

REPORT FROM THE  
FORGOTTEN PAST

MOONVENTION - Enter one Brooklyn reservation.

LARK - A small Greenwich village theater held a showing of two old WC Fields films in June--"My Little Chickadee" (with Mae West) and "The Bank Dick." This was my first taste of WC Fields' humor, and I nearly split a gut laughing. # Seems to me that the town was East Lompoc, but I'm probably wrong. # FAPAns I've met are Browne, Cox, Elsberry, Hammond, Ish, Macauley, Moskowitz, Riddle, Shapiro, Tucker, and Venable, plus three waitinglisters.

HORIZONS - You've called the shot again, Harry. Fantasy-Times announces the impending birth of a prozine named Spaceway, the umpteenth time someone has adapted a fanzine title for pro use. The others I recall are If, Imagination, Other Worlds, Astonishing Stories, Beyond, Galaxy, Fantasy Magazine, Comet, Marvel, Planet, and there must be some others. # The crop of prozine titles set off by Galaxy Science Fiction has reached some sort of low in fatuity. The new titles, while they are improvements over the adjectival titles of earlier days (such as Startling Stories, Amazing Stories, and so forth), are often completely meaningless. Examples: Orbit Science Fiction, Cosmos SF, Universe. Orbit is perhaps the emptiest title yet. Palmer's new title, Science Stories, is simply childish. We have few good titles: SF Adventures is one; Worlds Beyond was another. # Wetzel is still alive. I saw him at Philly. (Poor logic, but take it at face value.) # Van Vogt has always impressed me as being a master of the deus ex machina. Remember the events that led up to that famous punchline, "This is the race that will rule the Sevagram?" # Granted that TURANDOT has a deficient plot; it remains compelling music.

HOUSE OF WACK'S - Oh, come now. I'd like to see results of a poll of FAPA asking how many actually read this.

DAMN! - A fine old FAPish title. # This is as uninhibited a FAPAzine as I've ever read. # Your "Best of Fandom" advert stamps itself a hoax right in the first line.

RACY-PACY SPACEY TALES - Noted.

DREAM QUEST - Fine stuff. "Fugghead" is a good reason why I stay in FAPA. # Some of your story preferences are surprising, in view of the level of literacy expressed elsewhere in the mag.

LIGHT - Judging from a communique from teller Terry Carr, Burbee's attempt at FAPAN Pooh-Bah-ism is failing. But I admire him all the same for coming up with a notion no one else in this fine organiza-

tion has ever thought of. # In camp this summer we picked up all sorts of weird stations, including one from W. Va. and one from Canada. The Canadian one seemed to broadcast nothing but speeches by woman candidates for the August elections, and it tickled me no end to learn that one of your fine Canuck political parties rejoices in the name of "The Progressive Conservatives" !!

LOOKING BACKWARD - Noted.

FANEWS MAGAZINE - Likewise.

STFSTUFF - STFSTUFF is a fairly common fanzine title, though I can't come up with an editor's name just now. I think FANFARE is the most used fanzine title of all. And has anyone counted the number of prozine stories called "Time Trap" or "Survival"?

FLOP - "Nior fhan fupa na fapa aice" is Gaelic, all right, lifted from an F&SF story by Winona McClintic. # I doubt that the New Statesman and Nation will sue me, but you'd damned better not try to find out! # How come you know Greek? It's not a popular language for high-school study, especially modern Greek.

UNASKED OPINION - You are assuming, in discussing "essential guilt of the accused," that it constitutes guilt to have been a Communist at any time, even twenty years ago (or ten years ago, when Russia was our staunch ally.) I can't see this. People are entitled to make mistakes in forming a political philosophy, and why ex-Communists should be persecuted I don't understand. McCarthy makes me vomit. # If you check back fanzines, you'll see fan authors claiming ASF is slipping as far back as 1945 -- but though ASF continues to "slip," it likewise continues to take top ranking in popularity polls. # For quality ad-writing, I'd like to commend the Street & Smith copysmith who turned this gem out for the Philcon program booklet:

In physics, it's the speed of light: let's see you beat it!  
In science fiction, it's ASTOUNDING.

STEFANTASY - Good stuff.

IT CAME FROM BOX 203 - Right, Signet/Mentor (The New American Library) took over Penguin, which had been publishing in this country from about 1942 to 1946. The NAL continued in the same large size and format as American Penguin had used. (But during the war American Penguin had used the small-size format still used by Pocket Books.) Then, in 1950 or so, British Penguin, a sister concern, began sending over its books. This company is not related to the NAL, though it was related to the NAL's predecessor, American Penguin. Still with me? The old American Penguin books are in the same format as the present Signet, while current British Penguin titles are printed in England and have no cover paintings. (Just to confuse things a bit, a few of the British Penguins are printed in Vermont with the British format. This whole business is as mixed-up as the international recording companies. # British Penguins sell for 21¢ in England, 35¢ in the U.S., and larger volumes have correspondingly higher prices. # I wish I had kept my mouth shut and never continued Speer's chronology in that unfortunate Quandry article. I seem to be responsible for this



whole seventh fandom movement. But before the partisans of both groups start tugging at my corpse, I might as well say for the record that I consider myself a member of Sixth Fandom, having entered in the dying days of what I called Fifth Fandom.

SHADOWLAND - Very fine format. # There should be a law against unfinished contest stories. But I note some picture now playing in New York goes to the opposite extreme, and, rather than giving no ending, it supplies two, one happy and one otherwise. This is advertised as a radical departure from conventional techniques, which it is, but it's also a cheap way of salving conscience and avoiding a choice. # If Val Walker practises what she preaches I'd like to meet her!

FILLER - Tremendous. A towering landmark in FAPAdom. I roared for hours over "Brownn Grennell."

SKYHOOK - Raymond Gallun took two consecutive covers on Astounding, Feb and Mar 38. But the first cover story ("Mercutian Adventure" appeared in Astounding Stories, and the second ("Something from Jupiter" by "Dow Elstar") was in AS-F. So far as I know, noone else has turned the trick. Merwin pulled it only last month with two consecutive novels in Startling. # The Sturgeon article revealed quite a bit about the field's top stylist. # I could only regard the Rasch article as dull. A rasch statement, I know. # A little-known del Rey penname is Marion Henry. Not even Don Day had data on this. You'll find Henry listed as an associate editor for the Raymond mags, but the name, like Philip St. John, is drawn from del Rey's awesome full name, Ramon Felipe San Juan Mario Silvo Encico Alvarez-del Rey. (He was born in Minnesota.) # No point in wasting superlatives on Skhk (new contraction now!) any more; it's beyond praise by now.

YOUR NEXT OFFICIALDOM - On the nose, Mr. Boggs.

FANTASY AMATEUR - noted.

Three postmailings on hand, which may mean another 400-page mailing.... I'm writing in September, and can't say yet. # I suppose it's appropriate that a fanzine called D'JOURNAL should show up without any staples in it. (Oh, blast! Bergeron has changed his title to INTERM, I now see, which ruins the remark. Is INTERM supposed to be INTERIM?)

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Department of Non-Sequiturs: from the dust-jacket of Chad Oliver's Winston Juvenile, Mists of Dawn:

Cecile Matschat, editor of the Winston Science Fiction series, is recognized as one of this country's most skilful writers and editors... Nationally known as a lecturer, an artist of great ability, Cecile Matschat is also an expert historian. With this varied background, she is perfectly suited to select top science fiction authors and books...

Why?

PUZZLER

Just to keep you on your toes, here's one of those exercises in symbolic logic of which JWC is so proud. (For the benefit of Charles Wells, this was, once again, stolen from the New Statesman and Nation. The solution is located in one of the pages up ahead.

1. Wizzly woskies are always twizzical.
2. Nothing that is both axipated and mizzly can fail to be a polynog.
3. Those mellicles which are bimps are rumptious.
4. Polynoggerly is incompatible with zoobishness.
5. Woskies are either wizzly or mizzly, never both; all are axipated.
6. Everything twizzical is a zoob.
7. No mizzly woskies are rumptious.
8. All zoobs are mellicles; those mellicles which are not zoobs are bimps.

What is the discoverable relationship between woskies and mellicles? Hop to it, lads!

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Postman is icumen in,  
 Ihude sing cuccu;  
 Bringeth mail like winter hail,  
 And filleth mailbox nu.  
 Fanzines cometh by the drove,  
 Droppeth as the du,  
 Letter cometh, letters goeth,  
 Murie sing cuccu.

Wel singes thu, cuccu,  
 Ne swik thu naver nu.  
 Sing cuccu nu! Sing cuccu!  
 Sing cuccu! Sing cuccu nu!

\* \* \*

Ballantine Books seems to have bashed itself right to the top of the paperback field, standing triumphant on the bleeding wrecks of Bantam and Pocket Books and slugging it out punch for punch with Signet. How is that for metaphor?

Some twenty Ballantines have appeared since last I wrote, and in the six weeks before this is distributed another five will appear. There's been some good stuff in the recent ones, too. Top dog as far as sf is concerned is Clarke's Childhood's End, which for my money is the best sf story of the year. And issued last week was a revised version of Ward Moore's Bring the Jubilee, which I thought was the best magazine story of 1952. This makes seven sf books out of 40 Ballantines, which is a considerable proportion. (About twelve of the others are westerns of some sort, but there's yet to be a detective story in the lot.)

The other five Ballantine sf books range from very good to mediocre.



In the first class I'd put the Kuttner collection of short stories, Ahead of Time, which sees Kuttner at last writing in his Lewis Padgett quality once again -- I always thought his Padgett work better than his Kuttner stuff -- and last year's Star SF. Some of those new Kuttner stories are gems, especially "Home is the Hunter" from Galaxy and "Or Else" from Amz.

Another very fine Ballantine offering is The Space Merchants, otherwise known as "Gravy Planet." The other two sf items from Ballantine are not of the same grade: Gerald Kersh's spy-thriller-cum-sf, The Secret Masters, which is noteworthy for flashing style and an incredible plot, and Fletcher Pratt's run-of-the-mill Undying Fire, which we saw in Startling in May as "The Conditioned Captain."

But Ballantine promises a new sf book a month, and the stuff upcoming should turn the field upside-down. The October book is Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 (original notice had the temperature at 270, but Ballantine's been a hot concern lately.) This is supposedly Frost and Fire, announced by Doubleday but stolen away from them.

After that they have a new novel by Sturgeon, based on "Baby is Three," and works by Kuttner, Clarke, Wyndham, etc. And coming up is a new edition of Star SF for which editor Pohl paid 9¢ a word. All in all, it seems to me that if, instead of issuing a monthly pb, Ballantine were to call it a monthly magazine, it would take firsts in any poll!

The Ballantine non-sf has been plenty interesting too. To take them in order of appearance:

The World of Li'l Abner, one of the early Ballantines. This is a collection of the early, unselfconscious Capp strips, and makes some delightful reading even for a Pogophile like me. # The Racer by Hans Ruesch (no relation to the Frisco fan) is an exciting, melodramatic, not-overly-profound story of European sports-car racing, by a chap who once took part in that harrowing sport. I enjoyed the book.

I Thought of Daisy by Edmund Wilson is a new edition of a work of the 20's, centering about Greenwich Village. It's just the opposite of the last book, a carefully-constructed and deep piece of writing. Recommended, with reservations. # Summer Street by Hal Ellson is a story of adolescence, mere light reading and nothing more.

The City of Anger by William Manchester is a big, towering novel about the numbers racket in an unnamed big city, probably Baltimore. This is a gigantic, panoramic book, probably the most important Ballantine yet. Strongly recommended. # I have a number of the other Ballantines on hand, and hope to get to them soon. They include Executive Suite, The Witch's Thorn, the Martha Foley short-story collection, the anthology of new poems, Charles Jackson's Earthly Creatures, and one or two others. I note the trend in recent Ballantines has been away from popular mass tastes (the early Ballantines ran heavily to westerns, spy stories, and such) and towards such more substantial material as the Wilson and Clarke novels (and the Manchester) and the Foley anthology and Jackson collection, and the poetry anthology.

Some worthwhile stuff has come from Signet, which is maintaining its pb

supremacy only by a slim margin. Topping them all is James Jones' From Here to Eternity in a 75¢ edition. But other things I've enjoyed in the new Signets include Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man (which, despite the title, is not s-f, but a long and powerful novel of Harlem); Reach to the Stars by Calder Willingham, a puzzling story which includes some science-fiction interludes; Tomorrow the Stars, the recent, popular anthology edited by Heinlein. For sheer depravity try Norman Mailer's Barbary Shore.

A noteworthy item from Avon is Stories in the Modern Manner, a 35¢ anthology of stories from Partisan Review, containing a good many fantasies. And out just today is the second number of Pocket Book's literary semi-annual, Discovery. Haven't bought it yet, but it looks considerably slimmer and somewhat more interesting than its first issue.

A new firm aiming for the egghead clientele is Anchor Books, a subsidiary of hydra-headed Doubleday. Anchor Books are attractive, well-made items selling from 65¢ to \$1.25, depending on thickness. The reason for the high price seems obvious: these books are so esoteric in nature that their market is highly restricted.

I've only bought one so far, Andre Gide's Lafcadio's Adventures, a truly novel novel. I intend to pick up a few of the others when I get the necessary mazuma; included is a three-volume reprinting of Trevelyan's History; a collection of Greek romances translated by Moses Hadas, a former professor of mine; and much other fine stuff. So far I've not discerned any fantasy among the first twenty-odd Anchor titles.

Among the new Penguins, several are of interest to fantasiophiles: Franz Kafka's The Trial, which is listed in Bleiler, and Rex Warner's Men and Gods, a retelling of Greek myths. (Who will do the same for the infinitely less familiar Norse and Finnish mythology? Or Hindu? I'd love to see a paperback prose translation of "The Kalevala." The only editions available now are a servicable children's edition and an expensive poetic version, two volumes in the Everyman's library.)

The place to go for paperbacks in NYC is on Fourth Avenue, around 10th St. I've forgotten the name, but it contains an overwhelming selection of U.S. and imported paperbacks of all descriptions, including one complete wall for s-f titles. Of course, this information doesn't help too much without the name.

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As for that teaser on page four, it should be self-evident that wizzly woskies are mellicles and mizzly ones are not. This is easily seen from the following classification:

WOSKIES		MELLICLES	
Wizzly	Mizzly	Zoobs	Bimps
Twizzical, therefore zoobs	Not rumptious, so not bimps		Rumptious
And all zoobs are mellicles	Polynogs, there- fore not zoobs.		



Considerable time has elapsed between the last lines and these. In that time some postmailings have arrived, and for once I'll break my rule and discuss them.

FAPA NEWSLETTER - Thankee kindly, gentlefen. Let's get out and pile up some bundle-busting mailings during the coming FAPA year.

BOO - Is this a FAPazine? I note it contains some comments, so it may be one. It shares the general juvenile tone which damns so many of the many West Coast fanzines.

OPERATION FANTAST HANDBOOK - If these 64 pages and BOO's 48 are considered postmailings, it means another 480-page mailing, maybe even bigger.

TARGET: FAPA - Noted.

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One of the more interesting premieres this fall will be the N.Y. City Center production of a new German opera, based on Franz Kafka's The Trial. How anyone can make an opera out of this nightmarish novel (it concerns a chap who is arrested, put on trial, and condemned without ever once being told the nature of his crime or the Court in which he's tried) is beyond me, but if I get the chance I'll see the opera and find out.

S-F writers seem to be creeping in everywhere. Martha Foley's annual short-story collection (this year distributed by Ballantine Books) lists material by Bradbury, Ted Cogswell, and New Mexico fan Alice Bullock in her honorable-mention category, as well as three or four stories from a single issue of F&SF. Now the second issue of Pocket Books' Discovery is out with a story by Evan Hunter, a new sf author. (Hunter's Discovery story doesn't seem to be s-f.)

#### AMONG THE PROZINES

Of which there are many and many. I've been doing my darndest to keep up with them, but to no avail. However, the vast numbers of mags produce a proportionately vast number of good stories (if few great ones)--and for that we should be thankful.

Among the stories of the past few months that I thought outstanding, I liked Algis Budrys' "The Real People" in Beyond for November, especially. It's a perfect example of what we call Unknown stories and what fans of 1963 will call Beyond stories.

A short but effective piece is Sam Sackett's first story, "Liberation," in the September Fantastic Story Magazine. It's economically told and well. Another gem-like short story is Henry Kuttner's wonderful "Or Else" from the August-September Amazing; it's almost classic in its structure, a perfectly shaped piece of work.

Another fine Kuttner yarn is "Home is the Hunter" from Galaxy Jul 1953. As with the other, it's beautifully composed, measured, showing the hand of a craftsman. The new Kuttner is head and shoulders above the



old, and you know how fans loved the old.

Still another well-plotted story is Alfred Bester's "Time is the Traitor" from F&SF Sep. It's not quite as symmetrical as the Kuttner yarns just mentioned, but in its own way it's ingenious and fascinating.

From the August ASF comes Poul Anderson's "Sam Hall," an Astounding-type yarn done to perfection. How Anderson remains so good and turns out so many stories I can't see. Also worth reading is his "Three Hearts and Three Lions," F&SF's first serial (Sep-Oct.) It's a standard yarn, sort of a cross between the Connecticut Yankee and the Harold Shea stories, ~~but~~ fine fun all the way.

"Letter to a Tiger" in the Oct. F&SF is the sort of yarn I like to see occasionally--but not too often. It's cast in the form of a futuristic letter, and in a few pages a complete future society is created (but never explained.) It's all quite mystifying, an interesting and annoying tour-de-force.

The second issue of Cosmos seemed to be mostly wasted paper, containing as it does some third-rate stories by some first-rate authors. The only redeeming features are an amusing article by R.S. Richardson and an elaborate joke by one "N.R." Unrecommended reading. A notable story is the Sturgeon in the Oct-Nov Amazing; also in the same issue is an item by one Vern Fearing, "The Sloths of Kruvny," a parody on space-opera... I'd think Howard Browne the least likely of all to use such a yarn!

Among the new paperbacks, there's an interesting item from Ace Books, now edited by Donald Wollheim. Ace, in case you're not familiar with this minor publishing outfit, publishes 35¢ double novels, two books bound back-to-back a la COSMAG/SFD. Their first stellar offering is a van Vogt volume with World of Null-A and The Universe Maker bound together. The latter story is a rewrite of vV's "The Shadow Men" (Startling, Jan 50) while the former hardly needs an introduction. Since the new edition is a reprint of the Simon & Schuster book version, which I've never read, I'll probably re-read the Null-A yarn. I never really made head or tail from it when I read the ASF version, and perhaps I'll catch it this time around.

Of importance is Ray Bradbury's first novel, Fahrenheit 451 (Ballantine.) It's a blowup of his novella, "The Fireman," from GSF Feb 51. Included in the volume are two short stories which appeared in slicks this year and which I hadn't seen previously.

Another worthy Ballantine item is Childhood's End, which I think I discussed earlier in this issue, and coming in November is Ted Sturgeon's second novel, based on his Galaxy novella of last year, "Baby is Three." This should be quite an item.

This has been Irusaben 13, Nodeja 53-54.

--Bob Silverberg