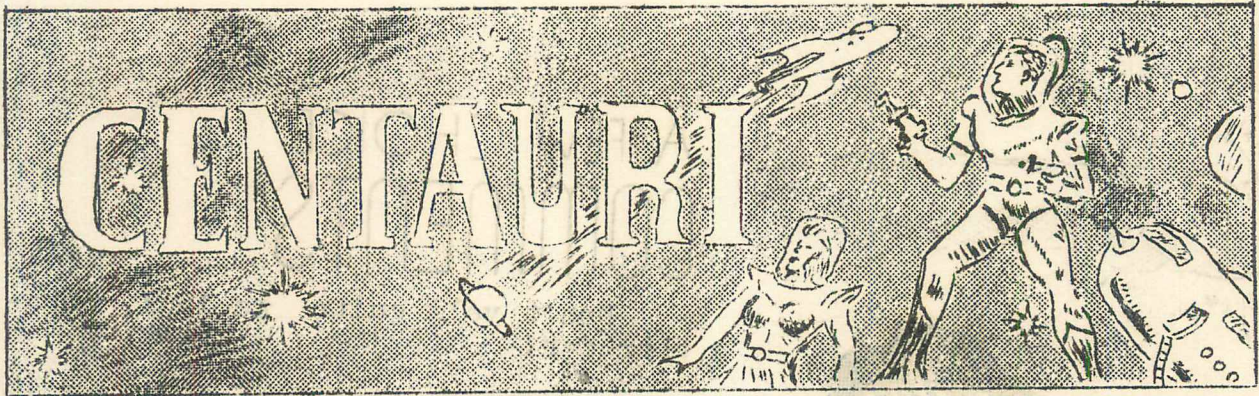


E. J. Beaumont









Andrew A. Anderson, Publ.

A. Andy Anderson, Ed.

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"Thought, it is thought, is electricity...."

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with Warner, Ackerman, Poucher, Tucker, Thompson, & Perdue.

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ART OF THE STRANGE PLANTS

Front Cover:-- E T Beaumont

Back Cover:-- Fred Warth

Interiors:-- Nils Frome (10); Warth (?); Harnes Anderson (3,4-5,7)

Number Four

Summer or so, 1945

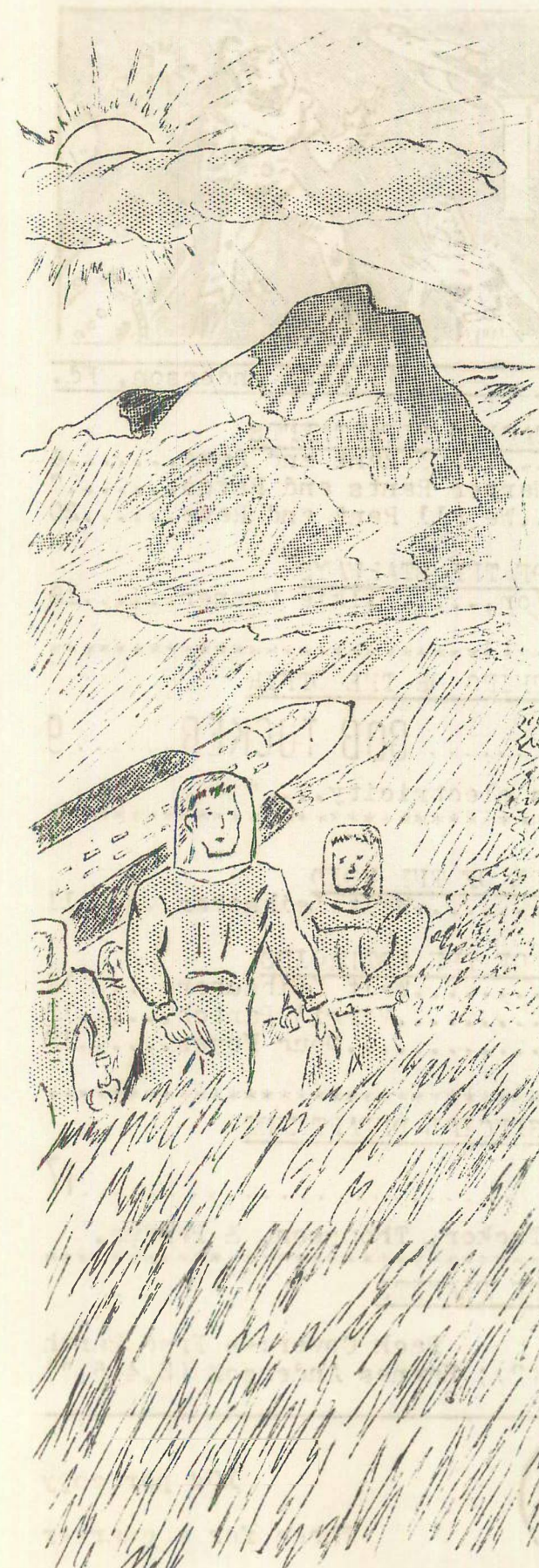


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## A FEW CHOICE COMMENTS

Don't yell quite so loud, brother fan!

I fully realize that Centauri is supposed to operate on a quarterly schedule ---- that this particular number was originally projected for publication way back in '44 (September, to be exact) -- and that it has now assumed the status of Nova and the other bi-monthlies and quarterlies appearing as annuals. I know all about it; and I'll gladly say I'm sorry, but I shall not try to justify my utter lack of ambition with excuses and apologies. They just wouldn't be sincere, so, instead, I think I shall try to clarify the position I enjoy within the miniature domain of the fandom of science and fantasy fiction.

Fandom, for me, as with most of you, is a hobby. Not a great crusade for some impossible idealistic cause nor a little cosmos within itself, but a pleasant and interesting diversion from a sometimes monotonous daily grind, and one that I consider wholly worthwhile. Few avocations, I believe, can rival it in actual educational value, or, for that matter, in enjoyment received. I enjoy all contacts I've made within fandom; I may have met a fan that I disagreed with on something or the other, or even laughed at, but never one I couldn't help liking.

That is my point. As a hobby, I thoroughly enjoy fandom, and I don't want to overdo it. No sense in slaving away on a magazine you put out for fun until all the fun is gone or in beating your typewriter until you give up in disgust as others have, burning your letter files and fan-mags behind you. I value the hobby



## THE INEVITABLE EDITORIAL

too much; if I didn't, I would have quit it long ago, even as I laid my stamp album aside to collect dust a few years back.

Independence in editing is a natural result of this attitude, and because of it my correspondence and magazine suffer. I would like to get Centauri out more often, but not if it conflicts with my other desires and interests. I publish the sort of fanzine that I find most to my liking (not that I want all fan-mags like cent!) and I select the sort of material which I find most to my satisfaction as an editor.

I have oftentimes tried to outline my ideas on this subject to my correspondents, but I fear that I've been misunderstood in more than one instance. I hope this clears matters up and that everyone understands that I do desire letters of comment on my publishing endeavors! Comment serves, you see, to color and improve my own ideas and to open new avenues of thought leading to a broader perspective.

And even when the comment is adverse or highly critical in nature, it does a first-rate job of further inflating my ever-loving ego, for it shows my efforts at least interest you enough to write a letter about them!

The contents page this issue is one good example of my feelings. A bit unusual, but that is precisely the idea. No more simple, practical, trite everyday TOCs! In fact, I may print the next so it reads like a mirror image.

---more overside





I usually put acknowledgements about here, so, before I forget it, I must mention that thanks are due Forrest J Ackerman for some valuable assistance on this issue. He saw to the litho work for the front cover for me, and also supplied the excellent fan caricatures by Virgil Partch and Doug Heyes that adorn page thirteen. Thank you most kindly, Forry.

The cover artist, E. T. Beaumont, is, of course, the McNutt-Bellingham combination. As far as the cover itself goes, what do you think of this sort of thing? You'll grant that it is a bit different from the ordinary run of fanzine fronts. Incidentally, I intended to have a slightly wider margin, but neglected to tell Forry to have the dimensions reduced. Henceforth, I'll make a memo of any such intentions ---- and promptly lose it, of course.

Private Wilkie Conner, of the United States Marine Corps, whose second short article for Centauri appears on page nineteen of this issue, is now overseas with the Third Marines. In fact, he wrote this article shortly before entering the Iwo Jima fracas and received my answering letter there. I assume that he is, if still with the same outfit, on Okinawa at this writing, so more material from him may well have to wait until the cease of hostilities in the Pacific. Come to think of it, I may not get the next cent out until then anyway.

Now back to little Andrew again.....

By the first of July I hope to be firmly established in tumultuous Shangri-La. My decision to move was not, to quell any insidious rumors Watson may have been circulating about fandom, influenced in any appreciable extent by the proximity of the LASFS (though it is nice to know people in a strange town), but was made at the time I chose the college I desired to attend. My choice was the University of Southern California, where I plan to major in journalism and minor in almost anything else that strikes my fancy. I venture to state that cent will suffer further from publication delays, et al, as a result of this intended move, since I will undoubtedly be pretty well tied up in educational matters as far as time and finances go.

Of course, Los Angeles has a first-class mimeograph and some A-One crank-turners, and perhaps I'll get a little help with the purely mechanical work involved --- that first-class mingo will print cent about five times as fast as my hand-fed, hand-slip-sheeted affair does --- but I'm still not making promises. What little time I shall be able to expend on fan activities will have to be divided up between personal contacts, a little select correspondence and reading in the fantasy line, an occasional contribution for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, and, way at the bottom of the heap, Centauri.

Perhaps by the time you read this my pilgrimage will have been successfully completed. In any case, I shall let all subscribers and correspondents know of my address and further plans as soon as I have been located down there.





"THE GHOST"  
BIBLIOS  
COLLECTING

HARRY WARNER, JR.

-THE UNNAMED-

Once every so often, Joe Fann comes out with an article in which he describes his ideal fanzine, the fanzine that he would produce if he had ten hours leisure time daily, the editorial ability of Whit Burnett, Hugo Gernsback, and Forrest J. Ackerman combined, all the money in the world, and his choice of the cream of fan writing. Well, that ideal fanzine, or something very close to it, actually exists, and I have a copy!

The strange part of it all is that it wasn't put out by a "fan". If you don't belong to the NAFA and other amateur journalism groups, you've probably never heard of W. Paul Cook, North Montpelier, Vermont, whose fanzine output has totaled three issues of two magazines in the last two or three decades. But it's doubtful whether, for sheer perfection of format and literary excellence of content, anything published by a fan has ever equalled the second issue of *The Ghost*, only recently distributed mostly to the general enjoys.

It contains 42 8½x11 pages, each of them superbly and faultlessly printed by a man who is an amateur in the French sense of that word ---- a lover of his hobby. Contents consist of just four items ---- but what items! Tops for fans, probably, would be E. Hoffman Price's article, which seems intended to be the first of a series of reminiscences, being entitled Chapter One of "The Rock of the Dead". It is devoted to Farnsworth Wright and is, as far as I know, the only published article of any length or worth in existence about the man who for nearly 20 years kept the contemporary weird tale alive in this country. There are two poems, "Winter Night" by Vrest Orton, and the definitely fantastic, lengthy, "The Wehr Wolf" by John Edward Colburn. And occupying the remaining half of the magazine is a "Conversation" in the form of a play "The Sphinx", by the famous Weird Tales writer of other days, Samuel Loveman, a wonder piece of word-witchery. Incidentally, part of the material for this issue of "The Ghost" was originally scheduled to appear in the second issue of Cook's "The Recluse", which is now almost 15 years late and may, I suspect, never appear.

Once in a while, a fan comes up with a brilliant idea for a fan-participation project, which would be a wonderful thing if it weren't so dreadfully complex, time-consuming, and dependent upon the participation of a vast number of fans. Here is, however, an idea that is already underway, suitable for the fan who has little spare time, yet not well publicized outside of the NAFA.

It is simply an attempt to standardize the reviews of sf., weird, and fantasy books that appear so frequently in fanzines, and permit the gathering together of such reviews into a single



separate file by such fans as are interested in books and book collecting. Originally devised by J. Michael Rosenblum, the plan is extremely simple. When you write a book review for publication in a fanzine, you put at the top of the page the essentials, like the name of author, pseudonym if any, name of book, and so forth. You skip a line, type "Further information", and write there anything you happen to know about the various editions of the book, whether its content ever appeared in magazine form, whether it had both American and British editions, and so forth. If you know nothing of all this, you merely leave five or six lines blank; the more ardent bibliophiles among us will dig up that information later on. Then you write your review, being careful to include a brief description of the plot and critical commentary, the two essential parts of any book review worth its salt, and you keep the whole thing within the limits of one typed 8½ x 11 page. (Naturally, sometimes this won't work, if you are so interested in the book that you want to discuss it for several thousand words ---- but you'll find that the vast majority of book reviews that have appeared in fanzines during the last five years are close enough to a page in length that they could easily have been converted into this form.)

The purpose behind all this? Well, the person who publishes the review --- yourself or some other fanzine editor --- will save the stencil, and eventually run off on white paper a quantity of extra copies of the review. They will be distributed from a central point to all fans interested enough in books to want to keep a review file. Final details of the distribution process, and certain technical matters of the reviews' "format" are now being cleared up, and should be getting publicity elsewhere before long. There is no reason why 300 of these loose-leaf bibliographical sheets shouldn't have been published by the end of 1945 -- fans in England as well as in this country are intensely interested -- and after another year or two of progress, an excellent basic bibliography of book form fantasy should be on hand. It will need, however, the cooperation of a lot of fans, both from the writing and publishing standpoint. So, when you next feel inspired to write a book review of a volume you may have read a week or ten years ago, do your review in this form, won't you? You will have no trouble finding a fanzine to publish it, or you may, if you like, send the ms. to Langley Searles or myself, and we'll take care of the publication angle. If you are intensely interested and want to enter it in a big way, pick out a certain writer or subject in which you've delved deep, and do a whole set of reviews, one to a book. A Burroughs fiend, for instance, could assure immortality as a fan by writing the necessary 40 or 50 reviews of the Burroughs fantasies; if you are on a higher aesthetic plane, doing the same for Cabell's books would be a fine achievement.

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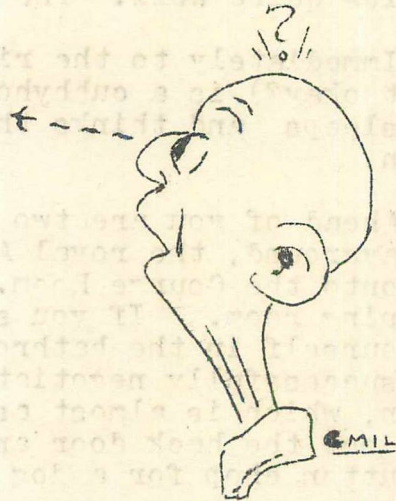
A warning to collectors! Buy your prozines now, or suffer eternal holes in your collections!

That warning is prompted by musings over the sad state to which the prozine field has degenerated, what with only one monthly and a couple of bi-monthlies now appearing. It seems so easy to



# THOUGHTS WHILE THINKING

BOB TUCKER



Thought has been definitely established as being independent of its carrier. Thought, it is thought, is a form of electricity wherein the electrons and protons of the carrier brain evolve at high frequencies, producing thought. This has given rise, in the lay world, to the popular expression, "He has shot his volt".

\*\*\*\*\*

Up in Battle Creek mister Walter Liebscher, book collector extraordinary, has brought out two or three issues of a new fanzine, Chanticleer. Now it happens that mr Liebscher has but one real ambition. That is not to have the best fanzine ever, or the largest library ever, or even the most colorful rooster ever.

No, all mr Liebscher wishes to do is to put your humble scribe in his proper place, a hole we dare not mention. The quaint mr Liebscher let us in on his secret recently when we were visiting him, and showed us how simply it worked.

Both mr Liebscher and your scribe had material in the last few issues of Chanticleer. It naturally followed that the dear readers inundated mr Liebscher with mail, commenting on the issue as a whole and these articles in particular. The canny mr Liebscher carefully sorted out those which praised mr Liebscher from those which praised Mr. Tucker.

Those which praised Mr. Tucker he threw away. Those which praised mr Liebscher he printed in the next issue. He then confidentially informed us "we were slipping" and showed us the published letters to prove it. We weep.

\*\*\*\*\*

We don't recall reading anywhere of the geographical set-up of Battle Creek's Slan Shack --- the floor plan, where they sleep, and how. So we may as well educate and mystify you here.

Slan Shack has 5 rooms on the ground floor, and 3 rooms on the second. Entering the front door (which is no mean feat and requires practice) you are in the parlour. There simply is no



better name for it. Considering the activities in this room, parlour fits quite well. The rest we'll leave to your imagination.

Immediately to the right inside the front door (did you get thru it okay?) is a cubbyhole known as the Temple of the Old Foo', where sleeps and thinks the Evans. He has his library and files therein.

Ahead of you are two doors; the one on the left leading to the Playground, the royal Ashley bedroom. The other, to the right, opens onto the Courge Room. In the old days it was referred to as the dining room. If you safely negotiate the Playground you'll find yourself in the bathroom, which is mighty handy. If you likewise successfully negotiate the Courge Room you'll come to the kitchen, which is almost as handy. Any time after that you are apt to pop out the back door and find yourself a doormat, shoe-scrape or a mutton chop for a dog who likes to lick faces.

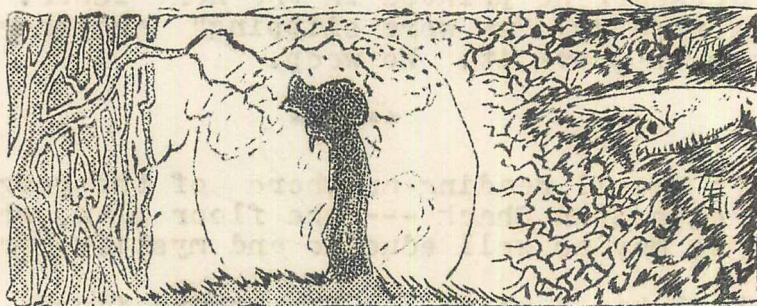
Upstairs. Aha, upstairs! At the top of the stairs is Liebscher's room, having a wall which isn't a wall, and which no one is allowed to peek thru without knocking, only you can't knock because it isn't a wall. He defies you to reach him in such manner. There is no door. You must stoop under or push the wall aside. If it were a real wall it would be annoying.

Beyond that is Mr. Wiedenbeck's room, which, sad to say, is just a room. We couldn't find one extraordinary fact about this room to startle people with. Mr. Wiedenbeck is mundane. However, we like to sleep in it best, which we did with gusto and things.

To the rear of these two rooms is a gigantic attic made over into a studio. It houses thousands of books and magazines along the walls. Night-times, this is Thelma Morgan's private domain wherein she may wander about in her nightgown as she pleases. She reads Atlantic Monthly and Fortune magazines and keeps them hidden under her mattress for fear others will see them and think her stodgy.

The one sure way to confound a Slan Shacker is to button-hole him away from the others, put a confidential smirk on your face, and whisper: "Just between you and me, old man, what do you think of Slan Shack as a whole?" -- We glee.

# # # # #



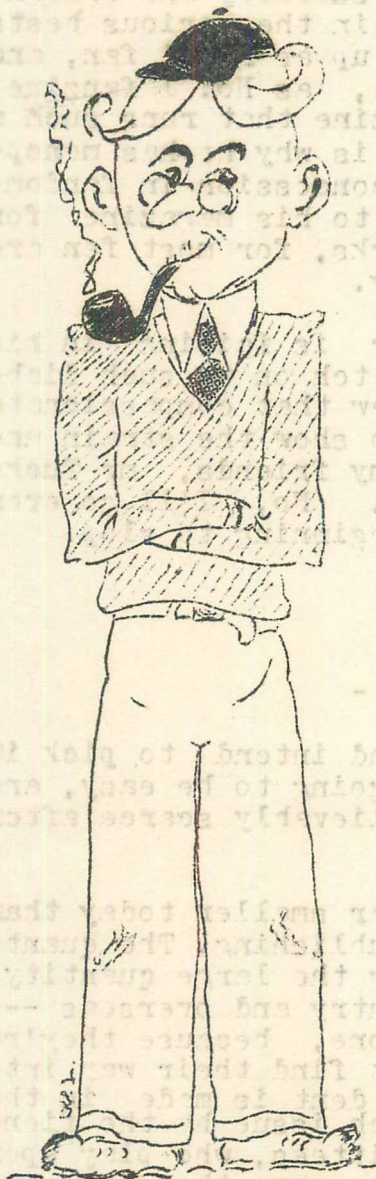
FROM



THE INSIDIOUS MR.

# FU MAN TUCKER

BY WALT LEIBSCHER



Mr. Tucker

Up in Bloomington, mister Bob Tucker, booh extraordinary, has brought out two or three issues of a fanzine of dubious merit, *Le Zombi-ic*. This so-called fanzine he has dedicated to his ancestors; he calls it "*The Ghouls' Chazette*". Now it happens that mr Tucker has but one real ambition. That is not to have the best fanzine ever, which he hasn't, or the largest library ever, which he hasn't, or to acquire the largest collection of cast-off females in existence, which I'm not sure he hasn't.

No, all mr Tucker wishes to do is become dictator and plunge all fandom into war. The very quaint mr Tucker let us in on his secret recently, when we were visiting him, and showed us the very elaborate and nefarious scheme for taking over fandom as a whole. When this is accomplished he intends to crawl in and be high potentate.

Now it seems that mr Tucker is insanely jealous of any fan who is gaining a high place in fandom by purely righteous means, a method which he fails utterly to understand. Being acutely aware of the increasing prominence of honest fan, mr Tucker has taken to lambasting these wonderful people, and to denying all true derogatory remarks about himself, which, by the way, are steadily increasing in the new and better fanzines.

Wrapped in his curdling ego, and being unable to comprehend anyone not liking what he calls his masterpieces of literary art, mr Tucker writes poison pen notes to each publisher who prints any comment which is derogatory to these 'pieces of art'. (Ho ho ho and a bottle of rum) Not only that, mr Tucker has become so demented he actually believes that he has an article in every issue of every fanzine published.

To prove that last statement, Mr Tucker, in an article elsewhere in this magazine, states that he had material in the last



few issues of Chanticleer, my inimitable and wonderful fanzine. This is an utter falsehood, and a transgression. Mr Tucker did not have articles in the last few issues of Chanticleer, 3 for 25¢, edited by Walt Leitscher, 25 Poplar, Pattle Creek, Michigan. Mr Tucker did have an article in the first issue of Chanticleer, a fanzine you can't afford to do without; two putrid book reviews, that were so utterly terrible that I had to print them on absorbent paper with a perforated edge so that the article could be easily removed from the magazine. Even using all these precautions, the subscription list of Chanticleer, such a gorgeous thing, too, dropped from 5 to 1½. Which proves not only that Mr Tucker is bad for fandom, but that he is worse for fandom.

Ah!, but this Mr Tucker is a master of subtlety and chicanery. Each year he conducts a poll, to ascertain the various bests of fandom. In these polls he inevitably ends up as No. 1 fan, and Lez, the fanzine you can afford to do without, as No. 1 fanzine. Why? Because Mr Tucker knows that the fanzine that runs such a poll has the better of the bargain, and that is why he has monopolized, or attempted to monopolize, the poll concession in fandom. He also gives away life time subscriptions to his magazine for lifetime votes. And it works, how well it works, for most fen are gullible ninnies and fall for false generosity.

But, I'm glad to report that Mr Tucker is failing in his ambition. Fen like myself are beginning to catch on to such diabolical schemes. Mr Tucker's articles, the few that compassionate editors continue to publish, are beginning to show the strain under which Mr Tucker has been working. Yes, my friends, Mr Tucker, like all would-be dictators, is slipping. No, I'll go even further with it, he has slipped. Now he is beginning to slop.

# # # # #

## -THE UNNAMED

- Tapping over from Page 8 -

miss an issue of this or that magazine now, and intend to pick it up a little later second-hand; but it isn't going to be easy, and wartime prozines are going to be almost unbelievably scarce after the war.

Consider: to begin with, editions are far smaller today than ever before in the history of pulp magazine publishing. The quantity published is further sliced drastically by the large quantities that go to service posts and PXs, in this country and overseas --- and magazines that go there are as good as gone, because they're either read to pieces or destroyed; they don't find their way into the hands of collectors or dealers. Another dent is made in the pitifully few remaining thousand copies of each issue by the fiendish thoroughness of waste paper salvage committees, who play upon the patriotism of people until you never can be sure that any given copy of Weird Tales won't end up among a bunch of old newspapers on the curb. Add to all that the manner in which so many magazines just simply fall apart through the infernal binding methods now being used ---- and you get a good idea of why even today it's hard to find the last two years' magazines at second-hand stores, and why, five years from now, they'll be harder to obtain than the Amazing Annual.





SAMUEL D. RUSSELL

CO-EDITOR OF  
*THE Acolyte*

MEL BROWN  
EDITOR OF  
FAN SLANTS.

# FAN FACES

BY  
VIRGIL PARTCH  
AND  
DOUG HEYES





## PRO AND CON

# STIFF MOVIES

\*\*\*\*\*

The idea of making a short from "--And He Built a Crooked House" still obsesses me, but I don't suppose there's much we can do about it. I don't think shorts that tell a fictional story are any too popular today, anyway. Judging from a trade magazine at which I get an occasional peek, more than half of all shorts are cartoons, and most of the remainder are called, euphemistically, "documentation" --- in other words, the American version of pure and simple propaganda.

Speaking of the IASFS and movies, though, I've often wondered why they never put on a little screenplay of their own... I've recently been reading Saki's "The Open Window" for the umpteenth time, and still think it would make a remarkably entertaining film of perhaps three minutes' duration. The only prop they'd need would be the open window leading onto a lawn or some sort of greenery, and someone ought to be able to find something of the sort somewhere in California, or even manufacture one out of a few boards, for that matter.

----Harry Warner, Jr.

\* \* \* \* \*

In its way, it is most regrettable that Mr. Warner is an oboeist. Much has been written, and much left unditto, concerning the unnatural effect that the vibrations of the double reeds must of necessity have on the brain of the player. It leaves one open for such unsupported charges as the one by H L Mencken about all oboeists being crazy. H L puts it entirely too strongly. While I disagree with what Mr. Warner has written, still! Quite contrariwise; it's just that lack of familiarity with his subject causes Mr. Warner to fall into some very common errors.

Should I speak to you of one Georges Méliès? Pioneer movie maker of France, who circa 1895 filmed many of the Jules Verne juveniles, including "Trip to the Moon" and others? But mayhap it would be better to speak of "The Last Laugh" and "Broken Blossoms" --- the two films most praised by the critics during the period 1922-25, and the two biggest flops of the same period. Art is a funny thing. As Cocteau succinctly said, "If an art form is not successful with the public, who is to judge which is wrong?" The changed form must perforce not be too good, or the boxoffice will pass adequate contrariwise judgement. Let us consider the zany neo-impressionism of the dream sequence in "Dumbo"; that superb whole which made up "Fantasia"; the mood painting in colour that made of "Pamfi" the dream-dust that it totalled.

For in the animated cartoon lies the future of the movie fantasy -- there, and in the montage work of the clever director.



Reality and fantasy are preferably non-miscible; and though the melange of a fantasy theme with realistic treatment, with photographic treatment, has the floor, to lil' Elmer the cartoon is THE medium. Fluctuant it is, as is the public taste; and in many instances varying for the worse; but always with the possible unity of medium and idea beyond what photography of orthodox subjects might do.

The cartoon -- hell, it's almost like a phylum. There are mutants, evolution and degeneration with time, loss of function (like a phylum, a lost function is never regained). Prime example of lost function: the almost surreal concept that likeness of shape begets likeness of use. Consider the machine gun that runs out of ammunition-- and that is reloaded with a picket fence, a piano keyboard, anything handy of many identical parts arranged in a strip. Or the grinning Negro that listens to Mickey Mouse playing piano, whereupon Mickey spins on the stool and draws organ music forth by playing the keyboard of the Negro's teeth. A touch that appeared in almost all silent comedies, now forgotten in favor of the realistic school....

Or an idea, Cartesian in scope, Berkeleyan in application; the Descartes Cogito ergo sum changed by affixing the simple modifier because. You've seen it-- Felix riding merrily over the edge of a cliff, centering happily on thin air, until he looks down, realizes -- and drops. Persistent yet, but not so overworked as of yore....

Introduce fantasy in shorts? Come now, Sir Harry; what on earth were these early cartoons, before the neo-realist school of Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, et al, brought us back to painfully hard earth with a most painfully audible thump?

Then the possibilities of montage work remain deplorably unexploited. Speeded-up photography is almost a virgin territory. Consider the possibility of mood that could be evoked in a nightmare sequence, say, and the endless desolation of a character roaming under a sky taken at 1/100 normal -- the clouds forming, living, dying, in a grotesquerie saraband... Or have you seen a flower open to the caress of sunlight? The beauty of the natural process, compacted to seeability; a fey thing that could yet remain as the visible manifestation of an otherwise hidden godhead.

That's the trouble that must needs be corrected. Hollywood fantasy is as standardized, now, as the double-take. Whenever a dream or an after-death sequence occurs, the automatic directorial reaction is that of dragging out the carbon dioxide snow. I point without pride to "Here Comes Mr Jordan" and "Lady in the Dark". An art form cannot stabilize without stagnation.

Objection entered to Mr Warner's choice, "--And He Built a Crooked House". Fish tush. Much, much rather would I see the producers of "Lot in Sodom" (which, by the bye, is the greatest fantasy movie of the past ten years, not excluding Fantasia) turn their incredible talents to a sympathetic interpretation of C. I. Moore's rancourless, heart-wrenching "Fruit of Knowledge".

----Elmer Perdue



Two reel scientifilms, or, more properly, fantasies, have long been a pet idea of mine, and so I am glad to see Harry Warner catalyzing the concept in fandom. I do not recall the "petition that was started about eight years ago" that he refers to; thirteen years ago WONDER STORIES was asking its readers "Do You Want Science Fiction Movies?", accompanied by a full page petition.

Several years later a Mr Reynolds, then director of the Los Angeles Science Fiction League, and I made a personal visit to Universal Studios and obtained an interview with a Publicity Head. Reynolds was a mature man; I an enthusiastic lad of 18 or so. We synopsisized stories for the flick ner. and gave him our ideas on why they'd be money makers. I can no longer remember a single story we suggested except John Russell Fearn's astounding that-variant, "Before Earth Came", which was a recommendation of Reynolds.

(( Editor's note : The following paragraph, taken from a letter from Perry to Charlie Horniz dated January 5, 1935, seems to fit right in here, so.. ))

I got in a word for Wonder in the interview. Mr. Cummins asked what magazines I represented. I told him I did not represent any directly, but that Wonder Stories sponsored the Science Fiction League, and I was a director of the League. I said that the publishers of Wonder also published Everyday Science & Mechanics, Radio-Craft, Popular Microscopy, and other magazines of science and fiction. He nodded at this, and seemed to know ES&M. In fact, as he mentioned "War of the Worlds", Bulwer Lytton's story of people coming from the center of the earth, etc., I gathered he was rather favorable toward science fiction stories himself, tho, as he said, he did not have the whole say.....

I also had a regular, cordial correspondence with Carl Laemmle, former president of Universal, now deceased, and plugged the production of scientifilms with him at every opportunity.

At the Chicon I was delegated to express to filmdom the desire of fandom to see more fantafilms produced. This I did via the Motion Picture Producers Association of America. And I got an article for Vorn from the Exec. Sec'y of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences at the time I was working for that organization.

Sometimes the studios get as far as purchasing a story---then never produce it. "The Ship That Sailed to Mars" has been owned by Paramount, if memory serves me correct, since 1926. Para owns "War of the Worlds", "Food of the Gods", "When Worlds Collide", "BUR", "Fifty Years from Now", and others. At RKO, "Gwangi" ---successor to "King Kong"--- proved a war casualty; similarly, "White Eagle" at MGM. Universal bought a Balmer-Wylie yarn, "The Billionaire", about an inventor that could foretell the future, but production was shelved. Similarly, nothing ever came of their purchase, from the pages of Amazing, of Gelula's "Automaton".

Director Fritz (Rocket to the Moon) Lang, browsing thru my library, expressed an interest in Gaston Leroux's "Machine to Kill"; I gave him my copy.

Daugherty regularly talks scientifilms to anyone who'll listen out at Warners----and says there are some important people who will. I tried to work thru A. Merritt for a remake of "Seven Footprints to Satan" at that studio



and he was enthusiastic about the idea shortly before he died. Daugherty has explained in Fanews, however, why Warners was unenthusiastic. Leigh Prackett is a good influence to have working at Warners, tho. And --aside to Leigh-- you might see what they've ever done about that S. Fowler Wright property they own, "Love in the Year 55 F.E.", the RedBook printing of one of the shorts in his book, "The New Gods Lead".

A local semifan once had MGM just about sold on a series, so he said, of specialty shorts like the Pete Smith & Bob Penchley novelties, "Crime Does Not Pay", etc. In 13 installments, each complete in itself, they were to portray the face of the Future...transportation, recreation, architecture, warfare, etc. I told all about this once in Shangri-La/Affaires. But nothing ever came of this swell scheme.

Passifans Dollens & Harryhausen of M, both competent amateur movie makers, have some ideas up their sleeves that may blossom forth in the postwar world.

So you see, some of us are not idle along this line, negative or unapparent as the results may be. After 15 years I still can't point with pride to a production of, say, "Sinister Barrier" and declare "There, I was responsible for the filming of that story!" But I plan to go back into the film industry in an advertising, writing or publicity capacity, so maybe yet it gives the scientifiilmette. In my native enthusiasm for fantasy, I feel convinced the public would look forward to featurettes based on simple scientificfictional concepts, amusing "idea" stories, and especially Unknown type material. They might call them "those crazy short pictures Studio X puts out like 'He Built a Cockeyed House', with that 4-door unmentionable stuff---wasn't it a riot?"

Television may have a lot to do with the popularization of visible fantasy in short form, with telecasting of "canned" plays like "Stay Tuned for Terror", "Macabre" & "Inner Sanctum". Bloch, Bond & Leiber might well be the fair-haired boys of this particular future

----Forrest J Ackerman

\* \* \* \* \*

Most science-fiction is not well suited to movie showing, for the simple reason that a really adequate presentation requires the use of entirely too much clever trick photography, and the observer knows that it is faked. There are exceptions of course; exceptions in which the personalities are the main factors, and the faking is relatively unimportant. Care and restraint might make possible the production of such a story as "If This Goes On", for example.

Good, modern fantasies are the best possibilities for movie production --- stuff of the Unknown type. I enjoy such pics as "A Guy Named Joe". "The Uninvited" is about as far in the horror direction as I would go; I liked that very much, but think it was a success largely because of the male lead, with his rather comic attitude of poking fun at the audience. I would also class "The Song of Bernadette" as a fantasy, and a remarkably fine one; but some fans wouldn't do so, and of course, highly religious people would not; they would be insulted by such a description.

----D. B. Thompson



\* \* \* \* \*

There are a few primary problems to getting a scenario into a producer's hands that Harry Warner didn't touch on when suggesting an attempt to put a science-fiction story on the screen in short form.

First, no studio will touch --even open the envelope-- of a story submitted from the outside. You must have an agent, one who already has access to the studios and knows someone in the story bureaus. Secondly, therefore, you have to interest an agent in the science-fiction scenario, a difficult problem in itself no doubt.

Securing screen rights to a story might be no simple matter, particularly if the author writes for a living. Getting the same from a magazine depends upon whether the publishing company purchased all rights, as many of them do, and how much of a cut they'd want from the proceedings.

After that my knowledge of the subject vanishes. Someone closer to Hollywood will have to tell you how to go about getting it into production.

Selling the short in the theaters is no problem. Short subjects are more or less forced down the exhibitors' throats, depending on the film company selling the product. Some sell shorts along with the feature, others don't. --- With which, I bow out.

---- Bob Tucker

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I'm afraid I haven't much that's helpful to suggest on Warner's film idea. Shorts are a good notion for an opening wedge; but few people see shorts, fewer still remember them, and the industry looks on them as stepchildren. I'd like to see shorts assume the status of the short story or at least of the one-act play---but that's another campaign.

The main thing you're up against is the Producer Mind, which says the public doesn't want stf; and when you point out that the very few stfilms so far made include a high percentage of successes, he doesn't hear you.

But time's on our side. The war has made rockets an understandable concept to the popular mind---understandable is not perhaps the word, when you consider the "robot rocket bombs" that are neither robots nor bombs, but at least the public no longer shies away from rockets as a crackpot notion. And there's been a good bit of campaigning on the prelude-to-space-flight idea---Perry had a piece in COLLIER'S and Ley, bless him, keeps showing up everywhere---I just found him in the ROSICRUCIAN DIGEST! (The Rosicrucians seem to endorse space flight.) And pretty soon some bright boy is going to realize that the public is now at last pre-conditioned to accept some fairly stiff doses of stf.

Of course stfilms when they come won't please us. Hollywood, used to catering to vast mass-average tastes, never pleases specialized fans; look at either supernatural-fantasy or mystery-detection, and see how greatly the filmform varies from what fans delight in. But it'll be something---and stf is so inherently photogenic a medium that it might well be something wonderful.

----Anthonyoucher



# POST-WAR TELEVISION AND SCIENCE FICTION

by Pvt. Wilkie Conner, USMCP

We devotees and writers of science-fiction have, for years dreamed of the oft-thought impossible that later proved reality. One of the best known of these dreams to suddenly become real is television. Prior to December 7, 1941, the radio industry was preparing this modern miracle for presentation to an eager and enthusiastic audience. Though the Nips and the Nazis have postponed the date of unveiling, television is now a certain post-war promise.

However, now is the time for those of us who are anxious for the advancement of science-fiction to make sure that this form of fictional entertainment finds its rightful place as one of the varieties of entertainment in this new medium of that industry. Now is the time for future producers to begin planning ways and means of presenting science-fiction. Now is the time for writers to begin planning stories that will be easily understood by a universal audience and still have the charm and distinction of science-fiction. Now is the time for readers to start thinking of stf that might make good television, and to advance those ideas.

If we wait until after the war, we might be too late, and science-fiction would suffer for a decent place, just as it has suffered in the motion picture and radio field.

Here are what I believe to be the most essential characteristics of a television science-fiction drama. If there are additions, I feel sure that Andy will be delighted to publish future views:

1- Easy understandability. Television will have a universal audience, not merely a selected group of specialists.

2- Easy scenes to produce. Television will necessarily make its own peculiar problems of production; scenes will have to be planned to be within the scope of the television camera. With a little imagination, loads of simple sets can be made, so this shouldn't prove such a big stumbling block.

3- Interesting action. Otherwise, John Doe will switch it off. You pay no admission fee for a telecast and it won't be like a movie or stage play that can't be stopped.

And there you have what little I have to say. I hope you put it to work and insure our favorite literature a prominent niche in the entertainment of our near future.

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## Editor's Note:

Although, as Conner points out, science-fiction in television has its own problems not wholly related to either the movies or radio, I think we can incorporate ideas along this line into our Stf-Movies forum. Then too, I rather imagine that most of the longer television programs (excluding on-the-spot stuff) will be filmed first, at least in part, in order to provide a variety of scenery and costuming. Therefore, some of the problems involved will be similar. What is more, television as a method of experimentation within fandom is still many years in the future, while movies are a feasible project to be considered. We'll see.



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# OPPOSITES --REACT!

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I should have written you a note of gratitude before this for Centauri, which is a sound intelligent little mag and one that I greatly enjoy receiving. Most fanmags I'm apt to leaf through with a dazed expression; but yours' and Leney's and Langley Searles' I always settle down to seriously. As you probably know from my recent letter in Shangri-L'Affaires, I'm particularly sold on Evans' bibliographies----invaluable stuff for the collector and anthologist.

Anthony Foucher  
2805 Ellsworth Street  
Berkeley 5, California

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Enjoyed Centauri 3 quite a lot---tho there were a few things I didn't fall for at sight, the mag stands up well as a whole. Most interesting to me were Warner, Leney, Buchanan, the reader section and the Evans biblio. I don't go for fan fiction in a big way. ---- When last I saw a friend of mine who's a director for Disney, he said that Fantasia II would include Beethoven's Emperor Concerto and Prokofieff's Peter and the Wolf. Tschaikowsky's Nutcracker Suite, despite the fact that it was in Fantasia I, is also to be included, whether because of popularity or the manpower shortage I can't say.

Evans' biblio of Saturday Evening Post fantasy is lacking the following items, all by Stephen Vincent Benet:

The Curfew Tolls (10/5/35), Johnny Pye & the Fool-Killer (9/18/37), Doc Mellhorn and the Pearly Gates (12/24/38), Henry & the Golden Mine (9/23/39), Daniel Webster and the Ides of March (10/28/39), As It Was in the Beginning (2/6/43). All of these are one hundred per cent fantasy. Although classed as a fantasy in SVB's "Selected Works", "Last of the Legions" (SEP 11/6/37) is a historical short with no fantastic elements. "The Bishop's Beggar" (SEP 2/14/42) is a borderline item.

C. J. Fern, Jr.  
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New York City (25)



A few words on this issue (#3). I think the cover is careful and dashing for a fanmag, though marred by a lack of knowledge of human anatomy. The wheel shading behind the CENTAURI lettering on the title-page is also attractive; the lettering itself being of course far too ornate. Only a little experience was needed to show me fan stories, poems, and illustrations are better if not looked at, and those in C. bear me out. On the other hand, I enjoyed Janey's short descriptions, and, perhaps more so, the discussion on music for Fantasia -- the different approaches & viewpoints here were very interesting taken together, &, what is more unusual in fan discussions of topics of interest to normal intelligent people, the viewpoints were worth reading in themselves. I fear the rest of the mag left me cold; needless to say (I hope) this is as much a description of my own temperament as of the merits or otherwise of the magazine.

Doug Webster  
Idlewild, Fountainhall Road  
Aberdeen, Scotland

I don't think the use of micro-filming will damage the sale of books and magazines particularly, but perhaps it will. Cost will be important of course. Doesn't seem likely that it would be as cheap to micro-film a whole book as it would be to buy it, but I don't know much about the matter. And I know very well that if micro-copies were on sale at bookstores, I'd certainly rather pay two dollars for the ready-prepared version than to spend one dollar and an hour of time making my own.

The story of yours is good; didn't really think about the ending until I reached it, but then I never do. Don't think I ever looked at the back of a book in my life, before finishing the story, unless it seemed to be very poor, and I just skipped to the end to see if maybe there might be something in the story -- usually, in such case, there wasn't, and thus I saved myself a lot of reading to no end.

Agree with Conner on the comics. Some potential fans get their first taste for sf and fantasy out of the comics. If they don't tire of the comics and look for something better along the same line, then they aren't potential fans, anyway; the comics represent the highpoint in their fantastic education. If they have any possibilities as fans, they eventually turn to magazines and books, and forget the comics. In that respect, they are to good fantasy as the "Dead Eye Dick" stories of the last century were to the better quality adventure stories, toward which their readers turned as they got older.

Pest item is Gray's poem; that is as good a science-fiction poem as I've ever seen. I've seen quite a bit of Gray's poetry, and like it all.

D. B. Thompson  
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Alexandria 2, Louisiana



Daniel's article is rather amusing, just as are all other articles dealing with an organization of all fans. I don't see any sense in the idea. Why must there be one compact organization? Why must we all unite under one title? To form an extra large sort of Papa? Utter nonsense. Fandom is perfectly all right as it is, as far as I can see. What differences would there be if this herculean project were ever a reality? - Fanzines would still go on unchanged, save perhaps for some minor details. So would fan activity. Let the dreamers dream.

There is little I can say about the first part of Warner's column, but as for the bit on microfilming books -- Oh boy! It seems to me that such a situation as he suggests could be corrected. If magazines and books were ever produced in this manner I should think they would resort to using the method employed by our present day radio. Each book or magazine would be sponsored, the production costs being paid for by advertisers, and the products themselves sent free to subscribers. Perhaps this idea is too far fetched, though. I can think of several reasons why it might not succeed.

It pains me to say that I didn't like No Greater Warrior. I think perhaps I would have appreciated it more were it not for the last two paragraphs, which throw the whole effect away. I think it would have been improved greatly if they were omitted, and the preceding one changed slightly to accommodate it.

I think Conner is a trifle too optimistic in his inference that today's comic book fiends are tomorrow's s-f fans. The true s-f fan has a certain amount of intelligence which can safely be called abnormal. There is nothing in comic books to suggest intelligence or advance a person's mentality. As a matter of fact even the most uneducated person can understand comic magazines, not so with s-f. Science fiction requires so much more thought than the comics that I could hardly say that they are potential fans. But then it's hard to tell. Comic magazines have only been in vogue for about five years.

As yet I can't see what possible use Evans' articles listing dates and publications of old fantasy can be to anyone unless they have access to a large supply of the magazines he mentions. In me they only incur a very unsatisfactory drool session. They belong in the "Interesting --- so what?" category. Not that he doesn't deserve credit for the terrific amount of work he must put into them, but I just don't see of what use they are.

Summarizing my opinion of Centauri as a whole, I would say it is a well-rounded out, well-balanced fanzine with an obvious appeal to quality of material. In policy, similar to Wilimczyk's Paradox, it is neither too serious, like Laney's Acolyte, nor too lackadaisical, like Chanticleer. Of the fan mags I have seen, I would consider it about fifth.

Don Jalbert  
13 Highland Street  
Winchendon, Massachusetts



Cover is all right; looks like something out of Burroughs. Daniel's article is the same old rehash; so much of this has appeared that I'm muchly afraid that no one pays any attention to it anymore. Personally, I cannot see anything so very wrong about the NFFF except they do not make a big enough splash in fandom's puddle. In other words, the publicity is rotten. With a little effort such a federation could run its membership into several hundreds -- including me. We don't need people going about screaming for a great, single-front society; we need someone to get behind what we have and push. Right?

Warner's comments re obituaries and post death valuation of writers is quite interesting, particularly in view of the words given to Merritt, though that is now long past. Microfilming of books. I shrug. Unhandy, to say the least. And a wonderful help to opticians. I rather imagine that the interminable exposure to film light would not be exactly easy upon the eyes. And one could hardly lay a film and machinery attached aside as one does a book for minutes to rest the eyes, talk, write, etc. As a matter of record, very good; but for a popular method of presenting books it does not appeal to me.

I agree muchly with Conner. He has stated the case much more clearly and concisely than I could have. Hurray for the comic mag! Let's just hope that it becomes a habit and not a satiation.

Disagree with Buchanan. What is important as hell is the fact that the jet-planes have changed the public opinion in regard to rockets. Changed governmental opinion, too, into subsidizing experiments, and though war rockets have very little worth for men carriers, perhaps something will come by chance.

Liked the biblio of fantasy in Sat Eve Post. Haven't some of these things by Britten Austin been published in books? (( Anyone happen to know? )) ... know nothing of fantasy music, unless Artie Shaw is fantastic with his impressionistic stuff.

Cpl Norman "Gus" Willmorth  
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## COMMENTS

a run-of-the-mill editorial  
lapping over from page six

The second anniversary of Centauri comes up soon, but a special ann-ish is very unlikely. It is going too far, you will admit, when an annual celebrates each anniversary. No, the system I shall use is somewhat different ----- and original, I hope. Credit for the idea really belongs to Harry Warner, who noted my use of 3 Cent and 4 Cent as abbreviations for issue numbers and made the logical suggestion ----- a nickel issue!

So the nickel issue comes next. Won't be especially big or gala, but it's going to be a good one, if it takes another full year to do it. Letters and material are solicited. Good stuff, please, but nothing which might easily become dated. Tucker was loused up with one item this issue that I had to edit out, and I desire no repeat performances. The real time to celebrate will be when I get to the dollar issue....come to think of it, I won't be doing too badly when and if I can boast of a dime number.



