

"AD ASTRA"

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"to the stars"

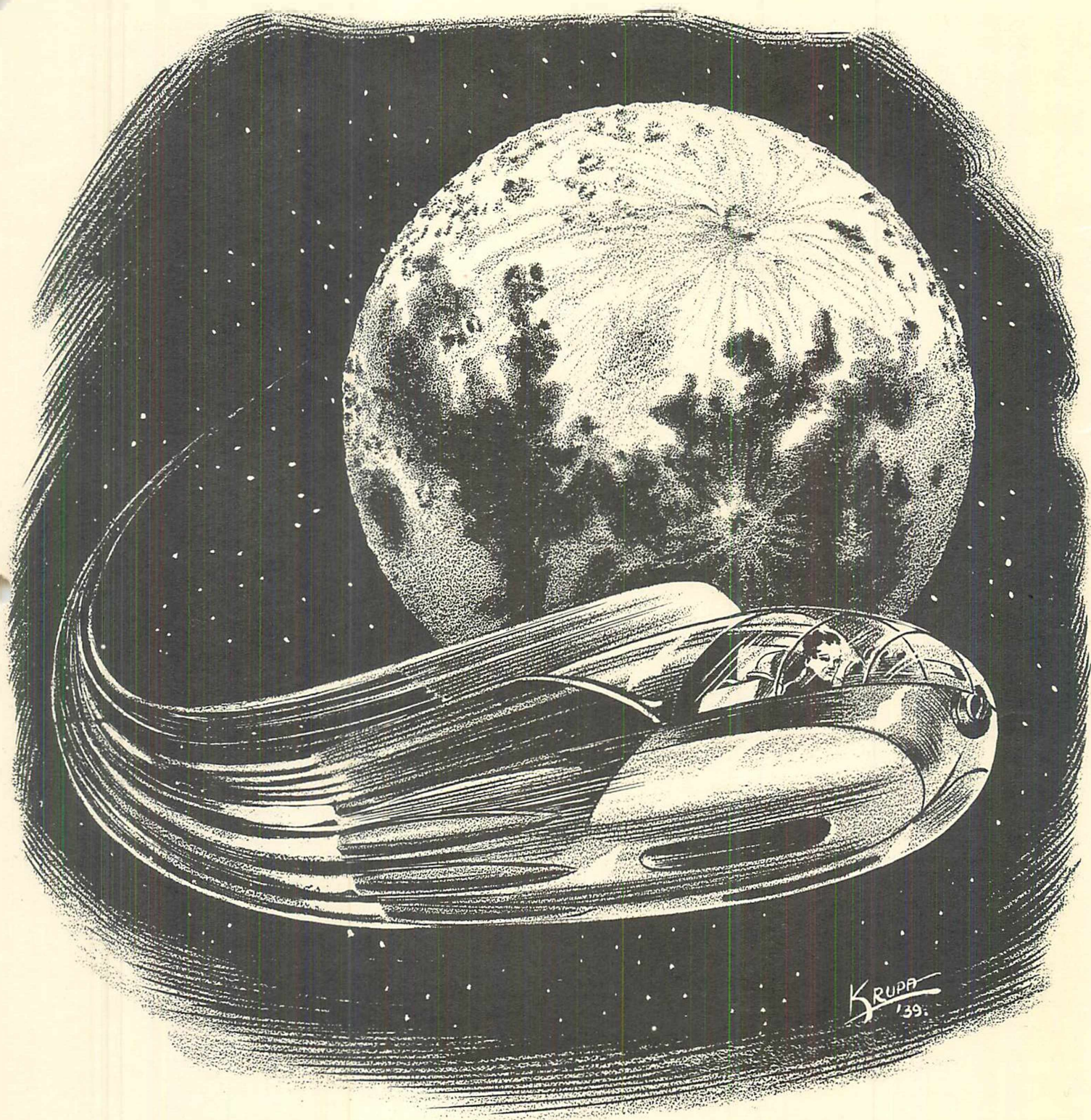
For Nov., 1939

Feature	Author	Page
BOOK-JACKET FRONT COVER		1.
FEATURE COVER	Julian S. Krupa	
ON EDITING	E.E. Smith	3.
CONDENSED STATISTICAL RESUME OF THRILLING WONDER STORIES	Jack Darrow	6.
THOSE MAGNIFICENT IDEAS	John W. Campbell, Jr.	7.
THOMAS P. KELLEY	Leslie A. Croutch	8.
ARRIVAL	Arthur Jaybarks Ackerman	9.
AA's BOOK REVIEW SECTION	Arthur L. Widner	10.
FANTASIES THAT BECAME FACT	J. Harvey Haggard	11.
PHILADELPHIA -- CONVENTION CITY	Robert A. Madle	13.
FARWEST FACTS	"Fawest Jack Erman"	14.
SEX AND STF	Donald A. Wolheim	16.
AD LIB	YOU, the readers.	17.
EDITORIALLY SPEAKING	Editor	20.
ADVERTISEMENTS		23.
BACK COVER		26.

AD ASTRA, 3156 Cambridge Ave., Chicago, Illinois, is an amateur publication for the science fiction fan. Published bi-monthly. Subscription rates are: 10¢ per issue; 25¢ for three issues. Life subscription: \$5. AD ASTRA invites literary contributions...good articles of general fan interest...essay-type material of opinioative nature...unique, startling but GOOD. A thorough perusal of this issue will act as a guide to just what type AA uses. AD ASTRA also needs interior stencil artwork. Fan artists with a working knowledge of mimeograph processes are wanted for future issues of AD ASTRA.

The opinions expressed in this magazine are solely those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the staff nor of AD ASTRA

NEXT ISSUE OF AD ASTRA DUE DEC. 20th.



Courtesy AMAZING STORIES

Quite a storm has been
raging recently, in fan
and pro-mags alike,
about editing.

Fans of
various

shades of
opinion have
written, at length
and pointedly. Un-
fortunately, however, a
good many of these contribu-
tors, being neither authors nor
editors, have shown quite plainly
that they do not know what they are
talking about.

Authors have aired their views;
but it has seemed to me that their
articles have been far more remark-
able for what they did not say than
for what they said. And, after all
this is natural enough. Authors
write for a living, and they cannot
be expected to antagonize delibera-
tely the men who will accept or re-
ject their forthcoming stories.

Editors have also expressed
themselves. But, ironically enough,
Campbell, the one who has defended
himself most vigorously his right
to cut and to edit as he sees fit,
happens to be the lightest and most
skillful wielder of the blue-pencil
with whom I have ever had any deal-
ings.

In a visit with certain of the
staff of AD ASTRA which I enjoyed
recently, this thing of editing was
gone into at some length, and final-
ly I was asked to do a bit of con-
tributing upon the subject. After
due deliberation I agreed---for, not
being an author at all, but a chem-
ist who does some writing on the
side, I am in the enviable and un-
assailable position of being able
to tell the full and unvarnished
truth as I see it, without fear of
consequences. I can swing from the
heels, without pulling my punches;
since it makes very little difference
to me---none at all, from a bread-
and butter standpoint---whether or
not certain editors like what I am
going to say. My position is even
stronger in that the only S-F editor

with whom I now have or expect to
have any dealings is one whom I
like, admire, and respect; as a
man, as an author, and as an editor
---John W. Campbell, Jr. And, to
make myself even clearer if possi-
ble, I will say now that if I did
not like the way Campbell handles
my stuff, I would not now be
writing for ASTOUNDING.

I quit the old AMAZ-
ING because the ed-
itors insisted,
through
changes
of

manage-
ment and

changes of ac-
tual editors and
despite my anguished
yowls of protest---upon re-
writing my stories. Some of
my yarns were well liked, anyway,
but a couple of them suffered ter-
ribly---"Spacehounds" in particu-
lar. You fans decided that it was
the poorest novel I ever wrote: I
still think that if it had been
published as I wrote it, it would
have been one of the best. I will
not go into details on that, how-
ever, as there is another and even
worse example which is not ancient
history, but is recent enough so
all of you have read it.

I refer to "Robot's Nemesis"
published in the June, 1939, issue
of THRILLING WONDER. There, fel-
lows, is one of the lousiest, most
indefensibly and senselessly crim-
inal jobs of sheer butchery that
was ever inflicted upon a story.
When it appeared originally, as
part of COSMOS in the old FANTASY,
it was rated excellent. As rewrit-
ten for the Tenth Anniversary TWS
(at the repeated urging of editor
and editor's agent, please note) I
know darn well that it was still
better. But when I read the edi-
tor's version of it I hardly recog-
nized it, and I got so mad that I
haven't cooled down yet. Four
times I started to write in about
it, but had to cancel---those let-
ters were nothing to send through

E. E. SMITH, JR.

ON
EDITING

Uncle Sam's Mail! This way, of airing my squawk to a lot of good S-F readers, will be a lot better, anyway---writing to the editor wouldn't have done a bit of good.

"Robot's Nemesis" was advertised as a novelette. It was never that; it was a short story---of between 7500-8000 words. As published, however (at a guess, without measuring it) it was cut to about 6500 words. Everything that gave it connection, coherence, plausibility, conviction, or reason was cut out: practically the only thing that was neither deleted nor revised was the blood-and-thunder. I don't wonder that you all thought it stunk. I thought so myself. It did, and it still does---it stinks to high Heaven. It was cut enough to spoil it, but the editing certainly finished the job---the conversation was enough to physic a snipe. Thus:

"...since he is Admiral-in-Chief of our side, the Blues. One slip may ruin the whole plan, give the Reds, our supposed enemy in these maneuvers, a victory, and get us all disgrated." And this:

"Can you release some of the ships from the automaton's yoke, after all?"

Good Lord! Who, with even half a brain, or with even the most rudimentary conception of what the reality of space-battle would be like, could possibly POSSIBLY put such tripe into the mouths of hard-boiled and hard-pressed officers of a space-navy? I could quote such brainless yammerings for pages, but I won't---it would be too painful and, after all, I can't take up the whole issue of AD ASTRA with my yarning. I'll just say that almost the whole yarn was rewritten, down to the intelligence of a not-too-bright ten-year-old moron, and let it go at that.

I have never written down to a reader in my life, and I never will. Not only is it silly and disgusting and repulsive, but it is also unnecessary, undesirable, and (I firmly believe) unprofitable. Some editors seem to think that the S-F group has a mental age of about eight,

but I, personally, do not. Science Fiction has a clientele far above the average reader-group in intelligence and in education, and I am convinced that they want and should be given, something to read that they really can sink their teeth into. This idea, I think, has been borne out by the history of various publications---the ones that have dished out the most pap and tripe have folded up or changed editors and managements quickest and oftenest.

There is no doubt at all in my mind that we S-F fans (I am a lot more of a fan than I am an author, and I read a lot more than I write) form a group absolutely unique in literature. We are the tightest-knit, the staunchest, the most loyal and at the same time the most critical group of readers known to any branch of literary endeavor. And right here I am going clear out on the limb by saying that we are the most intelligent and best informed group of readers existant---and that goes for all the massed readers of the Atlantic Monthly and all the highbrows of the Black Bay! Hence the question---why, in all the iridescent halls of mythology, do editors write down to readers, who neither require nor want it?

Nor is writing down all that editors do. Also, they juggle and change stuff around---aimlessly, pointlessly, just to be different---often to the complete obscurement of the carefully-worked-out point of a whole sequence. Miriam Bourne did a lot of that in "Spacehounds". There is a lot of it going on now, too; but, since it isn't happening to me and I don't want to drag anyone else into this brawl, I can't give names and page numbers. As I said before, professional authors (even really good ones---top-notchers) have to take it. There is a lot of good, solid writing done that you boys don't see because some dumb editor gets his dirty work in first. The authors don't have to like it, but they have to take it, without public squawking.

Maybe such editors have a Hitler

complex, or perhaps they think that they can write better stories than can the authors whose names they use. Somebody should suggest to such that they write their own stories---or, if they have to have established names, that they write the stories, send the MSS to the authors for OK's (would they get them? I WONDER!) and pay half-rates, say, for the use of said names!

Editors are supposed to know what the public wants. Some of them actually do. Others certainly do not, and I can prove it by record. Some years ago, the then editor of WONDER STORIES published in a fan magazine, under the slogan "What we reject, others print" (The wording may not be exact) a list of stories which he had rejected. One of them was "Flight on Titan", by Stanley Weinbaum, one of the best stories written by that marvelous young writer; another was "Triplanetary", by myself. Rejecting "Flight on Titan" was bad enough---even though Weinbaum was unknown then, an editor is supposed to be able to see quality in the typed page in and of itself---but to brag about!!!!

Also, I admit that accidents happen. I know, because a particularly distressing one happened to the ending of "Galactic Patrol". I worked on that ending for days. I did what I had always wanted to see done---ended a story exactly at the grand climax. I arranged things very carefully, so that I could do it---gathered up all loose ends beforehand, so there would be nothing left dangling; so that the reader would sigh in relief and feel perfectly satisfied when he read "THE END". And then, by some freak of fate, the printer left off those words entirely---the two words without which the story didn't end at all, but left everybody gasping and turning pages frantically trying to find the rest of the yarn! What a difference a comma, a dash, and two words can make! However, that was nobody's fault. It was probably the only serial ever published in which somebody's error did away

with "THE END"; and it was simply unfortunate that it also happened to be the only serial ever written whose entire fulfillment depended upon those two words!

In my discussion with Editor Reinsberg he suggested that a lot depended upon the authors, that some writers might need even more cutting than they got. This is undoubtedly true, but this article is not concerned with that angle. I am dealing with my own personal experiences and with what has been done by various editors to the work of one man---myself. And as a result of those experiences---influenced slightly, if at all, by the alleged experiences of others--- I believe that Science Fiction needs better editors more than it needs better writers. And Old Doctor Smith's diagnosis of the most prevalent editorial condition is that they know too darn much that isn't true. Most authors can write better than most editors can, and "someone should tell them these things".

And these conclusions bring out even more forcefully what an exception Campbell is. For he was--and is--a writer of the biggest calibre. He can--and does--write circles around nine out of ten of us. He would have every right in the world, with his background, to edit my stuff from stem to gudgeon; but of all the editors who have handled my stuff, he edits the least. For instance, in a hasty scanning of the first installment of "Gray Lensman" (I received the magazine only this morning, hence haven't had time really to study it) I noticed only one word that has been changed. I had the nurse's dance-frock of Earthly silk; Campbell made it nylon. A very good change---undoubtedly nylon will have replaced silk entirely in that future time.

Also, I'll bet that all of you enjoyed the episode of Kinnison and Madam Desplaines. The idle flirtation between the cosmopolite and the society beauty, changing in mood so instantaneously to the bitterest, most implacable enmity between the

Lensman and the zwilnik---the tie-up with previous episodes---the implication of things to come. It took work, lot of it, to put into that brief passage the stuff that is really there, and any change---even one inconspicuous perhaps to the casual reader--- would have ruined it; would have destroyed all the between-the-lines philosophy. Campbell knew that, and let it alone---all too many editors would have butchered it. Describing a lady as a "bedroom-eyed Aldebaranian hell-cat" is not exactly nice, I admit---but space in that yarn is decidedly at a premium, that action had to go fast, and that is the only printable five-word description I could compile (and I compiled it, too, boys; no fooling---I figuratively sweat blood getting that episode exactly where I wanted it) from all the words I know which could give a full, accurate, and complete description of that particular lady!

Also, another remarkable thing in a S-F editor, Campbell does not make any serious revisions of my stuff himself, but lets me do it. I have quarrels with him, of course. I really work on my stories, word by word, and I think that every word in my final MS should be as unalterable as the laws of Medes and Persians (with a few notable exceptions, such as the nylon). In this connection, I made one change in one episode in "Gray Lensman" which I still think was a change for the worse. I howled like a wolf, but Campbell gave me his reasons and I made the change---yielding as gracefully as possible.

There is still a doubt in my mind, however, as to which of us was right. I can say nothing further about it now, of course, since the episode has not yet been published; but after the yarn is all in print and if you readers should so desire, I'll give you the original version and see which you think is better?

And in the meantime, if anyone--fan or editor--wants to take a look at my old gray head, hop to it!

The End

 * EDITOR'S NOTE: *
 * The preceeding frank article *
 is published as representing Dr. Smith's sentiments, but doesn't necessarily represent the viewpoint of AD ASTRA or the staff. AD ASTRA is glad to open its pages to writers regardless of their opinions...it being our policy not to edit our contributors' material to any drastic extent. We thank Dr. Smith for his side of the "Editing" controversy and invite further discussion on this topic. EDITOR *

CONDENSED STATISTICAL RESUME OF THRILLING WONDER STORIES

*
by Jack Darrow

 No.

- 11 -- AIR WONDER STORIES
- 12 -- SCIENCE WONDER STORIES
- 3 -- SCIENCE WONDER QUARTERLIES
- 5 -- WONDER STORIES (large)
- 12 -- WONDER STORIES (small)
- 12 -- WONDER STORIES (large 25c)
- 5 -- WONDER STORIES (large 15c)
- 5 -- WONDER STORIES (large 25c)
- 9 -- WONDER STORIES QUART. (50c)
- 2 -- WONDER STORIES QUART. (25c)
- 19 -- WONDER STORIES (25c)
- 5 -- WONDER STORIES (15c)
- 2 -- WONDER STORIES (bimonthly 15c)

103 issues

20 THRILLING WONDER STORIES (bimonthly 15c)..to date.
 123 issues grand total

Editors: Hugo Gernsback; David Lassem; Charles D. Hornig; Mort Weisinger.

First issue: SCIENCE WONDER: June, 1929. First TWS August, 1936.

Artists: Paul, Brown, Wesso, Marchioni; Schneeman, Dold, Morey, Winter, etc.

 Further information may be obtained by writing the author or AD ASTRA..
 Next resume: ASTOUNDING STORIES..
 (SCIENCE FICTION now "STORIES" dropped)

Those Magnificent Ideas by-

JOHN W. CAMPBELL JR.

My compliments to Mr. Leslie A. Crouth for his "Good Old Days" article in the September AD ASTRA--- and my answer to his challenge.

Crouth wants me to promise to run any long, great-idea story that Fearn, Smith, or some other of the established writers turns out. Well, so far as Smith goes, we're running currently, his long (100,000 word) novel with plenty of strong, new ideas.

Those are not the reasons we're running it. We're running it in Astounding because it's an extremely strong, exciting and interest-holding story. Smith spent two years plotting, replotting, refining, and placing incident, then writing, rewriting and polishing. He has a mind as logical and exact as a calculating machine. In all his stories, he has made very, very few plain out-and-out slips in science. His material not only presents strong, new ideas; it backs them up with a logic and detail that gives them reality and believability. If he does come to an insurmountable block of present-day science, something he must overcome to carry on his story, he does it in a bold, yet permissible way. Instance: in his first "Skylark" story, he had to have his ship exceed the speed of light, which is plain contrary to the basic principles of the constitution of space. Smith didn't overlook the point, elide it gently by not mentioning it. He had imagination enough to say----- through his character--- "We are exceeding the speed of light. Therefore, since this is fact and the theories that said we couldn't were theories, the theories were wrong." Period.

Dr. Smith's stories are better for their scope and differentness of their ideas; the scope and ideas however, do not, per se, make them acceptable. Every week, here at the office, I get stories with ideas of greater scope, with yet more

grandiloquent magnificence---and bounce them hard, because the author can't begin to handle his idea, or can't write. Ideas? Ye gods, an idea isn't worth two hoots in Hades! Turn loose some author with a promise of accepting anything up to and including 100,000 words if he has a grandiloquent idea? Idea won't make a story; you absolutely must have a use for the idea, a plot and a tense story---and those don't come, just because you want them.

No, story outweighs idea a hundred times. Presentation outweighs both together---and none of the three is worth a mil a word if it isn't handled by someone who can write.

None of you who only read the magazines can appreciate that to the extent the editor who sees all the stuff sent in can. A psychologist studies the insane, the abnormal, to learn better the essentials of normality. An editor, seeing the results of pure grandiose idea, pure plot, etc., can judge better what is really behind the success of a good story. The worst story published in any science fiction magazine is at least a hundred times better than the average manuscript received.

As to length: It helps a story a lot. I know that. But readers don't like magazines with only three or four stories, in general. There is too much chance that the might not like two of them---and find most of their money wasted, so far as they're concerned. (Don't say make all three or four good stories. You may have liked story A, and howled at the terribleness of story B. OK. Somebody else is sure to wail at the dullness of story A, and praise story B to the skies. If everybody liked the same thing, it would be nice, but exceedingly dull in the world.) Therefore, we need short

stories.

Short stories can be good---it's just harder to make them good. How about "The Command", "Helen O'Loy", dozens of others that were ranked high by the readers? Some nice ideas simply don't make long stories.

Finally, one story that Croutch mentioned as being good, "Who Goes There?", I am particularly well acquainted with. I know its inner mechanism, so to speak. It did not have a great idea. It was not a ten-part serial. If it had been stretched to that length, it would have been a ghastly flop; I have good reason to know, further, that that story is an example of exactly what Croutch deplures. It was cut from a 35,000 word three-part serial to make a complete story. And it was much improved by the pruning away of excess verbiage. The material summarized in the first scene of the story as it appeared, was, in the original version, carried out in detail.

That comment is merely to indicate that rules don't hold, hard and fast, in science fiction. Trimming can be no end of a help. It can, equally, I know, be damaging.

"Who Goes There?" did not have a grandiose idea, or a new one. It was the dear old monster-frozen-in-the-ice-comes-alive-when-thawed-out plot. It didn't involve a single new, or remarkable weapon---for which fact it was praised, by some.

But it seems to have been liked. Why?

Perhaps because, resigning an attempt at new and marvelous concepts, it developed in realistic detail scenes entirely within the comprehension of the reader, scenes close enough to him, with methods and difficulties understandable enough to him, to drag him down into that Antarctic camp and nail him down with the characters, to feel a bit of the tensivity they felt.

I won't accept Mr. Croutch's challenge. He'd be fearfully annoyed at the quality of the material I'd be apt to get if length and magniloquence of idea alone swayed my judgement. I will not accept a grand

idea---unless the author can do something with it. I will trim every long story I get---unless all the length is used in telling the story, in pacing it, moving it on. And I'll continue reading my way hopefully through something more than 20,000,000 words a year, trying to select some 2,000,000 words a year for Unknown and Astounding--and hoping that, somewhere in that mass, new names with long, strong stories, with really powerful and moving ideas appear. New names have---John Berryman---A.E. van Vogt---in the most recent months. Others will.

But I buy stories---not ideas alone, nor length alone.

The End

*
* THOMAS P. KELLEY *
*
* by *
*
* LESLIE A CROUTCH *
*

August 19th, 1939, I took a week's vacation and journeyed to the "Queen City", Toronto. It was really a busman's holiday. I'm a radio-man in trade and I naturally had a good look about when down there. But that isn't the gist of this bit of typing. The fact is, I write to John Hollis Mason, who wrote the autobiography on Kelley in Spaceways, and I had gotten him to promise to see if I could meet Kelley while there. I didn't but--- and therein lies a mite of a true yarn.

Monday the 21st was the evening I thought I would see him, but it turned out Mrs. Kelley was ill so I couldn't very well barge in on him. "I"? More like "We" as Mason and Howes, another collecting fiend, were with me. But I talked with the author by phone from Mason's place, and I got a bit of info from him and also arrived at a few definite conclusions regarding the man himself, and also from what Mason

((Continued on page 12.))

 "ARRIVAL" by Arthur Jayburks Ackerman (a sequel to "Outward Bound")

New York: Journey's End: Life Begins! As our transcontinental train pulled into Penn. Sta., NYC, we--Morojo & I--scarcely could believe our senses...that we had traveled 3000 miles (an unprecedented trip for either of us)...that here we were in Skyscraper City...that within moments we should be amongst those famous fan & editors...

Suddenly-----
 there outside our window was Ray Bradbury--good old Ray! the clown of Los Angeles town, our pal who had preceded us by bus--&, by Gus!, was not that familiar face Charlie Hornig? thrice-welcomed to LA & now greeting us for the first time in his own territory! Charlie, all smiles, & exuberant Ray with a copy of the WSFC Souvenir Journal ("the golden-book") to show us right away; then--there were those new faces! DAW in the raw...not a photo, not a description, not a sketch...but the actual living breathing Donald Allen Wolheim! (Now I have forgotten for the nonce whether Don's middle-name is spelled with an "e" or an "a"--shades of Poe & England--& have no way of checking up; so forgive it, Don, if I pickt the wrong one.) Yes, Don Wolheim, "young Mr Lincoln with an umbrella". & in rapid succession I was introduced to others--I say I, it really was we, of course, Morojo being there too--but too many & too quickly for me to keep account of them all. I frankly didn't know "Doc" Lowndes was with us til 5 or 10 minutes had passed. I now know that beside Don, Ray, & "Doc" there were Fred Pohl, Jack Gillespie & Cyril Kornbluth. Everybody took some of our luggage--we had 3 suitcases, 1 handbag, 2 briefcases, typewriter, 2 pillows, file of photos (250 fantascience film stills), & miscellaneous mags, & illustrations acquired at Rap's during our Chicago-stop...

To the YMCA where Ray was staying we went. Discovering accommodations could not be secured there til 1:00 in the afternoon, Charlie volunteered to help Morojo find a place, while I checked the baggage, then went off with the boys to St. & Smith's. My impression of Penn. Sta. was a Turkish Bath; & on the sidewalks of NYC it surely was Hades! The first of many hey-days!

As we walked Ray talked Technocracy with Wolheim, & I got acquainted with the dry-wit of Kornbluth, who is not a person but an attitude. I should describe him as the pinnacle of all that is cynical. He is immensely amusing. He insulted me constantly. I like him.

Campbell, in a chemist's smock, was quite cordial. He had us rate the then-current copy of Astounding, it seeming to be about a tossup, in our bunch, between "Trends" & "Greater Than Gods", for top, with the Vogtale a sure 2d. Unknown was also rated & we looked at the next issues & the coming covers & Campbell made suggestions on a plot Bradbury brot forth. Illustrations to be auctioned he turned over to me to be delivered to the Convention Committee.

We returned to the YMCA where I got settled, met Morojo & Charlie & went to lunch at the Automat around the corner. I shall now give the exact menu of what everybody had to eat. (& Bob Tucker froths at the mouth & faints... 5 min. pause. Assuming that Bob has now recovered, I shall continue, making believe U have all read the menu in the meantime.) After the "inner-fan" had been satisfied, Morojo retired to her "hotelo" to get ready for the Esperanto "kurveno" that "vespero". (We wove in & out of the WSFC & the 32d Natl Esp-Kongreso while there.) Charlie, Ray & I browsed along Bdw & in the eve ate again at the Eat-o-mat. The Futurians had left us after

lunch. As I was about to join Charlie & Morojo at a table they had found, some one called my name, I turned around & blow me down if twarnt "Balty"! With him was Dale Hart, & it is my recollection that Walt Sullivan, Julius Pohl & Ossie Train were there too. Enyhoo, I sat & chattered with 'em; & after awhile my food seemd to b gone, tho I didnt remember eating, not that it matterd, as I never was very hungry any time I was in New York! Then Morojo came over & Balty, one of the Great Disbelievers, had to admit the evidence of his eyes that "Stf's Radigal" actually existed!

& if U Stephans & Stephanies realy like this sort of thing, I probably can persuade Rose Velt to tell U about "My Day: Sat 1 Jly" in the next number of STELLA.

Mi vidos vin!

 * AD ASTRA'S BOOK REVIEW SECTION by Arthur L Widner Jr. *

THEY FOUND ATLANTIS

by Dennis Wheatley

Published by J.B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia and London. Price \$2.00

This is one of the better "Atlantis" stories. Similar to A. Conan Doyle's MARACOT DEEP but more plausible and modern. The characters are unusually human and unsteretyped for this type of fiction. They are: Camilla, a partly spoiled, beautiful millionaress; her three suitors, Vladimir, a Roumanian prince, Axel, a learned Swedish count, and Nicky, a crooning film star. Sally, Camilla's cousin, Nelson MacKay, a retired British naval officer, and Dr. Herman Tisch, the inventor of a super-bathysphere. Half the book is taken up with a fantastic kidnap plot, and sets the scene where the traditional cable-breaking occurs. You can start in on the 14th Chapter and still get a lot out of it as it becomes very interesting from there on.

They get down in by a huge net in a haul of fish, almost suffocate in the bathysphere, get out, and have several encounters with blind fish-men in subterranean tunnels before they arrive at the real Atlantis. Everything is rosy for a while, until Nicky in a drunken rage, kills Dr. Tisch, after which the Atlanteans kick the whole party out again. The story rapidly approaches its climax, and ends with a surprise as far as the love interest is concerned, which is handled very well throughout the book. Descriptions and theories are well presented, and all in all it is worth the time it takes to read it.

***** ADVERTISEMENT *****

In one farmag---Dick Wilson, "Trudy" Hemken, Paul Freehafer, "Doc" Lowndes, Loyis Kuslan, Sam Moskowitz, Elmer Perdue, Forry Ackerman, Mark Reinsberg, Morojo, Ray Pauley, Julius Unger, CSYoud, Fritz Leiber, N Gilbert Dancy, Everett F Bleiler, Alan P Roberts, Thos Hinmon, Dave McLLwain, J Chapman Miske, Allen Glasser!

THE VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION, Forum of Fandom...opinions, inquiries, explanations, informations, indignations, amuzations...all for a dime, 10c, the t part of a d! Bx 6475 Met Sta, Los Angeles, Cal.....

It's

CHICAGO IN 1940!

World Science Fiction Convention

Be there!!!

"FANTASIES

THAT BECAME FACT"

No. 1

FORESIGHT!

There's always something Charles Fortean about those ancient writers who dreamed of things ahead and beyond their time, things that have since materialized into actuality. It smacks of necromancy, of deep black magic, and all those unplumbed depths of etherical substance of existence. It has all the atmosphere of strangeness as frogs raining from the sky, statues drenching the ground with blood, and the nameless aura of dread around the old crumbling idols of half-forgotten Easter Isle.

It is to be doubted if any science fiction fan can escape a feeling of wonderment when recalling that their beloved Jules Verne, called the "father of science fiction" by many, was writing of vague dreams when he penned his masterful "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea", a sense of profound awe for the man whose mentality had the power to probe ahead--into the FUTURE. For that is just what he was doing. And no fan would label his feat accidental.

Yet after a moment of thought it is easy to realize that Jules Verne was not the first to dream of sub-oceanic traffic, nor was he the first to think of flying to the moon? Dim ages a savage sat at the seashore; gazing down into the shifting tide, and in his primeval mind was unformed dream of longing. Could he travel as the fish travelled? What great deeds might thus be his! He invested his gods with such powers, and thus perhaps came into being the first science fiction thinker. When he looked upward at a new moon riding the sky and his mind formed pictures in the shading, is it to be wondered if he peopled that luminary with supposed godlike dwellers both similar and dissimilar to himself?

Jules Verne was born Feb. 8, 1828 in Nantes, France. But let us push

By J. Harvey Haggard

backward through the lost centuries, further into the dimming path of the vanished ages. In 1789 a volume of versified science was published by an imaginative old gentleman whose greatest claim to posterity was that he was grandfather-to-be of the reknown Charles Darwin.

Backward, backward through time we go, to Erasmus Darwin and his "The Botanic Garden", and as we probe the glimmering trail of yesterday let us see of what Darwin was dreaming when he wrote:

"Led by the Sage, lo! Britain's sons shall guide
Huge Sea-Balloons beneath the tossing tide;
The diving castles, roof'd with spheric glass,
Ribbed with strong oak and barr'd with bolts of brass,
Buoy'd with pure air shall endless tracts pursue,
And Priestley's hand the vital flood renew--
Then shall Britannia rule the wealthy realms,
Which Ocean's wide insatiate wave o'erwhelms;
Confine in netted bowers his scaly flock,
Part his blue plains, and people all his rocks,
Deep, in warm waves beneath the Line that roll,
Beneath the shadowy ice-isles of the Pole,
Onward, through bright meandering vales, afar,
Obedient sharks shall trail her scepter'd car,
With harness'd necks the pearly flood disturb,
Stretch the silk rein, and champ the silver curb."

Shades of science fiction writers! Old Erasmus, if alive today, might have ranked with Weinbaum. He didn't forget to provide a scientific manner for representing the ((Cont'd pg.12))

air in his submarine "sea-balloon" with oxygen. Joseph Priestly, a preacher-chemist driven out of England because of political views, had perfected the process fifteen years before 1774. And you'll have to give him credit for that original thought of hitching his Sea-Balloons behind a team of fast sharks.

Four decades ahead of Verne, Erasmus Darwin threw in a prophecy that anticipates the automobile, and then as though fearing some might doubt his powers, threw in a prevision of the steam-tug and airplane for good measure.

"Soon shall thy arm, unconquered
Steam! afar
Drag the slow barge, or drive the
rapid car;

Or on wide-waving wings expanded
bear
The flying-chariot through fields
of air.

Fair crews triumphant, leaning
from above,
Shall wave their fluttering 'ker-
chiefs as they move;
Or warrior-bands alarm the gaping
crowd,
And armies shrink beneath the
shadowy cloud."

Unfortunately, of course, Erasmus was born too soon, else he would have smacked the nail right on the head, substituted gasoline motors for steam engines...which was pretty good guesswork for his day and age, back in the seventeen hundreds, as any one will allow.

At the same time he wasn't striking out blindly into thin air, but did have a good idea as to what conditions would be like in the future. It's quite probable that he was a venerable old gentleman possessed of humor and foresight, and not at all improbable that he actually did believe in those things whereof he wrote.

And what a thrill would be his if he were but able to step out into this commonplace world of ours today! For he would see his wildest fancies come true!

(Part ~~2~~ next issue)

((CONTINUING "Thomas P. Kelley" by
Leslie A. Croutch))

has told me from time to time.

Over the phone, Kelley sounds like an excited, active fellow with a world of enthusiasm in his voice. Mason tells me that when Kelley gets an idea for a story he gets so excited he'll talk like a phono run wild on the subject. Anyway, I asked him for some advance dope on yarns for AA, and got him started. Boy, can that man roll off his Egyptian dates and history...he has them all at his fingertips. Dates and data on an idea for a forthcoming story on Helen of Troy came out like water through broken flood gates. And you could just sense the enthusiasm, the love for his work in his tense, fast voice. Fast? Yes, he's a fast talker all right. Anyway, this idea for Helen of Troy to be titled "Face That Launched A Thousand Ships", is fostered by legends he's picked up somewhere in his extensive reading that Helen of Troy never reached her destination, but was set off or marooned on some island in the Mediterranean. His idea is to write a story about her, and evidently about the fact that she is still living.

Kelley's "After a Million Years", he informed me, will appear in Weird Tales for Dec. 1939, running four months. Also, watch for his "The Sea Gorilla" based on the monster in "I Found Cleopatra". His "Island of Death" was to be submitted very shortly. Of course, the names may be changed, but here it is, for what it is worth.

I asked him if there was any chance that he would ever do a S&F yarn. He laughed, and answered that it was possible. He didn't say yes...and then again, he didn't say no.

This isn't much about him, I know, but he seems to be a tough person to get anything juicy on. So this will have to suffice, and as a closing bit: from the impression I got of him over the phone, Thomas P. Kelley is a darned nice fellow.

THE END

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 * PHILADELPHIA -- CONVENTION *
 * CITY *
 *
 * By Robert A. Madle *
 *

It is a well-known fact that Philadelphia isn't noted for the large number of science fiction fans dwelling there. In fact, despite that it is the third largest city in the United States, it is noted for very little, with the exception of the number of cellar-dwelling baseball teams it develops.

However, it is noted in the science fiction world as being probably the smoothest-going science fiction city. In Philadelphia you have never found two factions attempting to cut each other's throats. There has been only one science fiction organization; the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, formerly the Philadelphia Science Fiction League. This organization is composed of quite a few well-known S-F fans including Milton A. Rothman, John V. Baltdonis, Oswald Train, Robert A. Madle, Jack Agnew, etc. And let me repeat; the Philly fans love one another, and there has yet to be any dissension among members.

Perhaps that is the reason Philadelphia has sponsored so many conventions; I don't know. Anyway this article, requested by the Editor, is supposed to summarize Philadelphia Convention activity this far. This, I shall now attempt to do.

The first science fiction convention ever held materialized in October, 1936. The PSFS was informed by the New York Branch of the International Scientific Association to prepare for a visit from them. Little did either the PSFS nor the NYBISA realize that this historic gathering would be the forerunner of all subsequent conventions. However, to be brief, members William S. Sykora, Donald

A. Wolheim, John B. Michel, David A. Kyle, Herbert Goudket, and Fredrik Pohl, all active fans, arrived en masse on a chilly Sunday morning in mid-October. After hours of walking about the city discussing science fiction, fantasy fiction, and then some more science fiction, the members of the PSFS and NYBISA congregated at the home of Milton A. Rothman, then president of the PSFS, and conducted a somewhat orderly meeting. One definite thing was accomplished; it was decided to hold the First Eastern Science Fiction Convention the following February in New York. As the latter convention has little to do with Philadelphia, I'll just say that it was a howling success, and let it go at that.

The following October (1937) Philadelphia again sponsored a science fiction Convention. This convention will probably go down in SF history as bringing about the biggest bombshell ever thrown at a group of poor unsuspecting S-F fans. For it was at this momentous gathering that Wolheim and Michel presented their now-famous speech, "MUTATION OR DEATH". This, as some of you know, was the beginning of Michelism, and caused some of the most furious arguing ever witnessed or heard at a S-F convention, or any other convention, for that matter. In a way, the Convention can be termed a failure, for it did nothing but introduce MICHELISM to science fiction---science fiction itself was discussed very little due to the extreme length of time consumed by the furious argumentation. However, some persist that this was the turning point of fandom. It is merely a matter of opinion.

One year later, October, 1938, Philadelphia fans again announced that they would hold a convention--this time to be known as the Philly Science Fiction Conference. This gathering was attended by about 35 science fiction fans DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE MICHELISTS BOYCOTTED IT! Yes, that actually happened---according to some fans it was a blessing, no less! For those who

attended were unanimous in stating that it was by far the most interesting and friendliest of all conventions, bar none. Lively and interesting discussions pertaining to science fiction and science fiction organizations were held; Rothman presented a marionette show and there was so much food that there was actually some remaining after all had departed on there various ways! Everyone who attended this conference left with a feeling of friendship and satisfaction, realizing that there can never be a more interesting group than when a number of fans convene.

Now we all have reached October 1939. Philadelphia has again come forth with an announcement to the affect that she will sponsor another Philly Conference. We, the

FAR WEST FACTS by "Farwest Jack Erman"

* * *****

Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, expect this one to surpass all others. For one thing, fans are coming from as far west as Chicago and Bloomington, Illinois to attend. At this meeting, to be held 10 days from the date of this writing, we expect to accomplish numerous things. Of primary interest will be the actual organizing of the forthcoming CHICAGO WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION, to be held in 1940. And let me cast a hint and say that there will possibly be another bombshell thrown (perhaps more than one) for the Michelists have announced that they are coming en masse. What will happen when combatting factions convene in one room? Only Ghu can answer the question now. But it is obvious that something will occur, and this forthcoming conference may well be another turning point in science fiction fandom.

A few times a yr there r 5 Thursdays in a month, in wich case it has bcom customary for mems of the Los Angeles Science Fiction Leag Chapter to meet at a fellow fan's house. At the end of August the xtra Thurs ocurd, in consequence of wich the imagi-natives went to Ray Bradbury's for the firsttime en masse. Here we inspected our great scientific library aswelas Bradbury's personalibrary of bks & mags. Ray is a specialist in Buck Rogers strips. Another Ray was present--Ray Harryhausen, puppeteer--whose claim to fame lies in the fantastic scientifact that at the presentime he has seen KING KONG 32 times! Harryhausen also is producing an amateur scientifilm from his own script & with his own models, an into-the-past plot involving the end of Atlantis! He brot his pet brontosaurus model with him, a dog-(daschund)-sized dinosaur of realistic apearance wich bewilderd Ray B's "Scotty" quite a bit, especialy when Brad woud ventriloquize a bark out of "Bronty". Seen was T. Bruce Yerke's 3-pg foto-illustrated fact article on the menace of mechanization in the tobacco industry ("Tubby" recently has taken to the pipe, wich praps accounts for his investigations along this line), publisht in the Sep ish of The Technocrat mag; heard, the "Casy Coffin Hr", renderd on the radicfonograf, a thoroly funny transcription by Bruce & 3 other Ange-nos. Also playd (under protest) were recordings by the inimitable (thank heaven!) "Rodobo" (Ray Douglas Bradbury), & a not-bad, in fact quite thrilling, impression of the Invisible Man by Ed Barrera. Ray & 4e also tosst dialog back & forth at each other from Things to Come with music from the film forming a fitting background. Advance copys of the first Future Fiction & new Weird were around, & general discussion was the order of the informal meeting. Pogo, Morojo, Russ Hodgkins & others of course were present.

At our first regular meeting in Sep final decision, after 5 wks' discussion, was made on the LASFL's official opinion on the infamous Exclusion Act of the Nycon, or New York Convention. This reaction appears in the present Voice of the Imagi-nation, #3, organ of the LA leag. 2d important topic was the reading of the communications from

the Chairman of the Chicon (Chicago Convention) Committee & its Corresponding Secretary-Treasurer. 5 of those present immediately expressed their intentions of attending the affair of '40, those being Pogo, Russ Hodgkins, Ray Bradbury, Morojo & 4SJ, who further signified their sincerity by paying dues for the Convention-sponsoring organization, the Illini Fantasy Fictioneers, to Forrest J Ackerman, official Western Representative of same. Advance copies of Unknown & Startling were in evidence, & Russ had brought a beautifully & profusely illustrated edition of "Salome" & the ultra-weird "Worm Ouroubus" for all to oh-&-ah at. Also on hand was a large envelope of identified snapshots from sundry sources, fotos from Nycon Wk. 5 ladies were present. It was learned that Kuttner is doing a novel for Weisinger & that if 'Peter Manx' proves popular enough Hank & Art Barnes will continue to collaborate as Kelvin Kent, & the 3d in this Whirl Series may be called "Shanghai Jester"!

Sunday, 11 Sep, "brunch".

(11 o'clock combo of breakfast & lunch) was served a bunch of staffers at "Castle Stoneybroke" in Laurel Canon Calif, home of Robt Heinlein & wife Leslyn. Bob has just clicked again with Campbell on "Vine & Fig Tree" (working title to be changed), a serial which will follow the "Gray Lensman". Before the day was done the house held 13 & much fun was had by all. Present also was Elma Wentz, aspiring fantasy authoress, who currently is working at the Reach Studios in conjunction with production of the prehistoric picture "1,000,000 BC". When Elma mentioned having a friend who once wrote for Wonder it developed that recently arrived in LA is Jno Scott Campbell, enthusiastically remembered for "The Infinite Brain" & Quarterly yarn "Beyond Pluto". Efforts will be made to persuade Mr Campbell to attend the Leag. The day at Heinlein's was whiled away reading mss of Bob's & Bradbury's, with Technocracy from Hodgkins & Yerke, occasional Esperanto conversation on the part of Morojo & "Erdstelulov", & a little Foo for good measure thrown in by Hi Priestess, Pogo. In the eve some of the fans went to fantasy films, "On Borrowed Time" & a revival of "Things to Come" being in town at the same time along with others. The Heinleins hope to be able to attend the Chicon.

"Nu, tio estas cio!" - "That's all, folks!" - Fino.....

A N N O U N C I N G

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think he could get any sort of honest answers (if he got answers at all) or be capable of drawing all the conclusions from the results.

From another viewpoint, science and progress have steadily been working towards the emancipation of women from household or family drudgeries, and towards the bringing of them culturally up to the level of men. Which is to say any tale dealing with the future, if it depends upon a normal advancement of today's science into the future, should logically admit a considerable part of its characters, scientists, adventurers, explorers, political leaders etc. to be women.

If then there is any stand which fans can take on the subject of sex in science fiction without getting Freudian about it, it would be to take a science-progressive stand on it--point out the direction in which the world is moving today as far as freedom of the sexes is concerned, and project your visions accordingly.

The End

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Coming in future issues: Parts 2 &
3 of J. Harvey Haggard's current se-
ries; Forrest J. Ackerman, Robert A.
Madle; Robert Moore Williams; Far-
saci's "Sidelights in Fantasy" which
was squeezed out this issue; etc.
Watch for the gala fifth issue of AA!

I rather suspect that the average fan tends to shy clear of the issue, probably because he is actually either none too willing to commit himself or else he hates to reveal a lack of knowledge. The subject of sex is actually the whole subject of psychology, the whys and wherefores of many things, and when dealing with the specific attitudes of the adherents of escape literature, we are treading on very delicate ice indeed.

One fan editor rejected an article touching on sex on the grounds he doubted his readers were familiar with the subject. In another magazine a brief controversy flared up upon the question of the rather over-great emphasis on sex made by a couple of fans--primarily Robert Lowndes. Lowndes, however, runs toward the erotic as a result of his poetic inclinations and his would-be Baudelairesque poses. I am not going to psycho-analyze Doc here either.

"Sweetness & Light" that dangerous magazine from the West Coast is raising a stir among the more hide-bound of our fans. What its resultant will be, who knows? In any case, I do not expect that anything will materialize out of this ---openly. But the more mature or discerning or psychologically-informed of the fans can draw private observations that will be interesting indeed.

I do not think that anyone has ever made a poll of fans in regards to their sex-viewpoints and experience---I do not think that anyone ever will---or if he did I don't.

WHAT OUR READERS HAVE TO SAY!

JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR., writes in connection with his article: "I'm enclosing an article-letter in reply to the direct challenge of Croutch in AD ASTRA #3---September issue.....Much of Croutch's comments are sound---but, like anyone who hasn't plowed through the vast masses of tripe an editor gets, he doesn't realize how many ways a story can go sour---extremely sour. It takes more than mere length and marvelous ideas to make a yarn."

A bit of flattery from RALPH C. HAMILTON: "AD ASTRA improves, and establishes itself as definitely of value to that species of being known as the science fiction fan. It is entertaining, interesting, and informative; and though there are, of course, possibilities of improvement, these possibilities will doubtless be realized." ((Honest folks, it's entirely unsolicited!! Ye Ed))

Says ARTHUR L. WIDNER: "The third issue of AD ASTRA arrived and was read some time ago, but I've just got around to writing about it....'Twas good, but I disagree heartily with Les Croutch's article. My own article you'll find enclosed, goes into details....Cover was good but nothing special. The better fan artists could do as well with such a subject.... All the articles were good---this word "good" is getting overworked, but it describes the magazine---especially Warner's defense of Paul. After his back covers ~~for~~ Fantastic Adventures, he must be recognized as the top, in color, at least. Heheh. Darrow left out Juhre as an AS cover artist....I don't think you should stick exclusively to articles. Some poetry and fiction should be allowed. I'm speaking as a reader. By all means quit the double column business as it means fewer words. And see that you keep your promise about enlarging AD LIB." ((We've kept that promise, you'll notice. But AA will print only non-fiction, for the time being. There's so little truly good fan fiction --- and so many fan mags devoted more or less exclusively to fiction, that AA will steer clear of it. We'll concentrate on getting the best articles in the field! Ed.))

From Advisory Editor LESLIE A. CROUTCH in Canada: "The mimeoing this time looked to me like you had too much ink in it. The type was overinked in spots and thus made it look dark and smudgy....You have received many requests for all-across-the-page typing instead of the two column, I see. Certain types of articles and work will look better on a two-column page and some better all-across. I'd say full length articles should be run all-across the page. Advertisements, short bits that would normally cover but a half a page, short line poetry, etc., should be on a two column page. In this way you save paper and put a greater wordage per issue....Another thing---maybe I'm Scotch and thus hate to see things wasted, but cut out that double space between paragraphs. In 20 some odd pages you lose an awful lot of space. In my opinion, the articles rated thusly, in order of preference, (mine of course, being omitted for obvious reasons!): (1) Guest Editorial...Palmer; (2) Why Not Paul?...Warner; (3) Viva La Fan Mags!...Hornig; (4) Interview With Calkins...Meyer; (5) Reberth...Weaver (Mc Ackerman) Wright; (6) Sidelights in Fantasy...Farsaci; (7) ~~Convention~~ Sidelights...Madle; (8) Resume of Amazing...Darrow. The verse was nice, the better of the two being "In Oceanic Depths" by Warner.

(Continuing "AD LIB")

((You're right about wasting space between paragraphs. We've changed it all; and in so doing offer our readers far greater wordage than before. And, if you notice, AA has been working the two column and one column arrangements almost as Croutch suggests. It in itself, adds variety to the pages of AD ASTRA. Editor))

Condensed from long letter from old faithful fan JOSEPH GILBERT:
 "First place goes to Leslie A. Croutch for that rarities of rarities, an argument for the "good old days" that was really sound. As he said, the tales of the past loom so large in our memories because present day standards are so low....I'll skip hastily over the article on our muscle-bound ~~comic~~ strip hero, Buck Rogers. My opinions on the subject are dangerously and explosively violent...."Re-berth", by West Coast Ackerman was a piece on an effect that was another important angle of the Convention. We all form mental impressions that usually are wrong of our correspondents and writers. Why not have someone who actually attended the Convention to give us a word picture of a few of the more famous fans. How about it?....Neat idea you have reprinting the covers of S-F mags' first issues with guest editorials by their present day editors....I'm still looking for another "Ad Astra". The amateur poetry this issue looks it." ((4e Ackerman, we understand, will continue his Convention series in AA, so you'll find the "word-photos" you requested in this and coming issues. Thanks for the kind words! (Mr. Gilbert said some nice things --- too nice to print, in fact, in the unpublished portion of his letter.) Ed.))

Fellow editor TED DIKTY of "Fantasy Digest" flashes: "Latest AD ASTRA very nice. Since I missed out on the 1st issue, I didn't mind the cover repeat. The planographed page is a good idea. But try to get a better reproduction. This one was a bit splotchy in parts. Use the single column. Farsaci's column O.K. if he would use more lesser known facts. 4e's all x. The Calkins interview was interesting. Glad to see that you're using more of that type." ((Something went hay-wire on one half of our planograph job. We'll try and get uniform quality from now on. See front cover. Editor again))

GEORGE P. CALVERT writes: "I do not want print all the way across the page. Mimeographing is hard enough to read without trying to follow a whole line across the page. It is a unique feature of your guest editorial to reproduce old covers. However since you are printing them, why not use a good plate? The reproduction in my copy is plain black and white and has few half-tones. I would like to see you feature columns of off-trail news and Sidelights in Fantasy is a good place for it. Just because I haven't given you any out-and-out praise, don't think that I don't like AD ASTRA. It is a fine fan magazine and while comparatively new, in my estimation it is in the top rank." ((AA would rather have good constructive criticism than undeserving praise for only with the readers' comments can it guide the policies of itself. We can't see ourselves as others see us. Of course....ahem...the praise will follow..... me, Ye Ed))

From LA and PAUL FREEHAFFER: "AD ASTRA just arrived--it's better than ever. Best article of the issue is Madle's "Convention Sidelights", tho I admit I'm prejudiced in favor of Convention articles. Ackerman's "Re-berth" also good. Farsaci's column not as newsy as usual, but enjoyable. By all means continue it, with not quite so many items that even I already know." ((Ellay-es-ef-els always were very nice to AA. fooled ya!))

(More of "AD LIB")

And now, from 4e Ackerman; No. 1 world-fan; life subscriber, etc.: "Mind if I add my lip to your Ad Lib dept? "Convention Sidelites" claimed my immediate attn. & was the best article in the issue, I thot. As anything about the Convention could hardly fail to be of interest, however, such articles practically writing themselves, first place praps ritely should go to Larry's "Sidelites in Fantasy". More of this sort, friend Farsaci.

10c is a fair price indeed, I think, for extras of the piece de resistance planograf repro of '26 AmS's first cover & U'll find a couple of dimes inclosed to cover a couple copies.

I look a little askance at the letter assertedly from "Dave Keene", LA", whose experience with AA is said to be his first with a fanmag. Boy, ever since that "Bristol" Speer took me hook, line & donut (i.e.; sinker) in the Voice of the Imagination ("Welcome, welcome!" I wrote, "to a new fan!") I have been very wary. It wouldn't be Keene if Dave turned out to be Kuttner!

Darrow. deserves appreciation for his statistix re AmS. I fear too few may realize what a lot of work can be involved in preparing such a compact report. A pat on the back for Jack.

I am in favor of columns clear across the pg, anything to make yed's work easier.

I should like to know if the signature appearing with the Interview with Calkins is a facsimile of his autograf? ((No, our own penmanship.. Ed)) Interview was OK; have same to say for Palmer's Guest Editorial. WOW! I have just been struck by a marvelous idea for a name for an Amazing News Column in AA: Call it--- EN RAP-PORT!

I take issue with Les Crutch's idea in "The Good Old Days"? length is essential to a story to make it stand out. He cites "Who Goes There?", "Survival" &c; but highly praised also have been "Thru the Dragon Glass", "The Red Brain" & "Mana" more shorts!

I liked the poetry not-a-lot, but then, I am a bit averse to verse.

"Karlo" Hornig come again! How about something funny from U? I am thinking of your "Tempus Certainly Does Fidget" in Madge as I make this request.

May your mag soar not only "AD ASTRA", but, as Cummings once wrote, "Beyond the Stars"! ((Letters from 4e need no editorial comment. me, ed))

R.D.SWISHER briefs: "The third issue was most interesting. How was the reproduction of the Amazing cover made, direct from the cover, or was the cover copied by hand? I'm sorry to hear that Krupa has been barred to you. Do they allow him to participate in any fan activities at all?...." ((Cover reproduction was a planograf process which didn't meet up to expectations due to lack of black in the Paul cover. Better results this time, you'll note. Julian S. isn't barred from fan activities by his exclusive contract with Ziff-Davis. But he can't do direct work for fan mags. Our present cover job was something else yet... Editor))

J. HARVEY Haggard writes: "I really like AD ASTRA. Especially the illustrations, which naturally tops anything for covers of any fan magazines now in existence. And I like your choice of titles. I like to think that all sci-fi fans are groping, blindly perhaps, toward the stars. And that article regarding Krupa was especially enjoyable. The next number of the mag will be looked forward to." ((Thanks. ed))

(concluding "AD LIB")

HARRY WARNER, Jr., of SPACEWAYS reknewn: "I'd appreciate it if you'd print the following errata in the letter section, or some convenient place, even if you don't use any other parts of this letter:

//To whom it may concern: I hereby apologize for having written the poem "In Oceanic Depths". It is awful, and no one knows it better than I; it was written merely in a moment of weakness. However, to make it worse, an entire line was omitted from the printed version, thereby ruining what little form it once possessed. But, if you will insert at the end of the first "stanza" the line: "For now once-renowned Atlantis died" you may be able to make a little more sense out of it.//
((Honest, Harry, we apologize.... We hope we can avoid similar mistakes in the future. To continue with some more of WHJr's letter:))

"The Good Old Days": quite excellent; I'd rate it seven out of a possible ten. (By the way, why not ask your readers to rate everything this way, thus making it possible to analyze results? I'm starting this in the next S. From one to ten for each thing in the issue.) Even tho I don't always agree with Crutch, he says what he has to say in a nice manner, and speaks the truth in most cases. And something does need to be done about the situation; that's definite.

"Vive La Fan Mags" rates eight. This is just about the best thing that any of the big names have turned out: written in a nice, friendly style, and not giving the affect of 'padding' such as many of your pro authors have radiated. Viva la Hornig!

Interview with Calkins: give it five. Something is lacking that was evident in the one with Krupa, a big improvement over the present one. If it weren't for the interesting subject I fear it would be even lower.

"Re-berth": eight points. Ackerman always turns out really good fan stuff, and if he has written any more impressions of the Convention such as these, and those already written, get him to send them to you. I'm in favor of the straight across idea, too. You get more wordage, and you don't have the necessity of dividing words at such impossible places as: "str-angely"; and so on. All power to the straight acrosser, the faction which is now led by me and me alone.

"Guest Editorial": two. And that high rating is only gained through the fact that it gave me a couple of hearty laughs. "Condensed Statistical Resume of Amazing": five. Nothing that couldn't have been done by anyone who possessed a complete file, but evidently noone thought of it. It was needed, too.

"Convention Sidelights": six. Only fault is that now the Convention write-ups are beginning to duplicate each other quite a little, which may in time prove boresome. But Madle does say one word of truth, at least---that Ackerman is the greatest fan ever, despite all others.

Ad Lib: seven. For pity's sake, make this longer---a lot longer.."
((Is this issue's "AD LIB" long enough? Harry goes on for considerable length, but we had to stop as space is getting very low. Ed.))

BOB FORMANEK post-cards: "This issue was really great. It surpassed the other two by far in reading material. The cover by Krupa was excellent, as his illustrations usually are. The really great thing about the mag was of course the guest editorial and 1st cover of Am.S. There's another dept you want to be sure and continue. The interview was also swell. The other two really good articles were "Vive La Fan Mags" and Crutch's "Good Old Days". You have a really swell mag in AD ASTRA...."

((We think so too. Ye Ed))
With which we close up shop until next issue, inviting all your comments on this issue...for AD-ALIB. Send your letters early...avoid the rush.

"EDITORIALLY SPEAKING"
by the
.....EDITOR.....

As a rule, fan editors lie awake nights figuring out new and original excuses for their magazine's tardiness. Thus, fan mag readers are by now pretty much immune to long intervals between issues. But, we must sincerely apologize for AD ASTRA's erratic publishing dates, even though, in this case, the delay was unavoidable. Your editor was kept very much on the go during the past few months, with several trips to other cities, increased fan activity, along with numerous pressures in and out of science fiction. Added to this was a slight setback in certain material coming in late... or, in one case, not at all.

But in spite of all that, we're genuinely proud of this issue of AD ASTRA. We have, with each issue improved 100%, until now, AA begins to shape itself into the magazine we originally intended it to be. A reader commented: "don't ballyhoo future numbers of your magazine..." We haven't...too much, anyway. We've gone ahead with our plans in comparative silence, here and there dropping a hint of things to come. It was hard remaining quiet about this issue; it'll be that much more so on future issues. With your continued support...but wait and see!

Let's compare #3 AD ASTRA with #4. You asked for a larger reader's column. So it is. More pages and neater format. Check. Longer articles. In this issue we average over 500 words per page.

You didn't plan on the double cover, nor on the magnificent Krupa drawing, reproduced so effectively. Who expected this big line up? Not just big names...but top-notch material too. We want your comment on those things....suggestions for improvement and your individual ratings of the articles. Let's hear from YOU!

In the latter part of the summer, your editor undertook several trips in which the great pleasure of meeting science fiction personages such as E.E.Smith, Bob Tucker, Sully Roberds, was had. Public thanks are in order to those fans for being shown a wonderful time. The first in the series was a three day visit to Bob Tucker in Bloomington. Here, your editor was winned and dined profusely...met both Bob and Sully for the first time, discussed all phases of fandom, and made very important plans, to be mentioned later. Incidentally, this was a hitch-hike solo hop (120 miles).

A short while later (2 days) ye ed announced plans for a longer venture to Jackson, Michigan, home of E.E.Smith. Fan-friend Erle Korshak accompanied on this 200 mile affair and after ten eventful hours, the goal was reached. This, too, lasted three days...among the most-enjoyed hours ever spent. The complete manuscript to "Gray Lensman" was read...before it had seen print and after the time had flown too fast...the return trip to Chicago was made. Naturally, it would be impossible to go into any kind of detail in this editorial that would do justice to either trip.

Then, a week later, Erle Korshak and ye ed went via hitch-hike on a return visit to Bloomington. Then and there, the "Illini Fantasy Fictioneers", a state-wide fan organization* sponsoring the Chicago 1940 Science Fiction Convention. Officers to the club were elected, and the Convention machinery was thrown into high gear. Another great time was had, during which, the first "Barnyard Conference" in S-F was held in a nearby farm owned by Tucker relatives. (Also superb fried chicken dinner!) Details of the IFF were worked out on a full stomach, and matters dealing with the Convention were attended to in anticipation of this huge fan event. (Cont'd)

(Still "Editorially Speaking")

As this is being written, the IFF has been rapidly working the Convention into shape. The membership is open to all fandom, although only Illinois fans may actively participate in executive matters of the IFF, such as voting and holding office. Outside of that, privileges are the same to all fans who join regardless of their residence.

Dues per one year are 50¢. This entitles the member to a year's subscription to the regular IFF organ, the "Fantasy Fictioneer", to free IFF and Convention Advertising stickers for personal correspondence, the right to place free ads in the club organ, receipt of a membership card, and many other special privileges. Joining the IFF is literally, buying a large, active share in the 1940 Convention and even if it is a foregone conclusion that you can't actually be at the affair (but never give up hope), you'll still want to join for the special privileges, if for nothing else. For fuller details, write the Corresponding Secretary-Treasurer (Richard T. Meyer) %IFF, 3156 Cambridge Ave., Chicago.

Your editor, having been in particularly close touch with 1940 Convention affairs from the beginning, was elected Chairman of the Convention Committee, so readers of AD ASTRA will have an "in" on the latest news and developments. Bob Tucker, in Bloomington, Illinois, is Director of the IFF; Sully Roberts, also of Bloomington, was elected Club Editor. Erle Korshak, who has taken temporary residence in New York City, is Executive Advisor. As you may or may not know, Forrest J Ackerman is official Western Representative...has been doing a yeoman's share; Erle Korshak represents the IFF in the East.... until his return to Chicago this Xmas.

Unfortunately, Thrilling Wonder was unable to get its Guest Editor-

ial in on time, due probably to the extra pressure caused by the publication of their new S-F magazine, Captain Future, featuring a novel by Manly Wade Wellman. This will appear regularly with a continuance of the adventures of Capt. Future, patterned somewhat after "Doc Savage", "Shadow", and other continued character novels. Best of luck... Then, of course, TWS going monthly is big news, also. Incidentally, TWS has been extending a helping hand to the fan-field in the likeable manner of sending regular, newsy letters to most fan magazines, advising of coming line-ups, latest news, etc. AD ASTRA, although, not a "news" magazine, really appreciates this service...disseminates the news received throughout Chicago.

However, we will have to skip Mort Weisinger's Guest Editorial, to keep the schedule straight. This issue IS dedicated to THRILLIN WONDER STORIES. A condensed statistical resume of TWS will be found elsewhere in this issue. Next issue will be respectfully dedicated to ASTOUNDING....with, we hope, a guest editorial by Editor Campbell.

We must thank Mr. Sam Gold, who, if we might pun at this time, has a heart of gold! Although not a S-F fan in the true sense, he subscribed to AD ASTRA for life...\$5. To that fact you must attribute the exceptional quality of this issue. Thank you, again. And 4e Ackerman must share that honor, even though we did mention it before..I believe. While in N.Y.C. he tendered a \$5 bill to your editor..... so after they had revived your editor...he was able to thank 4e...over and over, and now, publicly. But, I gurgle.

Now, let's see: Have I covered everything? Well, I might mention that shortly after this number goes to print, your editor, Meyer, Marcornate, Warner, and perhaps others, are all piling in Bob Tucker's car, and journeying en masse to the Philly Conference! See you next issue!

LE ZOMBIE

L
E - GOES BI-WEEKLY !

Z
O
M - BECOMES A SUBSCRIPTION MAGAZINE !

B - PRINTS PICTURES !

I
E --- SEE:

le zombie presents.....

Edward J. (Ted) Carnell

17 Burwash Rd.

Plumstead, SE. 18

London , England .

Editor, "New Worlds "



(Watch for more photo's
in coming issues)

CHEERIO
CHUMPS!

OOops! Beg poddin'.....
of course we didn't really
mean that! ---- We meant:

CHUMS!

You see, dear boys and girls of fantasy land, and we even might also include readers of Fantasy News, we have a message for you! Now, it isn't a message of Christmas Greetings, nor the glad tidings that T. Bruce Terke's Tecnocracy has at last overthrown the capitalistic system and Tecnocracy reigns supreme--- no, nothing as dull as all that.

This message comes from the modest little hamlet of Bloomington, Ill. ---well known for it's Chinese quota. It seems that heretofore and whereas since last December, a small fan mag -or sheet- has been making the rounds, said sheet known as "Le Zombie". Ah! You suspected so all along, didn't you chum? Well, skip to the next paragraph:

It has come to pass that this-here "Le Zombie" was something of a public fancy-catcher--- it was something, -er, novel, in the way of sf fan mags. Fans from Skowhegan, Maine to Dopeywood, California raved aloud and in letter over our little gem-of-the-printing-press. At any rate, "Le Zombie" became a success! It appeared several times as a supplement to Fantasy News, it appeared once in the FAPA, and three numbers showed up in the super-super mag: NOVA.

And all this time our friends (and those who don't think so) continued to write us entreating letters, begging, pleading, urging that good ole "LeZ" come out more often. Four (the letters are on file!) fans stated plainly we were probably nuts to give it away free ---it was worth good, filthy lucre, claimed they! Finally we took the hint.

The first issue to go into the mails as a regular subscription mag did so last Monday August, 2, or thereabouts; dated August 5th. The response was surprising! Old gad-about "LeZ" became a bawling, healthy brat! A tasty dish for werewolves! "LeZ" now publishes bi-weekly!

Issue #10, which was that August 5th number, and issue #11, which was the August 19th number, are published and past by the time you read this- even perhaps the Sept. 2nd issue, #12. All the more reason you should jump on the wagon now before any more issues slip away..... back numbers are non-existent! Try a trial subscription to "Le Zombie" ---three issues for a dime--- same as Fantasy News!

IN CONTENTS, "Le Zombie" has the most original and refreshing material in fandom! First of all, "LeZ" prints photographs of fans! Something no other fan magazine does! On the opposite side is a reprint of the cover of #10, with the photo of Ted Carnell. "LeZ" delivers the goods! It's interior pages are the vampire's drawers! Sticking to it's subtitle of "Tucker's Candid Comment", it gives forth news and views in juicy paragraphs and departments....in a brand-new style! Three features grace it furthermore: "The Amateur Press" (about fan magazines) "pro stuff" (not at all what you think!) and the popular page of "Personals" --- items about you, lifted from letters.

"Le Zombie" published every-other-week by Bob Tucker and Sully Roberts. If you have never saw a copy, send a postcard for a free sample. We suggest however, that you mail a dime at once, for the next 3 issues.

--- A Cosmic Publication ---

LE ZOMBIE ● BOX 260 ● BLOOMINGTON, ILL.

O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O

Your mail-box should be receiving William H. Groveman's "FANTASEER". If not, take steps to remedy this situation by subscribing. 5c per copy; 40c per year. One of the last "hecto" mags left, and climbing with each issue. Send to: William H. Groveman; 18 Maryland Ave.; Hampstead, New York.....

O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O

O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O

A PERSONAL TIP: Join the "Illini Fantasy Fictioneers", sponsors of the Chicago 1940 World Science Fiction Convention. Write to: Corresponding Secretary-Treasurer; 3156 Cambridge Ave., Chicago, for full information.

CHICAGO IN 1940! World S-i-F Convention
