

# SCIENCE FICTION NEWS

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## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

"The Science Fiction Scene," a new department for views, news and general discussion, will begin appearing in *Science Fiction Monthly* with Issue No. 12 (August, 1956).

Plans for the department provide for reviews of all important new British SF books as one regular feature. Films will be covered by Forrest J. Ackerman, and other leading overseas sciencefictionists will be contributing.

As editor of the planned department I take this opportunity of announcing it and saying something of what we will try to do with it. In science fiction's thirty years of magazine publishing, many editors have devoted space to bringing newcomers up to date on the field; many magazines have run reviews and announcements, and many have invited their readers to add their comments. Not so many attempts have been made to provide a broad coverage of what goes on in science fiction or to survey the field critically. Because the regular magazines did not do these jobs, fan publishing developed into a substitute means of doing them in the 'thirties.

Lack of space has always been the strongest argument against such ventures; but "The Science Fiction Scene" will regularly run to sixteen pages. The magazine will expand from 96 to 112 pages to accommodate it without cutting down on the fiction content — and the price will stay at 2/-.

It has often been assumed that only a minority of dyed-in-the-wool enthusiasts are interested in anything except the fiction in a newsstand magazine; but it is difficult to believe that any regular reader of such a well-developed field of writing entirely lacks interest in occasional factual discussions of the ideas it expresses, the traditions and conventions it has accumulated. Many of them must be curious as to what kind of people write for the magazine, and we'll be able to tell them something of the writers' personalities and views of their work.

I am sure that many of our readers are anxious for some reliable guidance about books. These days numerous novels are described as science fiction by the publishers



Issues 9 and 10 of Australia's *Science Fiction Monthly*.

Issue No. 10 (June) of *Science Fiction Monthly* contains: "The Day the Sun Died," by Daniel F. Galouye; "The Underground," by Gordon Dickson; "Martyr's Flight," by Hank Searle; "Selling Point," by Norman Arkaw; "Not in the Script," by Arnold Marmor.

"The Stars are Ours," by H. K. Bulmer, is No. 6 in Atlas Publications' *Science Fiction Series*. One title to appear later is "Time Trap," by Rog Phillips.

Atlas also publish *Ballyhoo*, a magazine best described as funny, though that's an understatement. It specialises in a brand of zany humour verging on the macabre, and next issue (Winter, due in June) is "Chock Full of Space." Every item has a scientificational slant, usually on space flight, making the issue an item no SF reader should miss. We recommend it heartily.

— last year, for example, there were eighty-four published in England, not counting the few undoubtedly SF but not so advertised — and it is hard to guess from announcements or a brief glance at the book which are in the readable to epoch-making range and which are in the considerable group that should never have got into print. The reader can expect no help from the better-class newspapers and general periodicals which are usually a fair guide in general fiction and sometimes in non-fiction, because if they review science fiction books at all their reviewers uniformly fail to grasp the point. Several other SF magazines do

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## BOOKS

Since 1949, Everett F. Bleiler and Thaddeus E. Dikty have edited an annual volume, their choice of the year's best science fiction short stories. More recently they have been choosing a supplementary volume of "novels," or stories long enough to go five to the volume. For 1955 the two ideas are combined in a 344-page book edited by Dikty alone (Frederick Fell, N.Y., 4.50 dollars).

The contents are: "The Cold Equations" by Tom Godwin; "Of Course" by Chad Oliver; "Dominions Beyond" by Ward Moore; "Guilty as Charged" by Arthur Poiger; "Careless Love" by A. C. Friberg; "Memento Homo" by W. M. Miller Jr.; "Mousetrap" by Andre Norton; "Christmas Trombone" by R. E. Banks; "One Thousand Miles Up" by F. M. Robinson; "How-2" by C. D. Simak; "Heirs Apparent" by Robert Abernathy; "John's Other Practice" by Winston Marks; "The Inner Worlds" by William Morrison; "The Will" by W. M. Miller Jr.; "Felony" by James Causey; "The Littlest People" by R. E. Banks; "One Way Street" by Jerome Bixby; "Axolotl" by Robert Abernathy; "Exile" by Everett B. Cole; "Nightmare Blues" by Frank Herbert. One man's choice for the year's best, not ours and no doubt not yours, but an interesting collection. Our only exception is

to names appearing more than once in such a volume. An interesting feature is the absence of so many writers long outstanding; where are Clarke, Heinlein, Clement, Kuttner, Sturgeon, de Camp, Asimov, Kornbluth, Leinster . . . ? Does this line-up of comparative newcomers reflect the success of the science fiction novel over the short story?

Also included are "The Science Fiction Year," a survey by Dikty replacing the usual repetitious introduction, and "The Science Fiction Book Index," which is not an index but a checklist compiled by Earl Kemp of the year's books, including anything remotely resembling imaginative fiction, some odd choices of children's books and some non-fiction of possible relevance.

## ACE BOOKS REPORT

In February we published a reprint of Murray Leinster's "The Forgotten Planet," along with an original novel by Lee Correy called "Contrahand Rocket"; his first adult SF novel, incidentally. In March we did Philip K. Dick's second novel, "The World Jones Made" (a strikingly different work), along with "Agent of the Unknown" by Margaret St. Clair, which saw magazine publication in *Startling* as "Vulcan's Dolls." In April we take an experimental venture

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feature reviews, but the more the merrier — competition here does no harm when so much of the subject is controversial, and in any case many books are not covered at present.

Likewise, many readers must be interested in the film industry's attempts to put SF on the screen, and we will cater to this interest.

There will be a regular column, "Twenty Years Ago," as a reminder that SF didn't begin the other day, but has quite an eventful past. The distance it has come in twenty years is shown clearly when we consider what kind of naive fancies the readers of that day accepted readily enough — but the validity of many of the old speculations is plain now that science has had a chance to catch up and verify them. Often, particularly in atomic energy and communications, the writers are shown to have been over-cautious. The feature will be written with these points in mind, covering each month what was current two decades before.

Though there is no idea of a regular letter section, everyone is welcome to write in, and any comments of outstanding interest will be quoted as space permits.

Finally, let us not forget the new reader, for even to-day it is a mistake to assume that science fiction is well or widely known. Plenty of people have heard of it only vaguely, if at all, and they're not all hermits or head-hunters either. For anyone reading it for the first time, science fiction as published in a specialised magazine must be

at least as perplexing as it is exciting. The revelation that old-timers remember in reading about the possible world of To-morrow can still be experienced by a newcomer even to-day; but he has some obstacles to contend with, the great number of common assumptions about our future which are thrown in casually, explained tersely or simply assumed as part of the reader's background. Quite necessary, of course — you can't these days get away with stopping for a couple of pages to explain Newton's laws of motion and hence the basics of rocketry, because now you expect everyone to know that rockets do work in space and how — but it doesn't make things any easier for the lay reader when you also assume that everyone knows about limiting velocity and that if interstellar flight is ever feasible it means one of a few alternatives, all equally appalling to contemplate and quite foreign to the thinking of anyone unfamiliar with the problem.

In "The Science Fiction Scene," therefore, we will try to make the picture less obscure for the man who came in late. This doesn't mean coming down to kindergarten level, but we just aren't going to assume that all our public know as much about SF as we do.

That's about all I can say at this stage. I only wish to add that whatever the details, in "The Science Fiction Scene" I hope that we will be doing our bit towards gaining for science fiction the acceptance and recognition which are as yet only a hope for the future.

GRAHAM STONE

in the classics by doing the first modern translation of Jules Verne's "Journey to the Centre of the Earth," which has been long out of print here in other editions, and we may also do this in hard covers for the library trade.

In May we are doing an original by Jerry Sohl, "The Mars Monopoly" with an original by R. DeWitt Miller and Anna Hunger called "The Man who Lived Forever," which is based on Miller's novelette called "The Master Shall Not Die" in 1938 *Astounding*. In June we have two more original novels, "The Crossroads of Time" by Andre Norton and "Mankind on the Run" by Gordon R. Dickson. In July we will reprint "Star Bridge" by Jack Williamson and James Gunn.

We have on hand, but not scheduled, "The Players of Null-A" by A. E. van Vogt, the famous sequel to his "World of Null-A," which he has withheld from book publication for many years. This may appear in September.

Ray Cummings is revising his 1929 "The Man Who Mastered Time" for us. Joseph E. Kelleam is completing a new novel of the future about a character called "Raiult the Zarle." We have contracted for Andre Norton's "Star Guard" for 1957. And I am working on two new anthologies for autumn publication, now titled "The End of the World" and "Earth in Peril." That completes Ace operations as of now.

Speaking personally, my third novel, "One Against the Moon," will be published this Autumn by World Pub. Co. as a juvenile SF book.

—DONALD A. WOLLHEIM.

(It is welcome news that Verne is being newly translated. The existing English versions are from some fifty to ninety years old, and both style and vocabulary are badly dated. Without suggesting that Verne should be modernised technically, we hope to see the rest of his novels retranslated for the modern reader whose world includes later science fiction; the adult modern reader, we might add, not the school boy the Victorian translators had in mind—Ed.)

## OTHER REVIEWS

*Golden Atom*, 1954-1955; No. 1 new series. Edited by Larry B. Farsace, 187 North Union Street, Rochester, N.Y., U.S.A.

Before the war Larry published *Golden Atom*, a mimeographed magazine dedicated to filling in the background of science fiction for the historically minded reader and collector, and as such an outstanding success. Now, after fifteen years of silence, he's back with a far more ambitious version—a hundred letterpress pages of it. Its contents are described as "Science Fiction and General Interest," which is fair warning. Outstanding in the first half of a long reminiscient article by Harold Hersey, who edited *The Thrill Book*, the world's first

attempt at an imaginative fiction magazine, in 1919; who later published that fascinating collector's item, *Miracle Science and Fantasy Stories* of 1931, among some 200 other magazines; and who, it is hinted, was somewhere in the back room when *Astounding* started in 1930. Before going any further, we may as well say that we think this item is worth the issue's price of a dollar; the rest of it's not much more than bulk, but Hersey's worth it.

Farsace editorialises all over the place, and writes at great length on "My Attraction to Science Fiction, Fantasy—and Why," a sort of combined autobiography, short history of the field, survey of every aspect of it including vague connections elsewhere in literature, and general evaluation. Best described as rambling. There's other material, but forget it. Farsace says that "My main hope for future issues will be to write much less of the material and, if possible, to merely edit." Here's hoping. He would do well to write about a few subjects, one at a time, and control the impulse to throw in parenthetical quotes, appeals to authority and what almost amount to free-association responses. There's a lot of information here, but it's a bit too breathless.

Our verdict—*recommended*; mainly for the Hersey article; partly for the innumerable little-known facts, particularly dates and biographical details; not at all for the so-called "general interest" and self-congratulatory verbiage. Price one dollar, or \$1.75 for this and the next issue.

## IN GENERAL

The British magazine *Encounter* for January, 1956, has a long review of "The Quartermass Experiment," what sounds like a very avoidable British pseudo-science horror film, by one David Sylvester. Titled "The Anglicisation of Outer Space" the article is nevertheless recommended; its comparison with American efforts in the same line is worth reading.

Richard Wilson is an old-time New York fan from the days when members of the Futurian Society of N.Y. edited and largely wrote half a dozen news stand magazines. Though not as well known as others of that group (Kornbluth, Lowndes, Pohl, Kubilius, Wollheim), he has written some good short stories, such as "If You Were the Only," and a recently published book, "The Girls from Planet Five," which reviewers report as good satire. He is on the committee for this year's New York Convention, and at present is working in London temporarily.

The name of Frank Bryning was introduced to British readers with "Place of the Throwing-stick" in March *New Worlds*. Previously his stories have appeared first in Australian mass circulation magazines, and in most cases in America in *Fantastic Universe*. Watch for "—and a Hank of Hair," latest in his space station series, coming up in the *Australian Journal*.

## 30th ANNIVERSARY AMAZING STORIES

The April, 1956, issue of *Amazing Stories* is mostly a reprint issue, appropriately in the 30th anniversary issue representing stories representative of various times; that's the idea, anyway. The actual selection may not strike all of us as truly representative. In chronological order, the issue contains: "Advanced Chemistry" by J. G. Hueckels (March, 1927); "John Jones' Dollar" by Harry Stephen Keeler (April, 1927); "The Star of Dead Love" by W. H. Gray (May, 1927); "Solander's Radio Tomb" by Ellis Parker Butler (June, 1927); "Letter of the 24th Century" by Leslie F. Stone (Dec., 1929); "The Sword and the Atopen" by Taylor Greenfield (Jan., 1930); "The Jameson Satellite" by Nell R. Jones (July, 1931); "The Rat Racket" by David H. Keller (Nov., 1931); "Wanted, Seven Fearless Engineers" by Warner van Lorne (Feb., 1939); "Mr. Craddock's Amazing Experience" by W. F. Temple (Feb., 1939); "The Strange Flight of Richard Clayton" by Robert Bloch (March, 1939); "The Flame from Nowhere" by Eando Binder (April, 1939); "The Deadly Slime" by F. A. Kummer Jr. (June, 1939); "The Day Time Stopped Moving" by Bradner Buckner (Oct., 1940); "Vanished Civilization" by Joseph L. Millard (Feb., 1952); "Robot AL76 Goes Astray" by Isaac Asimov (Feb., 1952); "Wacky World" by Edmond Hamilton (March, 1942); "World Beyond" by Ray Cummings (July, 1942); "The Eternal Wall" by Arthur Leo Zagat (Nov., 1942); "The First Hundred Years Get You Nowhere" by Constance R. Dowd (March, 1945).

For some unknown reason "a photostat of the original illustration used when the story first appeared will be given to each artist" (current artists, that is) "... with instructions to study it and do that illustration in his own style."

Sam Moskowitz has a long article, "What Man can Imagine . . ." on predictions in early science fiction which have since been realized.

Paul W. Fairman has returned to *Amazing* and *Fantastic* as Managing Editor, a position he left in 1954.

## CONVENTIONS

New York was the site, at the time of the 1939 World's Fair, of an ambitiously named World Science Fiction Convention. The name has stuck, and the annual American meetings have carried it ever since. Sentiment in favour of a genuine international affair has been growing for some time, however, and London was supported by many as the site for this year's "World" Convention. New York was selected instead, but it seems likely that London will be recognised in 1957. What such recognition will mean is hard to formulate, except that there should be no national

meeting in America that year, moral support and some cash will go to the London organisers, and a few Americans will make the trip over.

But perhaps it may at least produce some consideration of the anomalous position that national Conventions are held without more than a shadow of a sponsoring body, to which every visitor is a delegate, which is to say that no organisations send delegates and no decisions made produce any action apart from preparations for another meeting of the same kind the following year.

The 1956 Convention will be held the first week-end in September at the Blimere Hotel. Guest of Honour will be Arthur C. Clarke, and probably most of America's important names in the field will be present. The Committee's address is Box 272, Radio City Station, New York 19.

The annual West Coast Conference will be held on June 30 and July 1 in Oakland, California. Early announcements name Richard Matheson (author of "Born of Man and Woman," etc.) as Guest of Honour. Other speakers named include Anthony Boucher, Poul Anderson and Robert Barbour Johnson. A panel discussion on "The Future of the Thinking Man" is a feature. Conference site is the Leamington Hotel; address for inquiries, Conference Committee, 432 Twenty-third Avenue, Oakland 6, Cal.

## S. F. IN GERMANY

(From Julian Parr)

The German SF magazine *Utopia* appears in two distinct series at different prices, a *Kleinband* and *Grossband*; neither is what we usually expect of a magazine, as they feature normally only one complete novel. An experimental *Sonderband* issue produced early this year was intended to fill the gap, and if successful was to be the first of a quarterly series. Printed on better paper, the issue included shorts by such well-known U.S. writers as Heinlein, Gallun and Rocklynne, as well as articles by R. S. Richardson and Forrest J. Ackerman.

The Science Fiction Club Deutschland, founded late last year, is making a good showing. It produces a newsletter and provides various services — discount on new SF books to members, for instance — and has published a tentative bibliography of SF in German under the title "Die Zukunft im Buch," running to 14 mimeographed pages and listing some five hundred titles with fragmentary information.

The Berlin publishers Gehrüder Welas have been issuing an SF newsletter of their own, including much of general interest besides plugs for their own books.

In Wetzlar in January a "Convention" was arranged by locals, and active fans met for the first time in force in Europe. Jan Jensen, of Antwerp, attended, making it international, even if you don't count resident American and British fans like myself and Ellis Mills, of Frankfurt.