

***First Fandom  
Secretary/Treasurer's  
Report***

*Winter, 1992*

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**JULES VERNE'S TOMBSTONE AT AMIENS  
PORTRAYING HIS IMMORTALITY**

Dear Members,

First of all, The ad on the first page. I am looking for someone to negotiate with the Worldcon Committee's each year. I have been doing it for 10 years and I am tired. I do not intend to attend anymore Worldcons so it would be best to have someone who does attend to insure that the Hall of Fame Award is handled in a proper manner at the Hugo Awards. This means writing letters and knocking heads with amateurs. You will be dealing with a new and non-professional committee each year. We have already established that we will accept no lesser award ceremony than the Hugo. So when they try to shift the award you must stand firm. Be ready to withdraw the Award from the Worldcon. There are several Regional Con's that have expressed interest in it. These negotiations would also include arrangements for a First Fandom meeting and/or party if one is desired. Anyone that wants a very frustrating job at no pay, please write me as soon as possible. I have not yet started negotiations with Magicon in Orlando and I don't want to do it any more.

There have been some changes in the way the report is being mailed this time and future mailings. I have discontinued the bulk mail permit since the renewal rate went up this year. by dropping the padded mailing we had to

bring the number to 200 and mailing single copies to two member families we can do it about as cheap as the bulk. Also it is much easier on your Secretary.

If the Report is kept to 12 pages or below it can be mailed for 29¢. This will run in excess of 20 pages, so when I saw the clarity of the type Mark had produced, I decided to try a reduction on the copy. There is a place on the Ballot for your comment on the size of the report. If I am allowed to reduce them it not only will save on postage but on printing. Please take time to state your preference. 1. Don't like the reduction. 2. Don't mind the reduction. 3. Don't mind for larger issues. 4. Any other you can think of.

The ballot also has the posthumous question. Many have ask that it be put on the ballot again. In the past I was against awarding posthumously but I have changed my mind on the issue. Please consider that our choices are becoming limited and there are many who have passed on that deserve recognition. The argument has been made in the past that the person should be alive to appreciate the award. My feeling now is that we owe it to the field of Science Fiction to recognize the pioneers that have passed on.

From the limited notes I received from the meeting (continued on page 20)



### Help Wanted

Wanted: Someone who enjoys smiling a lot while having his face stepped on to take over negotiations with the Worldcon committees for the Hall of Fame award presentation. No pay, long hours, no reimbursement for phone calls, stamps, travel, or antacids.

Get in touch with Ray if interested.

### Revenge of the Sci-Fan

"I grow old, I grow old. I shall wear my trousers rolled."

When T.S. Elliot wrote this line he was thinking of the conservatism of age, the unwillingness/inability of the old to adapt or be spontaneous. I was reminded of the poem as I read some of the letters you'll read in this, and as I considered my own feelings about the current state of both science fiction and fandom.

## First Fandom Secretary/Treasurer's Report

Winter, 1992

More and more I find myself re-reading older stories with enjoyment, and rejecting newer ones with disgust. More and more I have come to regard younger fan with a sort of puzzled loathing as I view their grossly overweight bodies and slavish devotion to what I feel to be vapid entertainments. And I began to believe that I was falling prey to the cumudgeonliness of age, the time of life when all I could do was to declaim "O tempora, o mores!"

But, as I was putting the first draft of this editorial together, I realised what was causing my reaction. Oh, yes, there is an element of age in it, but there's something else as well -- a nostalgia for proaction, and a dislike of reaction.

Science fiction, as I used to like it, was a genre filled with proactive heroes. These were folks who were faced with a problem, and went out and solved it. The heroes, or whatever they are nowadays, of current science fiction are reactive types, buffeted by events swirling around them, and in constant conflict with their own inner emotional lives.

The fan reflect the two approaches to the genre. Remember how we went to cons to sit and talk

science and science fiction not by the hour but by the day? We were proactive. We kept ideas in the air, twisted them around, scrutinized them mercilessly. Nowadays fan are reactive. They go to cons and sit there waiting to be entertained. Harlan Ellison called them "stone fans."

I once voiced my concerns about the current state of s-f to Bob Tucker. He asked me if I wanted to see it back in the ghetto. Right now I think my answer would be "yes." Proactive fiction inspires proaction. Proactive science fiction spawned at least one generation of problem-solvers who wanted us to go out into space, use nuclear and thermonuclear power, develop genetic engineering, better our lives. Reactive fiction seems to be spawning a generation of people who just want to be entertained.

In this, the end of the 20th century, as we approach Standing Room Only on the planet, as the ozone layer is being eaten away, as we find ourselves having to import food for the first time in our nation's history, we need solutions to problems. And we need problem solvers. If science fiction won't inspire people to proaction, what will?

The First Fandom Secretary/  
Treasurer's Report is edited by  
Mark Schulzinger  
528 Woodruff Bldg.  
Springfield MO 65806

In this you will  
find the usual FF

business, announcements, and lettercol. As a treat I am publishing "The Birth of Fandom" by Mike Ashley. Mike was kind enough to offer us the use of a chapter from his book on fandom, and was even kinder to send it to me as softcopy so I could put it into the DTP mill more easily than otherwise. I was surprised to find that I had the article on hand for two years. My apologies, Mike, but you know all about lead time.

I am just about out of material for future issues. I need material to publish! It's evident from the letters that all of you have some interesting, and even important, reminiscences, bits of dirt, or wryness to contribute. I would love to be able to pub it right here in our own cozy little rag. Send it to me. That's an order.

### DUES

Dues in First Fandom are \$5 per year, and are payable at any time. Send your dues check to Ray

### DECEASED

Gene Rodenberry  
Ted Dikty

### NEW MEMBERS

The following have been accepted into our august ranks:

Robert Binder -- Full Member  
Ross Rosenberg -- Full Member  
Elsie Wollheim -- Full Member

Joe Martino -- Associate Member

Welcome dinosaurs!

### NEW APPLICATIONS

The following have been proposed for Associate Membership. The name of the member who wrote the proposal letter appears in parenthesis after the candidate's name.

Bill Bowers (Bob Tucker)  
Jim Harmon (Redd Boggs)  
Richard Kyle (Ken Krueger)  
Dave Rike (Redd Boggs)  
Larry Touzinsky (Bob Bloch)

In addition, it is recommended that we grant associate membership status to Judy May Dikty. I think all will agree she needs no letter of nomination.

If you have any objections to any of the above, please write to Ray. Otherwise each one becomes a member automatically as of the next mailing.

### HALL OF FAME BALLOT

Lots of names on the ballot this year, folks:

Nelson Bond  
J. Harvey Haggard  
Frank Kelly  
Andre Norton  
Art Saha  
Don Tuck  
Art Widner

Remember: You are to vote for only one candidate. A separate ballot will be included by Ray if he doesn't forget.

### FANTASY PRESS

At Worldcon Ray Beam learned that Lloyd Eshbach had mint copies of "Tyrant of Time," his Fantasy Press short story collection, for sale. I immediately dispatched a letter and check to Lloyd, and he sent me a copy, mint in dj, by return post. A note from him explained all: "Don Grant bound these. He bought the entire FP stock in 1962 when I had to vacate a warehouse, and had no place to store several thousand assorted books. They've been in his warehouse all these years."

It is a lovely copy, a 1955 first edition, with stories by one of our very



own. If you'd like a copy try sending Lloyd \$10.00 plus \$2.25 shipping (ain't that awful?) to:

Lloyd A. Eshbach  
220 S. Railroad Street  
Myerstown PA 17067

### REQUEST LINE

I am currently trying to establish contact with anyone who is an active fan of Frank Herbert's Dune novels.

Tim Mayer  
6505 East Central, #176  
Wichita, KS 67206

If any FFers are interested, please write to Tim.

Robert Barnett, 1107 Lyon St., Carthage, MO 64836 is looking for information. He wants to know 1) if anyone can identify the title or author or both of a novel, vintage 1945 - 53, in which a stretch of U.S. 66 between Carthage and Joplin, MO was mentioned, and 2) what issues of *Weird Tales* had illustrations in them by Henry E. Jankus, Jr.

If any FFER can help, please write directly to Mr. Barnett. I regret that his telephone number is not on record with Southwestern Bell.

### DINOSAUR DROPPINGS

Dear Mark,

FFS/TR is fine. However Nelson Bond has not been lost at all! He has been very busy for years as a seller of old & rare books, specializing in Cabell. His lists are witty & delightful to read. However, he is uninterested in writing fiction. Like other classic greats he was born too soon.

Ben Indick

\* \* \*

Dear Ray & Mark,

Enjoyed last issue of Sec.-Treasurers report. Very Good. Also glad to get up to date directory. Going thru it I find a few things I am not sure about. In the first place, my mail to following has been returned: Robert Anglin, Jean Bogert, Margaret Burger, Chester Karr, John Preble, and Leslie F. Stone.

Also you left out Edward E. Biefeldt -- he is still around as far as I know.

Thanks for listing Hall of Fame awards. I would again nominate J. Harvey Haggard who, as you know, wrote several stories in the 1930's and copped the cover several times on *Wonder Stories*. I nominated him one other time a few years ago & he

was defeated -- that was before we started giving multiple awards.

Missed Chicago, but hope to go to Orlando next year,

Best, Bob Peterson

[Some of our members have been missing for some time. Notable are the ones on the roster with Zip Codes of 00000, an indicator that the address is no longer valid. If any member can help with these, please contact me -- Ray]

\* \* \*

Dear Ray:

Thanks for the latest issue of F.F. and membership list. Incidentally -- in my copy of the list, the last two names on pages 2, 4 & 5 were illegible.

Now for apologies -- yes -- I received the First Fandom Dinosaur in one piece and my wife thinks it's great. Since I received it I have had the enclosed card sitting on my desk in the pile of things to be taken care of ASAP. Several times in recent months I have uncovered the card and exclaimed to myself: "Holy smokes -- I've got to send Ray a note!"

Well, I really have no excuse -- tho we have been busy around the house since last spring with plumbing, problems, roof repairs

and painting, new driveway, new storm combination windows replacing ones that were originally built in the house ninety years ago, repair to rotted parts on the screened-in porch, new water heater, and the 2,000 gallon oil tank buried in the side lawn started to leak.

Other than that I had nothing to do except to get some new computers and software programs for schools in our district -- setting them up, checking out the software, and instructing teachers in the use of equipment and software.

I've been retired for six years now, but I'm the only person the district has with any real knowledge of computers (I started a computer program about 10 years ago). I keep hoping they will have some new teachers with computer knowledge, but so far I'm still the expert & I don't know very much!

Al Lopez

[Al and Martha Beck were the first two members to receive the ceramic First Fandom Dinosaurs that I offered -- Ray]

{Al, the school district will never have anyone who knows anything about computers as long as you're around to do the work. But then you knew that all the time, didn't you? -- Mark}

\* \* \*

What Asimov lacks of pure style  
He makes up for -- well, once in a  
while --

By the way he can bluster  
From the depths of lackluster  
To the (almost) transcendently vile.

-- Dale Bowers

{Chortle -- Mark}

Dear Ray:

I am under the impression that the  
'92 Worldcon will be held in Orlando,  
Florida. Can you confirm this?

Ronald J. Small

[Yes, Worldcon is in Orlando, Sep. 3 -  
7. Write: Magicon, Box 621992,  
Orlando, FL 32862-1992. Phone:  
(407) 859-8421. -- Ray]

\* \* \*

Dear Ray:

I notice the new roster omits the  
name of Marj Elkers. Does this mean  
she didn't get the report or roster? If  
so she wouldn't know about it. The  
time between FF zines is so long that  
when I get one it is a surprise to me,  
so no one would miss it if it were late.  
You said you had computer trouble,  
so maybe other names were omitted;  
another check with the last roster and  
additions would be indicated. That's  
what I would do if I were Secretary.  
You and Mark are doing a good job,

but I wish the zine would come out  
quarterly or at least semi-annually.

Yours, Don Franson

[There were some names deleted  
from my data file as a result of the  
massive ice storm/power outage we  
suffered in the Midwest last March.  
They are being corrected as they are  
brought to my attention. As far as  
the frequency of the report is  
concerned, I am the only working  
officer in this organization (thank  
God for Mark's help!), and the job  
don't pay much. If you can figure  
out a way to hire me a staff I'm sure  
we can get it on a regular schedule.  
-- Ray]

\* \* \*

Dear Ray,

Erg 115 is currently at the  
printers, so you can expect a copy  
in a few weeks' time -- depending  
on the vagaries of the Overseas  
Postal Service. If you care to  
mention it in a future Newsletter,  
copies are available at a dollar a  
time of any FFER is interested (bills,  
NOT cheques). Some back issues  
also available.

On the comment on convention  
registration costs -- I can't afford  
'em these days I'm afraid, and like  
you, find that 90% of program items  
just don't interest me. Heck,  
nowadays Con Committees in the  
UK seem stuck in the panel, speech,

film, panel, panel, symposium (i.e.,  
panel) loop. Gone are the days of  
'This Is Your Life', 'Fan Huckster'  
tables, Liverpool Tape Operas, etc.  
Even the pro huckster tables all offer  
the same stack of paperbacks. I  
estimated that three days at Loncon  
would cost me over £200, minimum  
-- and for much less than that I can  
have A WEEK on the Continent, all  
travel and food included.

I hope you and your good lady  
are keeping well.

All the best,  
Terry Jeeves

{I don't go to a con anymore unless  
my wife and I get free memberships.  
I've turned down a few that invited  
me, but wanted me to pay for the  
privilege. Don't worry about the  
programming rut. No one attends  
'em anyway. -- Mark}

\* \* \*

Dear Ray:

It's a shame Arthur C. Clarke has  
fallen into so many physical  
problems. If there's any way it can  
be done, I would recommend  
retaining him on the First Fandom  
roster as an honorary member or  
member emeritus or something, in  
recognition of his special  
circumstances and his distance from  
the rest of us.

Harry Warner, Jr.

{I don't think there's any danger of  
Arthur falling off the membership  
rolls, Harry. He just doesn't want to  
receive the Report so he won't feel  
obligated to respond. He'll get out  
the same way you and I will: feet  
first. -- Mark}

\* \* \*

Dear Ray:

It was, indeed, a delightful  
surprise to learn that I've been  
admitted to the august company of  
First Fandom's Hall of Fame. I do  
regret that my various infirmities  
made it impossible to attend the  
presentation.

With respect to the question of  
whether deceased parties should be  
added to the HOF, my opinion is  
that they *should* be added when  
and where a majority agrees that  
they would be worthy if still alive.  
The HOF is for all of us still alive;  
and while we should concentrate on  
living persons, let's not forget those  
departed who are nonetheless  
worthy. Elect them *in addition to*,  
*not instead of* the still-living  
candidates.

Dave Gorecki's article on Jack  
Darrow was most interesting, but  
there are some errors (in addition to  
the consistent misspelling of *Weird  
Tales*) that need correcting, and I'd  
like to add some other comment.



I'm inclined to doubt that "fan enthusiasm for *Astounding* and other non-Gernsback inspired science fiction turned up in SFL-sponsored fanzines, prompting a rift between the chapters and Gernsback." Not that any other magazines were praised, but that such enthusiasm resulted in any appreciable rift. I'd like to see definite documentation of that point.

Page 6: "...Charlie Homig (editor of *Fantasy Fan* and later *Amazing*..." Dear me -- no! Charlie was Managing Editor of *Wonder Stories* later, and never had any hand in editing *Amazing Stories*.

Page 11: F. Orlin Tremain should be F. Orlin Tremaine.

Page 12: "Jan of the Jungle", by Otis Adelbert Kline, did not appear as a serial in *Weird Tales*, but in some other pulp, the title of which I don't recall. What did appear as a serial around that time in *Weird Tales* was "Tam, Son of the Tiger," and I never heard of that becoming a movie serial.

Same page: It's absurd to refer to Margaret Brundage as a "painter;" all of her covers were done in pastel crayon, an entirely different medium.

I'm sorry that Darrow wasn't asked when his letters under his own name were published, and when he took on the aka "Jack Darrow." I searched through my *Weird Tales*, in which I'm

complete from the July, 1925 issue. In those days, letters in *The Eerie* were mostly excerpts, although in some instances they were extended enough so that they may have been complete letters. For the most part, however, all we saw were a few sentences, or perhaps one entire paragraph.

I did finally locate a Kormoelje excerpt in the January 1928 issue of *Weird Tales*, wherein the "je" comes out "se." The July 1928 issue presents the first excerpt from "Jack Darrow." I'm haunted by the feeling that I've seen another excerpt in WT wherein his true name was spelled correctly, but couldn't find it. However, his true name is correctly spelled in August 1927 *Discussions* department in *Amazing Stories*, wherein he expresses pleasure that a novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs is about to appear, and asks for more interplanetary stories. "The Land that Time Forgot" started as a three-part serial in the February 1927 issue of *Amazing* (on sale January 5th), and the announcement of it was in the previous issue, so that letter was clearly written in 1926. Neither the "K" name nor "Jack Darrow" appeared in further issues of the Gernsback *Amazing Stories*, so "Darrow" would be a familiar name only to those science-fiction readers who had also been reading *Weird Tales* in mid-1928.

If I have erred on the above deductions, I'd appreciate seeing a

correction.

Sincerely yours,  
Robert A. W. Lowndes

[Thanks for the observations. Most of this is in an area which is before I was involved, so I'll leave it up to the older members. Robert Bloch also questioned "WIERD TALES!" It was my fault that I didn't proofread the copy when I got it from Mark. I was in a hurry to get it in everyone's hands before Chicon. -- Ray]

{Hey, typos happen! Editing and pubbing this thing is a multi-stage process involving word processing, spell checking, format conversion, importation into the DTP program, and all sorts of finicky fiddling until final printing. Somehow the typo survived all those steps, plus a run-in with my Funk & Wagnall's. I'd open a vein in expiation except there'd be no one left to put this rag out. -- Mark}

\* \* \*

Dear Ray,

I see you don't receive much news from your overseas members (except the indefatigable Arthur in Sri Lanka). So just to tell you I am still traveling about the world. In fact, I'm meant to be in Volgograd, Russia, right now as GoH at a large convention. But I have to sit this one out, having recently had an operation for a double hernia.

However, I was in Chengdu, China, earlier this year, at a fine World SF meeting. FF members Fred Pohl and Jack Williamson were also along. The Chinese take SF very seriously as a medium for social criticism. Next spring I hope to return to Chengdu.

SF publishers are springing up all over the ex-Communist states such as Czechoslovakia. I've just had a story published in Albania... So science fiction is still spreading.

All the best,  
Brian W. Aldis

{Left wing movements have always seen s-f as a form of social criticism. I recall when the *Daily Worker* called for a people's science fiction club in response to the publication of Fred Pohl and Cyril Kombluth's "The Space Merchants." -- Mark}

\* \* \*

Dear Ray:

I still have a CP/M-80 Kaypro II on the premises. I have a program named UNIFORM which handles many CP/M formats and MS-DOS format. I've used it to transport files from the Kaypro to my Amiga. The Kaypro uses single-sided diskettes. If I can do you some good despite this, let me know.

It was interesting, though not surprising, to learn that other First

Fandomers don't think much of current conventions.

Roy Lavender was in town for the WesterCon, I think, in 1989. I went downtown, signed up, wandered around, and found that Roy's was the only familiar face. None of the specialty stuff was of interest.

I sat in a couple of lectures which were reasonably interesting. During a lecture on horror literature, I realized that I no longer had any patience whatsoever with the mind games represented by horror stories. I had become conditioned to prefer physical action rather than brooding by my nine years as a technical rock climber and eight years as a mountain rescue person. Made a bit of an ass of myself with my comments, I seem to recall.

I discovered that reading the letters in the Summer, 1991 Report resulted in sentimental memories about fabricating the first two First Fandom awards in the basement of our home in Cincinnati in company with several of the founders of First Fandom.

I had suggested the Moebius strip design, and bought some stainless steel strip which we fastened to a trophy base which one of the others had obtained. I know that Don Ford, Lou Tabakow, and Dale Tarr were there. I think that Doc Barrett and Roy Lavender were also, something that Joan reminds

me would likely have happened only for the annual Don and Lou birthday bash. I contributed most of the text for the first two engraved plaques.

We tried to put another such trophy together in my basement for Doc Keller in 1988, but the stainless steel strip which I had purchased so casually three years before was not to be found, and the new strip I bough just didn't shape well. I don't know what we finally used, but I don't think that the trophy came out of my basement that year or ever after.

Mark Schulzinger called me last summer, I believe, when he was in Phoenix. I mentioned to him that I was planning to write a biographical sketch. The intention is still there, but it keeps getting pushed into the future.

I recognize that it was probably Mark's responsibility, but Joan and I were both disappointed in the quality of printing for the First Fandom roster. Our copy is illegible in some of the bottom lines. Not critical so far as I can tell, but annoying.

If other members wouldn't object, and the information could be gathered, it would be kind of nice if phone numbers were included along with addresses.

Do you and Mary Ann still do any spelunking?

Best regards,  
Stan Skirvin

[Thanks to you and everybody with CP/M machines who offered help but none so far are compatible with Sanyo. Mark and I are attempting to keep duplicate files so we can avoid problems in the future. No it is not Mark's fault for the poor quality of the roster. It is mine -- again for being in a hurry to get the mailing out. I am afraid my caving activities (Spelunking is what amateurs call it) have slowed down quite a bit. I am getting too thick in the middle to fit in some of those small holes. -- Ray]

{Yeah, don't blame *all* the foul-ups on me. -- Mark}

\* \* \*

Dear Ray:

Best wishes to you and the other dinosaurs. I haven't seen many of the old gang, many of whom have departed for other planets.

A dear friend of mine, Chet Geir, took the long journey recently. We were penpals for many, many years, and I really miss the guy. We picked scifi apart while we worked on *Fate*. He died as an aftermath of a heart bypass.

Scifi has either come a long ways from the old days -- or gone a long ways. When I stop in the middle of the scifi section at the book stores I'm really bewildered. I suppose it's

the right thing to include Fantasy, but it sure is weird and wild, and you wonder at the huge number of guys who eat it up and go wild about it.

Best wishes,  
J. Harvey Haggard  
A Scifi Nut From Prehistory

{I don't wonder, Harvey. These folks have no lives whatsoever. They're so unsocialized they make an N3Fer look like a party animal. But then they grow up. After all, we did. -- Mark}

\* \* \*

Dear Ray --

Happy to read the Summer Secy/Treas Report with all the reminiscent letters and news. Happy also to report that I'm too lazy to submit an interesting report of my own, now or never.

Best regards,  
Bob Swisher

{And Ray was too lazy to comment on your laziness. Ain't inertia wunnerful? -- Mark}

\* \* \*

Dear Ray:

'Tis true that I find too many things I want to attend at many time slots, but the Good Lord or Imp of the Perverse only provided me with but one body to put into attendance. On



the other hand there is much non-programmed activity I need empty slots for. I don't complain about the times I have nothing on the program. I wish there were more.

So it's not the con prices I object to. It's that other thing you mentioned: hotel rates. They are what's outrageous. On the other hand, if the room rates were not so high the con memberships would have to be higher because the rents subsidize the facilities. If they didn't the con would have to finance that also.

Could it be possible to rotate FF oriented programming at three regionals -- Eastern, Midwestern & Pacific? Possible a fourth: Mountain or Western. And remember, Chicago is not midwest. It's Old Northwest. Maybe the rotation might be Northeast, Old Northwest, South, Midwest, West, & Pacific. That combines Mountain and Southwest.

I heard from Conrad Ruppert who printed the first two printed fanzines. Seems he's retired from printing and is in *Who's Who in Photography*.

Clifton Amsbury

[Rotation in the regionals may be the only salvation for First Fandom as interest in the older stuff grows weaker. I believe in the not-too-distant future we will have to withdraw the Hall of Fame award from the Worldcon to one or more of

the regionals. -- Ray]

\* \* \*

Dear Ray:

I entered my 70th year in '91, and one of the sad things about it is the losing of good friends. What cheered me up a bit was reading your report, and to know that other folks are still going strong.

If course I agree with you about the rise in convention costs. I have a particular peeve in that I have to pay a supplement to obtain a single room. I am going to the Novacon, and, because I have a longish journey, had to book an extra night. For this I have to pay an extra £25 as the deal with the hotel is special rates for the con only. Which means that my single room costs £55 per night. This supplement is common in every hotel over here. Do you have the same?

Glasgow is bidding for Worldcon, and if they get it I shall certainly be there and hoping to meet some FF members.

Meanwhile, best wishes,  
Ethel Lindsay

[With the exchange rate the way it is you might try some cons in the States. You might be pleasantly surprised. We have a guest room, and you are welcome to visit. -- Ray]

## THE BIRTH OF FANDOM

By Mike Ashley

Gernsback should not have been too surprised when he launched *Amazing Stories* to find a receptive readership of fans awaiting the magazine. After all, he had deliberately aimed his earlier magazines, especially *The Electrical Experimenter*, at the amateur hobbyist and the radio "ham", because their enthusiasm was so responsive, and because he had hoped they might be stimulated into helping to create tomorrow's world.

Perhaps because of the dull response given to his 1924 circular, he had believed the scientification hobbyist existed only in limited numbers. Yet within a few weeks of launching *Amazing Stories*, Gernsback found himself inundated by mail from what he called "scientification fans -- who seem to be pretty well orientated in this sort of literature." He wrote about them in his June 1926 editorial, "The Lure of Scientification":

"From the suggestions for reprints that are coming in, these 'fans' seem to have a hobby all their own of hunting up scientification stories, not only in English, but in many other languages. There is not a day, now, that passes, but we get from a dozen to fifty suggestions as to stories of which, frankly, we have no record, although we have a list of some 600

{Hotel rates in the States have "published" and "negotiated" values. When I must go to Joplin, Missouri I am quoted a rate of \$56. When I mention that I have a discount card from the specific hotel the rate drops to \$52. Since I also belong to the American Association of Retired Persons I can get the rate down to \$45. Stating that I'm on U.S. government business brings it down to a flat \$40, and that includes taxes and breakfast! A little haggling can make a big difference in rates. My wife and I got accommodations in a \$130 a night hotel for only \$64. They were underbooked for a convention and had to rent the rooms out cheaply. -- Mark}

\* \* \*

Dear Ray:

I'm glad to see the new directory for 1991-92. I would like to add my voice to those who think there should be a rule change for a posthumous award. I thought Ozzie Train deserved it, and talking to a few others they thought so too.

All the best, John Newton

[The posthumous question is on the ballot again. Even though I have opposed it in the past, I have changed my mind. I think it is the way to go. -- Ray]



or 700 scientifiction stories. Some of these fans are constantly visiting the book stores with the express purpose of buying new or old scientifiction tales, and they even go to the trouble of advertising for some volumes that have long ago gone out of print."

At this stage Gernsback was talking primarily about collectors. Book collectors have existed for centuries, avidly pursuing their particular brand of bibliophilia. It is not surprising that amongst them would be those who delighted in the fantastic tale. What these collectors lacked was any form of organization. The desire to read is often linked with the desire to write, and amateur writers' circles as well as amateur journalist associations had been around for a century or more. The latter became more organized in 1876 with the formation of the National Amateur Press Association followed twenty years later by the United Amateur Press Association. Both organizations published their own amateur magazines, concentrating usually literary criticism and poetry, with little place for fantasy or science fiction.

It was into this circle that H.P. Lovecraft was invited in 1914, and he soon became a leading contributor to the amateur journals. Initially this consisted of poetry and essays, but he finally began to contribute fiction with "The Alchemist" in *The United Amateur* for November 1916. His main encourager was W. Paul Cook

(1880-1948) a printer from Athol, Massachusetts, and a leading light in amateur journalism. Cook published fifteen issues of an amateur magazine called *The Vagrant* which ran from 1918 to 1927 and which, because of the Lovecraftian contributions, is highly collected today. Although an amateur publication, it was not a fan magazine, and was certainly not inspired by either science fiction or fantasy. Cook's later magazine, *The Recluse* (1927), which saw only one issue, had a heavier bias to fantasy, containing work by Clark Ashton Smith, Donald Wandrei, H. Warner Munn, Frank Belknap Long and Samuel Loveman, as well as Lovecraft's essay on "Supernatural Horror in Literature", and might be classified as the first amateur fantasy magazine. Because, through Lovecraft, these writers had also been attracted to *Weird Tales*, one might argue that there was a form of organized fandom of the school prior to 1927, but this primarily revolved around Lovecraft's own circle of friends kept together by his prodigious letter writing. It was certainly not dedicated to the promotion of weird fiction, or the study of the supernatural or the occult in any form. As such it may only be classified as a group of fellow devotees and admirers and not as a proper form of fandom. Science fiction was a narrower form of fantastic literature and consequently had a much more limited circle of

followers. As a result they were almost certainly isolated. It was unlikely, even in a big city, to know of another "kid on the block" who read science fiction. It made science fiction devotees appear to be loners, when in fact they were only too keen to get to know kindred spirits who did not regard them as cranks.

Only one attempt at organizing science fiction fans had been made, and that was in England. It was the Science Fiction Club run by Paul Enever of Hayes in Middlesex. He wrote about it much later in *Wonder Stories*.

This society was formed back in 1927, before any science-fiction had reached England, other than Wells, Verne and a few contemporary "dreamers". On very rare occasions there would come into the possession of the club, a tattered copy of one of the existing American magazines, and such an event was always celebrated with high glee in the club meetings.

Enever went on to refer to the club's "perpetual instability", but it seems to have lingered on somehow into at least 1934, though it made no mark on the development of fandom, even in England. Walter Gillings, the real father of British science fiction magazines, encountered it only once with an enquiry about how to publish a journal which might keep the club together. Apparently it had previously published a fanzine called

*Fantasia* which just may have been the first amateur science fiction publication if any more details can be learned about it.

In America, isolation was the common state of the science fiction fan. Jack Williamson echoed the thoughts of many when he wrote in his first published letter in *Amazing Stories*:

"Few of my friends will read *Amazing Stories*. They say that they do not want to be amazed -- that it is a cheap magazine -- that such intellectual acrobatics are unhealthy -- that the stories are too fantastic. While I admit that there is some justification, it is mostly blind prejudice."

They needed a forum to unite them. That came when Gernsback started the "Discussions" letter column from the January 1927 *Amazing*. Initially he published only the correspondent's home town but, from the January 1928 issue, he began to publish their address as well, and this enabled fans to contact fellows anywhere in the world. It was by this means that Jack Williamson contacted Miles J. Breuer, which led to their collaborations. It also started fandom on the road to organization.

Most of the early letters in "Discussions" were devoted to comments on the stories or on their

scientific principles. There arose lengthy debates on the possibilities of space travel and time travel, on sub-atomic worlds, giantism, and especially the fourth dimension. There must have been more written about Einstein's Theory of Relativity in the letters in *Amazing Stories* than in the rest of the nation's scientific journals. In fact the letter column is often more interesting than the rest of the issue!

It is certainly a valuable source of letters from writers in the early stages of their careers, or before they turned to writing. Names in "Discussions" in *Amazing Stories*, whilst under Gernsback's control, who sold professionally include Miles J. Breuer, Frank Brueckel, Stuart J. Byrne, A. Bertram Chandler, Sophie Wenzel Ellis, Richard V. Happel, Clare Winger Harris, P. Schuyler Miller, Raymond A. Palmer, Mearle Prout, Jerome Siegel, Leslie F. Stone, E.D. Skinner, David M. Speaker, Robert A. Wait, Cecil B. White and Jack Williamson. Whilst leading names in the fan world who appeared in "Discussions" in *Amazing's* first three years include Clifton Amesbury, Walter Dennis, Robert Eades, Allen Glasser, Ronald E. Graham and Clifford Komoelje (better known under his alias Jack Darrow).

"Discussions" also gave some idea of the circulation of the magazine. Although the data is more appropriate to identifying the locale

of responsive fans, it nevertheless is some guide to the extent of the magazine's distribution. There were 469 letters published in *Amazing* and the *Quarterly* during Gernsback's tenure. Of these, fifty came from outside the United States. Canada inevitably led the way with twenty-eight letters, and England with ten, but there were also letters from Australia, Brazil, Hawaii, Ireland, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, China and India. The international status of science fiction would continue throughout the Gernsback period, as we shall see in later chapters.

As regards the United States, 41 of the then 48 States were represented. New York, not surprisingly, was most prominent with 71 of the 419 letters, California was next with 51, Illinois with 31, Pennsylvania 25, Ohio 22, New Jersey 19, Michigan and Texas each 16, Massachusetts 14, and Missouri and Washington with 12 each. The only States not represented were Alabama, Delaware, Idaho, Mississippi, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Utah, which may have either indicated the lassitude of their readers, or the vicissitudes of the distribution system. Certainly all of these States had readers represented in the magazines before much longer.

The early attempts at organization were based on the further pursuit of science, not the study of science fiction. The first suggestion

for a club came from John Mackay of Jersey City, New Jersey. Writing in the August 1927 *Amazing* he stated that a group of young men were planning to form a Science Club with the purpose of scientific discussion and experimentation. This must have been music to Gernsback's ears. His belief that science fiction would stimulate and inspire was coming true. Mackay was hoping that if enough people could join the Club the fees would enable them to afford a laboratory for their experiments. He sought a response from men in the New Jersey area aged between 18 and 23.

It brought a swift response from Holger Lindgren in Olympia, Washington, who felt that such a Club should not be limited to one city or state. He believed that "it would be a wiser thing if an International Science Club was formed, and all interested in science, from 18 to 25 years of age could join. (Yes, it would have to be correspondence.)"

This suggestion received the total backing of Gernsback who offered to make *Amazing Stories* the official organ of the Club, provided there was a sufficient response and members were prepared to pay a small fee.

Donald L. Campbell of Chicago proposed, in the November *Amazing*, that the lower age limit be reduced from eighteen, as he himself was fifteen, and he believed that there

were plenty of young readers who would want to join. Again Gernsback agreed.

More ideas came in. J.C. McAlister of Yellow Grass, Canada, hoped there would be a special feature in *Amazing* on the activities of the Club, and Wilbur S. Jones of Little Rock, Arkansas, suggested that the Club have local chapters for discussion and experimentation. Jack Williamson proposed that experiments as suggested by readers could be conducted in members' laboratories on a rota basis. George A. Wines of Seneca, Michigan, stated that he had organised such a club in 1914 for the local high school boys called the American Order of Science. Its activities sounded like something out of Gernsback's *Electrical Experimenter*, since they had, amongst other things, built a local broadcasting station, and an electric gun which they had presented to the government when War broke out. Wines wanted to extend this organization on a national scale.

The May 1928 issue contained two letters (one from Lindgren again) suggesting that Gernsback act as the co-ordinator on the Science Club and appoint a committee to set up a constitution. Gernsback was reticent, probably because of the limitation on his time, and certainly none other in his employ had the time to devote to



this. It was not like the situation six years later when Gernsback had the energetic Charles Hornig on his payroll ambitious to organize the Science Fiction League. In 1928 Gernsback wanted someone else to take the initiative and form the Club.

Soon the more active readers took the initiative. In the March 1929 issue George Lasky of New York City asked for readers to write to him about getting the Science Club on its feet. A number did, most notably Walter Dennis of Chicago who, along with Sidney Gerson, also of Chicago, reported on progress in the Summer 1929 *Amazing Stories Quarterly*. Between them Lasky was going to write to all correspondents in *Amazing* in the New York area, and Dennis and Gerson were going to do the same for the Chicago area. Dennis now became the driving force. Through his correspondence he began to learn of small local clubs in existence, most of which had been created during 1928. The earliest was probably the Eastbay Club in Oakland, California, which had been formed by Aubrey MacDermott along with Clifton Amshury, Louis Smith and Lester Anderson in June 1928. Dennis had formed his own Pickwick Club in Chicago with Sidney Gerson and Paul McDermott, and there were other small gatherings in Atlanta, Oklahoma City and New York.

It was Dennis who decided something should be done to bring these together. He contacted

Raymond A. Palmer, then living in Milwaukee, and the two arranged to meet at Palmer's home. This was sometime early in 1929, though Dennis cannot now recall the date. It was at that meeting that Palmer and Dennis conceived the name of the Science Correspondence Club. Implementation of the Club from then on was handled by Dennis, Gerson and Paul McDermott as Palmer had no resources to handle volumes of mail, printing of membership cards and stationery.

One of the charter members was A.B. Maloire of Centralia, Washington. Maloire had been one of the first readers to appear in "Discussions" in the January 1927 *Amazing*, and he became the first to alert Gernsback's readers to the newly formed Science Correspondence Club in the August 1929 *Science Wonder Stories*. Since he was commenting on the June 1929 issue published on May 3, we can presume that the Club had been formed some time in March or April 1929. It was the first national organization of its kind created by science fiction fans for the furtherance of science. Maloire's letter also revealed some of the consequences of becoming an active fan which have plagued fans ever since:

"... unfortunately I have no time to read all [the stories] as corresponding with members of the recently created Science Correspondence Club has taken up much of

my time. Up to date we have a membership of twenty-five enthusiastic science fiction fans all anxious to devour every bit of science fiction that they can grab. Later we may ask a little space in some corner of your magazine to report our progress. At present we are voting for officers."

The Science Correspondence Club was the birth of organized fandom. Even though its formation had been designed for "the furtherance of science and its dissemination among the laymen of the world and the final betterment of humanity," the members soon found they had a greater interest in discussing the latest developments in science fiction, and though the two went

hand in hand for some years, it was clear that fandom was starting to organize itself for the promotion and glorification of science fiction.

Gernsback's original desire that science fiction would educate and stimulate men in the further exploration of science, had worked to begin with, but had now turned in on itself. Science fiction had become a cause in itself, and fandom was preparing itself for the battles ahead. Yet fandom could have had no idea what was going to happen next, even as it was getting organized. Before we look at that, though, let's not forget how Gernsback was looking at his own vision of the future.

#### LAST MINUTE ITEMS!

Due to the change in mailing procedures the P.O. Box 635 Galveston IN 46932 will be dropped. My home address will be used: 2209 South Webster St. Kokomo, IN 46902. The Box will no longer be effective around June. This will save us a little money.

Please note the letter on page 21 from John Cheng. Those who wish, may reply.

The limerick on page 6 was sent to me by Dale Bowers, a fellow I used to work for at P.R. Mallory. I put it in the material to send to Mark. Later I found it was taken from one of Isaac's Books. I hope we don't get sued.

I am running close on weight on this Report, so envelopes will not be enclosed for Ballot return. Please!! Vote anyway. Address 2209 S. Webster St. Kokomo, IN 46902

at Chicon V one of the proposals is that I enclose postcards for the voting. The cost on that would be about \$40. The return on ballots so far has been between 30 and 35%. I don't believe that including postage will help that figure. If you want to vote on a post card I will accept it as long as you sign it. I will continue to send envelopes for the return ballot. Please take time to vote!

I agree with Mark's assessment of Science Fiction today. If I never see another Unicorn or Dragon, I could be a happy man. It hadn't occurred to me before but some of the most satisfying and interesting conversation that I have these days is during the monthly breakfast I have with a bunch of engineers that I spent over 20 years working with. Most are retired but some are still working on a consulting basis. It is good technical problem solving conversation. I manage to keep up on the state of the art in powder metallurgy and occasionally even give a successful suggestion on a problem that has arisen. I was really annoyed at a line from Andy Porter's editorial in the January issue of Science Fiction Chronicle. After discussing the effect of the sagging economy on the SF field he said publishers would be publishing and then only the type that had paid big returns in the past. And then he said, and I quote, "If you're writing a

multi-volume fantasy about cute cats and punning elves, I know some editors who want to talk to you."

One of the recent applicants for associate membership is Jim Harmon. Many of you will remember him from the late 50's and the early 60's. I always felt he was a competent science fiction writer so in recent correspondence I ask him why he quit writing SF. His answer was interesting. It is too late to publish it this time but we will run it in the next Report.

That's about all for this time even though I know I probably have forgotten something. 'Till next time.

Ray Beam--Sec. Treas.

#### WANT ADS

Terry Jeeves wants:  
The Mightiest Machine, J.W. Campbell, any edition  
Venture SF (USA) May 1969  
and UK edns. #'s 3, 4, & 5 1964  
Cosmos 1963/64 (UK) #2, 3, & 4  
Original SF (UK) # 9 & 12  
SF Year Book # 4  
SF Digest (USA) May 1954  
Spaceway (USA) Dec. 54, Feb. & Apr. 55, June 1970  
Satellite SF (USA) Apr. 1957  
Dec. 1958, May 1959  
GreatSF from Amazing #6, 9 & 10  
Doc Savage pb # 95, 101, & 102  
Space SF Aug. 57--Star SFpb #4  
Buy or trade for any above  
56 Red Scar Drive,  
Scarborough, North Yorkshire  
YO12 5RQ United Kingdom

Trade Serials & B-Movies VHS  
send SASE for list  
Ray Beam

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND CULTURE

24 February 1992

Ray E. Beam  
Executive Officer,  
First Fandom  
2209 S. Webster St.  
Kokomo, IN 46901

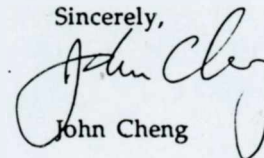
Dear Mr. Beam,

I am a doctoral student in American history at the University of California, Berkeley, and I am writing my dissertation on science fiction magazines during the 1920s and 30s. Several people I have talked with have mentioned your organization, and I thought I should write to you.

I am arguing in my dissertation that to understand science fiction magazines in the early twentieth century, you must consider the community of people involved with them, the editors, the writers, and perhaps most importantly, the readers. Part of my research has involved reading the letters-to-the-editor published in the magazines at the time, but I'm also trying to uncover additional information about the readers of science fiction, what careers they went into—scientific or writing—what friendships arose through their interest, who wrote to whom (any information people have about the Science Correspondence Club or the Science Fiction League), what the experience was like: how the magazines were bought, if readers bought or shared them. In other words, I'm interested in what members of your group have to share about their own experiences and those of other fans.

Ideally, I'd love to interview some of your members, or perhaps have them answer a questionnaire, but I don't know how you or the members of your organization feel about such things. So, I'm writing to ask for your opinion and any advice or assistance you might want to offer. You can write to me, care of the Smithsonian: NMAH-1040, MRC 605, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560; or call me at (202) 786-2416. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

  
John Cheng



**FIRST FANDOM**  
*Dinosaurs of Science Fiction*

Ray E. Beam  
2209 S. Webster St.  
Kokomo, IN 46902