

Science-Fiction Times

"The World Of Tomorrow Today!"

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(FREE with issue #293)

THE MESSIAH SPEAKS AGAIN!

PREJUDICE ENSLAVES FANS

SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES BOOK REVIEWS

by Gerry de la Ree

WAR WITH THE GIZMOS, by Murray Leinster. Gold Medal Books, 1958, 156 pp., 35¢ (paperbound).

Mr. Leinster's latest contribution to the science-fiction field is not one he will look back on with any sense of pride, nor is it one that a reader need look forward to with any sense of anticipation.

Ever since H. G. Wells' Martians threatened to wipe out the world in the 1890s, almost all writers of fantastic fiction have taken at least one crack at introducing a new threat to humankind.

Mr. Leinster, an old hand in the field, has written a very familiar tale and a rather unconvincing manner. His Gizmos -- invisible, gaseous creatures who thrive and multiply by snuffing out animals and human life -- operate virtually unchecked for 154 of the book's 156 pages. Apparently tiring of his port, the author snuffs them out in a few hundred words.

There are four major characters: Dick Lane, a professional writer of hunting articles; Professor Warren, a biologist investigating the situation in Virginia; her niece, Carol; and a chap named Burke, in whose automobile a good part of the yarn takes place.

Lane and the professor handle most of the dialogue; Carol, presumably the heroine, rarely utters a word, while Burke is the nervous type who's scared stiff of Gizmos. There's also a dog named Monster, whose main purpose in the book appears to be as a Gizmo-detector. Monster yelps, barks, screams, snaps, growls, and moans, to run through just a few of Mr. Leinster's adjectives.

Our four friends quickly dis-
(concluded on page 2, column 2)

by Ray Palmer

Naturally the fans have a right to like science-fiction, but I submit they have no right to expect any magazine to publish only what they want published, especially a magazine like FANTASTIC, which NEVER claimed to be a science-fiction magazine, but was SPECIFICALLY intended by the publishers to "carry the type of stories not suited to AMAZING STORIES because of their definitely off-trail nature." I should know, because I was the editor to whom Bernard G. Davis issued these instructions. Thus, when the present publisher, Mr. B. Ziff, Jr., wants FANTASTIC to feature a special Shaver issue of the magazine, it is his business.

Since the Shaver Mystery is not science-fiction, nor even fantasy, and FANTASTIC is not dedicated solely to these two, it can be truthfully said that FANTASTIC is not a portion of the "Favorite literature" of science-fiction fans, and they are entirely out of bounds in calling it "a magazine they must be ashamed to show to their friends", a "disgraceful mess", "catering to queer, borderline lunatics", "trash", or "dishonest".

Shaver fans number in the hundreds of thousands. There are, beyond all doubt, far more people interested in the things typified by Shaver's mystery than are interested in science-fiction itself. I would venture to say that a half billion people on this Earth are vitally interested in what is called "occult" (or the unknown).

As for Mr. Fairman being incapable as an editor of boosting circulation by publishing "good" science-fiction, no fan has as yet defined "good" science-fiction. My 31 years of experience in this

field, as author, editor, publisher, distributor has PROVED to me that the stories MOST LIKED by the type of fans who attend science-fiction conventions, are not the type on which general large circulations are built. Buck Rogers, Superman, Brick Bradford, Tarzan, etc., are much better circulation-getters. ASTOUNDING-type material reaches its top circulation somewhere near 100,000, and right now, I know for a fact that it is nowhere near that, nor will it ever get near it again. The newspapers and modern space-age developments have rendered it just "news of the day", and that 60 days late in deadline. I personally like ASTOUNDING-type fiction, but must admit that more and more of it fails to satisfy, as it is entirely lacking in imagination and surprise value. In short, I can "see what is coming" pages before I get to it, and thus, sometimes I never bother to get to it.

As an editor and publisher, I have ALWAYS failed to build circulation with the kind of story the fans like. Thus, it is NOT POSSIBLE to build LARGE circulation. Show me one editor who has exceeded 150,000 circulation in the science-fiction field IN ALL S-F HISTORY. A circulation that small, compared to hundreds of other type magazines, is not worth looking at if you are a publisher interested in big business, and making big money.

Today's average science-fiction circulation is LESS THAN 50,000. Some magazines exceed that, but they are few. You are reading one of them, if you read FANTASTIC. Offhand, I'd say Fairman has done an excellent job of building circulation with science-fiction.

Concerning prejudice, I remember distinctly at the second WorldCon at Chicago, I was so pleased at the large volume of enthusiastic fan mail regarding my

story "Black World" that I revealed I was the author. The day after the convention the change began. I received several hundred letters, all from fans, telling me how the story stank. An overnight about-face. I have never forgotten this, which for sheer bigotry and dishonesty will never be equalled in s-f. If you were one of those letter-writers, I consider you the world's most shameful creature. You, sir, are a cad!

With this in mind, I want to go on record as saying the Shaver Mystery is the business of the Shaver Mystery fans. As human beings outnumbering you many times, they have every right to have what THEY want, and request, in a magazine they read in more numbers than you. FANTASTIC is more their magazine than yours. Thus, the Shaver Mystery must be presented in it, at least in equal proportion to science-fiction and fantasy. It has not. It is time we have OUR innings!

Yes, I cannot produce a money-making s-f magazine using science-fiction. My best efforts have always failed (since 1954), the 1950-53 OTHER WORLDS was a wonderful success. Today I cannot duplicate that success. After four solid years of losses (one issue made \$42!), I have given up the ghost, and will never again publish a science-fiction magazine.

And in case you feel that I cannot write good science-fiction. I tell you this. Ever since 1942, I have written and sold science-fiction all over the field, even to the slicks. I have NEVER used my own name. I have bushels of letters lauding my work. I STILL sell a half-million words a year, in all fiction fields, including s-f. You would be very surprised if you knew my names. Some of you would be horribly mortified if you knew some of them. And if you DID know, I know exactly what you'd do. You'd sit down and write the EXACT opposite of your previous letters of commendation, in the most vitriolic language. You've done it before. You haven't changed your stripes. You are positively disgusting.

But, to those fans who are my friends, and I number them in the hundreds, some of them the leading fans in the field, I want to thank you for your honest support, even of the Shaver Mystery. And it is partly due to your requests that Mr. Fairman is at last giving the Mystery a fair shake. I believe you'll like what he gives you.

As for the Mystery, I have this to say personally: I BELIEVE in much of it, I UNDERSTAND it better than anyone in the world today, and I feel it is of the utmost importance. To me it is inconceivable that science-fiction fans would not give serious consideration to the flying saucer reports, to the army's theories of space travel, to the Sputniks, to the coming Space Age. It is absolutely incredible. When it was

all "fantasy", you plopped for it up to the ears. Now that it is not only "possible", but REALITY, you denounce it.

Finally, you are only interested in yourselves, you Shaver-denouncers. When I asked the fans to tell me exactly what they wanted, I gave them every bit of it, including back covers in color. No sooner done than you quit buying! No, not you, just everybody else! The fact is, you're just wrong. You haven't got a leg to stand on. And if you don't read FAIRMAN'S MAGAZINE (he lives up to his name), FANTASTIC won't be hurt a bit. What's a few hundred copies less sold to you mean in comparison to the thousands more sold to new readers who don't particularly care for ASTOUNDING-type science-fiction, or any type science-fiction? Why read theoretical rocket ships when you can read REAL rocket ships in the newspapers?

SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES BOOK REVIEWS (concluded from page 1, column 1)

cover that fire -- even a lit cigarette -- can explode a Gizmo. Armed with this information, plus the fact that they are virtually the only people on Earth who know anything about Gizmos, they spent most of the book attempting to drive to Washington and inform the authorities. Meanwhile, entire areas are wiped out by Gizmo attacks.

In many respects it's an out-and-out juvenile, and not a particularly good one at that. It might meet with the approval of the U.F.U. or flying saucer fanatics.

Science/fantasy books to be reviewed should be sent direct to: Gerry de la Ree, 277 Howland Ave., River Edge, New Jersey.

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INTERNATIONAL SECTION

AUSTRALIA

"F&SF" No 12
IS OUT

by Roger Dard

PERTH, 27 March, (GNS) - The Magazine Of Fantasy And Science Fiction, Australian Edition, #12 is out. Published by Consolidated Press, Ltd., 169-174 Castlereagh St., Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. 96 pages, digest, price 2/-. Contents: THE WILD WOOD Millred Clingerman, VENTURE TO THE MOON Arthur C. Clarke, WILDERNESS Zenna Henderson, OPERATION SALAMANDER Paul Anderson, and NEW MURDERS FOR OLD John Dickson Carr. Cover by Paul Blaisdell from the January 1957 U.S. edition.

ARRIVED FROM ENGLAND:

NEW WORLDS #70 (April 1958), SUPERNATURAL STORIES #16 (pocket-size bi-monthly, 2/-), OUT OF THIS WORLD #17 (alternate name used on SUPERNATURAL STORIES), FUTURISTIC SCIENCE FICTION (revival, pocket-size, bi-monthly, 2/-), FUTURE S F #2 (British reprint of US), SCIENCE FICTION STORIES #2 (British reprint of US), SCIENCE-FANTASY #28, NEBULA SCIENCE FICTION #28 (March 1958), S F ADVENTURES #2 (British reprint of US) & PHANTOM #13 (Apr).

