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The Time Stream

by Sam Moskowitz

RESUME' OF SCIENCE FICTION POLLS

The two most important early polls, The Science Fiction League Polls and the IPO Polls have been covered in the preceding column. We continue with our resume' of polls by reviewing another little known but interesting poll conducted by Robert W. Lowndes in his now obscure weekly LE VOMBITEUR in early 1939. LE VOMBITEURS poll was different in the sense that Lowndes asked only for lists of fans 10 favorite science fiction stories. The results were illuminating. Forty lists of stories were received naming 228 stories by 127 authors. Eleven authors received ten or more votes and these were presumed to be the favorites.

In number one spot with 30 votes was none other than H. G. WELLS. THE TIME MACHINE, WAR OF WORLDS, FIRST MEN IN THE MOON, BEAR BEGOTTEN, MEN LIKE GODS were among his yarns specified. To make it clear just how the balloting was done we reprint a typical list such as Forrest J Ackermanns which was sent in and read like this: FACE IN THE ABYSS (Merritt), NTH MAN (Flint), STAR BEGOTTEN (Wells), MASTERMIND OF MARS (Burroughs), A VOICE ACROSS THE YEARS (Steghens & Pratt), BLACK FLAME (Weinbaum), THE DIMINISHING DRAFT (Kachffert), RALPH 124C41 PLUS (Gernsback), SUNKEN WORLD (Coblentz). These printed

lists made fascinating study as one compared them with ones manual list of great stories.

In second place was OLAF STAPLEDON with 24 votes on his LAST & FIRST MEN, ODD JOHN, LAST MAN IN LONDON, etc.

STANLEY G. WEINBAUM received 24 votes but they were spread over eight stories instead of STAPLEDONS four, so he was given 3rd place. THE BLACK FLAME, MARTIAN ODDSEY, DAWN OF THE FLAME and THE VANDERPOOTZ SERIES were among those mentioned.

STANTON A. COBLENTZ copped 4th place with 23 votes for his satirical masterpieces IN CAVERNS BELOW, THE BLUE BARBARIANS, THE SUNKEN WORLD, 12,000 YEARS AFTER, THE MAN FROM TOMORROW and others had stood the test of time and had not been forgotten.

Fifth was DAVID H. KELLER, M.D. with 14 votes. Among those named were THE FLYING THREAT, THE METAL DOOM, THE THIRTY AND ONE, THE HUMAN TERMITES, etc. Some of his greatest were not mentioned.

Sixth was JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR. whose TWILIGHT, NIGHT, INTO THE INFINITE, THE ESCAPE & PENTON & BLAKE rated him 12 votes.

A. MERRITT also rated 12 votes including THE MOON POOL, SHIP OF ISHTAR, FACE IN THE ABYSS, etc.

Twelve also had EDWARD D. SMITH P.H. D. for THE SKYLARK SERIES.

JOHN TAINE, H. P. LOVECRAFT and ARTHUR J. BURKS with such favorites as THE DUNWICH HORROR, SURVIVAL, EXODUS, QUAYLES INVENTION MENTIONED.

Honorable mention went to LAURANCE MANNING, C. L. MOORE and EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS.

THE TOP SCIENCE FICTION STORIES

The surprise favorite was Stanton A. Coblentz's parody of modern civilization in CAVERNS BELOW which managed to garner 14 mentions to rate number one. Even Downes was dubious as to whether it deserved No. 1 spot but it had numbers on its side.

Second was Olaf Stapledon's LAST AND FIRST MEN with 13 votes.

Third THE BLACK FLAME by Stanley G. Weinbaum with 12.

SURVIVAL by Arthur J. Burks managed 10 votes for fourth place.

THE TIME MACHINE by H. G. Wells took fifth with 9 votes.

Others in order were WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE by Philip Wylie and Edwin Balmer; WAR OF THE WORLDS by H. G. Wells; THE SKYLARK OF SPACE and SKYLARK THREE by Edward E. Smith, Ph. D.; A MARTIAN ODYSSEY by Stanley G. Weinbaum; REBIRTH by Thomas Calvert McClary; ODD JOHN by Olaf Stapledon and THE REVOLT OF THE PEDNSTERIANS by David H. Keller, M. D.

Chauvenaut in his summary of the poll pointed out the high standing of the more solid works of science fiction by Olaf Stapledon, H. G. Wells, Stanton A. Coblentz and David H. Keller, M. D. and believed that the popularity of such stories as THE BLACK FLAME and SURVIVAL would not be repeated in a future poll.

THE LE ZOMBIE POLL

The LeZ Poll as it was commonly known as was announced in the Sept. 30, 1939 issue of Le Zombic. 47 replies were received to three questions.

- 1.) If you could correspond with but one fan, whom would it be?
- 2.) If you could purchase but one Pro Mag, which would it be?
- 3.) If you could purchase but one Fan mag, which would it be?

The fan voted the one the fans would most like to correspond with if they could correspond with but one fan was FORREST J ACKERMAN with 11 votes. BOB TUCKER came second with 10, DONALD A. WOLLEHEIM third with four and RICHARD WILSON, JAMES V. TAURASI, DALL HART and JACK SPEER in order. Also mentioned were J. Michael Rosenblum, Mark Reinsberg, Harry Warner, Jr., Franz Litz, Fred W. Fischer, Sam Moskowitz, Ed J. Carnell, Edward Clarke, Paul Frechafer, etc.

SPACEMAYS was the fan mag most fans would buy if they could only buy one, it received 11 votes. FANTASY NEWS was second with 9 votes and LE ZOMBIE third with 5. AD ASTRA, THE SCIENCE FICTION FAN, FANTASCIENCE DIGEST, THE SATELLITE, NOVA, VOICE OF IMAGI-NATION were voted in order. Also mentioned were Fantasy Digest, New Fandom, Cosmic Tales, Scientific Tales and D'Journal.

In professional magazines it was almost no contest with ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION garnering 27 votes, UNKNOWN, 7 and WEIRD TALES 6. STARTLING STORIES, AMAZING STORIES, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, THRILLING WONDER STORIES & STRANGE STORIES rated in order.

ART WIDNER'S POLLS

Perhaps inspired by the LeZ Poll was Art Widner's Polls which were on a big scale and generally regarded as representative. These polls ran over a long period of time and accumulated a large number of votes.

The results of the first section of the poll, the favorite authors was announced in the May, 1940 issue of GOLDEN ATOM. CAMPBELL-STUART took first place with 805 credits (not votes). STANLEY G. WEINBAUM was second with 718; EDWARD E. SMITH, Ph. D., third with 677; DE CADE third, 610; H. G. WELLS fourth, 443; WILLIAMSON 405, MERRITT, 400, LOVECRAFT 381, TAIPE 265, KELLER 257, as chosen by 157 fans.

Dec. 1, 1940 results of the rest of the poll were announced in FANTASY NEWS.

THE TOP FANS WERE: FORREST J. ACKERMAN (538), (2) BOB TUCKER (446), (3) SAM MOSKOWITZ (395), (4) ROBERT W. LOWMEDES (317), (5) HARRY WARNER JR. (308), (6) DONALD A. WOLLEHEIM (236), (7) WILLIAM S. SYKORA (204), (8) JAMES V. TAURASI (158), RAYMOND VAN HOUTEN (152), (10) ROBERT A. MIDDLE (136).

THE TOP FAN MAGAZINES: SPACEWAYS emerged as number one with 252 credits. (2) SUN SPOTS (182), (3), STARDUST (160), (4) LE ZOMBIE (153), (5) SNIDE (133), (6) FANTASY NEWS (130), (7) PLUTO (128), (8), VOICE OF IMAGINATION (119), (9) COMET (106), (10) ALCHEMIST (99).

THE FAVORITE COVER ARTIST: FRANK R. PAUL rated first in this category to be followed by HULBERT ROGERS and VIRGIL FINLAY pulling in 3rd. WESSO and BROWN rated fourth and fifth respectively.

THE FAVORITE INTERIOR ARTIST: proved to be VIRGIL FINLAY with F.R. PAUL second and HENRY BOK third. WESSO and DOLD rated fourth and 5th.

THE FAVORITE ALL-AROUND ARTIST was VIRGIL FINLAY followed by F. R. PAUL with WESSO, CARTER and BOK following in order.

Fan and fan mag polls were open until a month later so results may have been slightly altered, but obviously could not have affected the leaders drastically.

The results of the second of Art Widner's Polls was announced in the Feb. 22, 1942 issue of FANTASY FICTION FIELD.

THE FAVORITE SCIENCE FICTION AUTHOR proved to be ROBERT HEINLEIN! Whose prolific pen was creating such yarns as MITHUSTAN'S CHILDREN, BY HIS BOOTSTRAPS (under his Anson MacDonald pseudonym), BEYOND THIS HORIZON, etc., etc. He was regarded by many as a passing favorite. E. E. SMITH, Ph. D. pulled up into second place with the CAMPBELL-STUART duo taking third. LAPRAGUE DE CADE would up 4th, A. MERRITT 5th, A. E. VAN VOGT, 6th with L. RON HUBBARD, JACK WILLIAMSON, H. P. LOVECRAFT, ISAAC ASIMOV, H. G. WELLS, STANLEY G. WEINBAUM, EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS, JOHN TAIPE & C. L. MOORE following in order. The inception of Campbell's writers into the high places was noticeable, but generally considered a temporary trend.

THE FAVORITE PRO MAG, monotonously enough again proved to be ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION with UNKNOWN WORLDS 2nd and FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES in third place and THIRD TALES, SUPER SCIENCE STORIES, ASTONISHING STORIES, THRILLING WONDER STORIES, STARTLING STORIES, COSMIC STORIES, FUTURE FICTION, STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES, PLANET STORIES, AMAZING STORIES, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES and SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY following in order.

THE TOP FANS proceeded to be ACKERMAN, TUCKER, WARNER, LOWMEDES, GILBERT, ROTHMAN, CHAUVENET, EVANS, BRONSON, WOLLEHEIM, UNGER, D. B. THOMPSON, MOROJO, SPYER and ROSTENBLUM. The most noticeable change was the complete disappearance of SAM MOSKOWITZ from the voting.

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THE TOP FAN MAGAZINES this time were SPACEWAYS, FANTASITE, VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION, LE ZOMBIE, SOUTHERN STAR, FANTASIA, EFF WEEKLY, ECLIPSE, FAN-ATIC, STARLIGHT, NOVA, SNIDE, FIZ. DIGEST, MILTY'S MAG, FANTAST, READER & COLLECTOR, ECCLASUS, FRONTIER in order.

The biggest trouble with the Widner Poll's was the fact that each section of the country voted in cliques. And the Queens SEL having been broken up at the time scarcely any votes had come in from that very sizeable group at all. Therefore their opinions did not influence results.

THE BEOWULF POLL

This, (puff, puff), brings us up to date and to GERRY Dele REES BEOWULF POLL, the results of which were announced in the Feb. 21, 1944 issue of FANTASY FICTION FIELD. The BEOWULF poll produced some very startling upsets in the field as we shall see.

THE FAVORITE PRO AUTHOR: For the first time was A. MERRITT who shoved ROBERT A. HEINLEIN from that vaunted position into second place. H. P. LOVECRAFT rose to take a good third, STANLEY G. WEINBAUM was fourth, A. E. VAN VOGT fifth, EDWARD E. SMITH, PH. D., 6th, L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP, 7th, CAMPBELL-STUART, 8th, KUTTNER-PADGETT 9th, RANDO BINDER 10th. E. RON HUBBARD, EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS, CLARK ASHTON SMITH, JACK WILLIAMSON, C. L. MOORE, EDMOND HAMILTON, ORAF STARRIEDON, AUGUST W. DERRETT, NELSON S. BOND and ERIC FRANK RUSSELL followed in order, with WELLMAN, CUMMINGS, COBLENTZ, BAIRD, SILK and KELLER winding up the bottom of the list.

THE TOP ARTISTS WERE IN ORDER: VIRGIL FINLEY, HANNES BOK, FRANK R. PAUL, LAWRENCE, MARGARIAN, CARTIER, CLYDE, DOLOV, ROGERS & SCHNEIDMAN.

THE TOP PRO MAGS were: (1) FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES to usurp ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION for the first time since the Science Fiction League Polls. WEIRD TALES third, PLANET STORIES, STARTLING STORIES, THRILLING WONDER STORIES, AMAZING STORIES, CAPTAIN FUTURE, FANTASTIC ADVENTURES followed in order.

THE TOP FANS: De le Ree had asked for civilian fans only so Ackerman was excluded. BOB TUCKER wound up in first place, ART WIDNER, 2nd, JULIUS UNGER, third, HARRY WARNER, 4th, LARRY SHAW, 5th, FRANK LANEY 6th, AL ASHLEY, 7th, DONALD A. WOLLEHEIM, 8th, PHIL BRONSON, 9th, and ROBINSON, DE LE REE & SPER tied for 10th.

THE FAVORITE FAN MAGAZINES were in order, LE ZOMBIE, ACOLYTE, VOM, FANTASIE, PARADOX, EFF, FANTASCARD, VULCAN, DIABLERIE, NEBULA, etc.

THE TOP NEWSHEET was FANTASY FICTION FIELD!

So there you are. All the fan polls of any importance from 1935 to date. They show many changes. DAVID H. KELLER, M. D. twice No. 1 author and several times "up there", was way down on the final ratings. New fans did not know of him. THE EXILE OF THE SHIPS no longer won best story polls, new fans had never read it. A. MERRITT attained more popularity after his death if fan polls are any indication than before. And this comes at a time when his works are more easily obtainable than at any time in science fiction history. FORREST JACKERMAN has pretty well stayed "up there" as top fan. But I won't draw any more conclusions or summaries, in the outlines of these polls you have a wealth of fascinating material to check on. Compare them yourself, they should even be good for an article or two.

THE END

PSYCHOLOGICAL QUIRES OF WRITERS

by

Thos. S. Gardner

Some blame it on Emerson but the concept is probably far older than he, and just as false as it is old, many claim. Emerson wrote an essay called "On Circles" in which he developed the concept of Compensation. Thus if a man were weak in one way he would be strong in another line to compensate for his weakness. The good received the rewards for denying themselves, the evil punishments for their omissions and commissions against local tabus. Thus if a man were weak physically, he would be compensated by being stronger mentally than he usually would have been if he had been normal physically. This particular idea causes many very good people to foam at the mouth and decry the decay of intelligence and the rise of wishful thinking whenever they see anyone talking about and believing in the Law of Compensation. On the other hand, many very good people use the compensation idea as an example of justice--little realizing that justice is a mental concept only and not found in nature.

Friedrich Nietzsche was a weakling and never had any health, so he created the concept of the superman, the blond beast that would rule the world. His writings strongly influenced Germany before the war and still influences their peculiar "kultur." The analogs may be found in the field of science fiction and many other quirks in the characters of writers come out in their work--most of it is unconscious however. Thus Robert E. Howard created Conan, the warrior and barbarian adventurer who always found lovely damsels to love and everywhere he went beautiful women were his for the asking. It is entirely probable that Howard was backward in regard to the ladies. All of the biographical sketches that the author has read make no references to any such human characteristics.

Edgar Rice Burroughs always makes his heroes and heroines, (I almost wrote sherds) princes and princesses. Thus he endows them with intelligence, fighting skill, and beauty far above the common herd. The opposite is true on earth--was not Charles XII of Sweden the last King to lead his men in battle? That was quite some time ago. The modern crop of royalty are not handsome, skillful nor overly bright. In fact many of them could not make a decent living if they had to depend upon themselves. As for the princesses! Any American High School will produce at a moment's notice far more beautiful girls than the whole batch of royalty all over the world can. Burroughs worshipped aristocracy; judging from his prominent use of the aristos theme in his novels. It would be interesting to see what such a really excellent, smooth and all-around good writer such as Burroughs is, could do if he used ordinary human beings. Every single book that the author has read of his and even the novellettes (two in number) always throw the main scenes to the aristocracy and royalty. Tsk! Tsk! Mr. Burroughs, why don't you buy a title with some of the money that we readers have paid out for your stories in the past few years? (Personally, I have paid out enough to pur-

chase a Baronetcy, at least.)

Jack Williamson has a weakness toward the color green. It has played in titles, symbols, and every fashion in his stories, examples are "The Green Girl," "The Stone from the Green Star," "The Green Hall, in his Legion of Space Series," and continue on into the far reaches of the night. The writer in a private communication with Williamson several years ago asked the reason for the preponderance of the color green. Mr. Williamson replied that he had not realized that he had used it so much. So there you are!

What causes World Wrecker Hamilton to want to crash civilizations? Does he want to crash this one? I admit that it might be an advantage in many ways but the world wrecking theme played such an important part in scads of stories for years that many readers thought he couldn't write anything different--but Hamilton could and did--write some of the best stories printed without his pet theme. Perhaps the World Wrecker is growing up and is becoming more conservative.

When one speaks the name of Dr. David H. Keller, M. D. a whole series of stories flit through the mind. But one and all have dumb bits for heroes and backward, Victorian idealism at the base of the stories. The characters are notoriously afraid of a scientific and mechanical civilization and are especially conservative, narrow and sickly sentimental. Does Dr. Keller fear that man is becoming too civilized and expresses his fears via fiction? Perhaps he believes that civilization is bad and the old days of disease, hypocrisy, religious persecution and intolerance were better? (Nazi Germany evidently thinks so too.) I am sure that Dr. Keller, via his stories is very broad-minded, well educated, and above all quite modern. The author wonders if Dr. Keller realizes that he has given many people the impression described above?

Some change must have occurred in the personality of Ray Cummings about the time of the writing of "The New Found World" in the early years of the 1930's. Before that all of his great characters were little men, after that, big men predominated. By big men, I mean really big, way over six feet in some cases, and many of the gals were also quite tall. However, the weakness for the beginning his character's names with "T" still persists. For fifteen years and more the author has been reading Cummings stories, and a very large per cent began the names with T, especially the main characters, usually the villains had this trade mark. Any explanation Mr. Cummings?

If the professional writers were all analyzed, it would be amazing to find that their stories are mirror images of something in their own make up, even if they think they are writing "pet bailers."

It is an interesting game to see how much of the inner man shows through a story. What do you find in the work of Binder, Kuttner, Smith, etc.?

THE END

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THE COSMIC REPORTER

by Cpl. James V. Taurasi

We made a record a few days ago of what the war has done to the pro fantasy magazines. We publish it here for your interest.

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION: from large to small, to pocket size.
still monthly.

AMAZING STORIES: from monthly to quarterly. pages reduced.

THRILLING WONDER STORIES: from bi-monthly to quarterly. pages reduced

STARTLING STORIES: from bi-monthly to quarterly. pages reduced.

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES: from monthly to quarterly. pages reduced.

PLANET STORIES: from bi-monthly to quarterly. still 128 pages.

CAPTAIN FUTURE: still quarterly. pages not reduced as this is written

WEIRD TALES: still bi-monthly. pages reduced.

FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES: still quarterly. pages reduced.

SCIENCE FICTION STORIES: discontinued.

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY: discontinued.

ASTONISHING STORIES: discontinued.

SUPER SCIENCE STORIES: discontinued.

AMAZING QUARTERLY: discontinued.

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES QUARTERLY: discontinued.

UNKNOWN WORLDS: discontinued.

In January 1943 we had 3 monthlies; 7 bi-monthlies; 6 quarterlies.

In June 1944 we have 1 monthly; 1 bi-monthly; 7 quarterlies.
7 magazines have been discontinued.

During 1942-43 we received approx. 102 fantasy magazines a year.
Now we receive approx. 46 magazines a year.

During 1942-43 we received 1,365 pages of fantasy a month. (approx.)
Now we receive 552 pages of fantasy a month. (approx.)

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PENGUIN BOOKS has just issued a new pocket book called OUT OF THIS WORLD, an anthology of fantasy and science fiction, excellent stuff by H.G. Wells, Stephen Vincent Benet, John Collier, Robert Arthur, Nelson S. Bond, Jack London, Arch Oboler, etc., etc.

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Cosmic Publications, a division of Fantasy Times Publishing Company has just published an edition of The Cosmic Booklet featuring the first story of The Magician of Space. Its FREE to all who send in a 25¢ or more subscription to Fantasy Times.

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DR. CYCLOPS is making the rounds again via the Loew's Movie houses. The PALACE Theatre, a third rate movie house made a great ado about two ancient movies THE MARK OF TERROR and THE HIDDEN CORPSE, both on the same bill, with large hand bills, etc. We went and saw two not so good detective pictures made in 1930, but no wierdness as advertised.

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ARGOSY is getting further and further away from the Argosy we once knew with each edition published. Gone is the Men's magazine Popular promised us when they took over. Gone and forgotten is their promise to again publish good fantasy. A crime, Popular, a crime.

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Get the new comic magazine, MYSTERY COMICS, for some good fantasy.

REC. ALLAN M. ANDERSON, now stationed at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma

PVT. ALEX CSHEROFF, who used to help us paint the town red writes from

THOS. S. GARDNER, who needs no introduction writes: "Dear Sam: "Congra-

DONALD A. WORMHEIM writes simply: "Dear Sam: Thanks for the copy of the book. I am glad to have the right of

BLOCK NUMBERS OF FANTASY TIMES ARE STILL ::::::::::::::::::::

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