

# FFM

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Dixon, Illinois

February 1962 issue

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## Editors Report.....

It has been six months since FFM #4. There are a number of reasons for this, Don and I have been in the process of changing jobs, and our time for fannishness hasn't been as great, but another reason is the membership itself. FFM is the magazine of First Fandom and it has been our intention to feature articles and artwork by First Fandomites. BUT -- with the exception of a few stalwarts, the membership has not been sending material in. I'm forced to use material from outside the organization, and good though it may be, that is not the idea behind FFM. We want material for and by First Fandom members!!! So come on. I know you all have a lot to say. Lets say it.

Note Dan McPhail's "Small-town Fan". Lets have the fannish histories of the rest of you. Doc Smith, we'd all love to read the stories behind your stories. And Don Wollheim, what about Wilson H. Shepard who published Fanciful Tales with you and started Phantagraph? Where is he now? Still in Alabama? He should be a member. I tried to locate him in 1949 when I was in that area and traced him to Haleyville, Ala. at that time. However, he worked out of town and only was in Haleyville on the week-ends so I didn't get to see him. At any rate, lets all get our memories working and get some articles in. OK?

I remember Wild West Weekly by Redd Boggs is reprinted from JD-Argassy #59. If you enjoy articles on the old pulp magazines, JD-A will be running a number of "theme" issues during the next year. There will be issues on Weird Tales, ERB-Tarzan, Argosy, All Story, Cavalier, "Black Mask", etc. JD-Argassy is my general zine and subscriptions can be had at \$2.00 for 10 issues. Address is: Lynn A. Hickman, 224 Dement Ave., Dixon, Illinois.

I would like to see a much better letter response to this issue. We have a lot to discuss and a good letter issue could be built on this.

I would also like to know what departments (if any) that you would like to see in FFM. Do you want books reviewed? Fanzines reviewed? Would you like an editors choice of the better books and/or fanzines that have been read here since the last issue?

You will notice that in the Treasurer's Report that Don mentions that the majority of the membership have not paid dues for 1961 and that the question arises as to whether they ever should. Don believes not because of the inactivity of the organization during that period.

I disagree with Don on this. The extra buck isn't going to hurt anyone and it would put the treasury in a nice fat shape and enable us to have a good backlog to start any projects that we might wish. Again, I wish you would all express your opinions on this.

Also in the Treasurer's Report (continued on page 38) dues for



I REMEMBER WILD WEST WEEKLY



by REDD BOGGS

PLATO  
JONES

## 1: How I Became a 3W Fan

Like De Quincey and his opium, I first made acquaintance with Street & Smith's Wild West Weekly so long ago that I might have forgotten the date and the circumstances if it had been a trifling incident in my life. But cardinal events are not to be forgotten, and by diligently searching my memory for fading recollections and the attic for the withering copy of the first issue of the magazine I ever bought, I can pin down the time and place almost exactly. It must have been the second or third day of August 1933, and I lived in Breckenridge, Minnesota, at 229 Eighth Street South in the house known in family annals as the Ross House. My introduction to Wild West Weekly arose in the following way.

In those days of boyhood I was known to my schoolmates as "the kid who draws cowboy pictures." Drawing was my hobby and my passion in the early morning of my life, and all one summer when I was about ten or eleven I labored at creating an original sequel to Zane Grey's Riders of the Purple Sage drawn in crude comic-strip form in the mode of Ed Wheelan's "Minute Movies." The reason why I and my friends should have imagined that I possessed any skill with a pencil cannot be inferred from the few scraps of drawings that have survived. I shuffle through them looking vainly for the smallest glint of talent.

Why I chose to draw cowboys instead of cheesecake is slightly more comprehensible. I was reading vastly of Zane Grey and the X Bar X Boys at the library; "cowboy movies" were my favorite Saturday entertainment; and I was an eager fan of the short-lived comic strip called "Broncho Bill." Despite all these sources of inspiration, however, one day of the long summer vacation I found I required fresh inspiration. I decided that I needed to study the effects achieved by the illustrators of some western magazine that was filled with action drawings and stories I could try to illustrate.

Somehow I managed to coax 20¢ from my mother, and waving aside her offer of an armored truck to convoy me -- for of course 20¢ was a fortune in those depression days -- I sprinted down to Holichy's drugstore to select a suitable magazine from among the gaudy array on their newsstand. After thumbing all the western magazines and jingling the dimes in my pocket meditatively, I finally chose a copy of Street & Smith's Wild West Weekly. As I blow the dust off it and glance through the August 5, 1933 issue today, trying to imagine how it must have looked on the news-rack nearly three decades ago, I wonder why my eye was attracted to it even momentarily. It is of little merit in displaying wild west artwork. The front cover, by Kiemle, seems completely wooden and vague in outline. It is, indeed, unlike most pulp-magazine covers, very subdued in color and arranged as a fuzzy vignette rather than as a full picture. The interiors, by H. W. Scott, are botches even less attractive than most pulp-magazine art, and I soon realized that Scott was an abomination comparable with Kramer, who desecrated Astounding a few years later.

At any rate, Wild West Weekly happened to be the magazine I selected. I bought it -- the price was only 15¢, not 20¢ -- and took it home to read. I sat in a chair on the front porch and read till it grew dark. So far as I can remember I was not inspired to the drawing board that evening, or ever, by the magazine. Its effect was clearly opiate in character, and as pleasant as De Quincey's laudanum and a good deal more habit-forming. After more than a quarter of a century I can still remember parts of the stories I read that summer evening almost word for word. The lead novelette was "Smoky Clark -- Trail Boss" by Ben Conlon, and it was backed by two other novelettes, "Tangled Herds" by Cleve Endicott, and "The Desert Phantom's Showdown" by Walker Tompkins, plus four shorts: "The Whistlin' Kid Climbs a Cliff" by Emery Jackson, "Some Sand, Ranger!" by Frank J. Litchfield, "The Thunder Bird at Gray Horse Mine" by Lee Harrington, and "The Sonora Kid -- Not Guilty" by Allan R. Bosworth.

I enjoyed each of these stories outrageously, without exception. A few issues later I began to grow more particular and even picky in attacking the weekly feast of reading. Two of my favorites in the first issue were the Conlon and the Harrington, and I will never forget how, in the latter yarn, the arch-villain known as the Thunder Bird escaped from Jail in Thunderbolt City during a wild rainstorm, leaving a taunting note weighted under a bar he had hacked off with a smuggled blade: "Gone on a gray Horse!" Both these stories were skillfully written and reading them over today for purposes of writing this scholarly dissertation I find them superior examples of pulp-magazine art.

But best of all the stories in that August 5, 1933 issue was "The Desert Phantom's Showdown" by Walker Tompkins. This was the last story in a series of six yarns, but it was complete in itself and capable of being enjoyed in splendid isolation, which I proceeded to do. It built up to a whacking climax, and the punchline -- the final line of the story and the whole series -- was "The courthouse clock was striking twelve." This yarn, colored with all the glories of the first impressions of a new delight, probably stands as my all-time favorite story from Wild West Weekly. One bumps into a "Desert Phantom" or a "Skylark of Space" only once in a lifetime, but the half-conscious aim of later reading is to discover another story in the same genre or by the same author that will produce as much pleasure. No story ever does, of course, and so there is always that little touch of sadness in the career of any fan.

On page 144, the last page of the issue, there was a large house-ad headed "Comin' Next Week!" which heralded the feature stories for the August 12th issue. The cover story was to be "Dead Man's Trail" by Samuel H. Nickels, blurbed as the latest adventures of "Hungry and Rusty, them two fightin' Rangers." For some reason I proved particularly susceptible to the allure of the Texas Rangers, and I soon decided that I must buy one more issue of the magazine in order to read this story. Of course I was already a slave to the habit and didn't realize it as yet.

Dated the Saturday of each week, Wild West Weekly, like the Saturday Evening Post, actually hit the newsstands in midweek. For

several weeks I bought the magazine each Thursday, which was the day of the week I had bought the first issue. Later, I discovered that the magazine appeared on the stands on Wednesday, and sometimes on Tuesday. Usually I bought my copy on Wednesday.

I read every issue of the magazine for exactly three months, but at the end of October 1933, with the darkest winter of the depression closing in, I couldn't even promote 15¢ a week for magazines any longer. I started to buy Wild West Weekly again in mid-January 1934, and thereafter bought it regularly for three years. By that time I had begun to read Astounding regularly, and my interest in science fiction had long since begun to out-blaze my enthusiasm for westerns. But I kept buying WWW for old time's sake, and even after I ceased to read it regularly I occasionally bought copies or had them given to me, and so was able to follow its later career, which lasted another six years, almost seven.

## 2: The Golden Years, 1927-1939

In an earlier article on Wild West Weekly, which appeared in Grue #29, published by Dean A. Grennell for the spring 1958 FAPA mailing, I recounted the early history of Wild West Weekly in some detail. Briefly, WWW was founded in 1902 (a date enshrined on the masthead in later years) as a five-cent weekly, a stablemate of such boys magazines as Pluck and Luck, Work and Win, and Fame and Fortune Weekly, published under the imprint of Frank Tousey, 168 West 23rd Street, New York, N. Y. Later the imprint became that of Harry E. Wolff, either an affiliate or a successor. In those early days the magazine was a thin pamphlet whose closely-printed pages were devoted largely to the novel-length adventures of a pulp hero named Young Wild West. No fewer than 52 novels featuring this redoubtable character appeared each and every year for perhaps two decades. They were, of course, written by various hands, under the byline "An Old Scout". Although each and every one of these 1000 or more novels are probably virtually unreadable, I managed to read a couple of them and reported on Young Wild West in the Grue opus alluded to a moment ago.

In that same article I also reported that Street & Smith bought out Wild West Weekly from the former publisher "in the early 1920s." However, further investigation seems to indicate that Street & Smith did not become the publisher till 1927. Indeed, Quentin Reynolds' history of Street & Smith, The Fiction Factory (Random House, 1955), says the event took place as late as 1929, though the appendix, giving publishing data on all Street & Smith titles, says 1927, and elsewhere Reynolds says WWW "was a success for 16 years," which would validate the authenticity of 1927 as the takeover date. At any event, during the early 1920s the magazine continued as a slim "weekly," still featuring Young Wild West, but now only reprints of the old Tousey novels, printed from the old plates.

Street & Smith revamped the magazine in 1927, whether or not they had just taken over at that time. The old relic of the days of Buffalo Bill now appeared in regular pulp format, the first issue dated August 13, 1927 or thereabouts. It sold for 10¢, and

probably ran 112 shag-edged pages. It was edited by Ronald Oliphant, a Street & Smith veteran who had been connected with Thrill Book during its brief existence some years previously.

In the "new" Wild West Weekly Young Wild West metamorphosed into Billy West, young part-owner of the Circle J in Montana's Bitterroot mountains. His saddlemates, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, became Buck Foster and Joe Scott, and the two Chinese servants were lumped together into Sing Lo, Circle J's cook and handyman. Wild's "charming sweetheart," Arietta Murdock, became Ruth Dawe, part owner of the Circle J, but she soon disappeared from the series, since the magazine, aimed at younger readers, allowed very little "love interest" in its pages.

The original plan seems to have been to base the appeal of the magazine largely upon the exploits of Billy West, as the old Tousey magazine had been based largely on Young Wild West. For several years the "Billy West" Novelette led off each issue; later, the "Circle J" Novelette -- as they were later called -- appeared in perhaps eight out of ten issues, even though they seldom led the lineup. From around 1935 on, Circle J appeared in the magazine much less frequently.

Despite the desire to build the magazine on the popularity of Billy West/Circle J, the editor of Wild West Weekly was careful to provide Circle J with a strong supporting cast of "regular characters" who returned frequently, if not as frequently as Circle J. The earliest 3W heroes were created by the editor himself, though the authors assigned to them worked out the details and plots themselves. Perhaps the earliest of these regulars was Bud Jones of Texas, a Ranger put through his paces by J. Allan Dunn, a well-known pulp writer who, like Ned Buntline, had led a colorful and adventurous life and who looked, incidentally, like the old movie actor, Sir Guy Standing. Bud Jones of Texas appeared in the very first issue of the "new" WWW. Dunn also wrote about another regular character who began to appear with the first few issues: Pete Prentiss, the Wistlin' Kid, a Cattleman's Association range detective; these stories appeared under the pen name of Emery Jackson. Kenneth Gilbert, later a slick writer of note, wrote about Ted Marsh of the Mounted, and one Reginald C. Barker wrote about Jim Hazel -- Forest Ranger, under the pseudonym of Lee Harrington.

Other early regular characters included Lucius Carey, the Shootin' Fool, by Houston Irvine; Lum Yates, by Collins Hafford; Vincente the Yaqui, by Wilson Campbell; and Crosby Sheppard, the Ranny Kid, by Clee Woods. Most of these characters faded out of the picture by the mid-1930's, being replaced by newer and more popular characters, although both Bud Jones and the Whistlin' Kid survived till about 1940, when J. Allan Dunn Died.

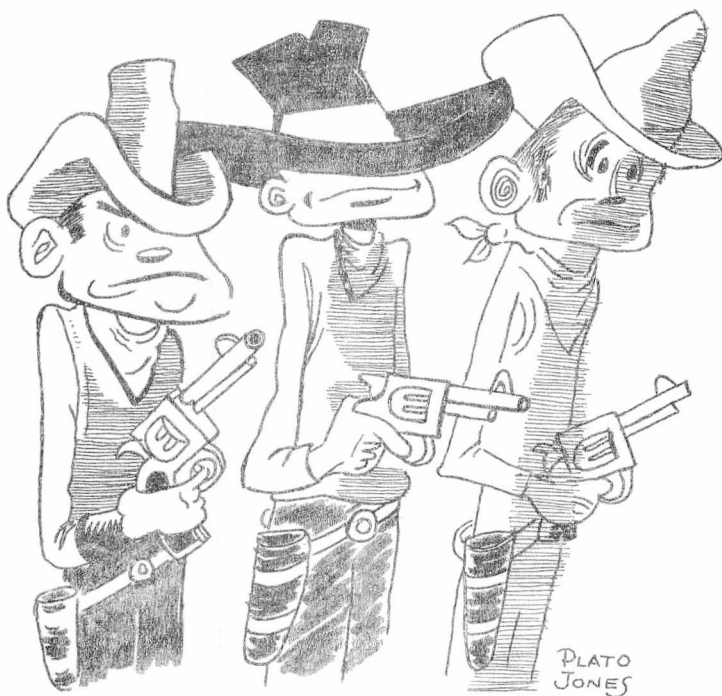
According to Mr. Ronald Oliphant, who was the editor of the magazine from 1927 to 1939, "The magazine in its new form attracted favorable reader interest, and after perhaps three years (I can't remember exactly) the magazine was increased in size and the price upped to 15¢. The general appearance of the magazine was improved, the crude covers of the ten-cent edition were replaced by better artwork, and the magazine built up a fairly good circulation for itself -- considering that the country was getting well into the depression of the 1930s."



The magazine kept the 15¢ tag from about 1929 till August 10, 1935, when the price was reduced to 10¢. At the beginning, the 15¢ edition ran only 128 pages; later, at no increase in price, the magazine actually enlarged to 144 pages. The 10¢ edition of 1935 gave the reader 128 pages (or 130, counting the front cover, as was done later) till 1940, when the page count was cut to 114.

Undoubtedly among the chief factors in the popularity of the "new" WWW was the introduction of two new characters whose hard riding and straight shooting soon took the play away from the Circle J outfit. Kid Wolf and Sonny Tabor became by all odds the favorite characters of nearly all 3W readers, and they continued to appear with scarcely diminished popularity till the very end. Their original adventures (or an adaptation thereof) appeared in book form under the titles Kid Wolf of Texas and Wanted: Sonny Tabor in the Chelsea House series published by Street & Smith, and Kid Wolf, at least, was the hero of a Big Little Book published in the 1930s. Both the Kid and Sonny were presented on radio for a brief while.

Sonny Tabor was apparently a later invention than Kid Wolf, who was already winning a huge following as early as mid-1929; Sonny did not arrive till a year or two later. He soon outstripped his older brain-brother in popularity, however, and by 1933 he was already undisputed king of the 3W range. Both characters were created by the same author, Paul S. Powers, under the pen name of Ward M. Stevens. He also used this pen name for a third series, featuring Freckles Malone, a pony express rider, but Freckles seldom appeared, although he was popular enough when he did show up. Possibly it was difficult to work out fresh plots on the stereotyped pony express theme; at any rate, Freckles Malone was Powers' only qualified success.



As Andrew A. Griffin, Powers also created the cheerful and resourceful Johnny Forty-five, another regular character who always rated among the top ten with 3W readers, and under his own byline during the final year of WWW's existence, he created the Fightin' Three of the Rockin' T, who rated high although they had insufficient time to gather momentum before the magazine folded. As Griffin and under his own name, Powers also contributed numerous "independent" stories to WWW -- stories not connected with a regular character -- such as "The Legion of Wanted Men" and "Runt Madigan, Gun Lawyer." Powers was the Jack Williamson of Wild West Weekly. A prolific hack writer in the early days, he was able to grow with the magazine and hold his own among the somewhat more skillful scribes who began to appear in the magazine in the 1940s. For the Christmas issue of 1941 Powers wrote a Sonny Tabor yarn, "Six-gun Santa," and added a touching little short, "Vigilante Christmas," that would make an excellent TV play for "Maverick." Fittingly enough, the very last issue of the magazine (November 1943) contained two Powers novelettes.

Sonny Tabor's popularity proves again the potency of the Billy the Kid legend, for Tabor was unabashedly a replica modeled on the New Mexican outlaw as popularly conceived. Unjustly accused of a murder, Sonny is forced to a life on the dodge, with a \$6000 reward posted for his capture or demise. Of course he is actually a model of deportment and spends most of his time running down the actual criminals who committed the crimes he is accused of. Like Billy the Kid, Sonny would not be driven from his home range -- in his case Arizona rather than New Mexico -- and probably unlike the Kid, he wore the same clothes at all times, which made it easy for people to recognize him, possibly even at night when the wind was right. Sonny's extreme youth and innocence was accentuated by "a bullet scar on one bronzed cheek that had more than once been taken for a babyish dimple." Aside from this, and the conventional attributes of the fastest gun and the straightest aim in the west, Sonny hardly required gimmicks and eccentricities to make him famous.

In contrast, Kid Wolf ("Kid to mah friends, Wolf to mah enemies") was a more conventional pulp hero, artfully gimmicked up and fitted with a set of eccentricities to make him colorful and distinctive. Although he professed great longing for the "Rio" country of Texas, he was independently wealthy and spent his life seeking adventure in all parts of the west from the "snow country" to old Mexico. He proclaimed himself "a friend of the undah dawg" and was wont to remark, "Yo' see, down in Texas wheah I come from they call me the 'soldiah of Misfohtune.' I'm proud of that name, and only wished I deserved it mo'." As you will note, he always spoke in sort of an ersatz southern dialect. His garb was colorful if not usually utilitarian: he wore fringed buckskins like Kit Carson or Daniel Boone, a huge sombrero with the front of it pinned back to the crown, and two Colt Peacemaker .45s. In addition to these weapons he toted a hideout: a Bowie knife sheathed inside his shirt between his shoulder blades; he could reach back and grab his knife and hurl it with blinding speed before a gunman with a cold drop could squeeze a trigger.

Johnny Forty-five wasn't merely eccentric; he was plain meshuggah. He habitually rolled a cigarette with his right hand, then another with his left, and then throw both away unsmoked. (He must have been followed by bums wherever he went, though this last was not specified.) His explanation for this practice is also characteristic of him. To his partner George Krumm he would say something like this:

"It keeps my fingers nimble, George,  
And I'm surely not a-jokin';  
My hands they roll the quirliies,  
And my guns, they do the smokin'."

Johnny probably owed most of his popularity to Krumm. "Fearless" George Krumm, self-styled Terror of Evildoers, tipped the beam at 200+ pounds (fat, not muscle) and "always rode with all the fire, grace and abandon of a bag of sand." On one memorable occasion he chugalugged a bottle of Tabasco sauce under the impression it was a bottle of rare wine. On another occasion, receiving a letter from his superior containing secret orders and ending, "After memorizing the contents of this letter, be sure and incinerate it immediately," George mused, "The chief don't seem to realize how dangerous it would be if this here letter was found on me. I'm takin' my life in my hands, carryin' it around this way. I've got a good notion to burn it."

Powers fathered all these raffish characters and kept them going full-tilt for a decade and more, but other writers were more prolific. One of the leading 3W hacks was Lee Bond, though he seems to have died or given up his art sometime in the early 1940s. As Cleve Endicott he wrote most of the Circle J novelettes; as has been pointed out, Circle J appeared nearly every week for six or eight years, so this was a sizeable stint in itself. As Lee Bond he wrote countless "single" stories, nearly all of novelette length, such as "Feud Ranch" and "Bullet Brand," and contributed frequent stories about two regular characters. One of these was among the leading 3W heroes: Jack Reese, the Oklahoma Kid -- no relation to any other Oklahoma Kids anywhere -- an outlaw who defied 3W tradition by being as homely as sin rather than bronzed and handsome and who was perpetually pursued by a popeyed deputy sheriff named Ed Sparks, perpetually armed with a mighty doublebarrelled shotgun. Bond also wrote a series of short stories about Calamity Boggs, a chronic pessimist and hypochondriac -- no relation.

It should be pointed out that there existed a hierarchy of regular characters in WWW, with position based largely on popularity and signified by such things as frequency of appearance, place in the magazine, and above all by the length of the story. The titans, Kid Wolf, Sonny Tabor, Johnny Forty-five, the Oklahoma Kid, and various others were never allowed to appear except in novelette-length stories which were nearly always featured on the front cover. Lesser characters such as Calamity Boggs, Lum Yates, the Shootin' Fool, Shorty Masters, Jim Hazel, and others, appeared only in short stories. Between these extremes were a few characters who sometimes appeared in novelettes but most often in short stories: Hungry and Rusty, Bud Jones, the Whistlin' Kid, and Jimmy Quick, were some of them. Of course social mobility existed even in 3W and some char-

acters rose and fell as time went on. Shorty Masters, M.D. (Mule Driver), made his final 3W appearance in novelette form in the early 1940s, after appearing only in short stories for a decade, though possibly his rise was partly as a result of the growing prestige of his author, Allan R. Bosworth. (See Bosworth's amusing article "The Golden Age of Pulp" in The Atlantic, July, 1961; he mentions his authorship of 200 Shorty Masters stories during the 1930s.)

William F. Bragg, perhaps one of the most talented of WWW contributors, created two popular characters: Silver Jack Steele and Flash Moran, who got along without many gimmicks or eccentricities, although the former did flaunt a white lock of hair where once a charge of buckshot had nicked his scalp. Bragg later created a series of stories about a character named Highpockets Halligan, which was part of a sudden emphasis on humor in WWW during the late 1930s. Allan R. Bosworth, under pen names, wrote several humorous series, including one about Judge Roy Bean and another about a pair named Jeff and Bugeye. Another such series was Hinges Hollister, by Phil Squires. But all these intentionally humorous series were a bit tiresome, and Bragg himself did much better with humorous touches in stories not presented as humor. He wrote a number of stories about a character named Andy Irons, including two that rank among the finest stories ever published in Wild West Weekly: "Trouble from Texas" and "Ridin' the Roarin' Chinook." The latter was tastefully spiced with a dash of wild humor involving Captain Andrew Jackson Irons, young Andy's hell-for-leather father.

Andy Irons, despite occasional appearances over at least eight or ten years, never made the pantheon as a bonifide regular character. There were others like him, including George C. Henderson's Bullwhip Adams, Hal Davenport's Banty Red Watkins, and William A. Todd's Risky McKee. A real 3W regular was indicated in at least one -- and usually all -- of three ways: (1) His next adventure was forecast in the "Comin' Next Week!" house ad in a notice like this one for "Murder Trail" by J. Allan Dunn: "Bud Jones of Texas rides ag'in an' shows by his special brand o' gun play thet he ain't fergot none o' the tricks of his dangerous trade -- Rangerin'." (2) At the end of his current adventure, there was an editorial note, promising another story about the character real soon now: "When a gent kin handle outlaws like thet, yuh kin bet your bottom dollar he's due back in Street & Smith's Wild West Weekly pronto... Don't miss the next Silver Jack Steele adventure." (3) And most important of all, the regular character always visited "The Wranglers Corner" each time he appeared in the magazine.

"The Wranglers Corner" began in the first issue of the "new" WWW and continued every week for a decade and more. It was the letter department of the magazine till about 1937, when it became an amateur writers' department. But more important, throughout these years it functioned as a sort of a wild west version of a Justice League of America meeting where the 3W regulars congregated, talked shop, and listened to the letters from "the readin' hombres." Evidently written by the editor, "The Wranglers Corner" usually boasted a little narrative to flavor it, sometimes a slight plot, and its characters were all the bonifide regulars whose adventures appeared in that particular issue of the magazine.

Once a character was invited to "The Wranglers Corner" he was indisputably in the pantheon -- although in later years the rules were occasionally relaxed to admit some riffraff. Various characters such as Frank J. Litchfield's Jimmy Quick appeared now and then for years before achieving membership in the "Corner." A few regulars "made" it on their very first appearance; however, these characters usually came to WWW from other places: Pete Rice, by Austin Gridley, became a 3W regular soon after his own magazine, Pete Rice Western, folded up. Hal Dunning's Jim-twin Allen, the White Wolf, had appeared in several Chelsea House books (and presumably in another Street & Smith magazine) before he arrived in WWW. All his 3W appearances were authored by Walker Tompkins under the Dunning byline, the creator of the character having died some years previously.

Walker Tompkins was one of Wild West Weekly's most prolific and popular writers from the early 1930s to mid-1942 when he was inducted into the service during World War II. He wrote under various pen names and house names, most notably Philip F. Deere, but under his own handle he created the perennial favorite, Tommy Rockford, he of the golden handcuffs, who was first a railroad detective, later a border patrolman. (In the former capacity he seldom went near a railroad; as soon as he switched to the latter trade he immediately became involved in a railroad robbery.) Early Rockford novelettes such as "The Navajo Avenger" and "Skulls in Wrist Canyon" were of particular merit and interest because they were primarily detective stories in a western setting. Later Rockford degenerated into a conventional shoot-'em-up lawman.

Despite Tommy Rockford's fame, Walker Tompkins' niche in the 3W Hall of Fame was won, not by his authorship of the Rockford stories, but by his status as the leading creator of six-story series. "All Stories Complete" was the cover slogan and editorial policy of Wild West Weekly for many years. Possibly it was inaugurated because younger readers, who constituted the bulk of the 3W readership, are deemed less likely than adults to read "long" stories of serial length. However, serials are traditionally a publisher's method of strengthening a reader's loyalty to his magazine, and presumably the front office declared in favor of "continued" stories. At any rate a happy compromise was achieved when in the early 1930s Editor Oliphant developed what was called the six-story series: a set of six novelettes, each complete in itself but with a close tie-in with the preceding yarns. Such series featured the same hero or heroes, the same villain or villains, and the same general setting and set of circumstances. Thus, taken together, the set of six stories constituted a serial comprised of six instalments each complete in itself.

Unlike most WWW stories, these six-story series often boasted "love interest," and often featured golden-haired heroines who could be kidnapped and rescued once in each story. Each of the six stories ended with the hero victorious in one phase of his struggle against the villains in much the same way that Kim Kinnison triumphed at the end of each "Lensman" novel. Usually the story climaxed with the death of a secondary villain or in the supposed death of the top villain, whose real identity might be a mystery. Only a very stupid reader, of course, could believe



that the top villain was actually dead for keeps when he beheld the editorial note at the end of the story promising further adventures of the hero in an upcoming issue, but at least the story was technically complete in itself.

The original six-story series formula was followed with apparent success down to around 1936 or 1937, after which decadence set in and the six-story series became merely a set of six stories about a particular hero who was pitted against six different villains in different settings and circumstances. Various heroes of six-story series won enough reader interest and support to return in two or more series, and sometimes came back, at last, as regular characters. Senor Red Mask, created by Guy L. Maynard, was one of these. He first appeared in a six-story series about 1932, came back for two or three encores, and finally became a permanent fixture. He owed most of his popularity to his colorful trappings -- the garb of a wealthy Mexican caballero -- and the equally colorful border atmosphere of the tales.

Another regular who was originally introduced in a six-story series was Trig Trenton, the Border Eagle, first introduced in 1933 and the hero of two further six-story series in 1935 and 1937 before becoming a regular. These stories were written by Walker Tompkins under the house name of Philip F. Deere, but while the Border Eagle was perhaps Tompkins' most successful character after Tommy Rockford in terms of longevity, these stories were by no means his major contributions to the six-story canon. Probably two such series qualify for that honor: "Terror Trail" and "The Desert Phantom," both written by Tompkins under his own name. The Phantom, alluded to above, first appeared in a six-story cycle in 1933, and was brought back for an encore in 1935. The original was an excellent and colorful saga of masked vengeance, but the sequel was very dull and ordinary, most of the magic having dissipated when the hero's face was unmasked.

The "Terror Trail" series was later rewritten as a novel and published in book form, but no sequel was possible because its setting, rather than its plot or characters, was its chief attraction. Most of the action took place in an authentic Spanish castle hidden in "a remote fastness of the Rocky Mountains." It had been built by Don Picadero, "a notorious buccaneer of the conquistador period...to be his hideout and the storing place of all his ill-gotten gains." The series ended with part of the treasure recovered and the Rio Torcido flooding the bottled-up canyon wherein the castle stood, forming "a lost lake pooled between windswept pines" and hiding the "grim secret" beneath its placid surface. "Only the wild ducks and moaning pines know about it, and they will never tell." The book version of "Terror Trail" did not include this passage, and I was mightily disappointed. Tompkins wrote many other excellent six-story series, including "Cougar Fang," "Deputy Death," and "The Arizona Thunderbolt," but none was as offtrail as these.

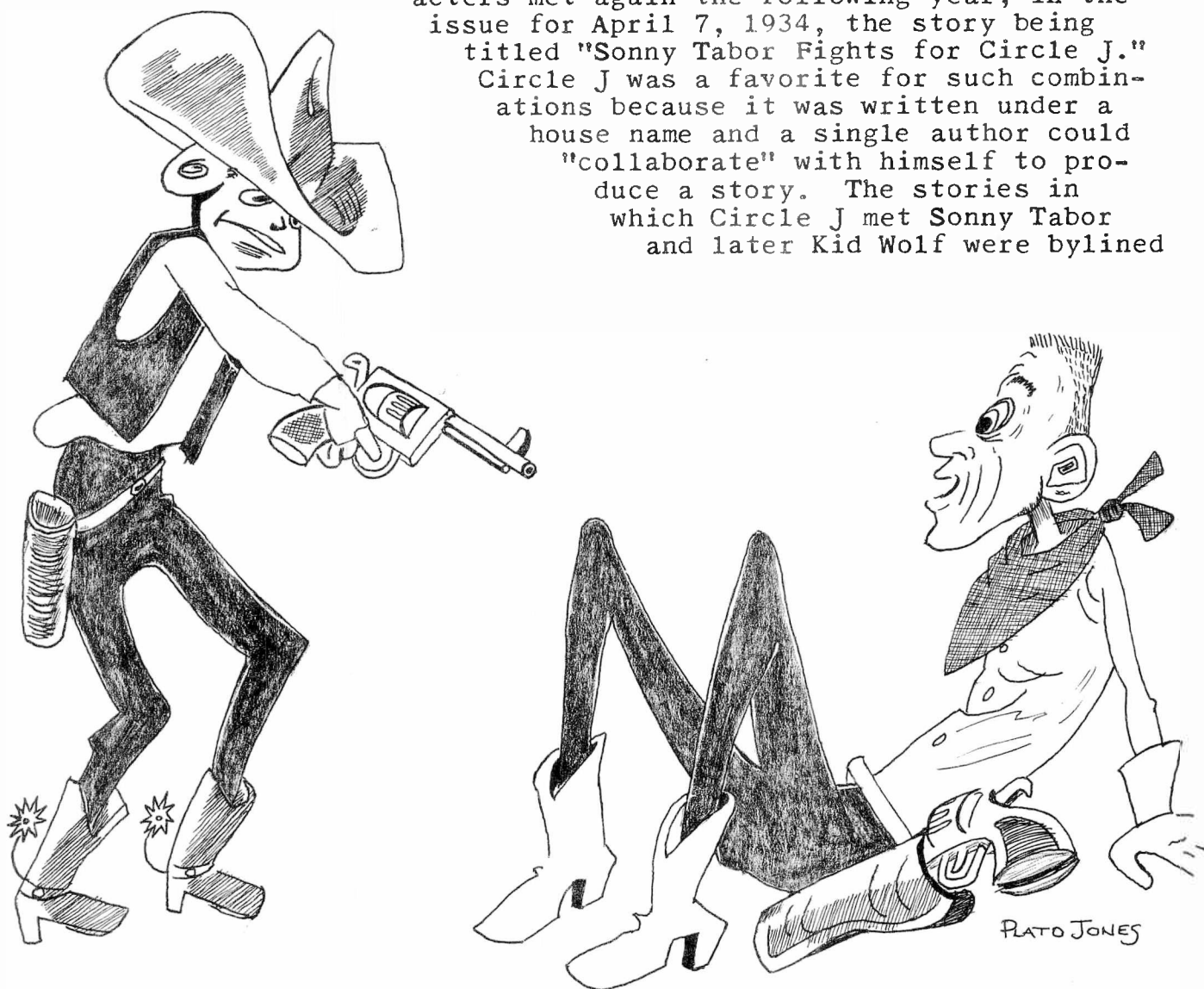
William F. Bragg was hardly less successful in selling six-story series than Tompkins himself. He wrote two or three series about Starr of Wyoming, the first especially fine, and many others

about other characters. One was called Trail Blazer, another Maverick -- no connection with the TV series of many years later -- to mention a few at random. Guy L. Maynard (with "Far-away Logan"), William A. Todd (with "Ronny Fellows"), Andrew A. Griffin (with "Senor Mystery"), and George C. Henderson (with "Whizz Fargo") were other six-story authors of note. There were many others.

During the golden years the usual formula for an issue of WWW was a table of contents composed of three novelettes and four (or occasionally five) short stories. Usually all the novelettes were devoted to the adventures of regular characters or six-story series characters, and two or three of the shorts also concerned regulars. This meant that in a given issue there were five to seven regulars on hand. The idea used later by the Justice League of America in which various heroes banded together within the bounds of a single story was used with caution in Wild West Weekly, though there were always readers' demands for more "combination" stories. Apparently the earliest experiment along this line took place shortly before I bought my first issue; it featured Circle J and Sonny Tabor in a

single riproaring novelette. The same characters met again the following year, in the issue for April 7, 1934, the story being titled "Sonny Tabor Fights for Circle J."

Circle J was a favorite for such combinations because it was written under a house name and a single author could "collaborate" with himself to produce a story. The stories in which Circle J met Sonny Tabor and later Kid Wolf were bylined



Cleve Endicott and Ward M. Stevens, but were written entirely by Paul S. Powers. Circle J also adventured with the Whistlin' Kid, the Bar U Twins, and probably others. Various other regulars joined forces on occasion, but probably the most famous occasion of all was in the September 7, 1935 issue which featured Ward M. Stevens' "Kid Wolf Rounds Up Sonny Tabor."

Despite the dominance of regular characters there were sometimes "independent" novelettes and quite often short stories not devoted to any regular character. Walker Tompkins, Lee Bond, and other prolific writers pounded them out between other assignments. Mention should be made of the immensely popular novelettes that appeared under the bylines of William A. Todd and of Ben Conlon. Todd's most famous yarns included "The Secret of Sundown Mesa," "The Shooting of Trigger Kane," and "The Gun Curse of Solo Dale," while Ben Conlon, who never wrote about a "regular", penned such outstanding "stray" novelettes as "Smoky Clark -- Trail Boss," already mentioned above, "The Gun Boss," and "A Deputy for Salamander." Whether Todd and Conlon were genuine, or only pen names or house names for other writers, I do not know. But I remember looking for their stories with the same interest that, in later years, I glanced over the contents page of Astounding for the stories of A. E. van Vogt and Anson MacDonald.

### 3: The Last Years, 1939-1943

Inevitably, according to the inexorable laws of economics, Wild West Weekly changed a little when the price was cut from 15¢ to 10¢ a copy with the issue of August 10, 1935. Sixteen shag-edged pages were lopped off; one of the three regular departments, "Western Pen Pals" conducted by Sam Wills, was dropped, and the two remaining departments, "Fiddlin' Joe's Song Corral" and "The Wranglers Corner", were reduced in size and set in smaller type. But the biggest change lay in the fact that one of the usual "Four Complete Western Stories" in each issue was now done in comic-strip form. These stories ran in "complete episodes" but, like six-story series, taken together told a more or less continued story. They ran for about 20 instalments before being dropped for a fresh "story in pictures," though some characters returned for an encore. For about four years these comic-strip yarns consisted of pictures with a brief text underneath, like the popular "Tarzan" feature in the daily newspapers, but during the final year of the feature the text was dropped and the story was told with handlettered captions and balloons in the panels themselves. When the latter format was adopted, a byline was added at last: Warren E. Carleton; previously no byline had been visible. However, William Timmins, later cover artist for Astounding, drew the strips throughout the entire five years, and quite competently, too, using several styles and techniques.

The first comic-strip character in WWW was Dogie Cantwell; the last, Omaha Hooker. In between came Brazos Bell, Fargo Neal, Slim Harkness, Sailor Anson, Dusty Radburn, and several other forgettable characters. The "story in pictures" feature was dropped forever early in 1940.

But the changes that took place in 1935 were minor compared with those that came a few years later. By the late 1930s, the magazine was beginning to feel the pinch. Radio, movies, and particularly the burgeoning comic books were beginning to kill off the pulps, and Street & Smith tried to meet the challenge by improving the physical appeal of the magazine. A new logo was designed and run superimposed on the cover-painting as was never done in earlier times. A year or two later the contents-page layout was revamped; the result looked more modern and streamlined, but it resulted in the disappearance of the familiar silhouette drawing around the ToC logo that had appeared for many years. I never quite forgave them for that. Trimmed edges showed up about the end of 1939, only to halfway disappear again with the final issues of 1943, which boasted only the sides trimmed, top and bottom still shaggy.

Following the time-honored custom, a new editor was brought in to retool the magazine in 1939. He was John Burr, who also edited Western Story and probably other Street & Smith pulps. Though his regime proved to be in a minor way comparable with that of Sam Merwin Jr at TWS and Startling late in the 1940s, most 3W fans and probably many 3W authors lamented the departure of Ronald Oliphant, always deemed a fair and friendly editor.

Under Burr, WWW was allowed to "mature" somewhat, though it was still aimed at younger readers and not intended to compete with Western Story. The most welcome innovation of the new regime was the use of more nearly correct English in the magazine. In former times blurbs, editorial notes, departments, and even many story titles were rendered in a semi-literate western lingo calculated to drive any halfway intelligent reader away screaming in short order. This lingo was drastically toned down beginning in 1939, though it never quite disappeared entirely.

"The Wranglers Corner" had been turned into an amateur writer's department about 1937, but continued to serve as the meeting-place of 3W regular characters till 1939 when that gimmick was dropped. The department itself continued on into 1940, but thereafter was dropped for good. "Fiddlin' Joe's Song Corral" -- an early manifestation of an interest in folk music, a department dating back to the beginning of the Street & Smith WWW -- had been dropped shortly before. Editor Oliphant had instituted a brief editorial department called "A Chat With the Range Boss" late in 1938; this published comments on current and upcoming stories, as well as letters from authors and readers, and for a time was the only department in the magazine. In mid-1941, however, a new letter column, "Readers' Branding Irons," was instituted, and lasted as long as the magazine.

Better artwork had begun to appear in the late 1930s when H.W. Scott began to be squeezed out by Bjorklund, a superior western illustrator who did most of the interiors from about 1937 to 1940. In the same era WWW adopted the full-page "book-jacket" illustrations which became a standard feature in all Street & Smith pulps -- including Astounding and Unknown -- for a year or two. By 1940, WWW was an extremely attractive pulp, boasting trimmed edges, superior illustrations, and modern logo and titles. It remained an attractive pulp to the end, but in mid-1941 oldtime readers

could see that the magazine was falling on lean times. All the artwork in the magazine, cover and interiors, was now reprint material. The covers were all taken from the WWW files for the 1930s. The interiors presumably were selected from the files of Western Story, Cowboy Stories, and other Street & Smith western magazines of the past, since WWW itself had too many Scott illustrations and too few worthy drawings in its back files. Western fiction is stereotyped enough so that drawings in the files could be found to illustrate almost any story after a fashion. The final WWW issues in 1943 seem to have been specifically illustrated again, all drawings done by an artist named Smith.

Under John Burr, drastic experiments were undertaken in the fiction department. In 1939 serials were allowed for the first time, beginning with William F. Bragg's "Tiedown Johnny's Gunsmoke Trail," which read as though it had originally been conceived or written as a six-story series and converted to serial form. Though several notable serials were printed, including Alan R. Bosworth's "Steel to the Sunset" and Walker Tompkins' "Trail of the Iron Horse," serials managed only indifferent success, and the ancient "All Stories Complete" policy was reaffirmed about 1941.

"Independent" novelettes and short stories were allowed far more space than they had been given in the 1930s, and during 1939-1941 the cast of regulars was almost crowded out by serials and "stray" stories. Various new characters were introduced to replace old favorites who were losing popularity, and some of these remained to compete with the old regulars during the final years of the magazine. Perhaps the most important of these new regulars were Rowdy Lang and Blacky Solone, outlaw and manhunter respectively, who corresponded roughly with Sonny Tabor and Kid Wolf, and like those characters were the creations of a single writer, one James P. Webb.

The other newcomers who managed to achieve major status in WWW were relatively few in number. Clay Starr introduced Dapper Donnelly, patent medicine salesman; Ed Earl Repp created Yuma Bill Storms and his partner, Beanpole Badger; J. F. Houghton wrote a series of "humorous" shorts about Cameron Claflin; and Chuck Martin chronicled the adventures of Rawhide Runyan ("his neighbors called him a cowboy's cowboy!"). As was mentioned many pages ago, Paul S. Powers added to his string of regulars in 1942 by introducing the Fightin' Three of the Rockin' T.

The requests in "Readers' Branding Irons" clamored for the old favorites, and the "range Boss" was forced to explain on several occasions that "we're bringing back the old favorites as often as we can." He pointed out that "some authors just aren't available" -- apparently he referred to writers who had died -- and that others had retired. Some writers such as Allan R. Bosworth had gone up to the slicks. Sonny Tabor, Kid Wolf, Johnny Forty-five, Circle J, Hungry and Rusty, the White Wolf, Tommy Rockford, the Border Eagle, Senor Red Mask, the Oklahoma Kid, Silver Jack Steele, and Flash Moran were the chief characters from the old days who survived to the last.



These old favorites were somewhat de-corned for the new era in which they ventured. Kid Wolf's "southern drawl" was toned down, and Sonny Tabor may even have changed his checkered shirt for the first time in history. Sonny spent several years acting as an undercover lawman, having won a pardon, a girl friend, and a saddle buddy, about 1939, but during the last year of the magazine, 1943, he became a bonafide man-on-the-dodge again. So far as I know, however, even under the "mature" influence of the new regime nobody was ever told the Christian names of "Kid" Wolf and "Sonny" Tabor -- or for that matter, of "Buck" Foster, "Hungry" Hawkins, "Rusty" Bolivar, "Trig" Trenton, or "Flash" Moran. I suspect that even their creators did not have this information available.

The evil day was put off longer than anyone should have confidently expected, but in the summer of 1943 WWW failed to appear on its weekly schedule for probably the first time in its 41-year history. The last word in its title was whacked off, and the magazine became a monthly publication, known as Wild West. About five monthly issues, priced at 15¢ and enlarged to 146 pages, later to only 130, appeared before the final blow fell without warning on page 29 of the November 1943 issue: "Because of the drastic necessity for the conservation of paper and because we are doing everything in our power to co-operate with our government in winning this war, we announce, with regrets, that with this issue Wild West will suspend publication for the duration...." This notice appeared in the middle of "Death Blots the Brands," a Fightin' Three novelette by Paul S. Powers. The only other regulars who made the final issue were the Oklahoma Kid and Johnny Forty-five. If Wild West hadn't died as a war casualty, of course TV would have killed it along with the rest of the pulps within another five or six years, but perhaps it is fitting that WWW (or WW) died, as it were, with its boots on.

To end this article I must briefly mention the 3W Club that grew up during the last years among the ardent letterhacks in "Readers' Branding Irons." Among the most fannish of these fans were David C. Sparks, Bill James Marion Henderson, Jack Powers (the son, I believe, of Paul S.), Bill Foster, and others. But the Number One 3W Fan by general acclaim was Bob Stratton of Seattle, Washington, who owned a vast collection -- many if not all of the 2118 issues published over 41 years -- and was a walking encyclopedia of 3W lore. Bob entered the armed services during World War II and was killed in action. Thus, ironically, Wild West Weekly and its most passionate admirer died almost at same time.

#### THE END

NOTE: As I did at the end of the Grue article about Young Wild West and Circle J, I must acknowledge the help I received in writing this article from Walker Tompkins, one of WWW's most famous contributors, and Ronald Oliphant, WWW editor from 1927 to 1939. Many thanks to both of them. -- Redd Boggs.

# THE WONDERS OF WONDER

-- a fantastic announcement --

by Robert A. Madle

How many of you remember the old large-size WONDER STORIES, which, of course, started out in June, 1929 as SCIENCE WONDER STORIES? I'm quite sure that most members of First Fandom have copies in their collections and, as a matter of fact, quite a few of you probably purchased it from the newsstand when it first appeared. (Hugo Gernsback made no secret of the fact that he was about to publish a new magazine and always sent out notices or "advance copies" to advise his potential readership of the impending publication.) I'm also sure that some of you have nostalgically recalled the dear, dead days of WONDER with its marvelous Paul covers, its facinating editorials and departments, its stories -- each of which was a new adventure -- and the general all-around "sense-of-wonder" which pervaded the magazine.

I have always been convinced that Hugo Gernsback was invariably too far ahead of his time -- and his magazines bear this out. When radio was just a dream, he published MODERN ELECTRICS; when television was something out of sf, he published TELEVISION NEWS; when pulp-size magazines were the trend, he published his magazines in the 8½x11 size. Consequently, they failed. Even his use of the word "Science" in SCIENCE WONDER STORIES had to be dropped after a year because, in 1929, and up until not too long ago, the word "Science" frightened more readers away than it attracted.

The above is just an introduction to an idea which developed at the last Midwestcon. Frank Andrasovsky and I were having a little discussion and the subject of WONDER STORIES came up. Frank remarked, "Wouldn't it be great if WONDER STORIES could be revived?" This struck me as an amazing coincidence as I had been thinking sometime about how practical it would be to have a magazine like SCIENCE WONDER STORIES on the newsstands right now. "Frank," I said, "sit down and lets discuss this in detail."

We spent several hours discussing this fantastic idea and soon had Ben Jason, Ben Kieffer, and Lynn Hickman enthusiastically supporting what would appear, at first blush, to be nothing short of madness.

What we envision is a magazine published in the same format as the old SCIENCE WONDER STORIES -- and published by First Fandom! (Wait -- don't go away yet -- the best is yet to come!) It is visualized as a "one-shot" -- but who knows what could happen to such a magazine today?

As the evening (or morning wore on) here are some of the ideas which emanated from our enthusiastic albeit nostalgic minds:

1. The magazine would be called SCIENCE WONDER STORIES, 96 pages, 8½x11.

2. Frank R. Paul would do the cover.
3. It would consist of some reprints and some new stories.
4. It would be a "First Fandom Publication" with a shield similar to the one Gernsback used to indicate his.
5. Instead of a listing of "scientific advisors who pass on the merits of each story" there will be a list of "science fiction advisors who pass on the merits of each story". They will, of course, be the members of First Fandom.
6. There would be an editorial, just like Gernsback used to write, called "The Wonders of Wonder". Maybe we can even get Gernsback to write it.
7. There will be a readers' department called, of course, "The Reader Speaks".
8. There was even some talk of reviving The Science Fiction League with this "one-shot".

Anyway, the ideas are too numerous to list here. And they open the way for new ideas, too. Of course, someone is going to say, "How are you going to publish it? Who is going to write for it?" Good questions -- but we think there is enough enthusiasm for this project already to indicate that it can go if we really want it to. Just look at the membership list of First Fandom. We have editors, writers, artists, and just about everything needed. The names of Ray Bradbury and Robert Bloch on the cover would be big selling points and should insure a good circulation. Maybe we can get E. E. Smith to write a new story. We have editors Wollheim, Pohl, and Ackerman who could possibly arrange for distribution for the one issue. Ben Jason is aware of a photo-offset process that could cut the publishing costs considerably. Ackerman owns a new Paul cover which was painted especially for him. Maybe we can look up Laurence Manning and get ahold of his "Valley of the Mist" which was scheduled for the June, 1936 WONDER and which Charles D. Hornig claims to be one of the greatest sf stories he ever read. I'm sure that Hugo Gernsback would cooperate in this venture which could very well become the most fantastic fan project ever attempted.

Sure, there are many other problems. How can we get the rights to the title? How are we going to finance it? Who will volunteer to do the work on the magazine? And many more. But I believe that these problems can be met and handled quite capably as they appear. After all, First Fandom is not an immature bunch of kids -- we have as members some of the leaders in the sf field today.

This is being thrown out to the membership for discussion. Please think about it seriously as we know it can be done. True, it would be the biggest fan project ever tackled -- but we have the biggest accumulation of sf talent ever assembled in one organization. Send your comments to me as soon as possible. They will all be printed in the next issue of the magazine. Remember: this is no gag!! We're deadly serious and feel we can not only accomplish this incredible piece of nostalgia but also perhaps it might

go to the extent that it could become a quarterly or something. After all, the format of the magazine we plan is that of the big sellers of today. Anything can happen. We can make this happen. As Lynn Hickman remarked, "It would be worth \$100 to me just to see it on the newsstand." Send all comments to me at the following address.

Robert A. Madle  
4500 Aspen Hill Rd.  
Rockville, Maryland

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Don Ford reports.....

At the First Fandom meeting held at the Midwestcon XII, June 24, 1961, at the North Plaza Motel the meeting was opened by the Secy-Treas Report. Dues were due and we were at the stage of \$2.00 in the Treasury. However, the TAPP BAEDEKER was out and returns would be coming in for that. Some \$74.00 having been expended for its publication, the first \$74.00 coming in would be returned to First Fandom.

Lynn Hickman announced that he needed material such as articles, artwork, etc. for the FFM.

Motion was made by Ford, seconded by Kyle that an ad for FF be taken in the Seacon Program Booklet. Dave volunteered to make the drawing and send it on to Seattle.

Motion made by Dirce Archer, seconded by Howard DeVore that nominations be accepted here and now for new term of officers; if others come in by mail, then a mail vote be conducted.

After much discussion this was withdrawn.

Motion made by Lou Tabakow and seconded by Dirce Archer that nominations for First Fandom officers open May 1st and be accepted by mail until June 10th. Nominations be closed at the Midwestcon. Voting would be by mail during the time between the Midwestcon and the Worldcon. At the Worldcon, all those who have not voted may then do so in person. The ballots would then be counted at the Worldcon.

This was carried unanimously.

Motion made by Alderson Fry and seconded by Dale Tarr that the current slate of officers be nominated for another term.

This was passed unanimously.

The award Committee, consisting of Bob Madle, Stanleigh Vinson and Bob Pavlat suggested a Science Fiction Hall of Fame whereby photos of the recipients be displayed in a First Fandom booth at all conventions. They said they would have a more definite proposal at a later date.

(continued on page 37)

# SMALL TOWN FAN

by Dan McPhail

IS science fiction really a way of life? I think it is. At least, for some of us, it is a very vital and important part of our life. Sure, we scoff and joke about it; in jests ranging from the fugg-headness of it all to the loss of our Sense of Wonder. But we love it, else we would do the obvious and just drop out. Quit. Exit. And, I'm sure, the world would continue to orbit for the all of us.

BUT to the truefan, and especially to those of us who have been with it so long, science fiction - and its inner world, fandom - is never far away. In today's news of rocket shots to the moon, in the everyday use of television, radar, jet liners and advanced medical techniques, we are witnessing the fruition of what were only dreams when we first tasted the sweet nectar of "impossible stories" in the good old days of science fictions' beginning.

FANS who had the rare privilege of being a part of First Fandom, no matter how small, can look back with fond memories to those early days. Science Fiction fandom is fairly young as hobbies go - after all, the first prozine appeared only 34 years ago - but its early history is fast becoming legend and facts and recollections are getting more and more difficult to chronicle. For that reason alone, the formation of FIRST FANDOM, restricted to those who were active before 1938, is an important step in the big job of compiling an accurate history of fandom.

SPEAKING for myself, I was most certainly in on the very first yelps of the new-born fandom; being one of the restless youths who haunted the newsstands each month for the latest scientifiction pulps and in between issues prowled the second-hand bookstores, seeking the rarest of rare volumes - the stf or fantasy book. But, like many others, I was unaware then of being part of the start of a movement destined to endure all these years. I joined eagerly many of the clubs that sprang, full-blown from the imagination and aspiration of enthusiastic fans, and dreamed visions of future activities. The modern-day "Southgate in '58" had nothing on us for a slogan. Back in 1938, Jack Speer and I used to kid about "Comanche in 1950!"

BUT let me try to start at the beginning, which means I'm going to have to reach 'way back yonder! I guess my first touch of fantasy came from the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs. I dimly remember reading some of the Tarzan books that a cousin had, but I can vividly recall the atmosphere of Barsoom and the thrilling adventures of John Carter in "A Princess of Mars". That, I think, was about the time Lindbergh made his historic flight to Paris (1927) which made an aviation-lover out of me, an interest that was to always remain with me and years later provide me employment as an aircraft maintenance foreman. My first regular magazines were,



besides American Boy, the air-fiction mags and areo Digest.

In 1929, we lived in the small northern Oklahoma town of Marshall where I had a red-headed chum whose folks had a large farm near town. We would swap week-end visits often and I clearly remember the Saturday night when his family was in town and I was going home with them for the night. We had gone into the corner drug store to get something to read and that was when I saw my first science fiction magazine, that was to start me on the road to fandom. It was the Amazing Stories for May, 1929, with the magnificent painting by Frank R. Paul of two space-suited figures leaping across a lunar landscape with the giant globe of earth hanging low on the horizon. So vivid and real was the artists work to me that I immediately plunked down my quarter for it. And that night in our attic room, we ate apples and read far into the night of the thrilling adventures of The Moon Strollers, marveled at visions of the far future, fought with Stanton A. Coblentz against The Gas Weed and shivered with Jules Verne and the English At the North Pole. Unknown to me then, Hugo Gernsback had just left Amazing Stories but when we moved to Oklahoma City shortly thereafter, I soon discovered his new publications, Air Wonder and Science Wonder Stories, also featuring the artwork of Paul. Air Wonder Stories provided an ideal bridge between my old interest in aviation and my new interest in scientifiction.

Our new home in Oklahoma City had an unused garage and I was allowed to have it for my own use. The place had a dirt floor and was hot in summer and cold in winter but to me it was a treasured retreat wherein I nailed apple boxes to the walls to hold my collection of aviation, boys mags and my growing collection of sf prozine. Along with many model airplanes was now displayed carvings of rockets, both of original design and copies from sf illustrations.

My father had lost his life in a fire that destroyed our farm home when I was just a baby. My mother later married a fine man, then an army sergeant who had been General Pershings' orderly during the Mexican Campaign against Villa. During the latter part of World War I, he was stationed in New York City where we lived only a few blocks from Don Wollheim's long time home on West End Avenue. After leaving the army, and serving as a postmaster in Texas, he followed the oil fields. He was tool dresser on a well that struck oil only a few days after the Mary Suidik "discovery" well blew in to herald the rich Oklahoma City oil pool. But, shortly after that, during my first year in junior high, he was killed when a speeding interurban trolly hit his car at a crossing.

The following years were really tough sledding for my mother and kid sister and myself. The street-car company responsible for dad's death was in bankruptcy and while mother received a small settlement and banked it, the interest would not cover living expenses and the principal constantly declined. When I came out of high school, the notorious depression of the Thirties still had a firm grip on things and, instead of college, I found myself trying to buck men with families for the few jobs available. With pleasures thus limited by finances, I found reading to really be "escape literature" in my case. My step-dad had raised me as his own son and we had been really close as father and son. I sorely missed his companionship during the early years after his death and I

think that perhaps had a lot to do with crystalizing my interest in science fiction. It was indeed a release from the trials and heart-aches of the day and gave glimpses of a future of better things than the present could offer.

Even with limited finances, other difficulties could hit the early-day fan. I recall the time when, on the way to school, I dropped by the drug store and, joy of joys, picked up the very first issue of Clayton's new Astounding Stories of Super Science with the Wesso cover of a giant reaching for a man and woman cowering in a cave. That very day a teacher spotted me looking at it in my notebook and apprehended it! Years passed before I was able to replace it, too!

But I was to face a far greater blow to my collection, it turned out. While we were at Dad's funeral, in Texas, a misguided relative took it upon herself to clean house for us and in the process, threw away much of the "junk" I had cluttering up the garage. Unfortunately, her definition of "junk" included most of my sf collection and other mags. Some items that the trashman hauled away, such as the Amazing Annual, I was never able to replace, and it was a long time before I built back my losses.

In those days it was difficult to find money to buy even the few titles then appearing. I carried a paper route and each Saturday had to check in at the down-town newspaper main office; after which I would tramp a familiar route as I checked the second-hand bookstores to hunt for needed items. I can now remember how longingly I would read book reviews and ads for pamphlets or booklets and know I could not hope to get enough money to order them. One of my great sorrows was not being able to buy the large Paul drawings that Wonder used to advertise.

Amateur journalism has always been of great interest to me. Even before I discovered science fiction, the role of editor and publisher intrigued me. In grade school at Comanche, I was co-editor with Jack Speer's older brother, Jim, in putting out a magazine titled The Original Idea. I still have drawings, of airplanes battling a space ship invader, from that publication. And Lloyd Cromer, the chum I mentioned at Marshall - he and I put out several hand-printed newspapers and fiction mags, which featured stories of strange adventures.

Dated June 1, 1931, I issued what is undoubtedly one of the very first fan magazines. I was very taken with my new interest in sf and had the urge to communicate my ideas and bits of information I was accumulating, to paper. So, on ruled writing paper, I laid out a two-column, four page publication of general comment and reviews of all the then current issues of prozines. The entire thing was hand-printed in ink and headlined the major news event of the year, the return of E. E. Smith to Amazing Stories with his "Spacehounds of IPC". Thus was born SCIENCE FICTION NEWS.

I was a lone-wolf type of fan in those days and my only knowledge of fellow-fans came from the readers pages, and while I did not correspond with them, many of the names became as familiar to me as if I knew them in person. I can recall the many letters of

Ray Palmer and Walt Dennis regarding the Science Correspondence Club; Jim Nicholson of the Boys Scientifiction Club; the 12-year old Linus Hoganmiller, Don Wollheim, Jack Darrow of Chicago who ran Forrie Ackerman a hot race as top letterwriter, Mort Weisinger, Louis C. Smith, Isadore Manzer, Herbert Goudket and Allen Glasser. I recall P. Schuyler Miller writing Dr. Sloane of Amazing for advice on submitting stories as an "unestablished" writer.

I continued to hand-print SFN the first year and then, from my earnings as a paper boy, I purchased - at a dollar down and a dollar a week for a month - a 1912 Oliver typewriter...the kind where the keys are in banks on each side. So for a while the mag appeared in larger size with typed pages. Then someone had the nerve to steal my 'printing press' from off our back porch, and I was forced to limp along on borrowed typers for a period of time with an occasional hand-printed issue necessary. However, at the end of 1935, I again obtained a typewriter and started a 'mail-order' edition of AFN, sending sample copies to all Oklahomans whose name I could find in old readers columns. Jack Speer and I were corresponding and I revealed my plans to him for a state club of science fiction fans.

In the January, 1936 issue of SFN, the formation of the Oklahoma Scientifiction Association was announced with great fanfare. This was the first effort to establish a state fan club and it did quite well, expending to about a dozen members and we even held a con in Oklahoma City (total attendance at this "Pow-Wow": three). At this time I was just out of highschool and had promoted a job with an engraver where, in the manner of all true fen, I managed to use his equipment to the betterment of fandom...making a cut of an OSA emblem and printing it and the logo for a SFN cover. Rubber stamps and hecto drawings were used for headings and cuts on the typed zine. Jack was my associate editor and conducted a popular coverage of radio and comics.

Dual duties gave me a job with both a small weekly newspaper and with the print shop that produced it. In this position I would sell advertising, report news and society items, and was officially the sports editor. I would do the leg work on the news beat, come in and write up copy, set type and build up the page, often lock it up and run off the pages. The owner of the shop was a nice guy and permitted me to buy paper stock wholesale and to use his equipment in off hours and thus was able to print the final three issues of SFN in 1936. With high hopes, I mailed out a hundred copies of each issue but the response was pretty small. My old ledger shows the total expense for the three issues at \$4.39 and income (subs & ads) at \$6.64. The list of subs and trades included Schwartz, Baltadonis, Wollheim, Pohl, Beck, Wiggins, Dollens, Blish, Hanson (English NOVAE TERRAE), Sykora, Miller, Racic, Lichtig and George Clark.

I had great expectations for Science Fiction News but I was stunned when, only a few days after I had proudly mailed out my first printed issue, that the mail brought the Fourth anniversary issue of FANTASY MAGAZINE - with 60 pages! And I had thought my 14 pages on slick paper a big event! I remember I sat there, with

Julius Schwartz' bulky fanzine in my hands and thought of the many long hours at night when, under a single drop light in a lonely, empty building, I had sat before a tray of type and laborously set up page after page and then ran them off myself. It seemed a cruel fate that fandom would be receiving this giant competitor during the same week my thin fanzine went out. It was quite a blow to my ego, as that October, 1936 SFN represented a pinnacle in the long climb from that hand-printed start of 1931.

Well, the December 1936 issue was my swan song, and SFN died, never to rise again, despite later plans to mimeograph it at Comanche. It had run up a string of 40 issues, distinguished itself with the first sf crossword puzzle, scooped the field with the 1st fan review (by Carnell) of Wells' "The Man Who Could Work Miracles", pioneered the "gossip" type of news coverage and earned a nice pat on the back from Dr. T. O'Conner Sloane. I regret I was unable to provide wider distribution to this early-day fanzine, for little is known of it by newer fans and few of the older collectors have copies. There is not a complete set in existence today.

Science Fiction fans were few and far between in most sections of the country in the mid-Thirties and the true fan never missed a chance to get in a lick for the cause. Even before I formed the O.S.A., I was in there swinging. In 1932, for example, I was part of a group of boys that formed a club called the Cosmos Club and I'm sure that I must have had a hand in naming it. (And you know who put out "Space Ship" their hand-printed bulletin!) I sold the members on having the club promote "athletics and science fiction", thereby giving me a chance to wheedle a sub from them for Jerome Seigle and Jerry Schuster's SCIENCE FICTION. Which you will admit was a laudable, if sneaky, way to help the creators of Superman build circulation!

Being long on time and short on cash in my teen-age, I early developed the browsing of magazines on the newsstand to a fine art. Restricted by finances to only a few prozines, I nevertheless kept up a continuous survey of a wide range of interests: aviation, business, current events, railroads, sports. I never seemed to care for western stories, but did keep up with such titles as Argosy, Top-Notch, Popular, Thrilling Adventures, Oriental Stories and watch for "off-trail" stuff in Blue Book and for Fu Manchu in Colliers.

It was while browsing through a copy of Writer's Digest that I spotted an announcement of the editorial wants of THE TIME TRAVELLER and immediately wrote Allen Glasser about it. I joined his Fantasy Fans Fraternity and ordered the seven issues of TTT that had appeared. As it turned out, the first four were unavailable and my subscription was accordingly extended, which carried it over into SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST when it succeeded Allen's mag. In the latter fanzine the crew of Schwartz, Palmer and Ackerman and printer Ruppert produced such a perfect newszine for fans that I never missed an issue and have the complete file.

While I missed out on a lot of things in the early days, I

still managed to have a hand in a number of projects. I corresponded with Wilson Sheppard of the old Terrestrial Fantascience Guild of Alabama, purchased Clark Ashton Smith's private edition of "Ebony and Crystal" (my cop is #457 of 500 printed), became member #1 of Raps' ambitious Jules Verne Prize Club, joined the SFL, was member of SFL chapter in Oklahoma City, purchased the Swanson booklet, the ARRA phamplets, all of William Crawford's ambitious efforts. I corresponded with many fans, but especially with Don Wollheim, Morris Scott Dollens, Ted Carnell, Bill Miller, Jack Speer, John V. Baltadonis and James V. Taurasi.

The only letter of mine that I can recall writing a prozine then, appeared in an early issue of Astounding. Most of my writings were for my own publications but I did have a few 'outside' appearances. I wrote the first "Nova" story for Bob Tucker's famous D'JOURNAL, did reporting for Taurasi's FANTASY NEWS, film news in Dollen's SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTOR, a gossip column for Baltadonis' FANTASY HERALD, articles for NEW FANDOM and Moskowitz' HELIOS. I won a prize (A copy of H.G. Wells' "Food For The Gods") in a contest sponsored by NOVAE TERRAE.

As Publicity Director for Dave Kyles' Phantasy Legion I worked long and hard to build it up but it died on the vine. Will Sykora approached me on exchanging subs and encouraging dual memberships between our OSA and ISA and had a man named Hightower contact me in Oklahoma City about joining them. Bob Tucker was very enthusiastic over forming an Illinois counterpart to our club and our two states to be a nucleus for a proposed "American Scientifiction Assn."

Many events live again as I send my memory on a time-flight back to the era of First Fandom. Not having time at this writing to do more than spot research I cannot place all events in their proper sequence but will try to couple them with related items.

How many of you recall George Gordon Clark? He was quite a fire-ball in 1935 and the Science Fiction League had really inspired him. He was not only SFL member #1 and headed the SFL Chapter #1 but also put out the first SFL publication, his excellent BROOKLYN REPORTER. He and I exchanged letters and fan mags and I joined his SFNS - Science Fiction News Service. I know there has been some doubt expressed in some circles that such a news service ever existed, but I can assure you it did...I still have my "contract" with him. I received news releases from George for my own SFN.

Through Don Wollheim, I contacted Ted Carnell of London and this handsome, mustached Englishman became one of my dearest friends. We exchanged long letters of descriptions of our home areas, swapped newspapers and general interest magazines and he did a popular column, "Transatlantic Commentary" for my SFN. Through the shaky days before Chamberlain, the terrible time of the London fire bombings, his training and hair-raising exploits as a British Commando; and in the years following the war, we have continued our correspondence. Unfortunately, we have never met, although on both his trips to America, we talked on long distance phone calls; our wives and mothers write each other (and now it looks like our daughters may carry on this tradition). Ted has



sent me every issue of his NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE FANTASY, plus countless films and pictures. He is a fine person, a worthy editor, an asset to the sf field and proof of the good that can come from active participation in fandom.

I recall a wonderfully kind letter from beloved Dr. David H. Keller and an article he wrote for me at my request and one that I never was able to publish and finally returned to him long afterwards.

Jack Speer and I, at intervals, waged "newspaper wars". First over the invasion by Italy of Ethiopia; when in support of Emperor Sallassie, I put out a little paper titled the Ethiopian Eagle and Jack launched his Mussilani Mocking-Bird. And when I moved to Comanche, we attended the same church and during the week we would type and carbon two copies of joint editions of an effort called "Comment" and deliver the sections to each other at church on Sunday mornings. And there was the time of the Shaver Mystery when I put out The Terro Times and Jack edited the Derro Dispatch.

For some time I had felt fandom had need of some type of an amateur press group but I was unfamiliar with the operation of the National APA and others (I did not join the American APA until later) but did work up plans for an association of fanmag editors and at the end of 1936 actually began to lay the groundwork for such an organization and mailed out some announcements of it. However, on learning of Wollheim's plans to establish the FAPA, I scrapped the whole thing and joined hands with him. As you perhaps know, I served, under appointment as the first vice president of FAPA and then ran in the first election for the same position. In a hotly-contested campaign, I edged Robert A. Madle by one vote for the office. It was a much disputed victory, with accusations of shady dealings and ballot-stuffing being tossed about, but through it all, I'm glad to say, Bob and I remained friends. For FAPA, I saved up money and ordered from Montgomery Ward a small rotary duplicator and launched THE ROCKET, shortly to be renamed PHANTASY PRESS, which I published until I dropped out in 1940. When I returned to FAPA in 1955, I revived PP, and it is now the oldest active title in the association.

At Comanche, I also published two issues of FAN-FACTS! as a subzine to feature prominent personalities in each issue. Pro-ed Charles Hornig and James Taurasi were featured, while an unfinished third number was devoted to Sam Moskowitz. I had plans for many publications (I dummied out so many plans in my all-night job at a service station that Speer dubbed me "King of the Dummies") some of which appeared in FAPA, but my biggest plans were for one that did not materialize. That was to be SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM and I still have pages that were actually mimeographed for the 1st issue. Larry Farsace contacted me after some advance publicity had gone out and revealed he was at work on a zine with the same title. He painted a glowing picture of his own plans and begged me to change the name of my own magazine. I guess he was a pretty good talker for I never brought forth the completed Fandom. Another event was in the hopper when Harry Dockweiler asked me to take over his FANTASY MIRROR, as a successor to SFN. He had put out one hectored

issue which carried news coverage by myself.

While speaking of plans, I would mention the fact that I almost had the chance to produce a fanzine that would have been a bell-ringer and really have made my "mark" in fandom. I worked as a salesman-artist-bookkeeper for an engraver in Oklahoma City and got him quite interested in amateur sf mags. He proposed to me to put out a fanzine that he would print, primarily to demonstrate his skill as engraver and include photos of my selection. He would print all the copies I desired, plus additional ones to mail to prospective customers. While our plans were cooking, I laid out a dummy for the first issue, to be titled PICTORIAL PHANTASY, and include photos of prominent editors, authors, fans, magazine covers, etc. I still have those plans and as I look at it today, I am still impressed with the sensation it would have been.

Still highly prized after all these years are several drawings that Johnny Baltadonis sent me. One is a caricature of me and another is an excellent pen and ink sketch of a rocket take-off that my photographer son has enlarged to size 18x20 inches and now hangs in my den. I also prize a beautiful water-color by Mary Rogers of the famous brother-sister team of the Thirties. Also a black and white Paul drawing that was a gift from Charles Hornig.

I've got quite a collection of sf odds and ends, including letterheads from many mags and fans, plus quite a number of tiny fanzines and one-shots, many little carbon-copy jobs put out by Wollheim. Actually, my collection includes more items from earlier eras than the present time. I had married in 1940 and my wife and I returned to Oklahoma City where I realized a long-held ambition to be associated with aviation. I was hired as a mechanic-learner and during the years that followed, advanced to a foreman. But those war-years were hectic ones, as you will all recall, and the long stretches of rotating shifts, of 12 hour days and seven day weeks to "keep 'em flying" did not leave much leisure time and I almost lost track of fandom. True, I bought newsstand mags and once in a while on a day off I would browse second-hand dealers as of yore, but as far as fanning was concerned, lack of time and more especially, lack of cash, kept me inactive. Occasionally a friend, such as Jack Speer, would remember me with fanzines, to my great pleasure.

However, I did not drop out of amateur publishing entirely. I was selected recreational director for a large area of Tinker AFB and created, and issued, via ditto, a newspaper for a section of about 400 people. And on my own, I launched a mimeod zine of home-town news, sports, pin-up pics and general interest stuff for relatives and friends in service. Titled "Mac's G.I. Journal", it eventually built to a circulation of about a hundred and lasted until I was drafted into the navy.

After the war I was inactive as I went through a period of business adventure of no significense here other than that it eventually relocated me in Lawton, Okla., where we bought a home and I got my old sf collection out of storage at my mother's at

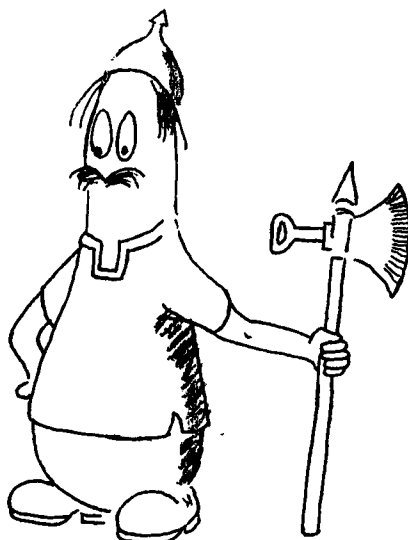
Comanche where it had lain gathering dust for over a decade. Now that I have converted my garage into a den, the collection at last has a home. In 1953 I learned to my surprise that there was a sf club in Oklahoma and was holding a con in Oklahoma City. I contacted young Kent Corey to learn details and attended the first Oklacon where I donated a large number of ancient prozines, made a speech and entered the modern fan world. And, thru Sam Martinez urging, I re-entered FAPA, with the 71st mailing marking my official renewal of membership; coming in at the same time with Robert Bloch. FAPA mailing number 12 was the last I had seen, and you can imagine the excitement when I received my first bundle in 15 years! What changes!

Thus the saga of my start in science fiction, in the early days of fandom. It was a world of thick bulky magazines with startling, facinating, romantic covers that sped you away on wings of imagination from the depression-ridden world of that time. A time when your young mind went racing into the future and rode the star lanes to exciting adventure on other worlds. A world of Edgar Rice Burroughs and Hugo Gernsback and E.E. Smith and Frank R. Paul and breathless waiting for the arrival of new magazines each month. A time when the question of trimmed edges or a new quarterly or Who Is Anthony Gilmore? was of prime importance. Matters you could depend on Science Fiction Digest to you informed on. An era devoted to the creation of friendships and concepts that were destined to last far longer than most of us expected.

Those were the times when you would study the brightness of the moon with a real Sense of Wonder. But wonder blended with a feeling of assurance that at some distant time (it seemed so far away then) that the dreams of science fiction fans would be realized - and that the Moon Strollers of fiction would be replaced by real men from The Green Hills of Earth.

-- Dan McPhail

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(Note: A year or so ago some friends of ours loaned us a copy of Ronald Searle and Geoffrey Willans' "Down With Skool," which Miri and I think must surely be one of the funniest books ever written. We've also more recently read "Back in the Jug Agane," which is another of the Molesworth books...more of the same outrageous hilarity. Anyway, we were so enthused over the character and penetrating analyses of Molesworth that one day one of us looked at the other and said,

"Ghod, just think what Molesworth would have been like if he'd been a fan!"

And so a Brandonization was born. This one isn't finished yet, but we're printing the first two chapters here because it seems to us that OMPA is the logical place to publish such a parody. Further discourses by Master Molesworth will appear as we write them, no doubt. Eventually we hope to present the whole batch at once, with illustrations by some suitably talented fan-cartoonist.

A pity that Harry Turner has gafiated. He would have been perfect for this stuff.

Anyway, ladies and gentlemen of the AMPA audience...meet Nigel Molesworth...)

## O. K., C O M E I N

This is me, e.g. Nigel Molesworth the dry rot of fandum wich is the way of life i am in. It is utterly wet & weedy as i shall (i hope) make clear but of course that is the same with all ways of life holy causes & g.d. (hem hem) hobbies.

e.g. Fandum is nothing but pub deadlines, O.E.s, postage due, BNFs, fannish songs, fannish slogans, my brother Molesworth 2, & FIRST FANDUMITES everywhere.

The only good things about Fandum are the FANS wizz who are witty, intelligent, socialy concious & have broad mental horizons etcet. although you have various fakefans fuggheads sercons greedy-guts & members of the N3F with whom i am forced to mingle hem hem.

In fact Fandum is a bit of a waste of time AS YOU WILL SEE.

## F I R S T F A N D U M I T E S A T B A Y

First Fandumites are always very old thirty years at least, think that Fandum is SIGNIFICANT chiz moan drone, & are always telling you about Sam Moskowitz Forry Ackerman Don Wolheim etcet. & they also keep MOUNTAINS of old fanzines with which they hound

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Down With Fandum is reprinted from the February 1961 issue of defenestration. Reprinted by permission of Terry Carr.

and persecute you like my mother she say 'Now Nigel you must read these so you will grow up to be a good fan like your father who indexed the complete works of G. Peyton Watenbaker & did Fandum a GREAT SERVICE.'

Next to necrophiles First Fandumites like best young fans who show RESPECT chiz and say yes sir mr. pro sir and such weedy things, tho they themselves only say to the pros such things as 'Well, Tony, Ill buy you a beer' or 'say John, will you buy me a beer' or 'Hello Ted, let's get somebody to buy us a beer'. Then they go off and talk about the good old days (before i was born) when science fiction was SCIENCE FICTION, wot else would it be i ask, cookbooks?, and say wot good fans THEY were, always claiming to have read every story published until 1950 or 1944 or 1938 or 1927 or whenever it was they consider the downfall of SCIENCE FICTION. And of course they tell the pros that wot's being written today is no good, wich isnt showing much respect if you ask me but then they dont.

Personally i dont think UNKNOWN was so great it was full of weedy things about dead people, sprites, ancient gods with seaweed in their beards, djinnii, UNKNOWN FORCES & other completely wet things. I like modern science fiction becuz at least it doesnt have people saying 'Lo!' and such rot. But actually i dont read science fiction too much anyway. I used to read it a lot but now a great deal of my valuable time is taken up in feuding. Actually i dont like to feud at all but people are always getting mad at me writing letters or mailing comments they say 'Wot right has that Molesworth got to say quote Ted Pauls is a big jerk if he thinks that eighth fandum has started just becuz of a bunch of new fans one of whom is him unquote?' Anyway faneds dont understand me probably becuz i have superior mental horizons wizz, & so i have to spend a lot of time feuding with my peers. & thats why i dont read much science fiction any more. Its not that im not respectful.

Wot has this to do with FIRST FANDUMITES? Elementary, my dear, FIRST FANDUMITES think science fiction is simply STUPENDOUS. Here is a recipy for a mad fanish evening acc. to a FIRST FANDUMITE.

Take 2 TRUE FANS (i.e. the weedier the better) place on opposite sides of the table so they can look each other in the eye glare glare how can they stand it, then ask each questions wot hav to do with SCIENCE FICTION.

Molesworth: Mr Ladle, tell me old stfsop, wot did Hugo Gernsback eat for breakfast on the morning of Apr 18 1932?

Ladle: A v. interesting question, sir. If i recall correctly, & my worthy colleag Mr Ackerham can korrekt me if im wrong glare glare, he had squash & tortillas covered with maple syrup am i right?

Molesworth: Korrekt, old fossil, to the best of my knowlege. (Aktually, i havnt fainest idea of korrekt answer. Gernsback quite possibly had caviar & shish kebab served on flaming sword wich was lit with dunning letters from starving authors wanting their money chiz.) And now you sir, thou woodpulp completist, tell me briefly the plot of the first science fiction story ever put to words, author title date and magazine.

Ackerham: Hem hem, that wd be The Second Stage Osiris by Nekh-bet Sinhru, published Nov 4812 B.G. (which initials you ought to be able to figure out if you know FIRST FANDUMITES at all) in v 1 n 1 of Book of the Dead Science Fakt & Fiktion. It is about people from the stars wizz wot come to this world & are considdered gods. Osiris is the Hero and is brave noble fearless etcet. but his bro.. is a cutup wot takes a sword to him &--

Molesworth: That will be ebuf, spare us the sorid details.

Ladle: But Gilgameshes Conquest of Mars was published befor that, old top.

Ackerham: Dont be such an oik, Tucker isnt that old.

Ladle: Fakts are fakts, thou clot, there is no room in serious reserch for--

(Happy fannish evening breaks up as FIRST FANDUMITES hurl sharpened churchkeys, bash heads with bound vols of Frank Reade Lib and slash each other with untrimmed edges of old magazines. It is a splendid show after all.)

--(Terry & Miriam Carr)

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## L E T T E R S

Harry B. Warner It was a good issue of FFM, even though I can't Hagerstown, Md. figure out from it whether I owe First Fandom any dues. In one spot it seems to indicate that all dues are now payable, in another I gather that I'm not among the ones expected to pay, and I can't remember the last time I sent a buck. It could have been a week or a year ago, which shows how confused I am about things these days. ((We are listing all those that owe past dues. All others with the exception of those that paid at the Midwestcon are due to pay for 61-62 now. By setting the date at Worldcon time we can be more specific and avoid the confusion that we have had in the past. LH))

The Scienceers Story should be a bombshell for many fans. Even though this has been published before, I don't think that most of today's generation has been aware that there was a Negro among those pioneer members of the Scienceers. This should be embarrassing to those of us who have cited extremely obscure people like one-time visitors to a LASFS meeting as the only known examples of Negro fans. Naturally this information will come in most useful for fan history purposes. I must remember to ask Allen whether any effort to keep Warren's race a secret outside that particular circle was made. It's impossible to determine from this article whether such an effort was made successfully, or whether it just happened that all the people who were aware of it left fandom and the newcomers weren't aware through sheer circumstances.

The pictures made Madle's article particularly interesting. The fellow who made the engravings must have learned how from the girl who does them for the newspaper that employs me, because the faces are washed out in these cuts exactly as they are in the local newspaper.

The Wollheim article was excellent. It seems utterly ridiculous to say it, but the fact remains that DAW has become a much better writer since he entered fandom. He became famous for his fusses and innovations in the 1930's but he was a very poor writer in those days.

Dale Tarr hits me in a sore spot. About 1950 or a bit earlier, I began to pull ahead financially, making noticeably more money than I was spending. It was time to make a decision on what to do with the excess. I had all sorts of faith in the future of America and I like the capitalistic way of life (as long as there are plenty of checks and reins on excesses). But I couldn't believe that there was any sense in risking money on the market at a time when many or most stocks were selling at all time highs. I'll put my savings into the bank and government bonds, where I can get hold of it immediately, and convert it into stocks after that crash that is just around the corner hits the market and prices go down to a sensible level. Of course you know what happened: inflation proceeded at a more rapid rate than the growth of savings through interest and stocks that were so high in those years now cost two or three times as much in many instances. I wouldn't have gotten rich, unless I'd been incredibly lucky, if I'd decided to play the market. But I know that I would be a few years closer to retirement than I am right now.

--Harry Warner

David L. Fox      Thanks for an excellent issue of FFM. Articles, Glendale, Calif.      illo's, everything was enjoyable. I especially enjoyed Don Wollheim's fine essay, particularly as it underlines a feeling I have had with increasing force in the PostWar years---that we are truly living in the future. The future, that is, of some of the best science-fiction of the late 20's and 30's. The odd thing to me, and a point that Wollheim did not emphasize enough, is that when I read the wonderful tales of the far-off forties and fifties and sixties, it never occurred to me, a teen-ager, that with any luck at all I would probably live thru those amazing decades, and the ones to come, and even, with a great deal of good fortune, into the Twenty-first Century! Perhaps it is just as well, for now, when I see a helicopter churn by overhead, or hear our President solemnly discussing the chances of putting a man on the Moon, or read of Russia's latest atomic outrage against world peace---or hold in my hand my tiny transistor radio, a marvel which would have baffled scientists of even fifteen years ago---to my wonder is added a pleased surprise that I who have read about it, and longed to see it, but never expected to, should have really lived into the future.

One more thought before I close. I think it would be a fine thing, especially for conventions, to have a club emblem, and even a button, to identify us to each other and to the junior fans.



⌞⌞The idea has been under discussion for some time. I am in favor of a lapel button and some of the others like the idea of jacket emblems and/or arm bands. I'd like to poll the membership and find out what the majority would like. We can have them made if the membership will buy them. LH⌞⌞

Dr. D. C. Montgomery, Jr. Regarding the fourth issue of FFM, I Greenville, Mississippi would like to make several comments. First, when requesting payment of dues, always state the amount to be paid as a matter of policy. A poor dope like myself who pays dues to a number of societies every year just can't remember the amount due each one. ⌞⌞Dues are \$1.00 per year payable Sept. 1st of each year or at the Worldcon. We will state the amount from now on. LH⌞⌞

Next, congratulations on a wonderful issue filled with the type of articles us old-timers like to read. Finally, let me say that I thoroughly enjoyed the article by Dale Tarr and would like to see others that are a little off the beaten track. I belonged to an investment club that finally disintegrated, and probably one of the reasons for its dissolution was that none of the members had any interests in common other than a desire to make money (which is universal). I'll bet the CFG club will not have that difficulty. Don't put all your money in Thiokol and General Dynamics, boys, even if GD is working on the first atomic spaceship.

One slightly off-trail subject that should be of interest to FF members is that of fall-out shelters. You would expect SF fans to be way ahead of the average guy in their concept of the future and better prepared to cope with the dangers some futures could hold. I have started to build a low cost above ground shelter, and many of my ideas in its construction and equipment are based on the experience of individuals in those future worlds of fiction about which I have been reading for years. I can clearly recall reading "Rebirth" by Thomas McClary when I was 14, "Final Blackout" by Hubbard when I was 20, and countless others in the last 20 years. If you think there would be any interest in it, I would be glad to try to do an article along these lines when I have gotten a little further along. ⌞⌞Yes, we would like to have an article on this along with some discussion on various types of shelters. LH⌞⌞

--Doc Montgomery

Philip N. Bridges I've just finished reading FFM#4 and enjoyed it Rockville, Md. very much, Madle's article especially. ⌞⌞I'm sorry I misspelled your name on the membership roster, Phil. I'll watch it next time. LH⌞⌞

--Philip N. Bridges

Dan McPhail Congrats, Lynn, on the neat appearance of FFM #4. Lawton, Okla. Glad to see the cover by Dollens and hope that Morris will be active with us. Terry Jeeves illos were nice and it is most interesting to have the photo pages. The reprint of Glasser's was worth rereading, of course, but the best of all, I thought was the little gem by Don Wollheim. Really

a great bit of writing, and certainly in the spirit of First Fandom.

--Dan McPhail

Donald A. Wollheim I know you share my sense of wonder at the Forest Hills, N.Y. present space accomplishments. But have you ever noted how fans under 30 seem un-itedly indifferent to space and rocketry? They or at least their fanzines show no concern or remark with space flight. To them it was a commonplace of growing up--a natural thing of the world to which they were born like radio and tv. I wonder who had the best of it--we who know what wonders the world has really come into or they who have really few startling innovations likely to enter their lives. They show a psychosis on the bomb, that's natural, and a panickiness too that our gang are not likely to show. I'd like to see some speculation in FFM on this--old fans views of the mind and life of younger fandom. There's a real change and it goes deep...

Someday I'd like to go into the membership list of First Fandom--I'm still amazed at the number of people in it who seem to have been products of some sort of Orwellian 1984 reconstruction of the past, if you get what I mean.

--Don Wollheim

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Don Ford reports.....(continued from page 22)

Dave Kyle volunteered to be co-ordinator of the 8mm movie project. This project is to round up 8mm movies of past conventions, etc. and edit, title and arrange them in some suitable order for future showings at cons.

Dues were voted on to be \$1.00 annually and now become due for the 1961-1962 period. The World Con being the date selected for dues to become due. Some members still are in arrears for the past year and all are urged to check the Treasurer's report for their status.

New members are: Alderson Fry 212 Logan Morgantown, W. Va.; Frank Andrasovsky 12023 Parkview Cleveland 20, Ohio; Larry T. Shaw 16 Grant Place Staten Island 6, N.Y.; Roy Lavender 7375 Donald Reynoldsburg, Ohio; Ben F. Keifer 1440 Inglis Columbus 12, Ohio.

TAFF BAEDEKER is on sale for \$1.25 per copy. If you haven't bought your copy yet, send the order to:

Don Ford  
Box 19-T, RR #2  
Loveland, Ohio

--Don Ford

Editors Report (continued from page 3)

Also in the Treasurer's Report is the list of those that owe dues for the year 1962. Lets get those dollars in to Don right away.

Lynn Hickman

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FIRST FANDOM Treasurer's Report

I have gone through the records and brought each member's dues up to date. The majority of members have not paid any dues for 1961 and the question arises as to whether they ever should or not.

As near as I can recall, 1961 saw only 1 issue of FFM and that was about the extent of any activity, with the exception of one meeting at the Midwestcon. No meeting was held at the Seacon; there being extremely few members present. All officers have been in a dormant stage for the past year and I'm of the opinion that we should not press for dues for the past year.

1962 should have a bit more activity and meetings are planned for the Midwestcon, the last week-end in June; and at Chicago over the Labor Day week-end.

To date, \$54.50 has been returned to First Fandom from the sales of TAFF BAEDEKER. About 20 more sales will bring us out of the hole on that, and then the profits will, of course, be going to TAFF. Those of you who do not have a copy may order from the Treasurer at \$1.25, mailed flat in an envelope.

Before any more projects are started, dues should be collected, and the following members dues are due for 1962.

Ackerman Agnew Alger Archer Bloch Barrett Bridges Bielfeldt  
Carrol Christoff Conner Coriell Cordes Davidson Derleth  
De La Ree De Vet Devore Dollens Engel Eshbach Evans Farmer  
Ford Fox Franson Glasser Greenberg Grennell Held Harrison  
Hickey Hickey Hickman Hensley Houston Jason Jeeves Krueger  
Kyle Logue Ludwig Madle Patterson Miller Millard Montgomery  
Moskowitz Pavlat Peterson Pohl Raybin Ringleberg Slater  
Smith Stanley Squires Stecker Tabakow Tarr Taylor Taurasi  
Train Unger Vinson Warner Widner Wollheim Woolston Young  
Andrasovsky Shaw Lavender Keifer Fry

Dues are \$1.00 Please check the list for your name.

New member: Roy Tackett 915 Green Valley Rd NW Albuquerque, N.M.



## THE STORY BEHIND THE COVER . . . . .

Twenty-six years ago James Rogers did this cover for a proposed printed cover on Dan McPhail's SFN.

Dan Was unable to have the cover printed and was afraid it would look too poor on mimeo, so it has been saved all these years.

This might be a fannish record of somekind. A drawing submitted, accepted, and then published with a twenty-six year interval between acceptance and publication.

I'm sending extra copies of this issue to Dan McPhail for him to forward to Mary and James Rogers. They should both be members of First Fandom and I'm sure James will be happy to see that altjough there was a slight delay, his cover has been used.

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