

RUNE 16

JUNE, 1969



RUNE 16 (June, 1969) is the official newsletter of Minn-Stf, the Minnesota Science Fiction Society. It's edited by Jim Young, and published by the club with the expert care of Fred Haskell and Ken Fletcher. We're mimeo this time!

RUNE is available free to members of the Minn-Stf. You can become a non-attending member for one year by sending one dollar to the Treasurer, and explaining why you've sent the dollar. You can also be sent issues for contributions or for trade. If you're ever in town, feel free to drop in for a meeting. (There are no dues; rather, a hat is passed around each time with proceeds going to the treasury.) And if there's not a meeting, we'll probably hold a party for you... (Crazy Minnesota fans....)

OFFICERS OF THE MINN-STF:

- Frank Stodolka, President (1325 West 27th St.; Minneapolis, 55408.)
- Jim Young, Vice-president (1948 Ulysses St. N.E.; Minneapolis, 55418.)
- Ken Fletcher, Secretary (1501 Breda Ave.; St. Paul, 55108.)
- Marge Lessinger, Treasurer (1350 Queen Ave. North; Minneapolis, 55411.)

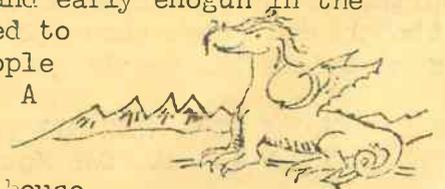
Y'EDITORIAL

This 'ere issue of the RUNE would have wended its merry way to you some time ago, if it hadn't been for a few things...like: I've been busy with a tremendous amount of mundane work which has finally ended (with my graduation from high school), and my battered and obviously aged typer broke down. My typewriter is a somewhat decrepit Reamington noiseless model that last went onto the production lines around 1953. The main-spring (the little begger that makes the carriage advance) busted, and you just can't take apart the main-spring because it's welded together, and various jolly things like that. So I had to scrounge around to all the typewriter companies (including the branch of Reamington located 'way the heck south in Bloomington) and finally found a place off the Mall in downtown Minneapolis that happened to have a beat-up noiseless with a still-usable main-spring...a main-spring I happened to buy and install in my typer. Ah, that familiar clickety-clack as I type this thing! No electric for me...until I get \$600 for an IBM Selectric, that is....

This RUNE is the first one to be mailed out on the new Minn-Stf bulk-mailing rate. This is also the first issue to carry the Redd Boggs series of articles on Minnesota fandom. Ruth Berman handed me the manuscript at the Minicon; Redd had written the article for her in 1961, the year before he left for California; so, we present in these pages the first installment of "Giants in Those Days". Since the Minn-Stf is the round-about child of the MFS I'm sure all Minn-Stffers will be interested in the thing...and I know every MFSer we can send the thing to will be happy to see their names in print. And everybody not included in those categories will really get a kick from Herr Boggs' article.

And so, with a cry of Minneapolis in '73!, we go on with the news.... JMY.

NEXT MEETINGS OF THE MINN-STF: JUNE 21, 1969 -- at Walt Schwartz's place (4138 Wentworth Ave South, Minneapolis.) JULY 4, 1969 -- PICNIC: The meeting will be shifted to a Friday so that it can be on Independence day and early enogh in the weekend so that some people are still in town. We've decided to have the picnic at Minnehaha Falls. Several out-of-town people will be attending...and everyone who reads this is invited. A party of the first magnitude will follow the picnic.



AT THE LAST MEETINGS: There was a slight gathering at my house

on Memorial Day (May 31). Attendees were (not in any order): Rein Konen, Holly Johnson, Fred Haskell, Karen Johnson, Frank and Carol Stodolka, Mark Riley, Bob Halfhill, Steve Popper and Jim Stokes. And of course, your host. On June 7, a slightly larger meeting was held at Walt Schwartz's place. During the summer, the Minn-Stf population always diminishes a bit, due to the college kids moving back home for the summer. Come the fall, though....!

REGIONAL SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTIONS:

Minn-Stf and Minneapolis in '73 will be attending more and more cons, and two major ones we'll be at soon will be Midwestcon and the worldcon in St. Looney. Lots more cons than these around though. Forthwith, a list of them:

June 6-8: PghLANGE: Pittsburgh, Pa. We hope to have a report on this con for you from Fred Lerner, who will be in town the week this fanzine is published.

June 7-8: Detroit Triple Fan Fair: Detroit, Mich. We'll try to have some information on this con in the next RUNE; hopefully a report by Howard Devore.

June 21-23: Southwesterncon: Houston Texas. Ramada Inn, Houston. Registration: \$2.50. For information: Tony Smith; 1414 Lynnview; Houston, Tex.; 77055. "Primarily comic-oriented," -- LOCUS.

June 28-29: MIDWESTCON: Cincinnati, Ohio. For information: Lou Tabakow; 3953 St. Johns Terrace; Cincinnati, 45236. Registration is \$1.00 at the con.

July 4-6: WESTERCON XXII (FUNCON II): Santa Monica, Calif. At the Miramar hotel, Santa Monica. Registration: \$5.00 at door; \$3.00 in advance; \$1.00 supporting, convertible to full membership at door for extra \$2.50. For information: Westercon; P.O. Box 1; Santa Monica, 90406. Make checks payable to Ken Rudolph.

ST. LOUISCON (27th World Science Fiction Convention): St. Louis, Mo.
29 August-1 September

\$4.00 attending, \$3.00 supporting or overseas. Information: St. Louiscon; P.O. Box 3008; St. Louis, 63130. Guest of Honor, Jack Gaughan. Fan Guest of Honor, TAFF-winner Eddie Jones. This is the convention, the kind of thing that can overshadow even something like the Minicon! Lots of Minn-stffers will be going down, so there's bound to be an easy way for you to make to St. Looney this Labor Day!

TED WHITE RELINQUISHES FAN CoH; TAFF-winner EDDIE JONES NEW FAN GUEST

In the 28th LOCUS Ted White -- who had been previously announced as the fan Guest of Honor at the St. Louiscon -- stated that he was relinquishing his position to goose the interest in TAFF. The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund brings a Briton to a con here, and on alternate years takes a Yank to a British con. (And good fen from other nations as well as Britain participate, too.) Eddie Jones and Bob Shaw were running for TAFF, and it was recently announced that Eddie Jones won TAFF. So, Eddie will be seen as the Fan CoH at St. Looney.

PUBLISHER PLANS REPRINTING OF OLD SF MAGAZINES

Garrett Press, a reprinting firm, has announced that they will be reprinting science fiction magazines in book form. All pages of the magazines will be reproduced on non-pulp paper...and color-covers will be reproed in black-and-white. The pre-1960 issues of GALAXY, ASTOUNDING-ANALOG, F&SF and UNKNOWN (WORLDS) will be reprinted. The publisher hopes to make UNKNOWN the first reprint. Cost will be high, though: somewhere about \$200.00 for the 39 issue set of UNKNOWN (depending upon how many orders the people get.) (Source: LOCUS and LUNA.)

GORGON: THE MINN-STF FANZINE!

GORGON is out. Dan Musick is the publisher; your Fearless Editor, Ken Fletch,

Fred Haskell, Louie Fallert and Frank Stodolka are just a few of the people who contribute to the first issue. I think it's one of the best first issues I've seen. (And I include my first HCCP in that, too.) Dan is living with his parents for the summer, and will be back in the cities with the end of August. You can write to him for copies of GORGON (at 25¢ per) or contribute to the second issue (out in July) at: 10 Studio Place; Colorado Springs, Colo.; 80904. Be sure to get it!

MINICON WILL RELEASE THIRD PROGRESS REPORT

Due to the great success of the second annual Minneapolis Science Fiction Convention, Minicon 2, the Minicon will be releasing a third PROGRESS REPORT free to all members of the convention. It will be finished at the same time as this RUNE. If you weren't a member of the con, you can get a copy by simply asking me for one -- they're free. The report includes the (ridiculous) thing the Minneapolis Tribune had to say about us, photos from the con (De Vet, Gordie Dickson, Simak, Manse Brackney, St. Louis people, the Lewises from Boston, and many many more -- yes...even me, looking half dead after playing nearly all the way through Metropolis and then having a flash-bulb explode in my face....) It was quite a con; this is quite a report.

WHAT GORDON R. DICKSON SAID ABOUT MINICON, WITHOUT BEING PRESSED TO SAY NICE THINGS:
"It's the best con I've been to -- bar none!"

MFS QUERY: Could somebody please send us the address of Clie Saari and Arden Benson's too, while they're at it? We want to send RUNE and other miscellanies to both of them.... And throw in John Chapman, while you're at it!

Ah, 'tis a grand and glorious thing to have me typewriter working happily again!

LERNER ON PGIHLANGE:

Fred Lerner did come through town, was entertained at a few parties, and said that PGIHLANEE in Pittsburgh had about 130 people at it, had a few problems, but was generally unorganized and fun.

This issue is obviously a little weak on the news-side, but you can chalk that up to our having to get back on our feet. So next issue, we'll be sending you more news than ever, plus the second installment of Boggs' article on the MFS.

This summer, Minn-Stf plans to change its meetings to Wednesday evenings. This change in schedule will occur after Picnicon (July 4th). This change will be broadcast widely so that all Minn-stiffers not on summer vacations will certainly here it. Stay tuned!

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NEWS SOURCES: LOCUS: biweekly from Charlie and Marsha Brown (2078 Anthony Ave.; Bronx, New York; 10457.) Six issues for \$1.00, 12/\$2, and 18/\$3. Quoted material is copyright 1969 by Charlie and Marsha Brown.

There has never been a newszine like LOCUS. Get it while you can.

LUNA: Monthly, Ann F. Dietz, editor. Address correspondence to Luna Publications, 655 Orchard St.; Cradell, New Jersey; 07649. 25¢ per copy, \$3.00 annually.

This zine is a little on the featurish side as compared to SCIENCE FICTION TIMES -- the zine formerly edited by the Dietzes. I would like to find out just what happened with SF TIMES and the starting of LUNA....

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME:

Minicon 3 will be held April 3-5, 1970, at the Andrews in Minneapolis. The program will be even better than at the second Minicon -- there'll be a banquet, an MFS panel following it, speeches and panels by more people than ever, some more movies, and the parties -- we'll have even better parties than before! Sounds like advertising? Ah...just wait!

MEMBERSHIP IN MINICON TWO

- 01 Jim Young, Minneapolis
 02 Marge Lessinger, Minneapolis
 03 Ken Fletcher, St. Paul
 04 Karen Johnson, Minneapolis
 05 Frank Stodolka, Minneapolis
 06 Carol Stodolka, Minneapolis

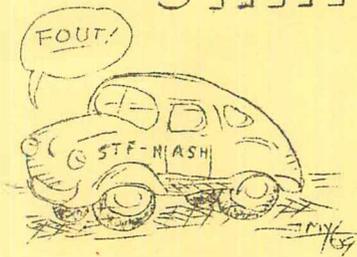
 001 Charles V. De Vet, St. Paul
 002 Gordon R. Dickson, Minneapolis
 003 Barry Dickson, Minneapolis
 004 Dennis Dickson, Minneapolis
 005 Carl Jacobi, Minneapolis
 006 Clifford D. Simak, Minnetonka
 007 Maude Dickson, Minneapolis

 1 SP4 John Kusske, Okinawa
 2 Joanne Swenski, Iron River, Mich.
 3 Pauline F. Jadick, Omaha, Neb.
 4 Laurie Berndt, Osseo
 5 Rein Konen, Minneapolis
 6 Dan Kennisten, Brooklyn Center
 7 Doug Kirks, Brooklyn Center
 8 Al Bencker, Osseo
 9 Leif Andersson, Bloomington, Ind.
 10 K. Martin Carlson, Moorhead
 11 Louis Fallert, St. Paul
 12 Fred Haskell, Edina
 13 Glenn T. McDavid, Northfield
 14 Jon Dummermuth, West Union, Io.
 15 Walt Schwartz, Minneapolis
 16 Don Nelson, Minneapolis
 17 Doug Kellogg, Minneapolis
 18 Chuck Holst, Minneapolis
 19 Dick Tatge, Minneapolis
 20 Anthony Tollin, Minneapolis
 21 Den Roberts, Farmington
 22 Jim Stokes, Minneapolis
 23 Carelton Carroll, Madison, Wis.
 24 Paulette Carroll, Madison, Wis.
 25 William F. Orr, Madison, Wis.
 26 Jim Plasman, Northfield
 27 Richard West, Madison, Wis.
 28 John Bulliss, Madison, Wis.
 29 Anthony Lewis, Belmont, Mass.
 30 Jerry Misner, Minneapolis
 31 Mentor C. Addicks, St. Paul
 32 Bev Addicks, St. Paul
 33 Steve Popper, St. Louis Park
 34 Al Kuhfeld, Minneapolis
 35 Ivor A. Rogers, Green Bay, Wis.
 36 Ken Gray, Savage
 37 Steve Gray, Savage
 38 Susan Erickson, Minneapolis
 39 Polly Malm, Minneapolis
 40 Anna Bonn, Minneapolis
 41 Dan'l Musick, St. Paul
 42 Joel Lessinger, Minneapolis
 43 Art Roberts, Minneapolis
 44 Pamela Janisch, St. Louis, Mo.

 45 Ray Fisher, St. Louis, Mo.
 46 Joyce Fisher, St. Louis, Mo.
 47 R. Schoenfeld, St. Louis, Mo.
 48 Ron Whittington, St. Louis, Mo.
 49 J. L. Johnson, Minneapolis
 50 Dana Andersen, Minneapolis
 51 Ronald Manguson, Minneapolis
 52 James Harkin, Minneapolis
 53 Robert Halfhill, Minneapolis
 54 Chuck Donahue, Minneapolis
 55 Michael Trangle, Minneapolis
 56 Robert A. Busch, Minneapolis
 57 Clark Cloukey, Minneapolis
 58 Warren Monteiro, St. Paul
 59 David E. Miller, San Francisco, Cal.
 60 Tom Vest, Minneapolis
 61 Richard Kleinen, Roseville
 62 Lesleigh Couch, Arnold, Mo.
 63 Chris Couch, Arnold, Mo.
 64 Robert MacLery, Tenafly, N.J.
 65 Dwight R. Decker, Westerville, Oh.
 66 James R. Odbert, Minneapolis
 67 Mark E. Riley, Minneapolis
 68 Brian Bjorgen, Minneapolis
 69 Greg Kishel, Virginia
 70 Dave Ellwood, Minneapolis
 71 David Thornley, Minneapolis
 72 John Niemeyer, St. Paul
 73 Roger Ball, St. Paul
 74 Virginia Robbins, Circle Pines
 75 Robert C. Robbins, Circle Pines
 76 Nancy Trener, Minneapolis
 77 John Short, Minneapolis
 78 Jeffrey L. Russell, Minneapolis
 79 Janice Broadway, South Holland, Ill.
 80 Derek Treuer, Minneapolis
 81 Ted Willoughby, Minnetonka
 82 Ted Sweetser, Edina
 83 James H. Kavaney, Chestnut Hill, Mass.
 84 John Kavaney, Drake, N.D.
 85 Roland F. Trenary, Minneapolis
 86 Susan Lewis, Belmont, Mass.
 87 Don Blyly, Peoria, Ill.
 88 Pat Rear, Robbinsdale
 89 Robin Root, Robbinsdale
 90 Mark Ter Steeg, Granite Falls
 91 Ruth Berman, Minneapolis
 92 Patrick Worthington, Minneapolis
 93 Marvel Schoppert, Minneapolis
 94 David Fant, St. Paul
 95 J. Chris Dunphy, Fridley
 96 Denise Howes, Brooklyn Center
 97 Gayle M. Bock, Minneapolis
 98 Marjory Manson, Minneapolis
 99 Kathryn Sherwick, Minnetonka
 100 Steve Sherwick, Minnetonka
 101 Tom Harris, Minnetonka
 102 Dr. E. Manson Brackney, Minneapolis
 Registration as of 6 April, 1969. K.J.

Minicon was one of the best cons
ever held in the history of fandom. It's
just one more reason to think Minneapolis
in '73....

GIANTS IN THOSE DAYS



FORWARD

Seeing that the Minn-Stf is the halfwardly-direct descendant of the MFS, Minn-Stffers will be particularly interested in the following article...and as I've said before, everybody else will get a kick out of it because (as I haven't said before) it's funny, informative, and interesting as all get out.

Saari's Stf-Nash

Seeing that Redd left Minneapolis in '62, I can't call him on the phone and ask him to finish off the last chapters of the thing. For you see...he hasn't finished the article yet. This piece was originally published in Ruth Berman's NECLITHIC, and though Redd says in a note to Ruth tagged to the manuscript that he'll soon finish, he didn't finish the chapters on "The New MFS", and "After the MFS". A checklist of Minnesota fanzines was never completed, though Redd must have his notes handy for the checklist, since he sent me a section of the checklist dealing with the old MFS BULLETIN. Hopefully, due to this publication of this section of the entire article, we can persuade Redd to finish the work. As an added incentive, the Minn-Stf is going to publish the history when Redd finishes; a chapter updating the history, dealing with some of the fannish goings-on during the later fifties and earlier sixties, leading up to and including the foundation of Minn-Stf would be added on by Yhos with a little help from his friends for the history. And now, take it away, Redd Boggs! -- Jim Young.



Preface

I'm not sure that the history of fandom in Minnesota needs to be written. Certainly fandom has never developed characteristic identities circumscribed by state boundaries, and even regionalism has been largely lacking, despite the formation of the Southern Fandom Group and early attempts to organize the National Fantasy Fan Federation along regional lines. It is convenient, however, to consider fandom in Minnesota as an entity in itself. Such a segment is small enough to cover in relatively brief space, and large enough to contain a great number of interesting people whose achievements are worth chronicling.

While Minnesota has never been the home of teeming fan groups such as those in California, for example, Minnesota fans have played prominent, if not leading, roles in the Immortal Storm since the mid-1930's, and some of the top fanzines have been published here. Minnesota authors, many of them former fans, have contributed more than their share to the body of science fiction literature. Above all, the science fiction personalities in Minnesota have usually been unusually fascinating people -- "altogether lovely, but slitley wacky," as Jack Speer expressed it in the original FANCYCLOPEDIA -- and it would be a shame if they were forgotten.

Most of them are gone now: gone from the state itself, and gone from fandom. This article is an attempt to tell a little about the fun they had long ago, when they were still fans, back in the state of Minnesota.

Age of the Letterhacks

There was at least one science fiction fan in Minnesota even before the founding of the first science fiction magazine, Amazing Stories, in 1926. We can

Redd boggs

state this with some assurance on the basis of black-and-white evidence, for in the June, 1935 Wonder Stories Edward R. Manthey of Minneapolis stated that he had been a science fiction reader ever since the days of the Electrical Experimenter and Ralph 124C414 (i.e., 1911 or thereabouts). Manthey is the first Minnesota fan your Gibbon knows about, though Manthey's only fannish activity consisted of writing a couple letters to Wonder. With his second letter, September, 1935, Manthey was encouraged, in an editorial note, to become a regular letterhack of the likes of Don A. Wollheim, but apparently, he never wrote again. Both letters written by him were extremely interesting.

Various other Minnesotans must have begun to read science fiction at least as early as the first issue of Amazing. John J. Kelly, Jr., 1493 W. 6th St., St. Paul, asserted in the September, 1928 Amazing that he had been "a reader of Amazing from the first issue," and Edward C. Magnuson, 1206 E. 9th St., Duluth, reported in the January, 1931 issue, "I am sixteen years old, a junior in high school.... I have read Amazing Stories since it was first published and have a complete library of it." In the February, 1931 Astounding Magnuson said that he had read Astounding from the first as well.

There must have been hundreds of other eager neofannish converts who started back in the 1920's or early '30's, and we can name some of them by exploring the early letter columns. Douglas L. Benson, 209 N. Linden St., Northfield, wrote (Amazing, July, 1928): "I've been following your Amazing Stories for the last two years." A. O. Ueland, Halstad, stated (Amazing, July, 1930): "Since I first saw your magazine, and it was one of your very first numbers, I haven't missed an issue!" George Eastman, Hibbing, had been "a reader for several months," according to Amazing, January, 1930, while William E. Peck, 1220 Powderhorn Terrace, Minneapolis, declared that he had read Amazing "off and on, ever since the first April issue", (Amazing, June, 1931).

George Baskin, 2909 Tenth Ave. S., Minneapolis, appeared with a letter in the January, 1933 Astounding, giving his age as 15. In the May, 1933 Amazing, he said he had been reading that magazine "rather sporadically" for five years. Blake Nevins, 169 W. Broadway, Winona, was another 15-year-old and "an ardent reader...for some time", (Amazing, January, 1932). Donald Kahl, 260 Selby Ave., St. Paul, had two two letters in the April, 1931 Astounding, and in the following issue, L. B. Knutson, 629 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis, asked for correspondents, promising to answer all letters. Earle S. Troupe, 717 15th Ave. S.E., Minneapolis, reported in the July, 1934 Astounding that he had read the magazine for three years, and in the November, 1934 issue requested copies of the magazines (Amazings --JMY) containing the first two "Skylark" stories. (Incidentally, Troupe is one of the few dawn-age fans still discoverable in the Twin Cities area, now living at 1100 24th Ave. S.E.) Frank J. Peters, 2622 Third St. N., Minneapolis, wrote a very fannish and amusing letter to the July, 1934 Amazing, but unfortunately gave no information about himself, and seems not to have appeared again.

The relative lack of feminine readers of science fiction in the early days has often been commented on. Apparently, the earliest femmefan letter-writer from Minnesota and one of the few who ever appeared, was Ellen Laura Nightingale, 228 S. Main St., Fairmont, who asserted in the October, 1930 Astounding that she was "only a mere girl...only ten years old." She had started reading the magazine, she said, with the issue containing Part One of "Brigands of the Moon", (March, 1930).

There were others, including Robert W. and Richard O. Conrad of Rush City, Clarence Gunther of St. Paul, Truman Tyler of Minneapolis, and Robert Lord of St. Paul. Many of them were fans in the early sense of the word, carrying on their primitive fanac by reading at least two (and perhaps all) of the prozines, corresponding with fellow enthusiasts, and collecting back issues.

Though some of these fans wrote two or three letters apiece to the prozines, none of them was a true "letterhack" -- the term had not yet been invented -- who wrote regularly to the magazines. Perhaps the only Minnesotan to qualify even half-way as a letterhack was William McCalvy, 1244 Beech St., St. Paul, a fourteen year old who had letters in Astounding for November, 1930, April, 1931, and March, 1932.

Not till the mid-1930's did real letterhacking develop among Minnesota fans, and nearly all these letterhacks later became fans in a more modern sense, playing active roles in organized fandom. First of the great Minnesota letterhacks to appear was Cliver Saari, 1342 First St. S.E., Rochester, whose letter in Amazing, November, 1934, was probably his initial effort. He soon followed it up with letters in Amazing for February, April, May, and August, 1935, and February, 1936. By the time he wrote the last-mentioned letter he was residing in Minneapolis at 1712 E. 34th St. He also wrote some letters to Wonder, and numerous letters to Astounding, including two published in a single issue, November, 1936.

Born in Finland, Saari came to the United States in 1927 at the age of nine, and first began to read science fiction two years later, in the summer of 1929. One of Minnesota's first true fans, he also became one of her first science fiction writers when in 1937 he sold three stories to the Tremaine Astounding: "Stellar Exodus," "Two Sane Men," and "The Time Bender." During the next few years he sold stories to Captain Future, Super Science Stories, Future Fiction, and other magazines. During the 1950's he made a comeback, and sold to Campbell and elsewhere, but has disappeared again in recent years. A graduate in mechanical engineering from the University of Minnesota, he lived at last report in Chicago.

The first fan letters of Douglas Blakely, another famous Minnesota true fan, began to appear late in 1935. The October and December issues of Astounding published letters in which he revealed that he was 14 years old and eager for correspondents. In a later letter (March, 1936) he reported that he had been reading science fiction about two and a half years. His address at first was 4615 Edina Blvd., Minneapolis, later 2800 Irving Ave. S. During those years he was still a junior high and high school student, and in the December, 1936 Amazing Dr. Sloane roughly scolded him for being a "naughty schoolboy" because he confessed that he read SF magazines at school behind an open notebook. Most of Blakely's later fan activity was on a purely local scale, but he became famous among Minneapolis fans as an impromptu entertainer and as an actor in the numerous skits recorded by the fan group. He also played alto sax in various orchestras around the Twin Cities. His only professional writing was with "The Time Bender", which was largely Blakely's work but was given a rewrite and final script by Saari and published under the latter's byline.

The same Amazing (December, 1936) in which Blakely was chided by Dr. Sloane also contained a letter from John Chapman, still another of the famous Minnesota fans who were beginning to emerge. He had opened his letterhack career in the June, 1935 Astounding (an issue that also contained a Saari letter), but at that time was living in Minot, North Dakota. By the time of his next letters (Astounding, February and April, 1936) he had moved to Minneapolis, and was living at 500 15th Ave. S.E. (Your editor lived ten blocks from this address for the first 15 years of his life. -- JMY.) In 1937 he lived at 1521 Como Ave. S.E., which became a famous address to Minneapolis fans over the next half-decade.

Born in North Dakota, Chapman became a fan of Nick Carter at an early age, and attempted to write sequels to the stories in magazines, in which he put his hero through more and dangerousser scrapes than his creator ever imagined. When Chapman discovered science fiction, he started writing voluminously in that field, and finally sold quite a number of stories. Nine stories from his mill appeared in the early 1940's, and he sold others during the boom of the '50's. Like Blakely, Chapman was a musician of sorts, and played a "battered clarinet." He also collected a large record library that was famous among Minneapolis fans.

In April, 1937 Arden R. Benson, 4011 Emerson Ave. N., Minneapolis had a letter in Astounding and at the same time joined the Science Fiction League; another famous Minnesota fan had made his bow. Benson, whose nickname was Buns, spelled that way but pronounced Bunce, had begun to read science fiction in 1934, and like most fans of the day carefully built up a comprehensive collection of the magazines published before he became acquainted with the field. He was once called "the tallest man in science fiction" and "perhaps the most amiable during his amiable moments." Like other local fans he became an engineering student at the University of Minnesota and owned a record collection -- his consisted largely of old-time records -- in the days before this was a common possession.

An interesting letter appeared in Astounding, June, 1938. Signed jointly by Oliver Saari and Arden Benson, it begins, "Being the only science fiction fans in the city of Minneapolis (far as we know)..." and ends, "We should like to get in touch with other science fiction fans living in the Twin Cities. We hate to think that we may be the only two of that select society in these parts. So let's hear from you, fans!" This was a year after a disastrous attempt to form a SFL chapter in Minneapolis -- an episode described later in this history -- but it is not clear where the other local fans had disappeared to. Apparently some of them were still on the scene, for in the very next Astounding letters from both John Chapman and David L. Dobbs of Minneapolis appeared. August, 1938 was the month I moved to Minneapolis from Fargo, North Dakota.

Dobbs, who lived at 2309 Cole Ave. S.E., letterhacked in Astounding during 1939 and 1940, and had a letter published as early as October, 1936. He had begun reading science fiction in May, 1934, according to one of his letters, but he seems not to have taken a very active part in organized fandom in the Twin Cities.

Meanwhile another letterhack appeared briefly from Duluth: Tony Strother, 5020 Dodge St., who had letters in three successive Astoundings: October, November and December, 1938. He wanted to hear from fellow fans "preferably in Duluth or the Twin Cities," but apparently he never visited any Twin Cities fans nor organized an SF club in Duluth. G.E. -- who was probably George Eastman, referred to above -- of Hibbing appeared in the December, 1939 Astounding, mentioning that he was 31 years old and had been "a reader off and on for several years."

Following G.E.'s letter in the December '39 Astounding were two other letters of interest to this history. The first was written by Charles W. Jarvis, 2097 Inglehart Ave., St. Paul, who had become one of the most prolific and talked-about letterhacks in "Brass Tacks" since his first letter, April, 1939. Jarvis dabbled briefly in fandom -- he mentioned receiving news about "Gray Lensman" from the fan magazines in a letter published October, 1939 -- and he attended a number of meetings of the Minneapolis Fantasy Society, before entering the service during the war. Now a doctor in St. Paul and one of the few old-time fans still residing in this area, Jarvis told me in March, 1961 that he gave up reading SF years ago -- largely because of Campbell's espousal of Dianetics, apparently -- though he bought Galaxy during its early days. Professional reading consumed most of his time at present, he said, but he mentioned some of the old SF "classics" such as "Triplanetary" and various stories by Clifford D. Simak with great nostalgia.

The other letter of interest in the December, 1939 Astounding was written by Bill N. Campbell, 1015 W. 32nd St., Minneapolis, who mentioned reading "science fiction for several years as a silent fan." Like Jarvis, Campbell attended some fan meetings, but never stayed around to play a very active role in fan affairs.

Despite the increasing activity on the part of Minneapolis fans as the 1930's drew to a close, it remained for a fan on the eastern side of the Twin Cities, in the suburb of North St. Paul, to publish the first fanzine in Minnesota and thus become well known to leading fans around the country. He was Morris Scott Dollens, who had

begun letterhacking with the February, 1936 Astounding, revealing in his letter that he liked to color the interior illustrations of science fiction prozines using a 10¢ box of water colors. His artistic talents were given a more public display when he published, that same year, a half-sized hektographed fanzine titled Science Fiction Collector, the first issue dated May, 1936. (Sam Moskowitz's The Immortal Storm, pp 71-72 of the hardcover edition, described the history of this fanzine. See also the checklist of Minnesota fanzines to be published as the final part of the present article.) After publishing 13 monthly issues of the Collector, Dollens turned the magazine over to John V. Baltadonis of Philadelphia and disappeared from the fan scene until early 1941, as will be described in a later chapter.

The Minneapolis SFL

Anyone who reads back-issue Wonders of middling age -- the last few years of the Gernsback magazine and the first few years of Thrilling Wonder Stories -- will find several pages in each issue given over to an organization called the Science Fiction League. In The Immortal Storm Sam Moskowitz gives an excellent account of the SFL, which he calls more "beneficial and important to fandom than any organization which preceded or followed it." (p 32, hardcover edition). In introducing the club Gernsback described the SFL as a "non-commercial membership organization for the furtherance and betterment of the art of science fiction," and among its functions to that end was the chartering of local chapters to be affiliated with the parent organization. Many such chapters were formed, since only three members were required to start a local chapter, and the SFL column in Wonder was soon filled with news about groups that were being formed or proposed. Various chapters such as those in Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Leeds (England), were soon established on a firm footing, but many others were either proposed and forgotten or else organized, only to fall into inactivity almost immediately.

The Science Fiction League was announced in the May, 1934 Wonder (with a preliminary announcement the previous issue), but it was not until more than a year later that the organization of a Minnesota group was reported. The June, 1935 Wonder listed a proposed Minneapolis SFL chapter headed by Alden E. Stafford, whose address was 200-223 Civic Arts Building, 305 S. 5th St. By some coincidence this building now houses part of Farnhams school and office supply store, which contributes to local fan activity these days by functioning as the Minneapolis Gestetner agency and seller of mimeo supplies to Gafia Press and other fan publishers in this area. (Farnhams went bankrupt in 1968 and the site of the store is one block of the new civic-center project. -- JMY.) Though this SFL chapter was mentioned for the next seven issues -- for as long as the Gernsback Wonder survived -- this early and abortive attempt to organize a Minneapolis fan club constitutes a "forgotten chapter" in the history of Minnesota fandom. Later fans seem never to have heard of this proposed SFL chapter and never, to my knowledge, ever referred to it when describing fan activity in this area.

Even more curiously, a Mr. Alden E. Stafford still resides in Minneapolis, but when confronted in March, 1961 with the evidence of his part in the incident could not remember having attempted to form a fan club. He confessed to having read science fiction at one time, and finally recalled having been acquainted with a Mr. M.R. Keith, who once had an office in the Civic Arts Building sometime during the 1930's. He suggested that Mr. Keith, an attorney, may have had something to do with the matter. Mr. Keith, did indeed remember this long-ago incident, though he had forgotten the details. He believed that he and Mr. Stafford had discussed the formation of a SFL chapter and that Mr. Stafford had written the letter to Wonder, using his (Keith's) business address. However, the chapter "never got off the ground," Mr. Keith recalled, and no meetings were held.

This proposed SFL chapter was premature, but only by the narrow space of a few months or a year at the most. Cliver Saari moved to Minneapolis late in 1935 or early 1936, as did John Chapman, and Doug Blakely announced his existence to the fan

world about the same time. The presence of these young fans would have given the SFL chapter a nucleus from which to build, and the history of Twin Cities fandom might have been quite different. As it was, two years passed before another attempt to organize a Minneapolis group was made. On page 124 of Thrilling Wonder Stories, June, 1937, the following report appeared:

MINNEAPOLIS CHAPTER

At the preliminary meeting of the Minneapolis Chapter of the Science Fiction League held recently, members present were: Cliver E. Saari, who was elected temporary director; Douglass Blakely, assistant director; John Chapman, secretary; Robert Madsen, treasurer; Russell McKinnon; Arden Benson; Vern Winkelman; and Jack Burgess.

Honorary guests present at this meeting were Mr. Donald Wandrei and Mr. Carl Jacobi, well known science fiction authors, who gave interesting talks on various sidelights of fantasy fiction.

SFL members in the Twin Cities who are interested in joining this chapter please get in touch with Cliver Saari, 1427 Logan Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The "preliminary meeting" reported here was also the only SFL meeting ever held by the Minneapolis chapter, but local fan activity nevertheless received a stimulus which has many long-term effects. Messrs. McKinnon, Winkelman and Burgess are obscure fans whose fate is unknown to your historian; presumably they were never seen again in active fan circles. But the others -- Saari, Blakely, Chapman, Madsen, and Benson -- became fast friends and during the next three years and more, except for some brief lapses, met frequently and "carried on almost all the activities of a club except the two that distinguish a club from a casual gathering -- viz, organization and publicity." (So reported Samuel D. Russell in "The Minneapolis Fantasy Society", an article appearing in The FANTASITE #2, February, 1941.) Bob Madsen is perhaps the least familiar name of the five because he played little part in later fannish developments in Minneapolis. About the time a formal fan group was organized at last, he was appointed to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. He was listed as an honorary member of the fan club for several years, however.

Although Oliver Saari was elected temporary director of the SFL chapter, Doug Blakely provided much of the impetus behind the venture.

Blakely, it seems, deserves credit for stirring up fan interest in Minneapolis, having lured Saari away from his recluse with the aid of several disintegrators, flame throwers, bombs, and a brief, somewhat inaccurate, letter which touched Saari deeply. From all this sprang the Minneapolis SFL, and so to Doug goes a bouquet for his well meaning.

-- Squanchfoot, "MFS Members," FANTASITE #4, July, 1941.

During the interregnum period of 1937-1940, "the chief literary activities of the Unholy Five," as Sam Russell wrote in the article already mentioned, "were the composition of innumerable Silly Stories -- brief nonsensical satires on current assinities in science fiction." Thus was founded a great tradition in Minnesota fandom; henceforth, as long as two fans met in the Twin Cities, the MFS Silly Story formed an important element in their transactions. Jack Speer described the Silly Story in FANCYCLOPEDIA I:

They are said to have been composed back in the days of the First Transition, when the MFS had virtually no contact with fandom, but when read at meetings, they set the morons rolling on the floor with laughter.

They are the source of such exciting words as fout, nank, and Twonk's disease.

In 1939 Clifford D. Simak arrived in the Twin Cities. Born in Millville, Wisconsin, Simak had followed a newspaper career from Iron River, Michigan, to Brainerd, Minnesota, before landing in Minneapolis, where he still resides, employed as news editor of the Minneapolis Star. (Cliff is now working for the state of Minnesota's education development agencies, workinf on the public school's science newsletter, as I understand it. -- JMY.) His first science fiction story, "The World of the Red Sun," had appeared in Wonder, December, 1931, and after a hiatus of several years, he returned to the field in 1933, selling such stories as "Rule 18," "Reunion on Ganymede," and "Hunger Death." He was already a famous science fiction writer when he arrived here, and when the local fans "became acquainted with him and began visiting him regularly, their interest in science fiction was intensified," as Sam Russell reports. "It was inevitable that the thought of starting another organization should seductively rise and tantalize." The story of this new fan club, the first successful one formed in Minnesota, will be told in the next chapter. -- REDD EGGGS.

Next issue, learn about the MFS in its prime; back in the days when Minneapolis and St. Paul were still alive with the clacking-roar of street-cars, and when the likes of Gordie Dickson, Ollie Saari, Cliff Simak, and many many more were adding chapters to the fanhistories.....

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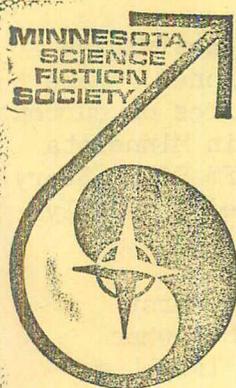
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