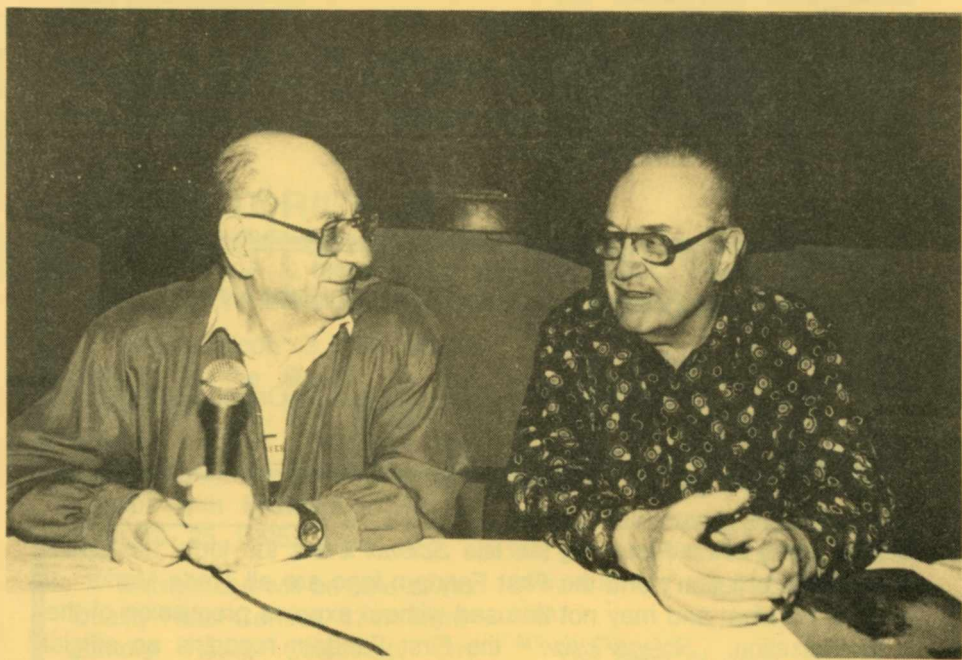


ScientiFiction

Summer, 1995



The First Fandom Report



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On the cover: Julius Schwartz and Forrest J. Ackerman at the Second First Fandom Reunion, Rivercon, Louisville, KY, July, 1994.

Photo By Sustaining Patrol John L. Coker, III, Orlando, Florida

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BOY, HAVE WE GOT NEWS!

TWO PICKED FOR POSTHUMOUS AWARDS

KORNBLUTH, WEISINGER GET NOD

The Posthumous Awards Committee, chaired by Roger Sims, has decided that two individuals are worthy of receiving the 1995 posthumous Hall of Fame award. They are Cyril Kornbluth and Mort Weisinger.

The awards will be presented at Archon, the site of the 1995 First Fandom Reunion, in June.

made payable to Pat Sims at 34 Creekwood Square, Glendale, OH 45246. Banquet tickets (this is the Midwestcon banquet) are \$20, and should be reserved in advance.

Attendance at the FanHistoricon events on Saturday is free to Midwestcon members, but donations are welcome, and should be sent to Pat Sims.

For more information about FanHistoricon 3, contact Dick & Leah Smith, 410 W. Willow Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070. USA phone: (708) 294-1950; e-mail dick@smith.chi.il.us

FANHISTORICAON 3 SET FOR CINCY

TIE-IN WITH MIDWESTCON

FanHistoricon 3, an official meeting of the Society for the Preservation of the History of Science Fiction Fandom: The Timebinders, will be held in conjunction with Midwestcon 46 on June 22 - 25, 1995.

Midwestcon will be held at the Quality Hotel Central, 4747 Montgomery Road, Cincinnati, OH 45212. Rooms are \$72 per night and include breakfast. Membership in Midwestcon is \$20 before June 1, and \$25 at the door. Membership checks should be

POGO REPRINTED

NEW EDITIONS READY NOW

The Sunday Comics Store has entered into an exclusive arrangement with the family of Walt Kelly and has begun the reprinting of the Pogo books in deluxe hardcover editions. The first group of ten are being printed now, and five are currently available.

The price of each volume is \$19.95, but the publishers have announced pre-publication offers which offer savings on complete sets.

The volumes currently being

reprinted are: "Pogo Puce Stamp Catalog", "Prehysterical Pogo (in Pandemonia)", "The Return of Pogo", "Beau Pogo", "Pogo Sunday Book", "Deck Us All with Boston Charlie", "Pogo's Sunday Punch", "Equal Time for Pogo", "Impollutable Pogo", and "We Have Met the Enemy..."

The Sunday Comics store also offers original Pogomania and Pogo-related items. For more information write to:

Sunday Comics Store

Free Pogo Newsletter

1200 High Ridge Road

Stamford, CT 06905

ScientiFiction

PUBLISHES SCIEN- TIFCTION

OLD ROOTS RUN DEEP

In a move to return to its roots, *ScientiFiction* has decided to begin publishing fiction. Its first story, "Spookball," is the first story written by Founding Member George H. Jones, M.D.

ScientiFiction is actively soliciting manuscripts which tell stories in the general style of *Astounding*, *Amazing*, *Startling*, and *Unknown*. Payment is offered at the rate of 1/4¢ per word on publication. The usual rules of manuscript submission apply, and electronic submis-

sion is encouraged.

Potential writers are encouraged to read the stf of the 1930s and 1940s for stylistic examples.

SFRA SETS ANNUAL MEETING

NORTH DAKOTA GETS NOD

The Science Fiction Research Association has scheduled its 1995 conference for June 22-25 at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, ND.

Grand Forks boasts twelve movie theaters, three golf courses, two large shopping malls, two museums, and many other attractions. Accommodations are available in the UND dorms for \$25.00 per night. All rooms have private baths and are air conditioned. A Holiday Inn (\$48-\$58) and Econolodge (\$33-\$36) are also available.

A two hour riverboat dinner cruise trip is planned, as well as a Saturday night banquet, a tour of the Grand Forks AFB, and other diversions.

Attendance fees are \$105 until May 1, \$115 until June 21, and \$125 at the door.

For more information contact:

B. Diane Miller

1402 4th Avenue North

Grand Forks, ND 58203-3145

(701) 775-5308

E-Mail:

ud068741@vm1.nodak.edu
(Internet)

d.miller14.geis.com (GEnie)

SPEER WORK REPRINTED

ARCTURUS PRESS REPRINTS HISTORY

Arcturus Press recently reprinted Jack Speer's history of Fandom "Up To Now." This historical essay was first published in "Full Length Articles" in 1939, and was first reprinted in Dick Eney's "A Sense of FAPA" in 1962.

The history covers such topics as The First Staple War, The Second Convention and the Shift of Power, The Founding of the FAPA, ghughu and FooFoo, and New Fandom's Struggle for Recognition."

This is a personal history which is full of anecdotes and in which the author's inimitable sense of humor shines forth. It has been published in a limited edition of 100 copies from:

Arcturus Press

Richard C. Newsome

281 Flatbush Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11217

No price is listed, but a generous donation is certainly sugges-

ted.

Arcturus Press continues to reprint fan history. Its next project is "Hammer and Tongs" by Clyde Beck.

NEW MEMBERS

The following is a new Founding Member of First Fandom:

H.L. Gold

2258 Via Puerta, H

Laguna Hills, CA 92653

The following associate member has been accepted:

Roy R. Wood

4709 Rutherford

El Paso, TX 79924

Welcome Dinosaurs!

APPLICATIONS

The following has applied for associate membership:

Jerry Gray Corder

SUSTAINING PATRON

We have a new sustaining patron, to wit:

Chris Miracle

Welcome aboard!

REVENGE OF THE SCI-FAN

WILD WEST HI-JINKS

Well, we are fairly well organized by now. I have the main electrical circuits wired in my shop and am able to do rudimentary work on an as-needed basis. I am back on-line, and have a new e-mail address for those of you who wish to communicate electronically. It's mschulzi@pro-gal-lup.cts.com

That's right, I didn't put a period after my address. I don't want anyone thinking that the Internet address codes have undergone some radical change.

In the move out here I lost my full Internet access, but I think I'm ahead of the game because of it. Almost every mag I get trumpets the Internet and its manifold virtues. In point of fact I've found the 'net to be a horrid waste of time. When I have only a few minutes to devote to on-line activity a day, I don't want to have to wade through the various sites and servers to see if there might be something interesting for me to look at.

Oh, sure I've logged on to the CERN site. It's a wonderland for stf fans. But it takes forever to download their pictures and to search for something you want to

H. L. Gold Wants Your Autograph!

That's right, First Fandom's newest member wants your John Hancock. Just write him a letter or send him your autograph along with an SASE. He'll reciprocate with a premium for the revived *Galaxy*, and a mounted, wallet-sized photograph of himself as he is now (age 80).

Remember, write to:

H.L. Gold
2258 Via Puerta, H
Laguna Hills, CA 92653
(714) 586-6919

spend the time downloading. When you're through with the process you discover you're still better off with a book.

E-mail is quite enough for me right now.

With this *ScientiFiction* starts publishing scientifiiction. The move was serendipitous, the result of an unsolicited mss from one of our members. The story happened to be good so I bought it. Yes, bought, and that is the policy as of now. I will buy fiction for inclusion in this mag. I will pay as little for it as I can, but I will pay. The standard rules of submission apply, so start sending in those stories, folks.

John L. Coker, III informs me that he has had nice response to his offer to supply transcripts of the reunion doings at Rivercon. He still has some left, and you can get your very own for six (6) first class stamps and your business card or your name and address on a 3X5 file card. Send to John L. Coker, III, 3701 Glen Garry Lane, Orlando, FL 32803.

We had good response to the listings of ephemera in the last ish. I will not repeat the listing this, so if you still want some of our back issues and other goodies, please refer to the Spring ish. I am considering pubbing a member services brochure which will be sent out separately. Any suggestions?

Horace Gold phoned me a month or so ago, and regaled me with his usual fine wit and commentary. He gave me a story plot which I now pass on to you: Howard Stern is sent back into the past to prevent the conception of Rush Limbaugh. To Mr. Stern's chagrin he discovers that he becomes R.L.'s father.

Horace also suggested that SFWA (you know, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association) should develop a standard eulogy suitable for newcomer, beginner best seller, or retiree. It should be delivered by an elected eulogizer, and followed by an elected roastmaster's 21-pun salute. Audio and video tapes of the event would be made available to all at a nominal cost.

Somehow I get the feeling that H.L. was not entirely facetious with that last comment.

Ben Indick had a review of "From Fiawol to Gafia: All About Fandom" published in "Science Fiction Studies," Vol. 22 (1995), PP. 130-132. He was kind enough to send me an offprint. The review is excellent and the book itself appears interesting.

Please remember that all members of First Fandom are entitled to free ads in *ScientiFiction*. Each ad will be printed as space permits, but there is no charge.

DEADLINES

The deadlines for First Fandom events and *StFare* as follows:

First Fandom:

May 31, 1995 -- last date for nominations for 1996 Hall of Fame award.

June, 1995 -- Dues Notices, Hall of Fame Ballots, Roster all sent out.

December 31, 1995 -- Last date ballots for HoF voting will be accepted.

SciFiction.

April 15, 1995 -- Closing date for Summer ish.

July 15, 1995 -- Closing date for Fall ish.

October 22, 1995 -- Closing date for Winter ish.

January 20, 1996 -- Closing date for Spring, 1996 ish.

DUES

Dues in First Fandom remain \$5.00 per year. The number on your mailing label will tell you to the end of which year your dues are paid. Please keep your dues current if you possibly can.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

II

THE HUGO

by

Robert A. Madle

In the Winter 1994 *SciFiction*, an article appeared by this writer, titled "Genesis: How It All Began," which described the formation of FIRST FANDOM. In the article I mentioned that one of the reasons for the formation of FIRST FANDOM was to recognize authors who would never get a HUGO. Our enterprising and aggressive editor then inserted a statement which said, "This is not quite so. The Hugo award was created by Don, Lou and a few others. In 1958 the recipients of the award were still mainly hand-picked."

I read this statement several times, trying to discern how anything could be so utterly incorrect. Don and Lou -- and the few others -- had absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the creation of the HUGO. The idea of the HUGO came about during the planning stages of the 1953 WORLDCON, PHILCON II, in the later part of 1952. Hal Lynch devised the idea when he said to me, "Why don't we give out awards at the PHILCON, sort of like the OSCARS?" I thought it was a great idea and said, "Yes -- and we could call

them HUGOs, named after Hugo Gernsback." The idea was discussed with Chairman Jim Williams who brought it up at the subsequent meeting, and it was accepted unanimously.

It should be noted that, during the past few years, there have been several interesting attempts to revise history related to the creation of the Hugo -- in addition to Editor Schulzinger's statement. Lloyd Eshbach, in his excellent memoir "Over My Shoulder," quotes Oswald Train as saying that Jim Williams came up with the HUGO appellation, even though history has given me credit for it. What actually occurred is as described above as Hal Lynch can -- and has -- verified.

A far more important -- and outrageous -- statement was made by Noreen Falasca in an article for *Thrust* several years ago. Her totally inaccurate claim was that it was the 1955 CLEVENTION that came up with the HUGOs (Noreen was Co-Chairman of this convention). It is true that the San Francisco 1954 group chose to ignore the HUGO awards -- as they were very unhappy with the PSFS who had "stolen" the 1953 convention from them in Chicago in 1952 -- and that Cleveland picked up and continued the awards. But awards *were* given out at PHILCON. The recipient for best new author, Philip J. Farmer, wrote a reply to Falasca saying that he may have

been dreaming, but he distinctly remembered getting a HUGO, which he still had. Also, at the first awards ceremony, Forrest J. Ackerman refused his and said that an English fan -- Ted Carnell I believe -- should get it.

In 1953, when the award was conceived, I was writing a department ("Inside Science Fiction") for Robert W. Lowndes's magazines *Dynamic Science Fiction* and *Future Fiction*. In many of these issues -- before and after the convention -- I popularized the Achievement Awards and the Hugos. This is all printed fact and for the record -- and long before the 1955 CLEVENTION. But credit must be given to them for continuing the awards -- especially to Ben Jason -- who did the mechanical and artistic work on the actual HUGOs in 1955.

The statement made by Editor Schulzinger that "In 1958, the recipients of the award were still mainly hand-picked" is not at all true. From the very beginning ballots were distributed, and the fans voted. True, in 1953 the returns were low, but the winners were decided by the fans. In fact the vote for Best Magazine was so close that it was determined to be a tie. At all subsequent conventions ballots *were* distributed. (Is it possible that Mark has the Hugos and FIRST FANDOM HALL OF FAME awards confused? I say this because in the early years of the FF awards the

recipients *were* hand-picked by the officers.) Anyway, by 1956 and NYCON II, hundreds of ballots were distributed and returned. Dave Kyle was Chairman, and it was during the development of this convention that the WORLD S-F SOCIETY actually appeared -- and exists to this day. As does the HUGO -- one of the most important ideas to come out of the fan ranks.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Mark just reminded me that the deadline is near. Not much has happened during the milder than usual winter. We are getting ready for a few conventions this spring and summer. I am going to start in May with The Knoxville Western Film Festival which has nothing to do with SF but is a lot of fun. I will get to meet Gordon Scott who many believe to be the best of the silver screen's Tarzans. Beside those considerations, I will conduct a considerable amount of business there which makes it tax deductible. When I looked up the Caravan's ad in The Big Reel, I found right next to it a film festival called Rising Star. They advertised

guests such as Forrest J. Ackerman, authors Fred Pohl and Ray Bradbury. After Knoxville will come either Midwestcon or Archcon or maybe both. I will be attending Pulpcon in August. I have not decided about NASFIC. I don't know if I want to brave that large a convention or not. Mary Lu Lockhart is still trying to talk Mary Ann and I into the Worldcon in Glasgow. It is tempting since the Worldcons held outside the country are smaller.

The Lockharts, Mary Ann, Wesley and I took a trip south for Spring Break. That is, south to Madison Indiana to visit with Joe Hensley. We had dinner with the Honest Judge and his Wife. The following day Joe showed us the highlights of Madison which is a delightful small city.

I will cut this short since Mark informs me that this issue is about full.

Until next time-----

Ray

Spookball

by

George H. Jones, M.D.

Goose was quite a pitcher, but no one including himself ever knew just where his pitches actually went!

I hope this won't be the last time I come out here to the bluffs. It's a beautiful spot, though with the grass and tree growth it has a wild look. The wind blows briskly today from the ocean and all is still except for a few gulls soaring about and giving their calls.

I can just see the rusty girders sticking out of the sand and running up into the foothills. It's funny how time produces myths, but I no longer protest when I'm told that once an amusement park was here. It's easier than trying to tell the truth

But I forget that I'm ahead of you. Just pull up a grassy knoll and let me begin at the beginning.

I was covering the spring training camps in Florida that year when I noticed Goose. He must not have been over eighteen years old and, at 6 feet 7 inches tall and maybe only 170 pounds, he was a sight. All bones and angles. Still, there was something

about him that made you watch him and not laugh. His windup was pretzel-like and his pitch hopped all the way to the plate. I'll bet he was pitching better than 90 mph even then when he was just out of some west Texas high school whose name you couldn't remember if you wanted to.

The next time I saw him was in a little Montana league when I went to see a slugger who turned into yesterday's news after less than a season. Now Goose was burning up that league with a 16 and 2 record, and an ERA that was less than 3. He finished that year with the Beavers who had signed him up two years before and finally decided to let him get in a couple of games at the end of the season. But those games were where my story really starts.

Forget his record, which was the best for any rookie in many years; the baseball itself is the hero. This ball started hopping like

it was alive from the second it left his hand, and really went wild about ten feet from the plate. It had so much zip that you had trouble seeing it. And so did the batters. There was a gap just in front of the plate where I'd swear the ball vanished for a fraction of a second. His strikeout record is still spoken of with wonder.

My regular assignment was to follow the Beavers both at home and away. After a while I noticed that if the day was hazy, or if we were at a night game that "gap" seemed to get longer. When that happened even the catcher began to miff the ball and the batters started swinging on the third strike, hoping that they could make a run for first base when the ball was dropped.

It was in St. Louis when that "gap" really got spooky. I was watching the ball hopping its way toward the plate, and then it just disappeared. The catcher's head spun around like a grapefruit on ball bearings looking for it; the ump didn't make a call, and the game just paused.

Then, *thut*, the ball hit the catcher in the chest protector and knocked him, off balance, right on his kiester. The umpire lied that he had called time, and called for the pitch to be thrown again.

After the game I asked Knuckles, the catcher, about what happened. He said the dust blew up in his eyes as the ball got

there. When I asked him about the delay in its arrival he threw me a dirty look and walked off.

So I waited for Goose to come out of the locker room and collared him. He made the usual excuses about having to do his laundry or something, but I just hung on until he got the idea that I wasn't going to leave without an answer.

"Mr. Randy," he finally said, "what you saw today ain't nothing. I can make that ball stay away for a whole second or more."

"Show me," I demanded.

The next Saturday morning I'll never forget. Goose got on the mound with no one behind the plate, and started pitching at the backstop. Of course there was no one in the park but the two of us, and I'm sure he wouldn't have done it otherwise. On about the sixth pitch the ball just disappeared about ten feet from the plate like it always did, but this time it didn't come back for what I estimated was about two seconds. Then it hit the backstop with a resounding *thump*, and fell to the ground.

I stood there, stunned; there wasn't any explanation for what just happened. Then I went over, picked up the ball, looked at it, then at Goose, and walked out to the mound.

"I don't know," Goose anticipated my question. "It just hap-

pens. I can do it all the time, but I hold back just enough to fool the batters."

"But how do you make it happen?"

He screwed up his face trying to put actions into words. "It's the spin I can get with my windup," he decided. "You see my arms are kinda long and they twist kinda funny. With a big overhand, and a lot of wrist action I get this spookball."

Spookball, that's what it was, all right. "And you can keep doing it?"

"Almost every time after I'm warm. And Mr. Randy," his voice dropped almost to a whisper, "sometimes they don't come back."

That was news to me. "Not at all?"

"Sometimes I come back later in the evening, and I find them right there at the backstop."

"Same ball?"

He shrugged. "I've marked them."

I didn't sleep too well or too long that night. I kept seeing balls disappearing and coming back again, big balls, little balls, white balls, colored balls. I woke up thinking about them.

And what was I going to do with what I found out? I wasn't about to write it up because

Goose told me he wouldn't ever throw one of those disappearing balls again if I did. And then maybe I was going nuts, hadn't really seen those balls wink out like turned off light bulbs. Too much time on the road, too many lonely nights, it could happen maybe. So I watched the games, wrote my stories, and kept those vanishing balls to myself.

It was later in the season with Goose really burning them in, and building up quite a record for a rookie in the majors, that I noticed the little guy with the camera. He was at every game. He usually sat in different places, but he only filmed Goose. After a while I saw that he managed to get every pitch. And he got them from every angle.

After a month I got right up behind him just before the game. "You're really a fan, aren't you?" I tried to sound casual.

He nodded, still fiddling with his camera. It was one of those expensive foreign cine machines with a huge telephoto lens on it and a tripod almost as big as he was. The game started, and I kept my place and threw comments at him from time to time. He never missed filming a pitch Goose threw, never answered me except to nod or shake his head. After Goose's last turn on the mound he packed up, smiled politely at me, and was gone.

I took up residence behind the

guy for the next couple of months, kept trying to get a word or anything out of him. Nothing. That is until after Goose threw a spectacular spookball and I absently commented that it was all in the windup. We wound up having a few beers in a nearby tavern drawing spookball trails on the tabletop.

Charles Everett Masters had a Ph.D. in physics, and wasn't anything like you'd expect someone like that to be. Sure he had bushy white hair, stooped shoulders, bright eyes that got even brighter when he was talking about something he enjoyed. But he talked in a way I could understand, and he didn't do it by assuming my brain was the size of those baseballs I wrote about. Height and dedication aside, Masters was a Nice Guy.

After a couple more weeks of filming Goose and talking over beers he invited me to his place. It was a rundown warehouse near the tracks. Masters had turned one end of the ground floor into a workshop. He lived upstairs in one big room.

"Mr. Randolph," he said after showing me around, "I need a confidant. I've asked around, even written some letters, and I know you can be trusted."

I started to say something stupid like what was he doing checking up on me, but he held up a hand to stop me.

"All I'm asking is that you keep everything I'm going to tell and show you secret until I give you the okay. Then you'll have the exclusive story on it. Oh, and if anything happens to me it's all yours to tell anyway. If you find out I'm some kind of crook, and that I'm conning you, our agreement comes to an end. Will you give me your word on this?"

I was glad he shut me up, he was a smart guy all right. I nodded my agreement, and from then on I was an observer in the most unbelievable thing I or anyone else has ever seen.

Doc Masters had hours of film taken at all angles of Goose throwing that spookball of his. He analyzed it by using charts and formulas that he said broke down the muscle action of an athlete's performance into math formulas. He even worked out some formulas of his own, thick packs of paper covered with symbols I never saw before. He said it had to do with something called topology, but it didn't mean anything to me.

What those symbols did, he said, was to show the motion of the baseball *after* it left Goose's hand, not before.

"You mean you analyzed Goose's windup and then tossed it out?"

"That's it," he nodded. "It's the movement of the ball that

creates the effect. The windup only sets the ball in motion."

One night he took me down to the workshop and uncovered what looked like a miniature scenic railway, the kind of thing I used to ride at amusement parks when I was a kid.

"This is a physical representation of the results of all the data I analyzed," he said. "A steel ball placed here at the beginning of the rail given the proper acceleration will perform exactly as Goose's spookball. The track's a little short, but good enough for demonstrations."

Then he moved a frame holding a piece of paper about a foot square some two feet away from the far end of the track so that a ball rolling along that course would punch right through it. Next he moved something that looked a little like a rifle and a lot like something out of a horror movie to the start of the track, put a metal ball in one end, and spent about fifteen minutes fiddling with dials and knobs that seemed to aim the thing.

"Now watch this." He flashed a grin at me and stabbed his finger at a button.

There was a "Bang!" from the gun, and I caught a glimpse of a silver streak whizzing around the track. I looked at the piece of paper in the frame. It was untorn.

"You missed," I said.

"Keep looking at the paper," Masters shouted, and at the same instant the paper tore, the metal ball hit the far wall and dropped to the floor with a metallic thunk.

"Do you know what you just saw?" Masters asked.

"There was a delay between when I thought the ball was going to hit the paper and when it actually did." Then that light went on over my head. "Hey, that's just like Goose's spookball. You did it! But...where did that little ball go?"

"Just where my equations predicted. Into another dimension."

"You've got to be kidding. How many times have you done it?"

He looked at a notebook lying next to the device. "Successfully, seventeen times. Unsuccessfully, 1252 times. And one time only the ball never came back. And one time it came back, but...well I guess I'll have to show you."

He went to a cabinet, took out a box. In it was another steel ball resting on a wad of cotton. He handed it to me. "What do you see?"

I shrugged. "Looks like any other steel ball."

He took it back from me, walked over to a nearby table, and put it under a microscope.

"Now look at it," he sugges-

ted.

I peered through the eye-piece. There seemed to be tiny scratches covering the surface of the ball. I told him.

"Yes, scratches," Masters said, "scratches from another dimension. Scratches that look like some advanced mathematical formula I can partially understand." He retrieved the ball and stared at it as if trying to see the lilliputian marks with his bare eyes. "I think it's a full explanation of what happened to this ball, and how to reproduce it. Someone 'there' found the ball, inscribed it, and sent it back to us."

I understood, and as I stood there I started to shiver in a cold sweat. To know there was another world, somewhere, maybe right here and now, maybe a million years ago or to be. And if there was one, then how many more might there be?

The rest of the day was a blur. I remember Masters going on and on about time frames and parallel worlds, drawing incomprehensible diagrams and fiddling with that funny track of his. Finally I went home, dropped into bed, and slept. I awakened 24 hours later feeling a lot better.

The next day I called Masters, but he didn't answer. After another two days I got up enough courage to go back to his workshop. It was locked. I began to wonder if I had

dreamed all that crazy stuff.

But my job was to follow the Beavers, that was how I earned my living, and I went back to it. Goose was taking his turn on the pitcher's mound, and not doing as well as before. His balls didn't seem to jump and vanish the way they used to. I asked him about it.

"Mr. Randy, there was too much of a hooraw going on about my pitching. You know, balls disappearing off and on. And there were too many questions being asked. So now I don't throw like I used to. I just put a little jump on the pitch, and that's usually enough."

And that's where it stayed. Goose kept that "little jump," and he settled down to being a good, but not outstanding ball player. I followed the games and wrote my pieces, and sometimes I let myself think about Doc Masters. When the thinking got to be too much I called, but got no answer. I even drove to his place several times at night, but there weren't any lights. I figured he had just given my leg an almighty yank, and started to forget about it.

About a year later the phone rang. "Mr. Randolph," It was Masters. "Could you come by today?"

Could I come by? The memories flooded back, and I knew wild horses couldn't keep me away. I don't even remember the drive over.

Masters met me at the door. He was the same intense, but friendly, guy I remembered, but there was an added air of excitement about him.

"Can you get three days off?" he asked. He gave no reason.

I thought about it. The Beavers were on a road trip to the West Coast, and I could get coverage out there without any trouble. I told him yes, and he told me where to meet him the next day.

The place he told me to go to was up the coast past Eastport. I drove until I reached the right turnoff. It headed toward the water. After a few miles there was an old wrought iron gate, and beyond it a road that looked like it wasn't used much. Eventually the road stopped, but the ruts continued. I steered slowly along the path until I got to a small, well-weathered wooden house.

I sat in the car, and then on the wooden porch. When the sun went down I opened the unlocked door and sat in darkness on a dusty sofa. Finally I heard another car drive up and stop. The door opened and lights came on. I don't know why I didn't look for a light switch. Never crossed my mind, I guess.

Masters was different from that morning. I mean he was so different I had a hard time believing him even when he insisted.

The Masters I knew was 60 or maybe older, but not this Masters. This guy was two inches taller, grey not white hair, no wrinkles, and had an appearance of intelligence and wholesomeness. That's the only way I can describe it -- intelligence and wholesomeness.

After an hour of listening to him retell our conversations and experiences of a year ago I had to finally admit that this was the Masters I knew, but a transformed Masters. He didn't offer an explanation for his change, I didn't ask for one because I had some suspicions I didn't even want to talk about. We had a rough supper in the tiny kitchen, and then turned in for the night. I don't know why but I slept like a log.

I awakened to the smell of coffee and bacon. While we ate Masters started to talk.

He had been to that other dimension. It must have been so; his appearance confirmed it.

"How did you do it?" I interrupted his flow of words.

"I built a transportation device similar to the one you saw in my lab. I can ride in it there and back again."

"Where's 'there'?"

He spread his hands in frustration. "There's no road map. There can't be. It's either here or there, now or then. Time and

dimensions do not matter." His voice dropped. "You know it's beautiful and terrible at the same time. They're wise, sentient, considerate...and cold."

"Who are they? What are they like?"

He shook his head. "I can't answer that, it can't *be* answered. I know that's not a good answer, but it's the best I can do. And it isn't important. What is important is their knowledge. If I can bring back with me only one tenth of one per cent. of only that which I understood, then we'll be a million times better off here. We'll be saved."

"Can I help?"

"That's why I asked you to come. You're my contact, my rope, my anchor in this tiny groove of time. This morning I'm going to go again. Your job, your important job, is to come back here the first day of every month." He handed me a shiny cube about an inch and a half on each side with a black button on one face. "This is a beacon to guide me back. They told me how to make it."

I hefted it in my hand. "It doesn't seem like much," I said.

"But it's so important. I know you won't understand this, but I've tried to get back here for ten thousand of our years, and look at me -- I'm younger than when I left! I've seen the dinosaurs, a few

cavemen, much violence." He pulled up his left sleeve to reveal a jagged scar on his forearm. "Look at this. Oh, but it's all in the past. But some is in the future."

He started to laugh as he pulled the sleeve down again. There was an edge of fear in it. I gripped the beacon cube even tighter in my fist.

"Remember," he admonished, "be here on the first of every month. The date isn't really important because I won't know it, but it's an interval. The anchor must be turned on. Just press the button. And turn it off the same way at the end of the day. It should last a long time. I should be back before it loses power. I hope."

We sat and looked at one another, neither one of us wanting to voice what ifs. Then he stood up, dusted his hands on his trousers. "Let's go. I want to get under way."

We walked out into the dawn, out into the most memorable day of my life.

The land was hilly here, and we climbed one hill and then another for several miles. Finally we crested a prominence and there, laid out in front of us, was a duplicate of the track I had seen in the lab from which the small steel ball was launched. But bigger.

This track was over a mile in

length. Sitting far above the ground at the starting point was what must have been the vehicle. I climbed up the ladder with him, and watched while he strapped himself into his seat. From what I could see the transporter was a hollow shell fitted inside of another shell with ball bearings between the two. All of this was fitted inside a frame that looked like a dime store gyroscope around which was still another shell. Everything was metal.

A wave of sadness washed over me as I helped Masters shut the door. He was going on an adventure, unexplainable, unimaginable, maybe even unreturnable. He was taking his chances in the hopes that he might bring back enough for the salvation of mankind. But salvation from what, to what, for what?

Once the doors were closed I took my post at a watchtower he pointed out some 800 yards away, and waited.

The fillings in my teeth started to sing. Then my hair stood on end. I could hear a throbbing as if huge generators were spinning somewhere nearby. The globe at the track head began to glow with a transparent sheen.

Then the ball started to move, slowly at first, picking up speed as it moved along the track. As it moved it changed colors, and the colors changed with its increasing speed from red to yellow, to

green, to blue and violet, and then to an indescribable haze as it shot along the mile-long track. It hurt my eyes to watch it, and I put down my binoculars.

The last thing I saw was nothing as it disappeared at the end of the track.

That was years ago. I've never missed being here at the first of every month, although the last year's been tough walking in the sand with this cane.

About six months ago the cube Masters gave me stopped vibrating when I pressed the switch, but I think it still works. I hope it does. He told me it would last.

You see he might be on that ship with Leif Erickson that came to Vineland, or he might be in the future with whatever comes after us.

Or he might still be searching for the way home.

I'm telling you this because you took an interest in me, because you thought I was more than just that old fellow who goes out to the old amusement park where he used to ride the scenic railway.

I want someone else to know what happened, because when he comes back I'm going off with him. There were two seats in that vehicle.

DINOSAUR DROP-PINGS

Dear Mark:

Another year and another nomination for the Hall of Fame.

I put forward the name of Erle Korshak for this honor. Erle is the man who taught me a tremendously valuable lesson early in life. He persuaded me to join the bidding committee for the 1940 Chicago worldcon. I joined, we won because there was no competition, and I wound up on the con committee.

That experience taught me never to do it again.

Best,

Bob Tucker

Dear Sir,

Allow me to congratulate your decision to commit time and effort to the worthwhile purpose of creating an affiliate status for First Fandom.

The "torch," if you will, of our appreciation for those things we cherish must be passed on to each succeeding generation, or we risk losing what we sincerely devote our efforts to preserving. Obviously, your organization shares this opinion, having modified the qualifications from being a reader since before 1939 to fanac

lasting at least 30 years.

I have been fortunate enough to receive the mentor-like nurturing you mentioned in your letter. Part of this nurturing has taken place through wonderful correspondence with writers and fans, many of whom meet First Fandom's criteria. Of especial delight have been my phone conversations with H.L. Gold.

Spurred on by my much-valued acquaintances -- with Mr. Gold and others, the non-fiction writings of Sam Moskowitz, Harry Warner, Jr., Lloyd Eshbach, et al., as well as publications like *Fantasy Commentator*, I have made great efforts to make up with persistence and devotion what I lack in years. In fact, at the moment I have a stack of books by Hamilton, C.L. Moore, Kuttner, Francis Stevens, Leinster, van Vogt, Keller, and Austin Hall I look forward to reading.

Again, allow me to applaud your efforts to recruit and nurture Sustaining Patrons, and I wish you continued success with your organization.

Respectfully,

Sean Donnelly

Dear Mark,

My introduction to SF was a battered copy of *Planet Stories* purchased at a second-hand book stall. Then I discovered *Amazing*,

Thrilling Wonder, *Startling*, and *Astounding*. I accumulated quite a stack of the pulps, but lost all except the *Astoundings*, they went into moving vans (army moves) and didn't come back out.

I entered the army immediately upon graduating high school (May, 1950), and was placed on the retired reserve list in September, 1980. Spent my army career in communication electronics. Married a lovely Japanese girl while in Japan; next month makes 39 years we've been together.

Took a swing at college and dropped out when my degree program was discontinued. Then went to work teaching basic electronics, and resigned in 1993 to stay home and take care of my wife. She has developed brittle diabetes.

My participation in First Fandom will likely be limited to correspondence. My wife is not an SF fan and we don't travel for recreation; medical considerations preclude.

Even so, I feel a great deal of pride in being considered for Associated Membership. I'll be in distinguished company with such people as Sam Moskowitz, 4E Ackerman, and Bob Tucker.

Sincerely,

Roy R. Wood

Dear Mark,

Many thanks for the current issue of the First Fandom Newsletter -- but noting that it lays copyright claim to the title "SciFiction" has me wondering as Wally Gillings used it on his printed fanzine. Its first issue was dated January 1937, and it saw around twelve issues -- I still have 'em in my files. Doesn't he have some sort of claim on the title? Okay, he's dead so the point is academic, but I'm just curious as to whether the title can now be copyrighted.

E.T. laws as per NASA -- sounds awfully complicated, but I suppose it's a case of locking the stable door *before* the horse departs.

Re disc recorders -- a friend of mine had one -- it was the size (and weight) of a coffin and definitely NOT portable -- without four pall-bearers. Sad thing you can't even buy reel-to-reel recorders nowadays apart from £600 professional jobs. Even cassette recorders can no longer record via mike, only from radio. Worst of all, I found out yesterday that one can no longer buy Standard 8 ciné film so bang go any of my planned animations. Projectors for 8mm are no longer available so all my racks of films will be useless when my dual-gauge projector packs up. It makes one wonder how much longer CDs will be available -- even to multimedia

PCs before being replaced by yet another storage method -- solid-state memory no doubt.

Ray Beam supports guns -- but if they were not so freely available would there be fewer "impulse" murders -- and fewer around for criminals (and others) to steal.

Oh well, all the best,

Terry Jeeves

Dear Mark:

The FanHistory group is headed by Peggy Rae Pavlat, 5709 Goucher Drive, College Park, MD 20740, and by our own Bruce Pelz. Hope you enjoy your new home.

Noreen Shaw

Dear Mark:

Mazel tov on your move! Although I could never willingly leave the Big Apple area, which has so many of my interests, I envy you your Southwest. Janet and I have had the privilege of visiting several times the wonders of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. The thrill of the immense plains and seeing rain-clouds pouring miles and miles away -- the canyons, mountains, mesas....smooth water rafting below the Glen Canyon dam...Solari dreaming in the desert.

Well, there are no theaters, museums and such in the depth and profusion of NYC either. So here I stay.

Congratulations to fellow FFers and FAPAers Harry Warner, Jr. and Jack Speer for their new laurel wreaths. I couldn't think of more eligible qualified honorees!

All best, again, and respects to your wife, who is a noble, generous lady!

Ben Indick

Dear Mark:

I've been curious about two questions. First, I was born on November 12, 1912, and I've often wondered how many First Fandom members are older than I am. Second, I started to read science fiction in 1922 in Gernsback's *Science and Invention*, and I've often wondered how many First Fandom members started earlier.

Prior to 1922 I read a number of Tom Swift books (maybe all of them), and have sometimes felt they are a sort of junior science fiction. Also I have been interested in the Arthurian legend since I could read. I've always felt they were a form of fantasy. I still read about every version of the Arthurian legend that I find. Both of these areas were a good introduction to becoming involved in

science fiction when I was finally introduced to it.

I was an early member of the International Correspondence Society. I believe that was the one which consisted mostly of science fiction fans. I may be remembered as the printer (hand type set) of the *Science Fiction Digest* which became *Fantasy Magazine*.

Hoping to meet more of the members of First Fandom in the future, I am

Conrad H. Ruppert

Dear Mark,

I'm glad to know that you, Sally, Ashes, and Buddy have survived the move. That's not easy!

I am planning to attend Archon at the urging of my daughter and a long time friend. I will be looking forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Leigh Crouch

Dear Mark:

I wanted to take a moment to let you know that the outstanding job you have been doing as editor of *SciFiction* has not gone unnoticed; indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that the clean, bright, interesting quarterly you are producing is the "glue"

that binds First Fandom together. And all of this in a magazine that appears every three months and right on schedule, too!

I have been especially impressed with the quality of several of the articles you have included for the readership in recent issues: of special note was "What Ever Became of Science Fiction?" by Roy Lavender in the Autumn ('94) issue. Wonderfully written. Chilling and thought-provoking. Although it was originally a GoH address Mark is to be commended for reprinting Roy's speech for the edification of our entire membership.

Keep up the good work.

Erle Korshak

Dear Ray,

I would like to nominate Frank K. Kelly again for the First Fandom Hall of Fame award. Maybe he will get it this time. I remember I had to nominate J. Harvey Haggard twice.

Mark is sure doing a nice job on the quarterly report.

I hope to make it to Soonercon this year. It would have been nice to go to Scotland.

Best,

Bob Peterson

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