

# SCIENTIFICTION

THE FIRST FANDOM REPORT

FALL  
2002



## SCIENCE FICTION

NOVEMBER 1960 • 35 CENTS

By JIM HARMON



## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Greetings,*

*I hope everyone had a really great holiday season. There are 2 major items that I want to talk about this issue. One is that it is time again to nominate for the Hall of Fame award. Please send me your nominations either by snail mail, e-mail or phone by March 1st. So that a ballot maybe included in the spring issue Scientifiction. There is a list of past recipients in the back of your membership directory for your convenience.*

*The second matter is not a happy one for me. It concerns club dues and the financing of First Fandom. After this latest dues period where dues notices were sent out to the members that owed dues, of that group only 25% of the membership sent in their money. Now, compared to other clubs, \$10 is not a lot of money for dues. It gets you a newsletter and voting rights and free memberships to several conventions around the country, including Archon in St. Louis, which extends to First Fandom members 2 free memberships a year. Just this one convention alone is worth the membership dues, as it would cost \$50.00 to go to the convention itself. The convention then presents you with a badge that gets you into the VIP suite so you can have a sandwich and talk to friends quietly.*

*I will be extending the deadline for membership dues till Feb 15th for those that forgot or lost the notice or whatever. Please send your dues to our treasurer Keith Stokes 108th Terrace, Lenexa Ks. 66210.*

*With the dues received being what they are I am in the tough position of saying that if you have not paid your 2003 dues then this is going to be you last newsletter. You will not be taken off the membership roles; you will be put on the inactive list and not sent a newsletter or allowed to vote or nominate. When your dues are paid then you will receive your newsletter again and voting rights restored.*

*This is not a step that I wish to take but must as it is not fair to the dues paying members.*

*Don't forget to check out the website for First Fandom at [www.firstfandom.org](http://www.firstfandom.org)*

*Joan Marie*

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# FIRST FANDOM REPORT

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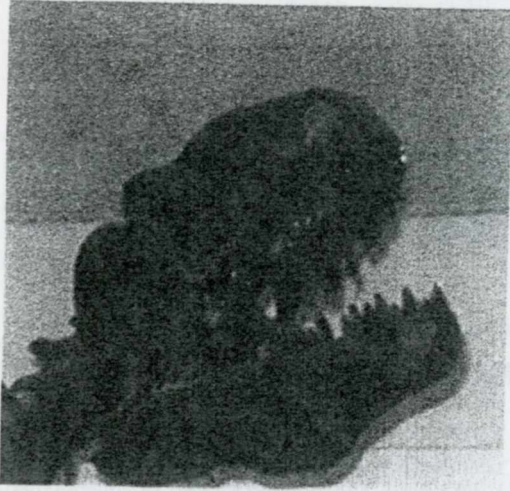
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*Allosaur, Pierce College*

## DINOSAUR TRACKS

### HOWARD DEVORE

Banks Mebane lived in Mebourne Fl, right down the beach from Cape Caveneral. He either lived on or near the beach. Every morning after breakfast he would go for a run on the beach, he did this Mebane style taking about 2 hours to stroll a mile down the beach. He would interrupt his stroll to pick up interesting objects on the sand. I remember one morning he picked up a little blonde in a 3 piece bikini but that's another story. Another morning he picked up Rotten Robert, they became friends and he told Robert about the Midwestcon and Robert was eager to attend one, so the next June he brought him to Midwestcon. Within a couple of hours Robert was well known

and had gained the nickname "Rotten Robert". Robert apparently was an exhibitionist and would walk up to a group of women and ask them if they'd like to see his equipment. Someone would stop him before he could get his zipper down but we couldn't be on the scene all the time.

Finally Friday evening he was talking to three women and offered to show it to them. Nobody stopped him this time and he unzipped his pants.

Ah! These were Midwest-con women. They had experienced Randy Garrett, Harlan Ellison, Isaac Asimov. Rotten Robert could not hold up to their standards, these were veterans!



One woman looked at it, she said "I think its a mouse, I can see it's little tail" Another said, "No, its either a wart or a tiny penis" The third said Its definitely a penis but I've never seen one that small before" Rotten Robert zipped his pants back up, turned his back and walked away. They had cured him of his tendencies, at least temporarily.

## CURT PHILLIPS

I'm very honored to be considered for associate membership in First Fandom. The late Lynn Hickman was a friend of mine and I would be proud to be part of an organization he helped found.

Beyond that however, I feel a kinship to the traditional science fiction fandom that First Fandom was founded to celebrate in the first place. Though born in 1959, I grew up on the SF & STF of an earlier generation. The stories of Laurence Manning, Neil R. Jones, and CAPT S. P. Meek are as familiar to me as any of the science fiction writers practicing today. Give me a good Nelson Bond story or a new Jack Williamson novel any day over most of what's published as science fiction these days. Certainly, good sf is being published today; Allen Steele, Robert Sawyer, and Joe Haldeman are writers (among others) who tell excellent stories. Jack Williamson is still working at the top of his form, may he long continue to do so.

It seems to me that for a good many years being a sf fan has changed. It has become less and less about actually reading and discussing good

science fiction and more and more about the alternate lifestyles that some aspects of sf fandom represent. I suppose these things are all right if you like them, but first and foremost it's the stories and writers that interest me. When I go to conventions and overhear "BNFs" talk about how science fiction is just "something they used to read", it seems to me that they have missed the point.

Me, I'm a science fiction fan, and I guess I always will be!!

## TERRY JEEVES

Dear Jim,

I just got the latest Scientifiction and felt like a few comments. That cover for "Death In The Stratosphere" I seem to remember it concerned a rocket blasting off and crashing through an invisible - but solid - layer around the Earth.

I was very sorry to hear of Forry having to sell his collection because of legal fees. No doubt about it, in a legal case the only winners are the lawyers. Everyone else gets taken to the cleaners.

I see the President mentions Dave Kyle and the Knights of St Fanthony. As a member I'd be interested to know if they are still operating as I haven't heard a word in ages.

The section on 1937 fanzines was a bit teasing as few of us would have access to them. I'll throw in my teaser. I have a complete run of Wally Gillings fanzine Scientifiction from 1939, plus the others which follow. Maybe I could do a piece on them.

A good read as usual. All the best.  
Terry

## SIR ARTHUR C. CLARKE

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SIR ARTHUR'S EGOGRAM 2001/2002

Dear Jim: F.Y.I. --

(AS PICTURED ON HIS HOLIDAY CARD): My "Dune Roller" (apologies to Julian May). Built by partner Hector Ekanayake. Placed 87 out of 88 in the Colombo Con-course D'Elegance, beating the corporation garbage truck by a handsome margin.

All the best, Arthur Clarke,  
3/12/02

Obviously 2001, of all years, deserves an EgoGram, though it is indelibly stained with the events of 11 September. I am still spooked by the fact that, in 1973, I chose that very date in *Rendezvous with Rama* for the worst disaster in human history. Several SPACEGUARD Foundations have now been established as a result of the novel.

Although I hope never to leave Sri Lanka again, I did the next best thing by appearing as a convincing 3-D Hologram at the Comdex Exhibition in Las Vegas on 13 November... -- 2002  
Nov 12

## FANZINE RETROSPECTIVE 2

by Jon D. Swartz

The subject of the first "Fanzine Retrospective" was an issue of *Amateur Correspondent*, a fanzine from the 1930s. This time we take a close look at an issue of *The Fanscient*, a rather unique fanzine published during the late 1940s/early 1950s.

### *The Fanscient* for Spring, 1949 (Volume 3, Number 1/Whole Number 7)

*The Fanscient* was edited by Donald B. Day for the Portland Science-Fantasy Society. Published from September 1947 until Spring-Summer 1951, this sercon publication appeared for a total of 13 issues. The last issue was double-sized (64 pages) and double-numbered (13/14). *The Fanscient* was known principally for its "Author, Author" column that featured autobiographical sketches by well-known SF authors. The authors featured, together with the issues numbers in which they appeared, were: 1) A. E. van Vogt; 2) Edmond Hamilton; 3) E. E. (Doc) Smith, PhD; 4) Jack Williamson; 5) David H. Keller, MD; 6) Ray Bradbury; 7) Will F. Jenkins; 8) Robert Bloch; 9) Robert A. Heinlein; 10) George O. Smith; 11) Theodore Sturgeon; 12) Anthony Boucher; and 13/14) L. Sprague de Camp. Photos of the authors and up-to-date bibliographies of their published work accompanied the sketches.

## Format/Policies:

*The Fancient* initially was published quarterly in octavo format, then halved to a tiny 5¼" by 4½" 32-page booklet, which is the size of the issue under review here. All issues were black and white, except for the duo-color issues 9 and 13/14. The Spring 1949 issue was lithographed, and sold for 25¢. (A 6-issue subscription was \$1.00). The cover illustration was a drawing of a nude woman by D. Bruce Berry.

## Contributors/Contributions:

DONALD B(YRNE) DAY [1909-1978], editor. Day worked at various occupations until he became a postal clerk in 1940. He began compiling his *Index to the SF Magazines* in 1935. He was an active fan in local and national SF affairs from 1946, chairing the 8<sup>th</sup> Worldcon (Norwescon) in Portland in 1950, and editing *The Fancient* for three years. His private Peri Press, founded for publication of his *Index* in 1952, became established as a spare-time offset and letterpress printing shop, with a regular business location and a partner. In this particular issue of *The Fancient* Day contributed an editorial, an article, a Memo, and (with Ken Slater) a "Checklist of British Science Fiction & Fantasy Magazines." This checklist served as an addendum to Slater's article on the British prozines. Day's "Memo to Reluctant Fanzine Publishers" offered help to readers who wanted to publish their own fanzines but lacked the resources. Day also provided the "Checklist of Fantasy Books in Print," one of the fanzine's regular features. In the 1948 *Fantasy Annual* Day was ranked #8 in the Best Fans of 1948 list and #9 in the Top Fan Journalists list.

D (OUGLAS) BRUCE BERRY [1924- ], cover artist. Berry served in the Air Force as a sign painter, and later worked at an advertising agency. He has been a SF fan for most of his life, and was a member of comics fandom in the 1960s. Berry began his SF work with William Hamling's Greenleaf magazines, illustrating *Imagination*, *Imaginative Tales*, and *Space Travel* (with his first cover art for the May 1958 issue of *Imaginative Tales*). Later he provided artwork for *Witchcraft & Sorcery*, *Rogue*, and *Men's Digest*. He then became a writer. When he was unable to write because of injuries sustained in an accident, he returned to illustration and entered the comics field as a letterer/inker. At one time he assisted Jack Kirby. Still later Berry published two SF novels: *The Balling Machine* (1971) [as by Jeff Douglas] and *Genetic Bomb* (1975), both written with Andrew J. Offutt. In addition, Berry wrote at least one book under the pseudonym of Morgan Drake. In the 1948 *Fantasy Annual* he ranked third in the list of Top Fan Artists.

DAVID H. KELLER, M.D. [1980-1966], contributor of an article on book reviewing. In his article Keller gave ten rules for reviewing books:

- 1) Honesty on the part of the reviewer is most important.
- 2) Has the book sufficient merit to warrant a second reading?
- 3) Is the novel based on an original plot or at least a new twist of an old plot?
- 4) Does the book sustain interest?
- 5) In the narrative the reviewer should find harmony with either the real experiences or daydreams of the ordinary man.
- 6) Every novel, even every short story, should be clear enough so a capable reviewer can condense it into a sentence of not more than ten or fifteen words which will clearly show the motif of the tale.

- 7) There should be no unnecessary and obvious "padding" to give extra bulk.
- 8) The description of format is important but should not overshadow the merits of the novel.
- 9) The reviewer, if worthy of the name, must consider a book objectively.
- 10) No book should be reviewed unless it is read carefully and completely.

Keller was a physician who wrote SF/weird fiction for his own pleasure until his first sale at age 47. He also was a frequent contributor to amateur magazines. It has been written that he was "put upon" by fanzine editors, but near the end of his life he wrote about his fanzine activity: "During the past 25 years, I have contributed largely to those magazines and have never regretted it. The constant contact with youth has served to lessen the ravages of time. Many of my best friends were fanzine editors. While none ever asked me to serve as assistant editor, they all seemed to appreciate my efforts to make their magazines more interesting." One of Keller's stories, "The Thing in the Cellar," has been reprinted many times over the years. In the 1948 *Fantasy Annual* he ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in its list of Top Fan Journalists. He is a First Fandom Hall of Fame recipient (posthumously).

WILL F. JENKINS (Murray Leinster) [1896-1975], subject of the "Author, Author" column in this issue. Jenkins' early ambition was to be a scientist: he built and flew a glider at age 13 and won a prize from *Fly*, the first aeronautical magazine. During World War I he served with the Committee of Public Information and the U. S. Army (1917-1918), and during World War II he served in the Office of War Information. He was also an inventor, and patented several inventions, including a front-projection method for filming backgrounds. The Murray Leinster pseudonym was created from his family lineage, including relatives who had lived in Leinster County, Ireland. He became a full-time free-lance writer at the age of 21. His first publication was an essay on Robert E. Lee in the *Virginian Pilot* (1909); his first SF publication was "Oh, Aladdin!" in *Argosy* (January 11, 1919 issue). [Some reference works cite his "The Runaway Skyscraper" that appeared in the February 22, 1919 issue of *Argosy* as his first SF publication.] His first published novel was *Scalps* (Brewer and Warren, 1930), and his first published SF novel was *Murder Madness* (Brewer and Warren, 1931). The latter originally appeared as a 4-part serial in the May-August 1930 issues of *Astounding*. His first SF collection was *Sidewise in Time, and Other Scientific Adventures* (Shasta, 1950). Jenkins/Leinster won several awards in the SF genre: Hugo Award (Best Novelette) in 1956 for "Exploration Team" [later titled "Combat Team"] in the March 1956 *Astounding*; GoH, 21<sup>st</sup> Worldcon (DisCon), 1963; Gemsback (Novel), 1936 [1983 Retro Hugo] for *The Incredible Invasion*, a 5-part serial in *Astounding*, August-December, 1936/retitled *The Other Side of Here* when published in book form; Hugo Award (Best Novelette), 1945 [1996 Retro Hugo] for "First Contact" which originally appeared in the May 1945 *Astounding*; many other awards, including being named a First Fandom Hall of Fame recipient in 1969. For years he was known as the Dean of Science Fiction Writers.

KEN(NETH) F(REDERICK) SLATER [1917- ], contributor of an article, "The British Proazines." Slater is a well-known British SF/fantasy fan who has belonged to fan organizations in several countries. He created "Operation Fantast" that helped facilitate the exchange of SF magazines between the United States and England in the post-World War II years, and published the fanzine *Operation Fantast* as well as a yearly handbook. He later founded a book and magazine business: Fantast (Medway) Ltd. in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. Forrest J Ackerman presented the Big Heart Award to Slater at the 1995 Worldcon.



## Other Features/Contents:

Californian Leonard J. Moffatt contributed a short fiction piece, "Amnesia" (illustrated by J. M. Higbee). Moffatt was the editor of the 1950 *Fan Directory*, a published author in the early 1950s, and is a current member of First Fandom. Portland fans George Wetzel and W. E. Bullard both contributed short fiction pieces: "A Tale of the Older Gods" by Wetzel, illustrated by Miles Eaton; and "Unsung" by Bullard, illustrated by G. (Jerry) Waible. Thyrill L. Ladd contributed an article, "Grandfather Read Fantasy, Too!" Ladd was a prominent SF collector/fan of the day; in the 1948 *Fantasy Annual* Top Fan Poll Results, he ranked in the top 12 of Fan Writers, in the top 11 of Fan Critics, and in the top 7 of Fan Article Writers.

Also included in this issue were two cartoons by Waible, and two pieces of art by O. G. Estes: "Classics of Fantasy: The Worm Ouroboros," and an illustration for Leinster's "*Proxima Centauri*."

Advertisements all were genre-related. One was for fantasy postcards from Day's Perri Press. Two were from First Fandom member Darrell C. Richardson, a "wanted" ad, and a "Fantasy Books for Sale" ad. There was also a house ad for back issues of *The Fanscient* (most selling for 25¢ each, with subscriptions one-third off on orders over 75¢), and an ad for books ("Scientifiction, Fantasy, Weird") from the House of Stone in Lunenburg, Massachusetts.

## **Conclusions**

The consensus of SF historians writing of the period is that *The Fanscient* was a leading fanzine of its day. Warner has written that *The Fanscient* was "one of the leading serious fanzines of its period," was "neat, a delight to read, and never stuffy," and only ended (in part) because "Day became interested in square dancing." Joe Siclari, in *Science Fiction Fandom*, describes it as follows: "A good quality fanzine, unusual because of being quarter-size for most of its run. It contained fiction, articles (often by major professionals), and many illustrations." Tuck says, in part: "It began duplicated and lithographed at 5 1/4 x 8 in., then completely litho in 'vest pocket' size . . . [and] featured fiction and articles of high standard." In the 1948 *Fantasy Annual* it was reported that *The Fanscient* had been voted the top fanzine of 1948. It was also noticed in the mundane world: the May 21, 1951 issue of *Life*, in an article titled "Through the Interstellar Looking Glass," pictured *The Fanscient* along with nine other contemporary fanzines. Even today, when many fanzines and semi-pro publications do a better job of featuring the same type of material, *The Fanscient* would be viewed as a very good example of amateur publishing. On the other hand, the very small format (with type that is difficult to read) probably would elicit some negative comments.

Note: Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Jerry G. Bails who supplied information on D. Bruce Berry.

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## ARCHIVAL MATTERS

By Don Dailey

### HAL CLEMENT and The 451 PARADOX

Harking back to Ray Bradbury's novel, *Fahrenheit 451*, the firemen are about to torch a huge stack of books containing the last copies of every science fiction and fantasy book ever written. The Chief Fireman turns to you and says "You may save one book from the flames. Which one will it be?"

Speaking to Hal Clement at Millennicon, I put him in the "paradox."

DD: Hal, you have had a little while to think about it. Which book would you choose and why?

HC: The *Spacehounds of IPC* by E.E. "Doc" Smith.

DD: Interesting choice. And your reasons?

HC: Well, first of all when I read it I was extremely young. I liked the adventure and the various implausibilities were not as strong in my mind then as they are now. The point where Steven and his girlfriend were marooned on Ganymede and had to make everything from the word "go" was very interesting. Including building his "ultra radio" to call for help with. Even at that age I realized how slightly implausible that was. Even given the guy's background, which was in the physics of the time. He had worked his way through college by designing and heavy manual labor of various sorts. Doc did his best to make that aspect of it plausible. He did something which is still "kosher" in science fiction, extrapolate your own idea of science. Like his fourth order of particles & rays and things, to justify the story.

(continued on page 13)

## HARMONY

By Jim Harmon

You have noticed that this *Scientifiction* is much smaller than the issues you have been receiving recently. First Fandom is in a money crunch due to a number of members not paying their dues. Our most obvious expense is the fanzine and the postage to mail it. Naturally, I urge everyone to pay their dues. Beyond that, some of the members financially better off may wish to make *contributions* during this emergency. An actual fund has not been yet established, but you could send any contributions directly to President Joan Knappenberger (address on the "contents page) marked "Emergency Contribution". The club is not yet dead of old age. Let's prove there is life in the dinosaurs of science fiction still.

NEXT: My first all-science fiction, all-Jim Harmon book is due out. It is called *Harmon's Galaxy*, Cosmos Press, Sean Wallace, publisher. It consists of an opening story, written especial for the book, plus shorts and novelets from more than thirty years, many of them from H. L. Gold's *Galaxy Magazine*. Space travel, time travel, stories debatable as whether they are fantasy or SF, a pastiche of the old hero pulps like *The Spider*, and the later life of one of radio drama's most famous fictional creations. There is a brilliant introduction by Richard Lupoff. It is a trade edition paperback, costing about \$20. Details from me at [jimharmonrdo@earthlink.net](mailto:jimharmonrdo@earthlink.net).

I also have a new story about radio's Tom Mix along with other mystery and comedy characters in *It's That Time Again*, edited by Ben Ohmart, \$15; the new *The Great Radio Heroes: Revised and Expanded*, \$35, and I could even find a copy or two of *Radio and TV Premiums*, remaindered at \$10.

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN: My home town of Mt. Carmel, Illinois was the birthplace of Brace Beemer, radio's Lone Ranger for eighteen years. As part of the celebration of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary, I was invited back to speak before the annual Chamber of Commerce banquet on his career, having chronicled it in several of my books, my expenses paid.

I hadn't been back to Mt. Carmel since the death of my mother in 1977, and I had wanted to return at least one more time, so Barbara and I accepted the invitation arranged by my old friend, Joe Young. (We had to pay her way.)

Mt. Carmel is nearer St. Louis, MO. than Chicago. We flew to St. Louis and took a rental car the rest of the way. Barbara had wanted to see the scenery, but there isn't much. "Corn field and bean fields" Joe Young would later say. Still Barbara liked the small stands of trees we passed from time to time. "Forests," she said. I said "We call them woods."

We got closer and closer to my old home town and things got more and more familiar. We passed down Main Street and many of the old buildings like the bank and the post office were still there, and finally back to East 8<sup>th</sup> Street and my neighborhood. Things had changed. I spotted the small house where my mother and aunt had lived, which I had once owned. It was covered with brown siding now, but still there. But I couldn't spot the house I was born in and lived in until age thirteen - 423 East 8<sup>th</sup>. I sadly concluded it had been torn down. I was pretty emotional about everything at this time

A woman who had been walking her dog came over to our car. "Hello Jimmie. You haven't changed a bit." I think we both had changed somewhat over the years, but I finally recognized her as Marilyn Miller, a beautiful little girl I had fallen in love with in the second grade. She let us take her picture.

Finally we went on to the home of my friend, Joe and his wife, Mary Lynn. It was in the neighboring town of Bridgeport, about 25 miles away. They had a nice house, but there was a flight of steps up to the door, requiring the use of a walking stick. I sometimes have to use these days. Inside, Joe escorted us to his den, full of even more radio premiums and collectibles than I have, but having some points in common with my place.

Over the next few days Joe took me around his high school class reunion and a meeting of a small group of civic officials and friends called the Roundtable and to a meeting of the Rotary Club where I said "a few words" to the assembled guests.

Barbara and I got back to Mt. Carmel and my old neighborhood and I finally recognized my old home. It was still there! A thrill for me. The present owners had added aluminum siding, changed the front porch and for some reason had changed the number to 419 but it was my old home. I had just been too emotional to recognize it before. Naturally, I took several photos.

Next stop was the Rosehill Cemetery to visit the graves of my parents. With the help of Joe and city official Don Price I found my father's gravesite (1865-1943) along with those of his sister and other family members. One stone was so old that its inscription was worn away – possibly that of my grandfather or grandmother. But somehow my mother's newer site could not be located.

I went on to a meeting of some of my few remaining family members at Hadley's Café, a fondly remembered eating place. There was my first cousin Eugene Odom, a World War II veteran and long time telephone company employee, his daughters Pat and Caroline, and Gene's great-granddaughter, Sidney, age 2. Gene was a hunter, used to be alone in the woods and did not say much, as Barbara and I talked to the girls. But when I mentioned I couldn't find my mother's gravesite, he said "I know where it is at. I'll take you there."

Eugene took us all there, and I saw for the first time the tombstone I had bought for my mother, and that Joe Young had seen installed. A meaningful moment.

I rested up for my "big night". Finally, I was there at the Chamber of Commerce banquet, meeting for the first time relations of Brace Beemer – his daughter, Barbara Beemer Daniels, her husband, Sinclair, son Brace Beemer Daniels, and grandson, Brace Jr. They were distant relatives of mine, since Brace Beemer was my first cousin, once removed. They treated me more like a long lost brother, than a distant relative. We all vowed to meet again, but who knew where or when?

I delivered my talk on radio's Lone Ranger, Beemer, and I offered the suggestion that the character of the Lone Ranger should be protected as a "National Treasure" as some films are. Then a hundred years from now somebody would be listening to an audio recording of Brace Beemer and there would be forever the ringing cry of Hi-Yo Silver! – JIM HARMON



## ARCHIVAL MATTERS (continued from page 10)

It was rather fun just catching an occasional mistake. At one point the hero was sending a message back to Earth. He allowed for a "light equation" of 40 minutes or so to get from Jupiter's moon. Not much later, from even further out in space, they televised the wedding of the hero and heroine from a spaceship in "real time" so that Mommy and sister on Earth were able to watch. This is the sort of thing you are always doing when writing science fiction. You are fully aware of some background problem like that, but forget to allow for it from time to time. But it's still great fun despite such lapses.

And I liked Doc's aliens. I was always a little dubious about all the various races of the Jovian satellites being essentially humanoid. Even in those days I felt that life could offer us more variety than that.

But the book is still fun and I can always read it again. In fact, I did read it not long ago and enjoyed it.

DD: I recently re-read *Spacehounds* and still found it enjoyable. Real "space opera". But if I hear or read that phrase "it's all x with me" one more time.....

HC: Well, that's a point which is dubious in the science fiction writing game. You realize that slang won't be the same in the future. Doc's "everything agreed to the 19<sup>th</sup> decimal", or something of that sort, was another very repetitious phrase. But who's to say what slang is going to be. And the fact is, when it's slang it's going to be used without the speaker really being conscious of it. A phrase you know just pops in while you're waiting for the next meaningful word to come up.

DD: The second part of the 451 Paradox is the same situation with a smaller pile of books containing every book you ever wrote, edited or contributed to. Which of these would you save?

HC: It would be *Still River*. It's a fairly recent one and I think it's still respectable. I would rather have people congratulate me on *Still River* than on *Mission of Gravity*, which was written over 50 years ago. I'd hate to think my "peak" occurred in 1950. Well, 1952 actually.

DD: I'll have to track down a copy and read it. I haven't had the opportunity yet.

HC: It's not that old. I forget if it comes before or after *Fossil*. But it was before *Half Life*. It's fairly recent, my books tend to come several years apart.

(To be continued.... Hal talks about his experiences in science fiction)

'Til next time.....

## TRANSITIONS

*It is with much regret that I must inform you of the passing of Walter R. Cole, a member of First Fandom. Mr. Cole died this week. Arrangements are still in the process of being finalized. I will send more information as it is obtained. Thank You*

E. Madison Friend of Mr. Cole

### ROBERT A. MADLE: THE QUIET FAN

By Robert A. Lowndes

(Reprinted by permission from Suncon, the Thirty-Fifth World Science Fiction Convention)

It really started one Sunday afternoon in July 1934 at the 178<sup>th</sup> Company CCC, Flagstaff, Maine. I'd arrived there early in May, and worked on one of the road crews, until my arches broke down and they sent me off to the hospital. There I was treated for athlete's foot, given two weeks bed rest, then returned to Flagstaff with only the comment that I had to keep off my feet. So they put me to work in the office—wow! That meant in off hours I had access to a typewriter.

We were paid \$30 a month, \$25 of which went to our families; the other \$5 was ours, all ours, to spend as we would. I'd subscribed to *Astounding Stories* and managed to pick up *Amazing* on the newsstands; back home, my father was buying *Weird Tales* and *Wonder Stories* and holding them for me. They'd just brought along the previous *Weird Tales*.

A letter I'd written had appeared in the July *Astounding Stories*, and a few of my acquaintances in camp were much impressed. That Sunday afternoon, there ensued a conversation that went something like this:

JOHNSON: Hey, Doc, have you written any more letters to that science fiction magazine?

DOC: No—but now that I can use the typewriter, maybe I will.

JOHNSON: You ought to write letters to all of them. I bet you'd get published.

DOC: They get hundreds of letters every month. I was just lucky that time.

JOHNSON: You write a good letter. I bet they'd publish another one.

DOC: Okay, tell you what I'll do. I'm going to write three letters this afternoon—one to *Weird Tales*, one to *Astounding Stories*, and one to *Amazing Stories*. We'll see if any of them get published.

JOHNSON: What if the *all* got published? How about that?

DOC: That would be something all right.

And it was something. One the way back home from camp, when I was mustered out, my 6-months term expired, and not wanting to renew, I picked up the October 1934 issue

of *Weird Tales*—and there was my letter. The November 1934 issue of *Astounding Stories* opened *Brass Tacks* with my letter. A month later, I picked up the December 1934 *Amazing Stories*; it would be too much if my letter were there—but there it was.

That restored the confidence I'd lost when, after years of trying I'd finally had a letter published in the July 1932 *Wonder Stories*, and my name was misspelled. The second hit was with a pseudonym in the February 1934 *Astounding* and then with my real name, spelled correctly in the July *Astounding*. But most of the letters I'd written since 1930 never showed up anywhere. From that Sunday in 1934, however, to the end of the 30's, every letter I wrote to the editors was published—though I never get around to the prolificity of Forrie Ackerman. (I wonder if Johnson ever saw those letters in print; I never heard from him after I left camp.)

Robert A. Madle might have seen them, if he'd been reading more of the magazines than *Wonder Stories* at the time. (He started with the February 1933 issue of *Wonder*.) But the first time I saw his name in print was the October 1933 *Wonder*; he had taken the second science fiction test sponsored by the Science Fiction League, and was one of the 28 members who had received grades of 70% or over; he rated higher than Jim Blish, who was another on the list. (Only those who passed were listed.) I was represented a few pages later, in "The Readers Speaks," with a letter signed "Sir Do Lowndes." (I'd joined Bob Tucker in the great staple war-opposing Don Wollheim—and Bob had dubbed me a Knight of the Oblong Table.)

I'd passed the first science fiction test earlier that year and according to the announcement in the January 1935 issue, my score would have qualified me for a degree: B.Stf. (Bachelor of Science Fiction). That really sounded terrific to a young fellow academically qualified for college but with no hope of attending. However, between the time that I sent in my examination paper, and the time the results were published, the setup was changed and it was announced that no degrees would be awarded; we'd just be "First Class Members." It was the second time that I'd been robbed of an "honor" I'd earned because the rules had been changed without announcement; it did not help me relate to people with trust. Bob Madle was more fortunate; by the time he took the test, no more was promised than delivered.

The following year (1936) I began to see Madle's name frequently in the letter departments of *Weird Tales* and *Astounding Stories*, and we both appeared in the October issue of the latter. That was the year I finally got to meet a science fiction fan around my age and of comparable length-of-service standing: Donald A. Wolheim; he was, in fact, older and had read more—wonderful. The next thing was to find a job in New York or near it, so I could attend fan meetings. The Science Fiction League was gone now as far as I and the New York fans were concerned, as what appeared under that title in *Thrilling Wonder Stories* was only a shell of the organization that Gernsback founded and Charley Hornig managed as well as he could. (Pretty well, I'd say, under the circumstances.)

(to be continued next issue)

## SCIENTIFiction

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