

ScientiFiction

THE FIRST FANDOM REPORT

New Series

Number 1

1st Quarter

2004



Forrest J. Ackerman, Clevention 1955, Morris Scott Dollens art backdrop. Courtesy of Noreen Shaw.

THE FIRST FANDOM REPORT

New Series, Number 1, 1st Quarter 2004

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Editors Jim Harmon, Barbara Gratz Harmon
Special Features Editor, Jon D. Swartz
Contributing Editor, Don Dailey

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PLEASE NOTE NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR LETTERS COLUMN:
jimharmonotr@charter.net

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings All:

The holidays have passed and a lot has happened since the last *SCIENTIFICTION* was published. It has been an event-filled winter to this point.

Unfortunately, several of our members have been ill recently and a few of them are no longer with us. **Julie Swartz** was hospitalized for quite a while with pneumonia. At one point there was some hope he would recover, but he lost his battle and passed away on 8 February 2004. And another of our dinosaurs, **Hal Clement**, passed away in his sleep on 29 October 2003 of natural causes. On the same date, **Lloyd A. Eshbach** also passed away. The wife of Ray Bradbury, **Marguerite McClure Bradbury**, passed away on 25 November 2003. Tributes may be sent to the Harmons.

It is also time to vote for the *First Fandom Hall of Fame Award*. A ballot is enclosed, and needs to be returned to me not later than the 21st of April. Thank you.

And finally, it's dues time again. A renewal form is enclosed, please send it in to arrive by the 31st of March, if possible. The information is needed to help update and publish a new Membership Roster. Again, thanks!

Here's looking forward to a great year in 2004!!

Joanie Marie Knappenberger

DINOSAUR TRACKS

ARTHUR C. CLARKE

EGOGRAM 2003

Friends, Earthlings, E.T.'s – give me your eyes!

Looking back on the year which has gone wherever it is years go to, I am happy to report that it has been a fairly quiet and productive one. Best of all, peace does appear to have returned to Sri Lanka: I wish that could be said for the rest of the world, though at east it seems to be emerging from the long shadow of 9/11. (Has any day in history so imprinted itself on the racial memory? And I am still spooked by the fact that, exactly 30 years ago, I chose that very date for the catastrophe which opens RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA....)

Although I am completely wheel-chaired (even walking a few paces with leg-braces and <two> helpers tires me) otherwise I'm feeling fine – both eating and sleeping well. And dealing with the couple of hundred e-mails, faxes and cards for my 85th birthday (December 16) has exhilarated rather than exhausted me. Apparently many world newspapers listed my arrival as one of the events of 1917... "Wasn't there a war on at the time as well?)

Brother Fred, Chris Howse, Angie Edwards and Navam Tambayah look after my affairs in England, and, as they have done for many years, my agents David Higham Associates and Scovil, Chichak Galen deal with rapacious editors and media executives.

More important, all but one of my adopted family – Hector, Valerie, Cherene and Melinda Ekanayake – are here for Xmas: only Tamara is in England, and I hope to see her in the New Year. Hector has been looking after me since 1956, and with his wife Valerie has made a home for me at 25 Barnes Place.

My beloved Chihuahua Pepsi is never far from me, night or day: she is now over ten years old and spends 90% of her time sleeping – but is always ready to pick a fight with Minnie, our Yorkshire Terrier. After a succession of sadly-missed Shepherds and Ridgebacks, I never imagined I would lose my heart to so tiny a canine person.

I am also well looked after by my staff and take this opportunity to thank them all:

Executive Officer: Nalaka Gunawardene
Personal Assistant: Rohan De Silva
Secretaries: Tony Thurgood & Dottie Weerasooriya
Aide: Lenin Kumarsiri
Valets: Titus, Saman & Chandra
Drivers: Lalith, Anthony & Ranjith
Domestic Staff: Kesavan, Ramani, Jayasiri & Gunawardene
Gardners: Jagath & Premasiri

I receive a new media project almost every day: it's nice to be wanted, except by INTERPOL... However, now that I have reluctantly accepted my limitations of time and energy, most enquirers receive my "Kindly Drop Dead" reply form.

*Greetings to the stf dinosaurs - I now have one
named after me - atrclk - 11/11/03*

As I approach 71 years of age myself, I understand what you mean by accepting limitations of time and energy. I have trouble with my legs, but so far I am handling it with a cane. But my lower legs swell so much that one examiner at a recent airline gate eyed them suspiciously, perhaps thinking I had something wrapped around them. I told him "Feel them – it doesn't hurt me." He did. – JH

TERRY JEEVES

Dear Jim,

Many thanks for the latest issue of Scientifiction which arrived safely a couple of days ago. Life has been rather hectic lately as I have developed a prostate cancer and have been undergoing all sorts of abominably invasive tests and I'm now on a waiting list for an op.

In addition, the PC is acting up, I can get mail out but don't always get it back in thanks to 100 or so chunks of spam each day.

Going back down memory lane, my first Con was in 1947, or 48, memory is a bit weak on the exact year. My first fanzine was *Gillings Scientifiction* in '38 and my first fan writing appeared in Ken Slater's *Operation Fantast*, ah happy days.

As for films, apart from Flash Gordon, I recall Gene Autrey yawping away in the Phantom Empire serial about an underground city and a dude ranch above it. To keep his contract, Autrey had to sing at least one song each episode - and avoid the nasty robots and a band of horsemen whose sole job seems to have been to ride in and out of a secret gate.

Then I remember bits of a Houdini serial in which he vied with a robot and escaped from horrible chains, boxes and so on - ah, more happy days.

The SF Science Museum sounds a good idea but I recall the early days of the

BSF Library from which you could borrow all sorts of goodies just for the cost of postage. When it got too onerous for the Librarian, it was merged with a University collection and somewhere along the way the BSFA part disappeared into secret research sections and we had no more easy borrowing. Ghu knows where it is now, so beware of time and the changes it brings.

Another memory is of the 1980 Norescon in Boston and my brief appearance in the Fancy Dress show as I chased the young Kyles, dressed as Soggies, across the stage.

Oh well, better sign off, thanks again and all the very best,

Terry

PS Know anybody wanting to make me a bid for UNKNOWN No.1 ?

Unknown 1 is certainly a valuable item. But pulps have not gone up as much as comic books. I see on eBay you can still get many SF magazines from the forties for around \$5.

Any comic book from that era is around \$100. And of course we have all heard the stories of some individual comic magazine issues going for \$50,000 or more. — JH

LARRY FARSACE

Dear Jim,

That was a nice surprise — those 2 pages by yours truly in the Spring "STF" profile. I'd forgotten I'd sent them out to a few 1st Fandomites, you to begin with.

With "SFT" now having moved to California, brings back a dozen and more memories of the state: At 82, a "Review of My Ties Up & Down the West Coast". When being stationed not too far from Burbank, at Riverside, near March AF Base, which had Shirley Temple's 1st husband (her picture painted by Fritz Leiber right above me).

This was when I also visited the Hollywood Stage Door Canteen, and Forrest J., who then itemed me in *Imagination*.

Then Fay Wray wrote to me in answer to my query, saying Skull/Island had been filmed at San Pedro Beach (what a disappointment—no real island!).

Besides being itemed in 4e's mags (even "Famous Monsters of Filmland"), there was also a wonderful review of "Star Bound", by Clearal Lovell, in "The American Bard", of Hollywood, also in the UCLA paper, and in "The Carmel Pine Cone," also Hamling's "Star Dust", on G.A., before that.

One of the pioneer Rochester fans, Francis J. Litz (great artist and fan publisher, hectographing) moved by Iglewood years ago. He left me a big run of

old WT to add to my (impossible!) mess here, leaving our Kodak City S.F. Club, Rochester's first. His bro. Was in Inglewood. My stepson Michael, in Albion, has relatives in San Diego, Ray and Charlie, we used to picnic with.

There's Auburn, Calif., where poor Clark Ashton Smith spent most of his life, old mining town, and whom I so badly wanted to visit, idolizing him so, but instead went to see the great poet/writer/editor of "Wings", where I first saw the name Duvernz!!!, Stanton Coblenz in Mill Valley, redwoods country, north of the Golden Gate Bridge, when I was stationed in downtown San Francisco (next to the WAVES).

First three of fourteen pages. Will try to include more in a future issue. — JH

KEITH STOKES

(on Hal Clement)

Folks report that he was fine at MileHighCon this last weekend.

NEEDLE was the first sf novel I can remember reading.

I first met Harry at the last New Orleans World Con, he was at one of the stations for photographers at the masquerade, standing next to me, taking photos at the folks in costume.

I met him many more times over the years, more recently at Conestogas and when he attended the Campbell Conference and Hall of Fame inductions.

He was very active in his retirement. When he attended the Campbell Conference, he was in the middle of 6 consecutive weekends of conventions. Most at his own expense.

I am very sorry the we have lost him, but grateful to have known him.

HOWARD DEVORE

Dear Howard,

Saw some mews in the paper that you would be very interested in knowing. Two days ago Lloyd Eshbach died at the age of 93. He didn't live that far away from us and we had visited him about twice in the past. He was very interesting and had many varied hobbies. He collected rocks and satires of Alice in Wonderland. He has willed most of these things to Temple University along with his autographed first edition leather bound Fantasy Press books.

I thought you would like to know because helped many young authors get their works published and out to the public. His book, *Over My Shoulder*, was really great. He will be truly missed.

Carol and David

HARMONY

A Column in Its Fifty-Seventh Year
By Jim Harmon

There is a connecting bond between science fiction and mystery fiction. When we are young, we may be passionately devoted to SF to the exclusion of all else, but as we mature I find many SF readers also read mysteries, and often SF writers turn to writing mysteries. Isaac Asimov was drawn to the mystery format and wrote some of the classic combination SF/mystery novels like *The Caves of Steel*. Among his last works was a series of short stories for *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*.

Perhaps one link between the two forms is that the pure science fiction story and the pure detective story follow the rule of reason, demanding evidence for belief. Unlike fantasy, magic will not work here. A man may fly, but only with a rocket-powered belt, not under his own power.

Leonard Nimoy demanded things be "logical" as Mr. Spock on *Star Trek*. He also demanded logic when he played Sherlock Holmes on the stage.

Of course, someone – I forgot who – pointed out that Holmes was a sham, pretending to live by reason alone. During one adventure when he thinks Watson has been hit by a bullet, the blood drains from his face and he albeit faints with concern over his friend.

So the science fiction story and the detective story may be plotted by pure logic, but they must be characterized by human emotion to speak to us as does all fiction that succeeds.

I was thinking about mystery fiction because in a few weeks I will be heading towards the Left Coast Crime Convention in Monterey, California beginning Feb. 19, 2004. This convention for mystery writers and fans will have as its guest of honor, my lifelong friend, Richard A. Lupoff, an author at once at home with science fiction and mystery stories. Dick has asked me to introduce him for his award.

In my time I have written a few detective stories – short stories for the old pulps, and a couple of quickie paperback thriller novels. But I have written *about* fictional detectives more than I have written *of* them. In my books such as *Radio Mystery and Adventure*, just reprinted in a paperback trade edition by McFarland, \$35.00, I have discussed at length *The Shadow*, *Sam Spade*, *the*

Thin Man, *the Fat Man*, *Nick Carter*, *Dick Tracy*, and the beloved *I Love a Mystery*. Even that other great favorite of mine, *Tom Mix*, was as much a mystery story as a Western. Each episode began with an announcement that this was another chapter in "The Mystery of –". And some of them were very clever and compelling mysteries. I wrote a new Tom Mix puzzler, "The Mystery of the Bodiless Horseman" in *Its that Time Again*, Ohmart editor and publisher, \$15. I did a new Sherlock Holmes radio story for *It's That Time Again*, Vol. II, Jim Harmon, editor, Ohmart, publisher, \$15, April 1, 2004. Radio was a medium particularly attuned to mystery. Any art form where you can't see what is going on has to be mysterious. I am also going to do a demonstration of an old time radio mystery drama at the convention.

The Left Coast Crime Convention will be over by the time you read this, but I think most of you dinosaurs of SF would find themselves right at home at this gathering, almost as much as at a science fiction convention.

– JIM HARMON

DISCORD

By Barbara Gratz Harmon

We have had to use more than we should have of the 16 page allotment (lack of finances preclude more pages at this time) for the expanded transitions section. Much of the material we normally would have run has probably not been received due to computer problems. Our internet provider has had equipment down. In addition our provider eliminated earthlink as its mail handler, necessitating a change in email address. Mail was supposedly forwarded, but along with it came hundreds (as counted) of spam every day. There's a limit as to how much viagra and refinancing one can do in one day. We had to block the forwarding. As a result we may not have received all the email submissions.

Please send again to jimharmonotr@charter.net. Any successful receipt is acceptable, but email is easier to work with because it doesn't have to be retyped

Of course we have to run members obits, but we would much prefer to run short articles on the current or past works of members.

--Bgh

FANZINE RETROSPECTIVE 5

by Jon D. Swartz

In the fifth Fanzine Retrospective we return to the early 1950s to take a close look at another prominent fanzine from that period. The particular issue under review is interesting to this reviewer for multiple reasons: its content, its format, and the SF club that produced it.

***Sinisterra* for Autumn 1950, (Volume 1, Number 3)**

Format/Policies: Published by The Nameless Ones, a SF club in Seattle, Washington (see Note), *Sinisterra* was the club's first fanzine but it appeared under this title for only eight issues: five quarterly issues in the early 1950s, with the remaining three appearing at ever-lengthening intervals until the mid-1950s. After that, *Cry of the Nameless* (formerly a free, monthly mimeographed newsletter mainly for the benefit of club members) became the club's main publication, winning the Hugo in 1960. The covers of the two issues of *Sinisterra* in my possession both are in color and composed of a type of construction paper that has an almost cloth-like feel to it. The issue under review here, the third one published, also has a photograph glued to the front cover. The photo is of Bea Mahaffey dancing at a Norwescon Ball with an "alien" in costume (identified on the contents page as Phillip Barker, a member of The Nameless Ones). Another club member, Ed Wyman, took the photo. The issue's production was a combination of mimeography, offset, and other production processes. The size was 7 by 8½ inches, there were 52 pages (not counting covers), and the price was 25¢. The title page indicated this was "a limited edition," and #143 is hand-stamped on my copy.

Contributors/Contributions: A two-page SF story, "The Dead Planet" by Clark E. Crouch (illustrated by L. Garcone), lead off the issue; "Rejects of Time", a Hall of Shame Selection by F. M. Busby (also illustrated by Garcone), a parody sequel to "Rejects of Space" followed. A section of "Miscellaneous Poetry" consisted of seven poems by seven different contributors: Martin Wall, Julia Woodard, August Adelund, Delcie Stuart, Clyed (sic?) Bacon, G. M. Carr, and Gordon Springer. Illustrations in the poetry section were by Mrs. Carr and Phillip Barker. The other main feature of the issue was Part I of a serial, "Termitaria," by Melville H. Hatch and Daniel E. Bonnell.

Other Features/Contents: An interesting feature of *Sinisterra* was the inclusion of photographs on the covers and/or interior pages. This issue contained several

pages of photographs of SF fans at the Norwescon, in a special Pictorial Section divided into four parts: Celebrities (report by Phillip Barker), General (report by Wallace Weber), Nameless Ones (report by G. M. Carr), and Famous Fans & Portland People (report by Alderson Fry). At the time, Fry was a medical librarian at the University of Washington. Beatrice Mahaffey, pictured in two of the sections (in addition to the cover) had to have been one of the most attractive women in SF fandom/prodom. If she wasn't, she was certainly one of the most photogenic. I don't think I've ever seen an unflattering photo of her, or one in which she appeared in an unattractive pose. She and her sister Pat were active in the Cincinnati Fantasy Group in the 1940s-1950s, and Bea was associated with The Spectator Club, an apa, around the same time. Pat was later the subject of a hoax appearance at the 1954 Supermancon, the second convention held in Manchester, England. Bea Mahaffey (1926-1987) met Raymond Palmer in 1949 at Cinvention, and Palmer hired her to work on his new SF prozine, *Other Worlds*, being published in Chicago. She worked on various Palmer publications for about five years, and some critics thought she was a better editor than Palmer. Bea was elected to First Fandom's Hall of Fame in 1987. Many members of The Nameless Ones are pictured in the Pictorial Sections.

No ads were included in this issue, but an "Agony Column" on the last page carried several clever fake ads (e.g., "Be a successful writer! Buy a PERFECTIONIST TYPEWRITER. This machine automatically rejects ungrammatical or miss-spelled phrases. Guaranteed not to write an imperfect word. Only a limited supply of 50 left; order now from 'PERFECTIONIST TYPEWRITER CO.' Critters Creek, Mu.").

LoCs were from Buryle Payne, Wally Weber, "Buck" Austin, and Franklyn M. Dietz, Jr., all with addresses in the state of Washington, except for the one from Dietz. (Dietz was a Long Island, NY fan who edited/published his zine *Science, Fantasy, and Science Fiction* during the late 1940s-early 1950s). An unsigned, rather rambling, one-page editorial completed this issue of *Sinisterra*; its contents can be summed up as 1) against "wishful dreaming" and 2) for the ideals of "honor, and personal integrity, and decency, and a determination to do that which is right."

Production of the issue was credited to the following businesses and individuals: Andrews' Letter Shop (lithographs), Wolf Den Book Shop (mimeograph), Western Refrigeration Co. (plant and labor), and W. Weber, Ed Wyman, Jess Terry, and Bill Hamlin (pictures).

Conclusions: This was the first official external fanzine of The Nameless Ones,

followed by *The Cry of the Nameless*; which became more famous when the club decided to make it available for subscriptions. This occurred around 1954, after 75 issues of *Cry* had already been published. F. M. Busby has written of *Sinisterra* that it was "a showcase of club talent: of the club, by the club, and for the club." Warner has reported that Mrs. Carr (named best new fan in a N3F poll in 1950) and Richard Frahm were the driving forces behind *Sinisterra*, which he described as the "elaborate publication" of the club. From the perspective of 50+ years, *Sinisterra* can be viewed as an outstanding fanzine of its time, especially with regard to its production values. The amount of work involved in obtaining and pasting photographs on all the copies of an issue leaves me marvelling at the industry of those who were involved in doing it. (The other *Sinisterra* issue in my possession (Volume 1, Number 2) also boasts a printed insert.)

In addition to Bea Maffey, inductees into First Fandom's Hall of Fame pictured in this issue include E. E. "Doc" Smith, Murray Leinster, Forrest J. Ackerman, Wilson "Bob" Tucker, and Lloyd A. Eshbach. Other past/present members of First Fandom mentioned were William "Buck" Austin, G. M. Carr, Bill Evans, Alderson Fry, Bill Hamlin, Bob Pavlat, and Harry Warner, Jr.

Note: So-called because the members couldn't agree upon a name for the club. Members of *The Nameless Ones* cited by name in this issue: Phillip Barker, G. M. Carr, Richard Frahm, Burnett R. Toskey, Wally Weber, and Ed Wyman.

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Pavlat, Bob & Bill Evans. *Fanzine Index*. Hyattsville, MD: Authors, 1952-1959.

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A Word of Appreciation: First Fandom member Robert Peterson was kind enough to send me a box of fanzines he no longer wanted. I plan to review some of them in future *Fanzine Retrospectives*. Thanks again, Bob!

TRANSITIONS

HAL CLEMENT

Harry Clement Stubbs, 81, a science fiction writer whose most famous novel was "Mission of Gravity" under the pseudonym Hal Clement, died Oct. 29 of natural causes in Milton, Mass.

Known for pairing information with imagination, Stubbs was a leader in the world-building science fiction genre – in which writers employ plausible science to create a fictional world.

"Mission of Gravity," first serialized in *Astounding Science Fiction* (now *Analog*) magazine in 1953, was set on a disc-like planet called Mesklin. The planet had a gravity 700 times that of Earth, and a 6-inch fall could be fatal to natives.

Born in Somerville, Mass., and reared in Boston, Stubbs became intrigued with science and science fiction in 1930 by a Buck Rogers comic strip. Seeking explanations, he checked out an astronomy book and Jules Verne's novel "Trip to the Moon" from the public library. He went on to earn a bachelor's in astronomy from Harvard, and after serving as Army Air Forces bomber pilot toward the end of World War II, obtained a master's in education from Boston University and a master's in chemistry from Simmons College.

Stubbs, who taught high school science for 40 years, published about 18 Hal Clement science fiction books and numerous short stories, as well as scholarly science articles under that name.

Submitted by Noreen Shaw from L A Times, Wed., Nov. 5, 2003.



Courtesy of Noreen Shaw

LLOYD ARTHUR ESHBACH

Lloyd Arthur Eshbach was borne June 20, 1910 and died Oct. 29, 2004. It was a long life, lived fully. Much of it was devoted to science fiction.

From his birthplace of Palm, Pennsylvania, he moved to Reading where he began reading SF in his teens, contributing to the lettercols, and graduating to selling a story, the third one he ever wrote, to *Science Wonder Stories*. Many others were to follow.

His interests turned to publishing and he founded two magazines, *The Galleon* and *Marvel Tales* early in the 1930s. He moved to books in 1946 and started Fantasy Press, the first small press to issue hardcover books of major SF authors such as Jack Williams, John W. Campbell Jr., Robert Heinlein and the beloved E.E. Smith, creator of the Lensman series.

During the next five years over thirty hardcover books appeared in editions of around 3500 copies each. Two years later, two more books appeared under the imprint of Polaris Press.

Eshbach continued his own writing career late in life with several novels including *The Scroll of Lucifer*, 1990. His autobiography, *Over My Shoulder: Reflections on a Science Fiction Era*, 1982, offers marvelous insights into his times.

Guest of Honor at the World Science Fiction Convention, 1949, and World Fantasy Convention, 1995, he was long an active member of First Fandom.

The author-publisher worked in the field of religious publications from the middle nineteen-fifties until he retired in 1975, primarily for the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

Thereafter, he became pastor of the Evangelical Congregational Church, Mount Culmen near Bowmansville, Lancaster County. In 1976, he moved to Reading and in 1977 served at Trinity EC Church, Womelsdorf.

Jim Harmon, based on information from the SFWA website. Photo: 1953 Philadelphia SF convention. Pictured are John Campbell Jr, unidentified fan, Lloyd Eshbach, and George O. Smith.

MARGUERITE McCLURE BRADBURY

Marguerite McClure died November 25, 2003.

Does anyone think that the *Martian Chronicles* or the other great Ray Bradbury works would have been written and would have become the works they are without the efforts of Marguerite Bradbury? Long before the term "working wife" was conceived, Marguerite Bradbury worked full-time to enable Ray to devote his efforts to developing as a writer. -- bgh

JULIUS SCHWARTZ

Julius Schwartz died February 8, 2004, President Joanie Knappenberger reported to SCIENTIFICITON. He was born in 1915, making him 89 at the time. His life spanned most of the Twentieth Century, but his mind went far beyond it.

In high school he was attracted to the early science fiction magazines beginning with AMAZING STORIES, then SCIENCE WONDER STORIES, WEIRD TALES and a few others that came on the market. He wrote letters to these magazines and through addresses on other letters to the editor he contacted Mort Weisinger in the Bronx, who was to become a lifelong friend and business partner, and Forrest J. Ackerman out in California. They had a club, "The Scienceers" and through it they published the first of all SF fanzines, "The Time Traveler". Later he would include in the circle Jerry Seigel and Joe Shuster (who would go to create the most famous SF character of all time, Superman).

Schwartz would become the first successful agent for SF with his Solar Sales agency. He would make the first sales for Isaac Asimov and H.P. Lovecraft and a new kid named Ray Bradbury. This editor met him as a teen-ager at some SF convention (later we couldn't decide which) and he offered to represent me. Somehow that never came to be, but shows Julie's incredible fraternity and generosity.

His greatest success came as a comic book editor for DC, where he initiated the return of The Flash and most importantly, the Justice League (revamped Justice Society). His ideas were borrowed by Marvel for Fantastic Four, and the Silver Age bloomed into fame and fortune. -- JH