

DYNATRON



DYNATRON, of which this is Volume 20, Number 1, is currently emanating from the Great Swamps under the direction of Roy Tackett, 412 Elderberry Drive, Laurel Bay, South Carolina, with the special invaluable assistance of Chrystal Tackett. DYNATRON incorporates the obscure "Wayside Inn Discussions" and the lesser known "Golden Gate Gibberish." The next issue should appear sometime in October and you can get it for contributing material, a trade, a letter of comment, or a dime.

All material this time, except cover, by ye editor.

Currente Calamco

In which we veer.

The liveliest subject in fantasy fandom these days appears to be the great debate on "Who Killed Science Fiction?" Reams of paper and hundreds of words have appeared on the subject. This idea is explored. That theory is postulated. I may as well toss in my own ideas on the subject. That's one of the reasons I publish this alleged fanzine.

The question is: "What's wrong with science fiction?" The answer is: "It ain't sellin'." And this, of course, raises another question: "Why?" You can get a different answer to that one every time you ask it.

Why isn't science fiction selling? We can't get display space. Why? Because science fiction isn't selling.

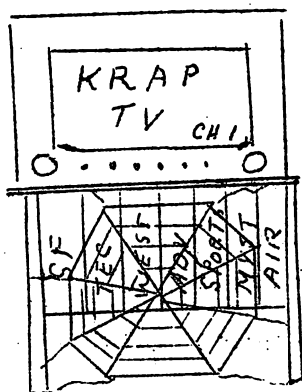
Why isn't science fiction selling? We got a distribution problem. Why? Because science fiction isn't selling.

"Around and about and came out wherein I went."

Next time you visit your local newsstand take inventory. This is the one in your neighbourhood, not the big one down town. Well, there's the comics, of course. They sell big with the kiddies, both big and little. Some slick women's magazines, the news weeklies, a selection of men's magazines of the TRUE, SAGA, ARGOSY, variety. Here's a wide selection of TV and movie fan magazines slanted for the teenagers. Many a different specialty magazine. Devoted to boating, cars, outdoor barbeques, dogs, cameras, sewing, do-it-yourself projects, all sorts of stuff like that. Where are the pulps? There are a couple over there with the comics. Let's see, MANHUNT, AMAZING, HITCHCOCK, perhaps a couple others. How come you don't carry more pulps? They don't sell.

We science fiction types like to think of ourselves as a bit different. A cut above, as it were. Look, the

average pulp reader during the heyday of the pulps was Sam Workingman who got off the job at five, picked up a few bottles of beer and forked over a dime or 15¢ for a pulp magazine on his way home and when he got there took off his shoes, opened his beer and sat back to enjoy the wild adventures of some detective, cowboy, spaceman, or general roustabout thereby escaping, albeit vicariously, for a while from the mundane world. Nowadays Sam has a TV set so all he has to stop by for is the beer. He gets the same effect by staring raptly at the one-eyed monster and a lot more vividly. Who will deny that the majority of TV fare today is the same type of stuff we got in the pulps a few years ago? So why spend 35¢ or 40¢ or 50c for a magazine when you can get the same thing for a few cents worth of electricity?



And that's one of the things that's wrong with science fiction. Despite the protests of loudly declaiming fen science fiction was pulp fiction.

Now, hold on there, friend. What you say may be true to some extent but all the pulp readers aren't in that category. Why I know for a fact that---. Sure. So Joe Middleclass used to read a lot of pulp, too. What's Joe doing these days? Take a look at your newsstand again. See all those specialty magazines? That's what Joe's doing. He's prosperous. For that matter, so is Sam. Joe has new interests like boats, and photography, and cars, and outdoor barbequeing in the suburbs. His evenings are taken up with his new hobbies and he doesn't have the time nor the inclination to read the pulps. Instead of settling down to read he goes for a spin on the lake or down to the karting track.

And that's another thing that's wrong with the pulps and, by association, with science fiction. Prosperity is killing them.

It would appear that the pulps, as such, are becoming extinct, and that science fiction is going to have to adapt to survive.

That is one thing Campbell is trying to do with ASF. He is adapting. ASF appears on its way to becoming a specialty magazine.

There is nothing wrong with science fiction itself. The fault lies in the format. A change is indicated.

Comment?

This subject has continued quite long enough for this time.

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HEADLINE: "AFL - CIO Supports Kennedy." And that's about as big a surprise as the nomination of Nixon by the GOP.

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Dick Schultz comments in YANDRO that he found Laurel Bay on a map of South Carolina, and it is in the midst of miles and miles of swamp and rhybe I wasn't exaggerating. Dick must have a very recent map. I wonder how that last surveying party managed to find their way out?

Actually, I will admit to a bit of exaggeration so far as Laurel Bay is concerned. This is a modern type community with easy access to the main highways. But we are in the middle of miles and miles of swamp and I exaggerate little the wildness of the area. We have communities and farms and some damn near impenetrable swamp in which lurk the various orders of reptilia I've written about. The Marine Corps has a fabulous jet air station here. All operations ceased a few months ago while the Provost Marshall's crew captured an eight-foot alligator that had decided to sun itself in the middle of one of the runways. Snakes of all varieties abound and there are reports of bear and panther. A thousand types of insects creep, crawl, fly, and make life miserable. An immigrant from the West, the coyote, is filtering into the area.

Which brings us to a point. (I knew we'd get to one sooner or later.) Here we are

modern, 20th Century, types who live in our great cities or their suburbs. We drive our modern, 20th Century, type cars down our modern, 20th Century type highways at a speed that takes us from one pocket of civilization to the next in a matter of a few minutes and all the while we admire the view of the billboards and strip cities along the way.

But have you ever thought about just how much of this country is still wild? I can't speak firsthand about the Northeast and Middlewest but in the South and West there are vast areas of almost empty (so far as human habitation is concerned) spaces. We don't notice it much as we see the built-up areas along the highways and we get the general impression that the land is filled. But these built-up areas extend only a few hundred yards on either side of the road and beyond them we find swamp, forest, desert, mountains, all sorts of seldom visited terrain. Maybe some hunters stray off the beaten path at times in pursuit of birds or game but on the whole there are tremendous areas of this country which are seldom visited by us modern, 20th Century, types.

There is really no reason why we should. Those are just boondock areas and, really, there is nothing of interest going on in them. Is there?

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DYNATRON has appeared in the distant past a couple of times although in different guises and on a very limited level. I hope to get it out fairly regularly, perhaps six-weekly or monthly, depending on material and time available.

SOLICITATION. Material is needed and contributions are herewith invited. Contributors will be honored by a special sacrifice to the Muse who guides their particular specialty. Fiction, articles, essays, what-have-you. All I ask is that their be some relationship, however faint, to science fiction, fantasy, fandom, or related subjects. And that should leave quite a bit of latitude. Comments and suggestions are welcome and might even be acted upon. (I refuse to throw myself into the swamp.)

September, I am told, is a bad time to launch a fanzine. What with the worldcon and all the fen are pretty well burned out for a few weeks. That may be so but the pubbing bug knows no season. Besides, I'm not going to let that brand-new mineo sit there and gather dust. We'll have a letter column, of course, with the hope of getting an argument or two going. Book review now and then, but I think I'll stay away from reviewing the general run of science fiction books. They get plenty of publicity in the prozines and in other fanzines. There will be a fanzine listing and a review or two. Art? Some. And the news, weather and sports.

Our cover this time is by Vera Lerma, a nonfan, who insists that it doesn't make any sense. However, it's a fair representation of life in the Great Swamp.

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"He who fights and runs away, lives to run another day."

—Bret Maverick.

While digging through an old trunk a few days ago I came across my old Science Fiction League button. A thing of beauty, that. The Earth and 13 stars against a dark blue background. Across this firmament flashes a golden spaceship with rockets blazing. Encircling this in letters of gold on a red background are the words "Science Fiction League." I buffed the insignia to restore its original lustre and placed it in my coat lapel.

Perhaps the League might be revived as a sort of informal federation of all fan activities. A sort of general tying together as it were.

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Blue whales are 20 feet long at birth.

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The Southern Fandom Group has sounded the rebel yell and is attempting to breathe a little life into Dixie fanac. Al Andrews is the Director, and the O-O is entitled, appropriately enough, "The Southern Fan." It is edited by Jerry Burge. SFG is not in competition with anyone but the idea is to combat the enervating effects of Southern weather, get Dixie fans off their duffs, and stir them bones into more and better writing, fanzines, discussions, conferences, and catfish fries.

SFG is off to a good start and growing fast. Bob Farnham, 506 2nd Avenue, Dalton, Georgia, is the Corresponding Secretary and y'all contact him for details. Heah?

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An item here says that two scientists from the University of Chile say man may be able to use his own muscular power to fly. I thought this one was disproven a long time ago. Of course, it was proven theoretically that the bumblebee can not fly either. But the way us modern, 20th Century, types are going in a few years we won't be able to use our own muscular power to walk, let alone fly.

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Another item says that children lose the ability to imitate strange noises at about age 10. I always figured that rock-and-rollers were older than that.

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One of the current hot items in the news is the apparent differences of opinion between Moscow and Peiping. A recent story makes note of this and states that Moscow, of course, is expected to emerge triumphant in this struggle. Which brings to mind "Sixth Column" wherein Heinlein records a similar struggle with the rest of the world, as now, anticipating the victory of Moscow. Heinlein mentions the shock to the Western world when China absorbed Russia. This would, no doubt, be a shock to our real world, should it occur. It is a logical assumption, however. There are more than six hundred million Chinese and China contains some of the wildest terrain in the world. China could fight a war that might cost them half of their population and still have enough left over to overwhelm almost anything sent against them. I fear not the Bear so much as I do the Dragon. (Man, there is some crazy, mixed-up grammar in that paragraph.)

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Have just learned about a new TV program. A science-western. Stagecoach to Mars.

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Veer.

WITCHCRAFT

A WAYSIDE INN DISCUSSION

/Editor's Note: Elder fen may vaguely recall the Wayside Inn, an establishment which, some years ago, was located in the wilds of Colorado. Like the White Hart and Gavagan's, the Inn had its regular clientage which gathered on frequent occasions to relieve its collective thirst, do appropriate homage to the great god, Bacchus, and discuss matters of more or less mutual interest and entertainment. We have dusted off the files on some of these, brought them up to date, and will, herewith, and in the future, present them for your amusement and, we hope, edification.]

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"Witchcraft," said Mr Bailey as his schooner was being refilled, "that's a fascinating subject. Imagine being able to conjure up the Old Boy himself, or one of his assistants, and making a deal for anything you desired. The interesting possibilities are infinite."

Mr Torbit shifted his not-inconsiderable bulk and lowered his scotch glass to the bar. "The payment required for the service by far offsets any advantages that might accrue," he rumbled.

"I have heard," said Elarty, gazing into the green depths of his Star-board Light (a drink, in the opinion of the illustrious bartender, fit only for the heathen Chinese who invented it), "that witchcraft is nothing more than a carry-over from the old pre-Christian religion in Europe."

"Depends on what you mean by witchcraft," said Mr Stede.

"Is there more than one kind?" Elarty asked.

"Witchcraft," said Mr Stede, "is a label which, like the roof of the Pentagon, covers a multitude of strange things. Pre-Christian religions, sorcery, demonology, heresy — especially heresy — are among the many things covered by the label of witchcraft. Actually, up to about, oh, say 1300 or thereabouts, a witch was primarily a sorcerer or sorceress. The only thing pre-Christian about it was that the belief in sorcery dates back to long before Christian times. Witchcraft concerned itself with the casting of spells and the controlling of the forces of nature and things of that sort. Making rain, calling down the lightning, hexing a cow, things like that.

"Then in the early 1300s the church got into the act by conjuring up the devil and witchcraft became intertwined with demonology.

"Our modern conception of witchcraft, as it is known to John Doe Common Man, is the creation of the Christian Church. These concepts were fostered and spread by the Church through the inquisition to further entrench the power of the Church, place the fear of God into the people, and, not the least incidentally, to fatten the purses of the hierarchy of the Church, particularly those concerned with the Inquisition."



A Devil. (After Mandeville, Strasbourg, 1484.)

"Do you mean to say," interjected Mr Torbit, "that up to that time witchcraft had nothing to do with the devil? Phil, give us another round."

"Precisely, Mr Torbit. Precisely. Ah, thank you, Phil." Mr. Stede sipped his port and continued. "prior to 1300 Christianity had no quarrel with sorcery. Sorcery and magic were a common place sort of thing that was a part of every day life."

"What caused the change?" Mr Bailey asked.

"It would seem," said Mr Stede, "that the Inquisition was most successful. Its purpose was to stamp out heresy and by about 1300 it had just about finished the job. Like any bureaucracy, the Inquisition looked about for a reason to justify its continued existence. Witchcraft was selected as the new heresy. The first trials for witchcraft were held in Provence about 1350 and between then and 1400 the various trials allowed the inquisitors to work out the idea of sorcery being treason against God and the Church. The witches were accused and tried not so much for sorcery but for entering into a pact with the Devil to deny God and to abominate the Christian Church. The whole idea of witchcraft as we know it now was created at that time, the pact with the Devil, the Sabbat, the Black Mass, night flying; all the rest.

"During the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries the Inquisition and civil witch trials really got rolling. Witches were classified, cataloged, and codified. The Church and the State prosecuted with such a fervor that the population of Europe and early America became hysterical about the whole thing. The range of crimes that came under the heading of witchcraft became increasingly broad until almost anyone could be accused for almost any reason. Witchcraft was considered a most grave and exceptional crime and was dealt with by most grave and exceptional methods. Torture was not only permitted but required to gain confessions. Accepted trial procedure was forgotten and accusation was tantamount to conviction.

"It is not known for certain how many persons perished during the witch trials but there must have been many hundreds; perhaps thousands.

"The witch trials and tortures became big business. The torturers actually set up and published fixed rates for their services.

"Fortunately, in the late 1600s the world began to come to its senses and the witch hunts and trials died out. While it lasted, and that was for almost 400 years, it was an exceptional period of superstition and terror.

"You might be interested in reading 'The Witches' by Jay Williams. A novel published in 1957 and a good account of witch hunting and trials in Scotland in 1570."

Elarty sipped at his Starboard Light. "It would seem that witchcraft got its unsavory reputation in what are considered modern times," he commented.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Stede. "Sorcery was rather respectable until the Church tied it up with demonology. There was a whole hierarchy of devils with Lucifer at the top and numerous under-devils. In addition there was a great variety of demons and witches were considered to consort with the whole unholy crew."

"Yes," said Mr Bailey. "What about that? From what I've heard and read there were some pretty wild goings-on between the witches and the devils; especially at the Sabbats."

"Well," said Mr Stede, "there is a wealth of story and detail about that. I wish we had time to discuss it now, but," he set down his empty glass, "this is Walpurgis night and I have an appointment."

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Fanzines

Items we managed to sneak out of the mail box while the alligator wasn't looking.

SI-FAN #1. Jerry Page, 193 Battery Pl, NE., Atlanta 7, Ga., 15¢. Streinz, Farnham, Burge, Wermers, and Bloch. Fine cover by Burge. Bi-monthly.

PARSECTION #1. George C. Willick, 306 Broadway, Madison, Ind. 8/\$1. Multi-graphed by Lynn Hickman. A symposium on SF by Dean McLaughlin, Gordie Dickson, H L Gold, and Lynn Hickman. Stories. Bi-monthly or sooner.

THE SOUTHERN FAN. Jerry Burge, 1707 Piper Circle, SE., Atlanta 16, Georgia. O-O of the Southern Fandom Group.

MONDAY EVENING GHOST. Bob Jennings, 3819 Chambers Dr., Nashville 11, Tenn. 15¢. Monthly mostly. All sorts of interesting items.

WARHOON. Richard Bergeron, 110 Bank Street, New York 14, N. Y., A SAPS Pub. Excellent discussion on various and sundry by Dick and others. Stimulating.

LE ZOMBIE. Bob Tucker, Bloomington, Ill. May, 1940, issue. I knew that the mail was slow but this is ridiculous.

SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES #52. 980½ White Knoll Dr., Los Angeles 12, Calif. 25¢, LOC, trade, other ways. Usual interesting chit-chat and items by and about LASFS, including an item by E. Marmalade Cox.

STYMLIE #1. Rog Ebert, 410 East Washington, Urbana, Ill. For free yet. Dittoed. Mostly by Ebert. Irregular. A couple of interesting items.

RETROGRADE. Redd Boggs, 2209 Highland Place, NE., Minneapolis 21, Minn. LOC or trade. Beautiful workmanship. Interesting material by Boggs and others.

KIPPLE. Ted Pauls, 1448 Meriden Drive, Baltimore 12, Md. 10¢, LOC, ETC., Lots of Pauls, short item by Tucker in #4. Letters, discussions.

YANDRO #91. Bob & Juanita Coulson, Rt. 3, Wabash, Ind., Mostly monthly. 15¢. Right good. As usual.

MAINE-IAC. E. Mickle Cox, 984 So Normandie Ave., Los Angeles 6, Calif. SAPS. The Lubec Leprechaun loosely literate. Long way from Lubec.

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What ever happened to Colorado fandom? Will the alligators take over? Is Ed Cox for real? Find out in the next DYNATRON.

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This is a marinated publication.

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