

science-fiction

April 1950

No. 15

NEWS LETTER

NEW WORLDS

fiction of the future

Under this new masthead (beginning with the sixth issue, dated Spring 1950), the fattened, redesigned British fantasy magazine NEW WORLDS made its Stateside appearance in mid-March. The recent lifting of Britain's paper and publishing restrictions are a direct cause of the magazine's growth and consequently will permit its entrance into USA exempt from book duty, as charged up to now. John Carnell is the editor.

Single copy price has been dropped to 30¢ in this country and all existing subscriptions will be adjusted to benefit the subscriber. (Orders may be placed with Roy W. Loan Jr, 1746 NW Columbia Road, Washington, DC.) The sixth issue, running to 96 pages, contains a novelette by John Aiken, and shorts by Don Doughty, George Whitley, F.G. Rayer, Francis Ashton, and A. Bertram Chandler.

Also in the issue is a scene from a British movie, "The Wonder Jet" (a documentary film), which portrays an air-minded youngster reading NEW WORLDS.



Ray Palmer is buying material for a new science-fiction mag, a companion to OTHER WORLDS, which he now edits. Palmer cites the unusual success of WORLDS as his reason for a new one, while observers cite the unusual policy of the magazine as the reason for its success. Title will be IMAGINATION and first issue will be ready about June.

Don Wollheim, editor of the Avon Fantasy Readers, expects his new science pulp, OUT OF THIS WORLD ADVENTURES, to make its debut this month. On a quarterly schedule.

New arrival: FANTASY FICTION, a small-sized quarterly using new and reprinted material appeared last month (dated May), at 25¢. Photographic cover and 128 pages, the magazine is edited by Curtis Mitchell.

SPOTLIGHT

THE "HUGO" AWARD: New York's Hydra Club, a business and social (mostly social) organization made up of science-fiction and fantasy writers, editors, illustrators and fans, are planning an east-coast science-fiction conference on July 4th in New York, at which time they will probably award the first "Hugo" for excellence in the field.

The honorary merit awards, named after old-time editor Hugo Gernsback, are being designed by artist Hannes Bok and will be presented at a dinner climaxing the weekend affair. Altho plans are incomplete, Hydra officials expect to award four of the Bok figurines; one for the best book, the best magazine short story, the best magazine novel or novelette, and the best "first" publication of any nature for last year. The March issue of the Hydra Club Bulletin states the awards are planned annually.

Dates for the conference are not yet set altho probable days are Saturday to Monday, July 1, 2, 3. Yet to be worked out are the methods of selecting candidates for the Hugo, and the choosing of the judges. Fans and fan clubs may participate as soon as final details are announced.

1950 SCIENCE-FICTION CONVENTION: John de Courcy has resigned as chairman of the affair, turning the gavel over to Don Day. The de Courcys are moving to California. This marks the first time a convention has changed horses in mid-stream. Club members okayed Chairman Day by immediate vote.

NFFF BOOK CLUB: President Rick Sneary announced plans last month to form a book club for the NFFF's four hundred members; a club operating along regular bookclub lines with reduced prices, free dividends, a four man reviewing panel, and advance selection. Ralph Fluette, Saginaw, Michigan, has been named book distributor and NFFF officers are lining up fan and semi-professional book reviewers to select monthly volumes.

the leading newspaper of the science fiction world

BOOKS

LEAVE US FACE the situation: with but a few exceptions, the current crop of science fiction books are not literature and not original novels, but warmed-over magazine serials and novelettes strung together to imitate a novel. These stories continue to carry the magazine taste when found in hard covers. It is a pity and a shame and all that, that so many volumes now appearing are but pulp reprints. In the case of anthologies this is understandable, but book-length novels are something else again. We want to deplore the situation. Somewhere, surely, there exist original s-f novels?

Only Doubleday has published books which are original stories, not taken from magazines. True, other houses have published "new" stories, but they were new only because the author failed to place them with some magazine years before.

In past issues our reviewers have tried to judge books as books, mentally stacking them alongside the new novels appearing elsewhere. The result was embarrassing. A reprinted pulp magazine story still tastes like one, and loses. So henceforth we shall judge science-fiction books for what they are: good or bad magazine pieces, and report accordingly. When one of those rare things, an original novel comes along, it will be treated as such. Happily, a rare thing leads off this month:

PEBBLE IN THE SKY by Isaac Asimov
(Doubleday & Co., New York. 1950. \$2.50)

Asimov is a popular magazine writer who seldom if ever writes a poor story in the s-f magazine field. Turning now to a new stand, an original science-fiction novel not written for magazine ink, he shines.

Asimov chose for a hero an old retired tailor, put him on a Chicago street when a nearby nuclear laboratory was experimenting with hot material, and let the tailor take the consequences. Old Schwartz was lifted right out of this age and deposited in the year 827 (Galactic Era), to his confusion. The earth was radioactive and fenced off from the universe, its citizens shunned. Being unclean and cut off, it followed they were sore about the quarantine and sought a means of retribution -- something nice like germ warfare, to which they were immune.

Onto earth comes an archeologist, seeking to prove his theory that this planet is the home world of the galaxy; and into this future comes Schwartz, with but two advantages and many disadvantages. How he licks the problem is good Asimov. How the earth became radioactive is no surprise. The book was selected by the Unicorn Mystery Club & distributed to its members last month.

Another Asimov novel is in the works.



Rotsler

TOMORROW'S YESTERDAY by A.M. Stanley
(Dorrance & Co., Philadelphia, 1949, \$2.00)

This also is a new novel, and again concerns an archeologist who, for my money, is suffering from a bad case of mother-love. He manages to tear himself away from mother and the girl next door to go poking about in dark dank caves. And gets bopped on the head by a rockfall. And wakes up in the far future to find the sexes reversed, with gnome-like women running things. And gets bopped on the head again to awake in the present, with the girl holding his hand. I seem to detect an undercurrent in all this.

SIXTH COLUMN by Robert A. Heinlein
(Gnome Press, 421 Claremont Parkway, New York City. 1949. \$2.50).

Originally a three-part serial in 1941, this Astounding yarn reads as well today as it did in that year, before the war came. The story tells what happened after the war came, when America was reduced to slavery and the entire organized US Army consisted of six men hiding in a mountain laboratory, six who realized they were the Army.

The sixth column they organize to oust the invader and recapture their country is a pseudo-religious one, based on the enemy doctrine that religious slaves are the only good slaves. Woven into the mumbo-jumbo of the pseudo-religion are the atomic weapons fashioned under the mountain and sent out to the temples. And with this volume, the publishers are to be thanked for bringing down the price of science-fiction books.

SHOT IN THE DARK edited by Judith Merrill
(Bantam Books, New York City, 1950, 25¢)

Every so often a science-fiction fan gathers together a crackerjack anthology to render a service to the field. This is as fine an example as can be found to prove the point. Merrill, an author and editor
(continued on page eight)

PEOPLE

Ken Slater & wife Joyce of "Operation Fantast" fame are making provisional plans to visit the USA in 1952, about convention time. Capt. Slater's release from British army due in September 1951.

Ray Bradbury hit the jackpot last month with the following sales: Esquire and Charm each took two; Colliers, Coronet, Sat Eve Post, Philadelphia Enquirer, Other Worlds each bought one; Fell's 1950 BEST anthology chose two, NBC radio network grabbed three, and GREAT BOOK OF SCIENCE-FICTION took one.

Fletcher Pratt's beard and New York's literary Hydra Club got the works in January 21st issue of New Yorker magazine, but were accorded better treatment in January 2nd New York Times editorial column. Annual New Year's party drew attention of press.

Fred Pohl deserted his associate editorship at Popular Science mag to devote full time to his Dirk Wylie literary agency.

Fredric Brown visited Chicago in late January, signed with Shasta Publishers for a collection of his yarns to appear in the fall, under the title, SPACE ON MY HANDS. Brown's new mystery coming from Dutton, THE NIGHT OF THE JABBERWOCK, will contain stuff of interest to fantasy fans.

Don Ford, last year's convention chairman, has taken over publication of the Cincinnati Memory Book, with the aid of three helpers. Book will review the conclave.

Fritz Leiber Jr's GATHER, DARKNESS! to be issued by Pellegrini & Cudahy (New York) in April, at \$2.75, instead of by Derleth's Arkham House as originally scheduled.

August Derleth's ARKHAM SAMPLER folded with its 8th issue, just rounding out 1949. His third science-fiction anthology, BEYOND TIME & SPACE, coming in May from Pellegrini at \$4.50 the copy.

Harry Warner's oldtime fanzine, Spaceways, has at last come into glory. Copies are given away free with each \$1 purchase at a new bookshop opened in Buffalo (N.Y.), by Ken Krueger and three associates. (Room 323, Market Arcade Building, Buffalo 3.)

Rog Phillip's second pocketbook, WORLDS WITHIN, has been published by Century Books at 25¢. His first was TIME TRAP, from the same company. Malcolm Smith on the cover.

Ted Carnell entertained with a travel-talk of his American adventures, and Arthur Clarke showed by epidiroscope several color pix from the Ley-Bonestell book CONQUEST OF SPACE, at a pre-Christmas convention (40 to 50 fans attended) at the White Horse Tavern in London; sponsored by Carnell's magazine.

Lester del Ray writing a teen-age boy's book on atomics; George O. Smith doing same for the radar story.

Don Wollheim, Avon pocketbook editor will publish two s-f novels in 25¢ format in April, which if successful will bring a series of them. First two will be PRINCESS OF THE ATOM by Ray Cummings, and THE GREEN GIRL by Jack Williamson; with Ralph Milne Farley and Stanton A. Coblenz to follow.** Meanwhile, Wollheim has two anthologies due from Frederick Fell this spring: FLIGHT INTO SPACE (\$2.75) for adults and EVERY BOY'S BOOK OF SCIENCE-FICTION (\$2.50) for youths. First time a teen-age anthology is offered.

Lilith Lorraine, fantasy-minded editor publisher of poetry magazine DIFFERENT, announces for June an experimental magazine devoted to s-f and fantasy poetry alone. Address: DIFFERENT, Rogers, Arkansas; 30¢.

Everett Bleiler, anthology editor and s-f bibliographer, appeared on a 15 minute interview over station WMOR in Chicago.

Curme Gray, pioneering in a relatively new field, has sold a combination science-fiction and mystery story to Shasta Pubs. An original novel, the yarn is set in the future and presents a locked-room gambit. Due this year, entitled NEVER SAY DIE.



Ted Dikty & Everett Bleiler finishing up work on their new Fell anthology, BEST SCIENCE-FICTION STORIES: 1950. Book will be ready in July, at \$2.95, with an introduction by Vincent Starrett, famed mystery authority.

Len Moffatt, preparing FAN DIRECTORY for spring publication, reports the return of over 300 questionnaires, after having mailed out some 2000 to four nations. About 12% of those answering were female. Publishers plan to notify all senders when directory is ready, and to keep price around 25¢.

Dr. DH Keller blossoms this spring with two unusual volumes from Prime Press, THE LADY DECIDES and THE ETERNAL CONFLICT. The books will be in limited editions of 350 copies each, autographed, at \$3.50 a copy. Thomas Gardner has written the introduction to one volume, and Paul Spencer the other.

Boucher & McComas' second issue of their new magazine appeared in January re-titled THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE-FICTION, and on a quarterly schedule. Third issue now in the works. Correcting our statement last issue, Boucher places press-run on 1st issue at 100,000, not 70,000 copies.

Hugo Gernsbach in print again, with his novel, RALPH 124C41 PLUS, scheduled for April publication from Frederick Fell, NYC.

Mack Reynolds placed "Some of My Best Friends are Martians," a how-to-write s-f article, with WRITER'S DIGEST. Next-door-neighbor Walt Sheldon peddled a moon rocket tale to COLLIERS. Robert Bloch active once more with yarns coming up in OTHER WORLDS, AMAZING STORIES, and FANTASTIC ADVENTURES.

FANZINES - 1950

Apparently following the 1950 boom of new science fiction magazines are the amateur publishers: the first three months have brought a deluge of fan magazines, some of which are reviewed below. Top of the heap:

The 100th issue of **FANTASY TIMES** (James Taurasi, 137-03 32nd ave, Flushing, NY) has 28 pages of news and features to celebrate its century-mark, plus an insert-- the complete cover, in color, of the Mexican sci-fi magazine. (20¢).

The spring 1950 issue of Don Day's **THE FANSCIENT** (3435 NE 38th ave, Portland 13, Ore.) runs a bibliography and thumb-sketch of Theodore Sturgeon, listing his 65 stories; plus an illustrated article on painter J. Allen St. John. (25¢).

THE NEKROMANTIKON is another outstanding example of an amateur's painstaking work. Manly Banister's 52-page book, emphasizing fiction, is more than worth the 25¢ asked. (1905 Spruce ave, Kansas City 1, Mo.) Many lino-block cuts, a two-color cover, etc.

FANTASY ADVERTISER has changed hands and improved immensely in the process. The title is self-explanatory. (1745 Kenneth Rd, Glendale 1, Calif.) 10¢ will bring you a sample copy chock full of good reading.

The summer 1949 issue of **SCIENTIFANTASY!** came in, way late, with the news that its next "convention issue" would be the last. (Bill Kroll, 1031 W. 18th, Des Moines Iowa) These 32 planographed pages of text and pix are worth getting. (20¢).

The editor of **PEON** has been transferred to Hawaii, but Navy or no, he continues to publish a readable job. (Charles Lee Riddle, PNL, USN., Fleet All Weather Training Unit, Pacific; c/o FPO, San Francisco.) We prefer the Dec. issue to that of March. (15¢).

THE OUTLANDER (Freddie Hershey, 6335 King ave, Bell, Calif.) is a good example of a fan club having a fine time and turning out a first-class mag. Some unusual humor here. (10¢).

Stan Mullen is an author who publishes **THE GORGON** whenever time and money hang heavy on his hands. **THE GORGON** is in, so time and money have again ... you know what. A semi-professional job, with pix. (600 Columbia Rd, Colorado Springs, Colorado. 20¢.)

The 3rd anniversary issue of **SPACEWARP** is dated March, and makes a fine record of editor Art Rapp's slaving over a hot mimeo. (2120 Bay st, Saginaw, Mich. 15¢). Redd Boggs, our own wandering columnist, is a regular feature here. It might be mentioned that Rapp also publishes the monthly **POST-WARP**, a letter mag for NFFF members only.

GRIST FOR THE MILL

Rockets, H-Bombs Old Stuff To Science Fiction Readers



GRIT, the national small-town newspaper you find in homes and barbershops all over America, ran a photo and two full columns on the booming science-fiction field in its Feb 26th issue. Tie-up arranged and tied-up by Richard Frank, an old time fan who should know the score. Frank is on the editorial staff of **GRIT**, lugged part of his own collection down to a public library to get the photo. (Reproduced by permission)

The March issue of **CORONET** is an item to file away in your collection: a 25-page article on rocketing to Venus, including 24 paintings by Chesley Bonestell (eight of which are in color). If that isn't enough, there's a picture article on Jane Russell.

The Beloit (Wisc.) **DAILY NEWS** on Feb 18th ran a large front-page photo and story on Frank Robinson, (Beloit College senior) and science-fiction. Robinson is pictured reading a copy of **WEIRD TALES**, an amazed expression on his face. Story mentions his fiction sales to pro magazines, etc.

.....

FAN MAGAZINES

SPACE MAGAZINE is a brand new one - we got 3 copies, and 3 invitations to join the American Rocketry Assn, its publisher. (621 NW 3rd st, Washington 1, DC.) A neat job.

SLANT (Walter A. Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd, Belfast, Northern Ireland, is a printed journal completely hand-set, with woodcut illustrations. 26 pages must be work! You get it by sending pro magazines.

CRACKLE, "A snap-zine" is just 2 pages: an eye-opening picture on one side, frank propaganda on space flight on the other, by a gal, Jay Gibson. The sheet emanates from Jersey City but is passed from hand to hand

SOUTHERN FANDOM, Lionel Innman's five-cent mag, really belongs in with the better items. (Rte 1, Ripley, Tenn.) Good work.

SHORTS

If you are more than 30 years old, you may remember Elmo Lincoln, the first silent-screen Tarzan. And if you've piddled around fandom for a year or more, you've probably heard of Vern Coriell, the Tarzan-fancier. These two have teamed up, and fans in the western states this year may catch their circus act when the Seal Brothers circus comes to town. The big show opens in Los Vegas (Nev.) April 2nd, runs for 30 weeks thru Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, North & South Dakota, etc. Coriell publishes The Burroughs' Bulletin & is a collector of Allen St. John covers. Circus-goers are to watch the elephants.

Publishing costs are now 100% more than they were in 1939, reports August Derleth, and the fantasy market not as bright as it used to be. Derleth's Arkham House will operate on a somewhat slower schedule this year, with eight books lined up but not all set to print. You may expect first, AWAY AND BEYOND (van Vogt), and THE ABOMINATIONS OF YONDO (C.A. Smith), with A HORNBOOK FOR WITCHES (Drake) to follow.



Harry & Evelyn Harrison, a fine pair of New York freelance writers & cartoonists who discovered the fan world, have cut loose on science fiction. Harrison did a part of the artwork on a new comic book, WEIRD SCIENCE, and persuaded his editor to send us a sample copy. The comic uses straight science yarns, shys away from space opera. My kids liked it.

The Los Angeles Science-Fantasy Society tossed its 2nd annual testimonial feed last Feb 18th, to honor Arthur Jean Cox as the "sellingest member" of the club last year. By selling more yarns than any other member Cox got a free meal, others paying \$1.75. He is secretary of the Society.

FJ Ackerman had a job --for awhile. He was temporarily hired by NBC, Los Angeles, to work with Ken Crossen (LA newspaper book reviewer) in choosing suitable s-f scripts to be aired on a nationwide half-hour show.

Prof J.O. Bailey's much-touted history of early science-fiction, PILGRIMS THROUGH SPACE & TIME, is available for \$1.98 from "Bookland", College Point, N.Y. Until some months ago it peddled at five dollars per.

Bernard Newman's THE FLYING SAUCER (at \$2.50 from Macmillan, NYC), is advertised as a Martian bomb thriller. It's a hoax--the story we mean. A scientist and two pals unite the world by means of a hoax bomb.

Latch onto I AM THINKING OF MY DARLING, by Vincent McHugh (Signet Books, 25¢), due in April. Humorous, fantastic yarn of New York City fighting off a mysterious plague.

What Washington DC calls a "Distclave" (their first), pops on April 30th, at the Wardman Park Hotel, 2660 N.W. Woodly Road. Washington Science-Fantasy Assn is sponsoring the affair, claiming to be practicing for the 1951 world convention. Tentative speakers' program includes Willy Ley, Mrs. Lee Hawkins Garby, Lloyd Eshbach, others.

What may be the first science-fiction cartoon strip in television is shaping up in Los Angeles, with Bill Rotsler and Syd Stibbard doing the illustrating, and the van Vogts writing the script. The storyline deals with moon rockets, a lunar race, and van Vogt's old favorite, an immortal man. Cartoon will be filmed, then aired.

FIRST CONTACT!

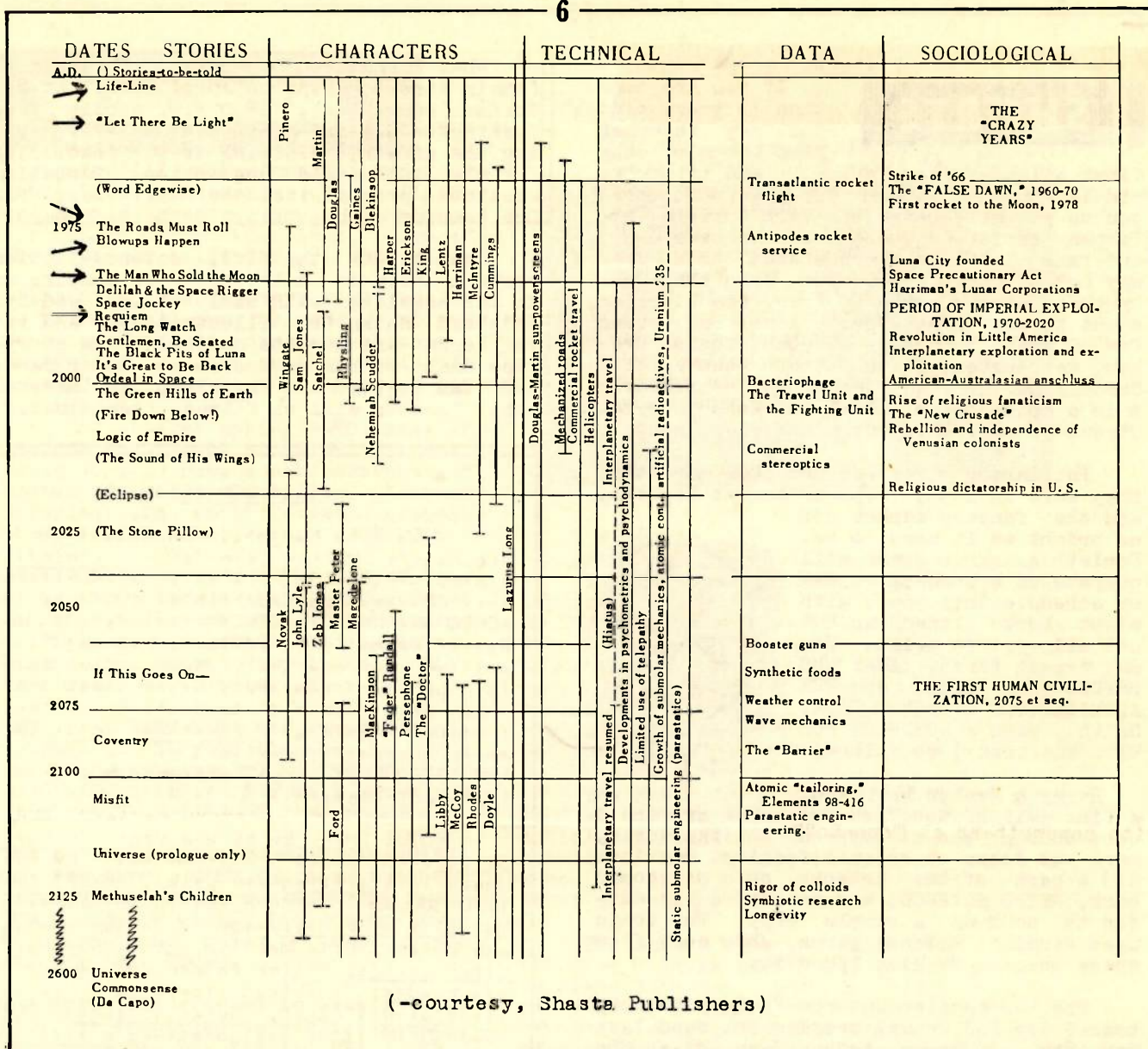
WHEN the National Broadcasting Co broadcasts Murray Leinster's Astounding story, "First Contact", sometime in the next 60 days, consider this: It was the ACKERMAN FANTASY AGENCY that set the deal. Recently an editor aired me: "I am writing you one half hour after being told by our company's executives that they have decided to publish a science fiction magazine." First contact! Editors increasingly think of the ACKERMAN FANTASY AGENCY first--for the b e s t in fantasy scripts.

ROGUE SHIP by AE van Vogt in Super Science--my sale! ENCROACHMENT by Ray Jones in Startling--my sale! EVERY WORK INTO JUDGMENT sold to the top market--The Magazine of Fantasy--by my high-climbing new client, Kris Neville. In the March Other Worlds, Editor Palmer recommends to his readers the lead story in a recent issue of his rival, Super Science: OUTPOST INFINITY by Ray Jones---a q u a l i t y sale!

Tales by Temple, Evans, Mullen, Neville, Jones, Wright, de Courcy, Young, Stark, Beynon, Grinnell, Flagg, Starzl, Harris, Diffin, Cox---all coming up from my Agency in Other Worlds, Astounding, Amazing, Weird, Planet, Avon and all the rest...plus a couple magazines yet to be born (or revived)!

My prediction: That by the end of 1950 there'll be 25 fantasy magazines on the market, and they'll be leaning heavily for mss. on the only specialist agent in the fantasy field. THE ACKERMAN FANTASY AGENCY is also busy in the book field (Taine, Stapledon, Weinbaum, van Vogt, etc) and in foreign translations. Sales up 300% last year. I don't want all the fantasy writers in the world, but I might be interested in handling your work. Investigate today. Air

FORREST J ACKERMAN
236-1/2 N New Hampshire
Hollywood 4



THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON - Robert Heinlein
(Shasta Publishers, Chicago. 1950. \$3.00)

Other book reviews on page eight.

Unusual in many respects is this first volume in Heinlein's "Future History" series. Popular magazine artist Hubert Rogers presents a striking dust jacket, his first in the book field. The end-papers present the complete chart of Heinlein's "History" (reproduced in part above). The book itself is a superior printing & binding job.

This first volume contains those six yarns marked by an arrow on the chart, with the title story being a new one written expressly for the book; some 30,000 words. Each story is an independent tale in itself with the whole being a "history" of the years 1952 thru to about 1990.

My personal favorites are Life-Line (in which the future can be foretold but not changed, and the title story. In the chart, examine the life-line of Lazurus Long.

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LETTERS

Melvin C. Schmidt (Evansville, Ind.): "I wish to correct Walter Bradbury's statement that THE BIG EYE is the first s-f book to be distributed by a major book club. The Book-of-the-Month Club distributed NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR last July. And if you want to go way back to the dark ages, the same club selected S. Fowler Wright's DELUGE in 1928, and HG Wells' SEVEN FAMOUS NOVELS in 1934. However the possible significance of the selection of THE BIG EYE by the Dollar Book Club is emphasized by its being the second such selection of the year. Perhaps there really is a trend started."

Arthur H. Rapp (Saginaw, Mich.): "Bloch should make sure of his facts before condemning certain convention attendees as the 'screwball adolescent fringe' or 'an army of goons.' Item: the pix to which he objects were taken at the banquet if he will turn to his program booklet he will find it states 'Masquerades & costumes are in order' at the time. Item: the pix were not all 'adolescent fen' since at least one of the zanily-garbed persons was a professional model imported by the pros which brought protests from some fans. (See BNL #13). That the Cincinnati newspaper coverage emphasized the costumes as though they typified all fan activities is unfortunate. Didn't Bloch have somewhat the same trouble with newswriters at Toronto?"

(Editor's note: if Rapp is referring to the "cemetary inspiration" motif used by Toronto papers, let it be known that Bloch deliberately planted such inspiration, for some whimsical reason. We were there. BT)

Robert Bloch (Milwaukee): "I suppose by this time you've seen the Jan 21st issue of New Yorker, with its 'Around the Town' bit on the Hydra Club. It demonstrates and reinforces my contention about how goon fandom can louse up legitimate efforts to procure respectable status for s-f groups. If any IRATE readers have written to quibble about my opinions, the New Yorker treatment of fan-stoops is eloquent proof of my notions. Granted, the New Yorker set out to razz, the fact remains it was given ready-made material on a silver platter by the fan antics. Too bad the nice guys there had to suffer because of the goons."

Ed Counts (Battle Creek, Mich.): "Ken Slater is going to publish a bi-monthly list of British fantasy and s-f books; if anyone wants these books they can get them by sending him s-f magazines in good condition. He will credit the sender with the face value of the mag, and when the sender has built up a credit equal to the value of a book he wants, it will be sent postpaid. This sounds like a good swap for people who don't save the mags. His address follows: Capt. K.F. Slater, HQ 13 Group RPC., BAOR-23, in care of G.P.O., England."

(Are you a goon?)

SCIENCE-FICTION NEWS LETTER

(formerly, Bloomington News Letter)
Edited and published by Bob Tucker
Postbox 260, Bloomington, Illinois
William Rotsler, staff artist

Number 15. April, 1950

Published free every second month as a news service to the science-fiction field. Readers wanting the next issue must request it in writing by June 1st. Subscriptions exchanged with all other fanzine editors.

Last issue, NEWS LETTER asked its readers if they were willing to pay for copies. Ninety-five percent answered yes, the remainder failed to answer at all. If & when this newspaper settles down to a reliable schedule, cash subscriptions will be asked.

About thirteen years ago, Dick Wilson of Richmond Hill, NY, published a newsweekly under the name we are now using. He has long since left the s-f field, now works as New York bureau manager of Transradio Press (a wire service.). Seeking permission to use the title last December, we received a handsome, hand-painted Christmas card, as follows:

"To Bob Tucker, and no other, on this Christmas, 1949; for 99 years, all rights to the title SCIENCE-FICTION NEWS LETTER."

Therefore, each Christmas for the next 99 years we shall thrice bow lowly in an easterly direction, mumbling our thanks.

-Bob Tucker

MAGAZINE NEWS: As forecast last issue, Robert Lowndes' revived FUTURE FICTION has appeared, at 15¢, called Volume 1, No. 1. The real V1, #1 came out in November 1939, under the editorship of Charles Hornig.

Popular Publications' CAPTAIN ZERO bit the dust, the March issue being its last.

UNUSUAL BOOK

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in the field, here presents 308 pages well worth the quarter asked. The twenty-three authors she has chosen are Sturgeon, Brown, Brackett, Kersh, MacCreigh, Heinlein, Padgett, Benet, Wells, Boucher, Leinster, London, Raymond, Allingham, Asimov, Bradbury, Thurber, Marshall, Freeman, Samalman, Poe, Tenn, and Wylie. They were taken from the pulps, the slicks, and from books, dating from a century ago to 1948. Get it.

Comes next George O. Smith, with two: PATTERN FOR CONQUEST (Gnome Press, New York 1949, \$2.50), and NOMAD (Prime Press, Box 2019, Philadelphia, 1950. \$3.00)

These are space operas; the publishers say so, the author doesn't mind, we agree. Both were hits in Astounding some years ago and remain good space opera today, reaching from the Sahara sands to outermost space. PATTERN deals with the invading Loard-Vogh, bent on enslaving the earth; NOMAD introduces an invisible new world visiting the solar system.

But look, George, why did you feel it so necessary to plant two girls in the opening scene of NOMAD, that you had a Martian spy actually say all this:

"We are not given to torture ... Otherwise we could devise something definitely tongue-loosening. For instance, we could have you observe some surgical experiments on --- say Laura Greggor, or perhaps the comely little waitress, Joan Forbes?"

George, knowing you, I realize you are an authority on comely little waitresses, but how did a Martian spy who never so much as set foot on earth know about our hero's love affairs? Otherwise, methinks you've written a fine pair of operas which will make you money and readers happy.

THE HOMUNCULUS by David H. Keller, M.D. (Prime Press, Philadelphia, 1949, \$2.50)

The very opposite of space opera and definitely not for space opera fans; unless we miss our guess this book will win for Dr Keller a host of new readers. You might call it satire, or a sharp comedy on the human race, or devil-dealing if you wish.

Colonel Bumble, aged and retired from the army, wanted a son to carry on his good name, but as we said, the Colonel was aged. The Colonel also has a remarkable pair of servants, and the determination to get what he wants. So damned if he doesn't proceed to grow a baby in a bottle, the bottle set well underground beneath a protecting blanket of horse manure. He goes to jail for it of course -- violating a town ordinance. We've read many Keller yarns in the past, but not since THE DEVIL & THE DOCTOR (Simon & Schuster, 1940) have we so thoroughly enjoyed his work. Recommended.

For news of two other forthcoming Keller books, see elsewhere in this issue.

SIDEWISE IN TIME by Murray Leinster (Shasta Publishers, 5525 South Blackstone Avenue, Chicago. 1950. \$3.00)

The sub-title is "And Other Scientific Adventures", meaning five more delightful novelettes and short stories, including "A Logic Named Joe," "Proxima Centauri," and "De Profundis," plus two others.

The lead novel, from a 1934 Astounding, is literally what the title indicates --not forward, not backward in time, but sidewise to what this world might have been if the Confederacy had won, if the Vikings reached our shores and stayed, if Russia had held Alaska and spread down the western coast.

Shasta consistently publishes fiction of merit, turns out books and jacket of last - ing quality and attractiveness.

WORLDS OF WONDER by Olaf Stapledon (Fantasy Publishing Co., 8318 Avalon Blvd, Los Angeles, Calif. 1949. \$3.00)

A small book with less physical properties than one might wish for, but one worth reading by all but the space opera hounds. The volume contains three novelettes, each otherwise out of print: "The Flames" deals with the discovery of intelligent life from the sun; "Death Into Life" considers the state of consciousness of seven airman who are killed when their plane is shot out of the sky--and afterwards; "Old Man in a New World", shortest of the pieces, looks at the world of 1970 and the critical, sometimes confusing changes that have happened.

The contents of the volume dig into the mind and stay there -- obviously the reason for which it was intended.

EXILES OF TIME by Nelson Bond (Prime Press, Philadelphia, 1949, \$3.00)

Lets call this one "time-opera" and be honest about it. Not too good time-opera at that, still striving to be honest. 1940 was the original publication date, but we can't locate the source.

An archeologist discovers a potent amulet in an old Arabian tomb and jumps backward in time to the very early days of earth, when mythology is ending and history is just beginning. With him are assorted characters to make a plot: a girl, a Scot, a couple of gangsters. An awful lot of shooting goes on, mixed with a comet and the Viking's "Ragnarok".

THE SCIENCE FICTION GALAXY edited by Groff Conklin. (Perma Books, New York, 1950, 35¢)

Conklin is back with another anthology, 12 old and new tales by E.M. Forster, Rudyard Kipling, Wm. Hope Hodgson, Arthur C. Clarke, John MacDonald, Margaret St. Clair, Murray Leinster, Miles J. Breuer, A. Rowley Hilliard, Ted Sturgeon, Ray Bradbury, and Laurence Manning; dates, 1912 to 1949. The tome has harder covers than a pocketbook.