

THE SCIENCE-FICTION NEWSPAPER

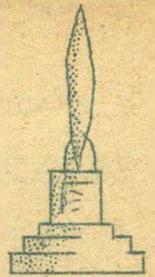
Fantasy-Times

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Ten Cents



"HUGO"
1955

FLETCHER PRATT, A FRIEND

by L. Sprague de Camp

Wallingford, Pa., 11 June, (CNS) - Yesterday my old friend and collaborator Fletcher Pratt died suddenly of cancer. I should like to pay a small tribute to his personality, his literary abilities, and his many kindnesses to me and other colleagues.

Fletcher was a native of upstate New York. He was raised on the Seneca Indian Reservation at Tonawanda and was an honorary Seneca. As a youth he worked in Buffalo as a librarian and a fly-weight boxer. He attended Hobart College for a year but had to quit for lack of money. Later he worked as a reporter and an editor in Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and New York. He was a feature-writer for Hearst under A. Merritt. When a fire burned out his apartment in New York, he and his wife Inga went to Paris on the insurance-money. There Fletcher studied languages at the Sorbonne while Inga got her training as a fashion-artist.

On his return, he began writing and translating science-fiction for Hugo Gernsback. His first published story in this genre was "The Octopus Cycle" in AMAZING STORIES for May, 1928. Though his total science-fiction output is (concluded on page 4, column 1)

WORLD CONVENTIONS SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD TODAY

by James V. Taurasi, Sr.

Flushing, NY, July 4, (CNS) - Today, seventeen years ago, New York saw the first WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION being called to order. On that day, long ago, science-fiction fandom, actually became of age, became a part of the science-fiction movement. That the young men in charge of that convention had no idea that their efforts would become an annual affair, the high-water mark of each year's activity in science fiction fandom, their well-thought out-planning of that ancient World Convention was such that all conventions since have almost 90% been based on the sound basic ideas brought forth at this first World Convention.

It was the New York World Fair of 1939 that gave fandom the idea of a World Convention. In 1938 the birth of NEW FANDOM, the national s-f club of its day, was announced with one of its aims to produce the 1939 World Convention. Locally, it was the QUEENS SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE, a chapter of Thrilling Wonder Stories' Science Fiction League, that took over the leg work of the convention. The two, aided by fans and clubs throughout the United States, brought about the successful (concluded on page 6, column 1)

"The World Of Tomorrow Today!"

FANTASY FORECASTS

Coming Up Next In The Pros

GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION - Sept., 1956:

(Novella): "The Other Man" by Theodore Sturgeon; (Novelets): "Verbal Agreement" by Arthur Sellings, "Chain Reaction" by Boyd Ellanby; (short Stories) "Nothing But The Best" by Alan Cogan, "Human Man's Burden" by Robert Sheckley, "Seeing-Eye Dog" by Daniel F. Galouye; (Science Department) "For Your Information" by Willy Ley; (Features) "Galaxy's Five Star Shelf" by Floyd C. Gale, and "Forecast". Cover by Jack Coggins showing "Hauling In An Asteroid".

GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION - October, '56:

(Book - Length Serial - Installment 1) "The Stars My Destination" by Alfred Bester; (Novelet) "Jackpot" by Clifford D. Simak; (Short Stories) "Man Of Distinction" by Michael Shaara, "Problem" by Alan E. Nourse, "George All The Way" by Richard Wilson; (Science Department) "For Your Information" by Willy Ley; (Features) "Editor's Page" by H. L. Gold, and "Galaxy's Five Star Shelf" by Floyd C. Gale. Cover by Emsch, illustrating "The Stars My Destination".

FANTASTIC UNIVERSE - October, 1956:

The September issue of Fantastic Universe is the last one to be edited by Leo Margulies. Starting with the October issue Hans Stefan Santesson will be doing the editing. Mr. Santesson sends the following report on his first edited edition of Fantastic Universe: "Here is the lineup for the October issue of Fantastic Universe, which hits the stands in mid-August: Cover by Hannes Bok. Lead Story, Arthur Clarke's "The Pacifist" (4,000 words). And: Robert Bloch's "A Way of Life", Isaac Asimov's "First Law" (a short story), Raymond F. Jones' "A Matter Of Culture" (novelet), William Tenn's "She Only Goes Out At Night...". Plus: Henry Slesar's "Messenger", Eric North's "The Second Sphere" (novelet), Ethel Lewis' "Daedalus Was Not A Myth", Madeleine L'Engle's "Poor Little Saturday". (concluded on page 4, column 1)

WORLD NEWSFAZ

by Forrest J Ackerman

Lauritz Melchior's son, Ib J., has sold a sci-fi yarn to the 50¢ slick Escapade: "The Racers"....May issue of the buck-a-copy WISDOM magazine features Richardson's illustrated "Life on Mars"...Angelinos Sherwood Springer and Mel Sturgis will share spots in the Sept Fantastic Universe with "Lords of Gestation" and "Unprotected Species" respectively.

RKO finally plans to produce a scientific film. It's picked three potential titles for the one topic: Project Vanguard, Satellite Station, or Around the World in 48 Minutes...Paul Blaisdell, who has a cover coming up on F&SF has just completed the role of Marla English's prehistoric solidified ectoplasm in The Sne-Creature! He next creates the horrors out of space for Allied Artists' Not Of This Earth...The Milner Bros' next scienciphlegm will be From Hell It Came.

"The Second Mrs Gilbert" by Walter Wager is an amusing robotale in the Aug Swank...Art & Camera for July has a 4 page article entitled "Test Your Talents In Science Fiction" by fan Robert Ernest Gilbert, with 8 original illustrations by the author. There are also 28 (my actual count) nudes for your 50¢.

"The Climbing Wave" by Marion Zimmer Bradley will appear in Science-Fantasy...Heinlein's "Puppet Masters" and Hubbard's "To The Stars" have appeared in book form in Japan...A new German sf mag is in the works....David Grinnell's F&SF yarn, "Top Secret", has been included in THE UFO ANNUAL as fact!

Ray Bradbury's "Black Ferris" will be televised as "The Merry-Go-Round" in a series called Sneak Preview...Catherine Moore is doing an original novel for Ballantine....I was one year in error, as I learned at his funeral, when I reported the age of the late Bob Olson as 71: he died shortly after his 72d birthday of quick pneumonia. Incidentally, his was the first funeral oration in which I ever heard science fiction, Hugo Gernsback, Amazing Stories, the 4th dimension, etc, mentioned.

BRUCE LEW WORLD REVISITED by J. L. Coan Bradley in July, 1956.

by James Blish

BOOK PUBLISHERS PLEASE NOTE:

Book and pocket-book publishers who care to have their books reviewed in this column, should send their books direct to James Blish, 135 West 84th Street, New York 24, New York. This will speed getting the review in Fantasy-Times. -eds

NERVES, by Lester del Rey. Ballantine, 1956. 153 pp., 35¢.

This classic, first published in ASF in 1942, has been expanded and revised for Ballantine. The added material tends to slow the story a little, which for once is all to the good; the suspense in the old version was so concentrated that it constantly tempted the reader to skip ahead, missing del Rey's finely reasoned details. You'll find the story still tense enough for six novels. Few other writers have managed to maintain so much suspense, or build up over so solid a structural foundation. Except for one rabbit pulled out of del Rey's hat on p. 125 without prior planting, the plotting is absolutely airtight.

Since the story deals with an incipient explosion in an atomic plant, del Rey has been forced by the passage of 14 years to revise its technological background heavily. Instead of rebas- ing his story on actual experiences with runaway reactors (such as Chalk River), however, he has again pushed the story's technological material in- to the future, developing a whole new rationale for the purpose. (Lazy writ- ers take note.)

I am none too sure that the new idea -- that of "packing" unstable nu- clei until they reach a new plane of stability -- can be defended quantita- tively, but del Rey makes it sound con- vincing enough to serve his purpose. I have two quibbles on this score: (1) It is confusing to label isotopes by such designations as I-631, since that makes

them all look like such isotopes of io- dine as I-131; and (2) If, as del Rey states, isotope 713 is chemically in- ert, it can't be picked up by a chelat- ing agent (the "versenes", actually a trade name, of the story) as the author claims on p. 60. These are minor mat- ters, however.

It's still a terrific yarn; by all means get it -- and plan to read it in one sitting.

TIMELINER, by Charles Eric Maine. Ban- tam Books, 1956. 182 pp., 35¢.

This is the fifth incarnation of this abominable story, it having been through three previous hardcover print- ings and a BBC broadcast. Still, there must still be a few fortunate people who haven't read it yet.

The plot is a series of episodic absurdities about a man who is forced to make a series of jumps through time. Each new situation he encounters is one you encountered in s-f in the 30s, here vaguely described in flat, tired prose. Eventually our hero returns to occupy the body of his own wife, and the novel ends in an explosion of horsefeathers. The writer, an Englishman, apparently is neither talented nor very intelli- gent.

Stay away!

THE BRIGHT PHOENIX, by Harold Mead. Ballantine, 1956. 184 pp., 35¢.

Here is a curious book -- a first novel by an Englishman which is neither very good (like "Childhood's End") nor very bad (see above). It deals with the old chestnut, the post-atom-war- despotic state, its attempts to convert the barbarians, and the defection of the narrator. I began the book with a groan, convinced that nobody could sell me that bill of goods again; but I was wrong.

Mead writes with skill, affection and conviction, and he has a consider- able gift for character; everybody in the book is real, even the minor roles. All these are saving graces, and they come to the rescue of Mead's 100% pre- dictable plot. (For that matter, if you've never encountered the plot be- fore, Mead gives it away at once by heavy-handed foreshadowing.) In addi-

tion, he is using the anti-Utopian frame to make a point of his own; in his novel, the villain is not tyranny, cruelty, or machinery, but pride.

Recommended with reservations.

FANTASY FORECASTS

(concluded from page 2, column 1)

"In addition to my Book Column (Where I review Lester del Rey's "Worms"; M. K. Jessup's "The UFO Annual"; Gray Barker's "They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers"; etc. I am running, on the inside cover, over the signature of David Kyle, a brief story on the forthcoming World Convention.

"November I am running a new 14,000 word story by Judith Merrill, and Michael Shaara's 12,000 word "The Day Huck Squared Bonken"."

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, Sept. '56:

"Operation Afreet" (novelet) by Poul Anderson, "Flying Dutchman" by Ward Moore, "Jules Verne: Voyagists" (a note) by Anthony Boucher, "Loney Road" by Richard Wilson, "Some Of My Best Friends Are Fans" (article) by Robert Bloch, "The Past And Its Dead People" by R. Bretnor, "The Science Screen" (department) by Charles Beaumont, "Verb Sap?" by Lyle G. Boyd, "The War In The Air" by R. V. Cassill, "Recommended Reading" (department) by Anthony Boucher, "Stawdust" by Idris Seabright, and:

D

A

B A X B R by Evelyn E. Smith.

B

R

Cover painting by Kelly Freas, illustrating "Operation Afreet".

WORLD WAR PRATT

(concluded from page 2, column 2)

modest (perhaps around forty titles) it extended over a quarter-century. Only in the year or two before his death did he stop writing imaginative fiction, that market having greatly shrunk while the demand for non-fiction books and articles bloomed. Imaginative fiction was a sideline with Fletcher, whose main writings are in the fields of history, biography, and military science.

Of his fifty-odd books, his best-known include THE NAVY: A HISTORY; ORDEAL BY FIRE; STANTON; SECRET AND URGENT; THE STORY OF CODES AND CIPHERS; and THE CIVIL WAR IN PICTURES. In his fiction, my favorites are his medieval adventure-fantasies, THE WELL OF THE UNICORN and THE BLUE STAR, though neither was commercially successful.

I first knew Fletcher in 1936, when my scientific friend John D. Clark introduced us. John had been corresponding with Fletcher about a naval wargame of which Fletcher was the inventor and guiding spirit. Played with scale models (of which Fletcher made over a thousand) and measuring-devices, its battles were vociferously fought out in the Pratt living-room until they got so big the players had to hire a hall.

My first collaboration with Fletcher was "The Roaring Trumpet", published in UNKNOWN for May, 1940. This was the first of the Harold Shea stories, and was combined with its sequel in the book THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER (Holt, 1941; Prime, 1950). Our last collaboration was the Gavagan's Bar series, of which we had a couple in the works when Fletcher died.

Fletcher was extremely helpful to younger writers. He not only taught me much of what I know about writing; he also got me a Fellowship at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, where he instructed for about twenty years. He was as helpful with other writers. His generosity was fabulous. Though he made pretty good money for a writer, he spent it freely on food, drink, and entertainment for his friends and colleagues. For seven years he headed the revered Old Authors Club of New York. He kept it going almost single-handed and when he finally quit. The club collapsed.

His range of interests was amazing. He raised mammals in cages in his New York apartment. He spoke French, German, Danish, Swedish, and Portuguese, and read other languages. He belonged to a group that met to read Norse Sagas aloud in the original. He was an expert chef, wrote a cook-book, and founded a gourmet society, the Trap Door Spiders. He was a war-correspondent in World War II, most of his assignments being to

Latin America. He was an authority on military intelligence and did one or two hush-hush jobs along that line himself. Once or twice in his later years, tough characters, not knowing they were dealing with an ex-pug, learned to their grief that a small, bearded, gnomish-looking man cannot always be pushed around with impunity. He was an active science-fiction fan and a former officer of the Hydra Club, and reviewed science-fiction books for the Saturday Review.

His death is a loss to American letters, to science-fiction, and most of all to the friends who valued him as a rich, rare, and complex personality. He was one of those men around whom others revolve like planets.

THE COSMIC REPORTER

by Arthur Jean Cox

What I believe to be the last word on "Bridey Murphy" appeared recently in serial form in the Hearst newspapers about the country, under the byline of the Reverend Wally White. White, the pastor of a church which Mrs. Virginia Tighe (the real name of the "Ruth Simmons" who remembered "Bridey Murphy") attended as a girl, has traced down the facts -- names, places and incidents -- of her life as a child in Wisconsin and Chicago and has demonstrated an amazing parallel between those facts and the supposed incidents of her life as a nineteenth century Irish girl, "Bridey Murphy". Mrs. Tighe, by the way, said in an interview that she does not believe in reincarnation and is sorry the whole business started.

"The Coast Of Coral", a book about skin-diving by Arthur C. Clarke, has appeared from Harper & Brothers, \$5.00, and is drawing good reviews.

According to an article in the NY Times-BkRv, May 13 ("The Wisard of Baum" by David Dempsey), the copyright on Baum's Oz books expires this year; which means that any publisher now has free access to the original stories and to the title. 1956 is also the hundred anniversary of Baum's birth.

SLICK SCIENCE FICTION

by Donald E. Ford

Life, June 4, 1956:
"Epic Of Man: (Part V) FIRST GREAT CIVILIZATION". An account of the Sumerians.

Playboy, June 1956:
"A Sound Of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury. A story about Time Safari, Inc. A reprint from Collier's or SEPost.

"The Darendinger Build-Up" by Wm. F. Nolan. Not science-fiction, but of interest since Nolan is a fan & has published fan mags devoted to Ray Bradbury.

MAD, July 1956:
Of interest to a majority of fans.

SCIENTI-BOOKS

by Stephen J. Takacs

NEW SCIENCE/FANTASY BOOKS OUT:

THE POWER by Frank Robinson, J. B. Lippincott Co., \$3.00, (April 27 '56).

BRIGHT PHOENIX by Harold Mead, Ballantine Books, NY, 35¢, (May 3 '56).

THE MAN WHO LIVED FOREVER by R. De Witt Miller and Anna Hunger, plus THE MARS MANOPOLY by Jerry Sohl, Ace Double Novels, NY, 35¢, (May 7 '56).

THE YEAR'S GREATEST SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY, edited by Judith Merrill, Dell Pocket Books, NY, 35¢, (May 17 '56).

TIMELINER by Charles Eric Maine, Bantam Books, NY, 35¢, (May 18 '56).

THE UFO ANNUAL by M. K. Jessup (non-fiction) (Flying Saucers), Citadel Press NY, \$4.95, (May 22 '56).

THE YEAR'S GREATEST SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY, edited by Judith Merrill, cloth bound edition, Gnome Press, NY, \$3.95, (May 24, '56).

THE UNQUIET SPIRIT by Marguerite Steen, Doubleday & Co, \$3.75, (May 28).

THE BRIGHT PHOENIX by Harold Mead, Ballantine Books, NY, cloth bound edition, \$2.00, (May 29 '56).

CROSSROADS OF TIME by Andre Norton, MANKIND ON THE RUN by Gordon R. Dickson (both in one bk) Ace Books, NY, 35¢.

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"The World Of Tomorrow Today!"

WORLD CONS SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD
(concluded from page 1, column 2)

first World Convention.

It is interesting to note at this late date that the governing body of New Fandom turned down a free Convention Hall in the World Fair grounds-itself, because it involved a \$1 admission to the grounds. The first World S-F Convention was Free, open to all who were interested in science-fiction.

Fantasy-Times pauses this July 4th to thank all those who's work produced

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AUSTRALIAN SUBSCRIBERS ATTENTION!

In the past six months many of you have complained that issues were getting to you torn, with pages ripped out, or not getting to you at all. To overcome this, starting with issue #249, Fantasy-Times will be mailed in bulk to Roger Dard, and he will re-mail them to the Australian area subscribers. In this way copies should arrive to you untorn and with no pages missing. We are grateful that Mr. Dard has agreed to set aside some of his time to aid you in getting your copies in good condition. But remember this service only applies to those of you who subscribe or resubscribe thru Mr. Dard. Any orders from the Australia area that reaches us thru other than Mr. Dard, will be sent from Paterson, New Jersey as before. We are now working on a format that will do away with most of the "continues on page so & so" that many of you Australian readers so dislike.

-The Editors

FANTASY-TIMES' CLASSIFIED ADS

2¢ a word, including name & address, 25 words minimum, remittance must be sent with order. FANDOM HOUSE, P. O. Box #2331, Paterson 23, New Jersey.

FOR SALE: Mimeographed copies of excerpts from scarce Cotton Mather Witchcraft book, Wonders for 20¢. Send stamped, self-addressed envelope for free, non-obligatory circular. - Robert Stock, 2449-19th Street, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

the First World Science Fiction Convention, fandom's greatest invention for the science-fiction movement.