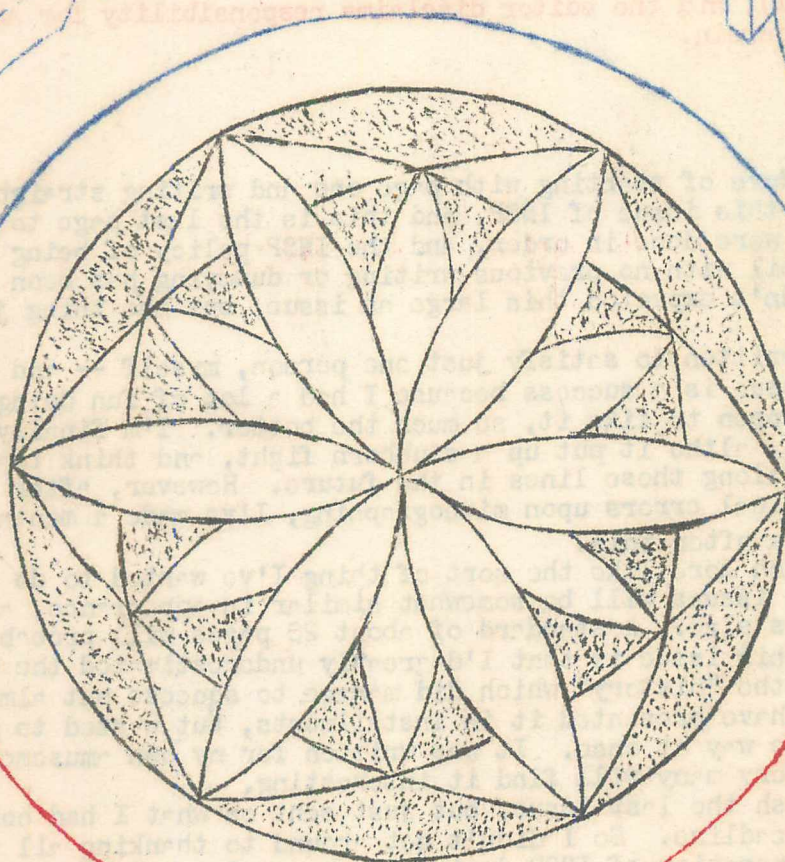




VOL.
4

NO.
1



Inspiration

VOLUME FOUR

FAPA

APRIL 1946

FAPA

NUMBER ONE

Yes, chilluns, this is the fapazine written, edited, and published by one Lynn Bridges, 7815 Navy, Detroit 9, Michigan. It is done whenever the mood strikes, usually once each 3 months, is supposedly for the benefit and enlightenment of FAPA members only (altho non-members have been known to get copies upon receipt of a stamped, self-addressed envelope and a crisp ten dollar bill), and the editor disclaims responsibility for anything he may have said herein.

The usual procedure of starting with page one and writing straight thru has been changed for this issue of INSP, and this is the last page to be done. However, other pages were done in order, and the INSP policy of being typed directly on the stencil with no previous writing or dummyming has been strictly adhered to. I hadn't expected this large an issue, but the thing just kept growing.

INSPIRATION is written to satisfy just one person, myself -- and based on those grounds this issue is a success because I had a lot of fun doing it. If anyone else should happen to like it, so much the better. I'm finally getting the duplicator licked, altho it put up a stubborn fight, and think that I can promise a better job along those lines in the future. However, after spotting a number of typographical errors upon mimeographing, I've made a mental note to proof-read stencils after this.

This issue is much more like the sort of thing I've wanted to do for a long time, and future issues will be somewhat similar in appearance, altho they'll hardly be this size. A standard of about 20 pages will probably be set. Reason for the bulk this issue is that I'd greatly underestimated the number of pages taken up by the "history" which did manage to squeeze out almost everything else. I could have presented it in installments, but wanted to get the whole thing out of the way at once. It was written for my own amusement anyhow, and I doubt if very many will find it interesting.

I never did finish the last issue, but just sent on what I had completed in time to make the deadline. So I didn't get around to thanking all those who helped out in the preparation of INSP during the years I was in the army. So many thanks to Harry Warner, Jack Speer, Russell Chauvenet, and Dick Kuhn for turning mimeograph handles and to Don Thompson for cutting stencils.

The mastheads in the history didn't turn out as well as I'd hoped, partly because it was almost my first experience at attacking a stencil with anything other than a typewriter, and partly because I was in a hurry and did a lot of work free-hand that I should have done with a straight-edge.

A few lines left, so I'll indulge in the current fad of rating the previous mailing according to school marks. I can do that without violating my principle of never reviewing a mailing. A is reserved for truly exceptional mags, B is for those whose material I found very interesting, and C is for those whose material didn't appeal so much. D, I won't go into that.

A - Fan Tods, Sustaining Program, Phantour, Horizons, a.

B - Science Fiction, En Garde, Browsing, A Tale of the Evans, The Time-binder, Walts Wranglings, Glom, Fan Dango, Elmmurmurings,

C - Beyond, Full Length Articles, The Fantasy Critic, BT, S-F Savant, Light, Phantograph.

D - Falling Petals, Guteto

THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS

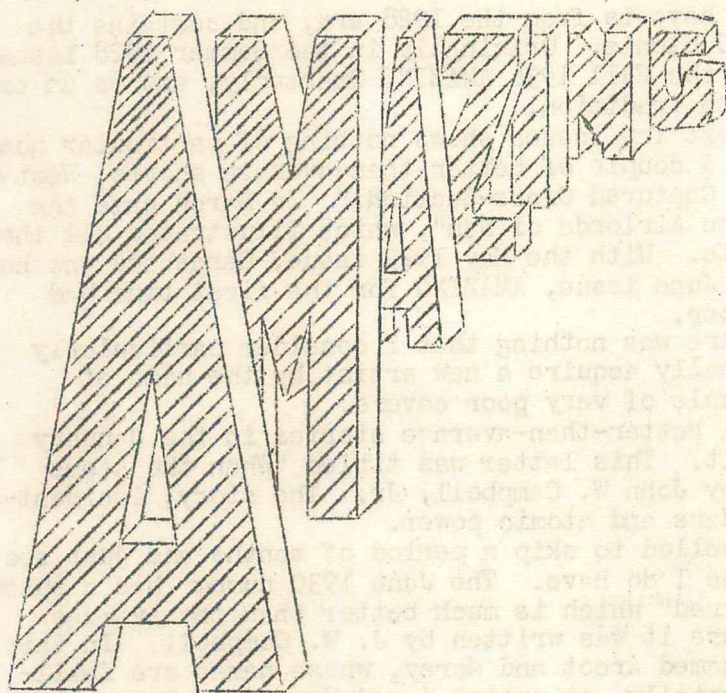
The first issue of any professional science-fiction magazine was dated April 1926. This issue of this fanzine is dated April 1946. The similarity in dates is all the excuse I need to do something I've long wanted to do, and that is to write a somewhat personalized history of the science-fiction magazine.

No, I haven't been reading science-fiction regularly since the first issue of AMAZING (I was 8 at the time), and I hardly claim to have read all the science-fiction which has been printed. In these respects I can hardly be qualified for the job of historian. Also, in the period before 1933, my collection contains more blanks than anything else, since I've never tried to be a completist. So if I don't mention any of your particular favorites from the pre-1933 era, it's probable that it's for the reason that I don't have them. Any stories printed after 1933 which aren't mentioned are stories which I consider not especially worthy of mention, altho some of them may be good.

Early in 1942 my collection came to a temporary halt due to the influences of the United States army, so this "history" will end at that stage. Now, with apologies and excuses out of the way, begins the history.

April, 1926

25 Cents



HUGO GERNSBACK
EDITOR

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS GERNSBACK

As every good fan knows, the first science-fiction magazine was AMAZING STORIES and the date was April 1926. It's also common knowledge that the editor was Hugo Gernsback, the managing editor was Dr. T. O'Connor Sloane, the cover was by Paul, and that on the editorial page appeared the word "science-fiction", an abomination which has persisted ever since. The lead story was "Off on a Comet", by Jules Verne. Also represented in that first issue were such stalwarts as H. G. Wells, Edgar Allan Poe, Austin Hall, and George Allen England. Thus, science-fiction was born.

Now I'm up against the vagaries of my collection, for after that first issue I have no AMAZINGS until the middle of 1928. Then comes a consecutive run from July 1926 until the end of 1929. After that, the collection drops back

into a hit or miss proposition. However, under the bland assumption that nothing of importance happened during the intervening time, I'll take up the history again.

In July 1928, Gernsback still hadn't run out of reprints by the masters, and Wells' "The Invisible Man" occupied a large section of the issue. There was also a story by Gernsback himself. My own favorite from the issue is a short by Bob Olson, "The Educated Pill."

It was with the August issue that things really got moving. Cover and lead position were given to a novel by an unknown writer, "The Skylark of Space" by Edward Elmer Smith. To say that this story made s-f history is a somewhat mild statement. Compared with present stories and later stories by the same writer, it seems slow-moving and loaded with unnecessary scientific detail -- but compared with stories from its own era, "Skylark" was really something new and great. It was an imaginative story on a scale which had not previously been seen, and set a new standard for this type of fiction.

Almost obscured by "Skylark" was a story which definitely didn't deserve obscuring. It was Philip Nowlan's "Armageddon - 2419 A. D." and had as its hero one Anthony Rogers, who later evolved into the comic-strip character of Buck Rogers. The writing in this was far ahead of its time, and it seems a pity that Nowlan didn't stick to writing science-fiction stories instead of comic-strip continuities.

One of the few Quarterlies I have is from the 1928 era, and contains the excellent "The Sunken World", by Coblenz. Originally in the Summer 1928 issue, this story was later reprinted in the Fall 1934 AMAZING Quarterly, and is an excellent satire in the best Coblenz tradition.

Quick thumbing thru of the next few issues shows nothing of particular note until the February 1929 issue and a couple of better-than-average shorts, West's "The Last Man", and Breuer's "The Captured Cross-Section." In March came the sequel to Armageddon, Nowlan's "The Airlords of Han", which illustrated all the more that Nowlan could really write. With the May 1929 issue, Gernsback was no longer with AMAZING, and with the June issue, AMAZING for the first time had competition. But more of that later.

For the remainder of 1929 there was nothing that I consider particularly outstanding, altho AMAZING did finally acquire a new artist by the name of Wesso to replace Paul, after a couple of very poor covers.

1930 began well, with several better-than-average stories in the January issue, and one of exceptional merit. This latter was titled "When the Atoms Failed", and was the first story by John W. Campbell, Jr. The story, incidentally, concerned an invasion from Mars and atomic power.

And now, once again, I'm compelled to skip a period of months and just see what is available in the few issues I do have. The June 1930 number has a space pirate story called "Piracy Preferred" which is much better than the average space pirate story, possibly because it was written by J. W. Campbell. In this story are a couple of characters named Arcot and Morey, whose names are familiar to many s-f readers. Coincidentally, an artist named Morey is also now installed on AMAZING covers, Wesso also having deserted to a rival as had Paul.

November 1930 finds another Campbell story, "Solarite", again with Arcot and Morey, and a new member, Wade, making up the now-famous triumvirate. Wade (you'd never guess) was the pirate of "Piracy Preferred". The Campbell stories of this era stand out from their contemporaries, which accounts for their frequent mention. In the same issue are a couple of very good shorts, Coblenz' "Missionaries from the Sky" and Williamson's "The Cosmic Express." A glance at the December issue discloses nothing except a very poor Morey cover -- and thus ends 1930.

1931 is the really lean year, so far as my collection is concerned. The only copy I have is that of January, but it is a very worth-while issue since it contains "The Prince of Space" by Jack Williamson. A good story, even tho it does concern space-pirates.

The February 1932 AMAZING has two stories which I liked. One was Leinster's "The Racketeer Ray" and the other Jones' "Planet of the Double Sun". The latter was the second of the Professor Jameson series, which was enjoyable until it became boring thru repetition. Unfortunately, I don't have the first of the series. June finds another good, and somewhat sarcastic, story by Leinster, "Politics". July's cover deservedly goes to the Vincent adventure story "Thia of the Drylands." August has the start of Cloukey's "Swordsmen of Sarvon", which I liked but don't know just why. It also has "The Last Evolution" by J. W. Campbell, a bit different from his usual type, but good.

Every story in the September 1932 issue is worthy of note, especially Williamson's "The Lady of Light." A new and fairly popular series was started with Skidmore's "The Romance of Posi and Nega." Later atomic developments have antedated this series, but it seemed good at the time. Also in this issue was the last of a generally good series which I haven't mentioned before, Burt's "Lemurian Documents", an attempt at translating mythology into ultra-science. Jones' "Suicide Durkee's Last Ride" rounds out the issue, and shows that Jones can write stuff other than Professor Jameson.

The October 1930 AMAZING has Binder's excellent "The First Martian." In November we find Olsen's "Captain Brink of the Space Marines". Titles in the December issue disclose nothing which I particularly remember.

In January 1933, AMAZING tried an experiment. From the earliest days of Science-fiction, covers had always supposedly illustrated a scene from one of the stories therein -- but now AMAZING tried a series of symbolic covers by Sigmond, delegating Morey to the interiors for the time being. The first of these symbolic covers wasn't bad, being a spaceship design done in a subdued blue. But later Sigmond showed a strange penchant for fish swimming in what was apparently space and for dragons.

As for stories, as is often the case with me the story at the back of the magazine is the one remembered most. Name was "Radicalite" and author was Murray. I was quite interested in chemistry at the time, which probably explains my liking for that particular story. The February issue seems unimportant, altho perhaps it's just the trouble I had turning past that Sigmond cover showing a dragon clutching a spherical spaceship as tho it were a bowling ball.

The March 1933 AMAZING has a Campbell story, which is invariably worthy of note. But this one, "Beyond the End of Space", is especially so because of its handling and scope. In April I find a short, Bird's "Universal Merry-Go-Round" which I liked. May had Jones' excellent and long remembered "Martian and Troglodyte".

I missed Tanner's "Tumithak of the Corridors", but liked the sequel, "Tumithak in Shavn", which was in the June issue. Also of merit in June 1932 was Olsen's "Crime Crusher". July and August were the last of the large size AMAZINGs, and contained nothing I especially remember.

1933 was a generally bad year for the pros, but AMAZING seemingly held out longer than the others. The old Clayton ASTOUNDING had already folded and WONDER was on bi-monthly status before AMAZING missed an issue. At that, AMAZING skipped only one issue in 1933 and had a record of $7\frac{1}{2}$ years as a monthly before it happened. That record wasn't broken for another $7\frac{1}{2}$ years. With the October issue, AMAZING resumed monthly publication and went to small size. Unfortunately, the event is only of historical note, as none of the stories has any special merit.

In December 1933 we find our old pal Jules Verne again on the contents page, but that issue did at least have Olsen's "Four Dimensional Escape" and a fair Professor Jameson story to lift it partially out of the rut. But, by the end of 1933 AMAZING had settled into a groove from which it was never to revive. It's stories were too quiet for its era, and altho it would continue for over 4 years longer, the old AMAZING was in its death throes. There were many of us who mourned, for the signs were plain even then.

But AMAZING was still far from being completely dead, for in the first issue of 1934 there was E. E. Smith's "Triplanetary". Altho this story has never received the acclaim accorded the Skylarks and Lensman series, it is one of my favorites. Originally, it was slated for the Clayton ASTOUNDING, but when that mag folded, AMAZING was lucky enough to get it. This story represents Smith at his best.

February finds Philip Nowlan and a time-travel story which is above average, "The Time Jumpers". Not until June is there another story which I remember as being particularly good, and this time it's Rosborough's "Hastings-1066". December is marked by Leslie F. Stone's "Rape of the Solar System", which probably isn't as good as I remember it to be. And those few lines are about the only comments I have to make on the 1934 AMAZING -- altho that was the year the other 2 s-f mags were really opening up science-fiction.

1935 gave promise of better things, for the January issue saw the start of Campbell's "The Contest for the Planets". This story was in the best Campbell style, altho not quite so galaxy shaking as many of his efforts. Very good tho. I also like the next AMAZING serial, Kostkos' "Earth Rehabilitators", which started in the March issue. In August, Coblentz' "The Golden Planetoid" is worth reading.

With the October 1935 issue, AMAZING went bi-monthly and also changed to a slightly more flamboyant format. The stories remained generally poor, altho in this issue Schachner's "World Gone Mad" was good. December finds Stone's "The Fall of Mercury", which isn't bad, and a story by one Raymond A. Palmer which is.

In 1934 and 1935 AMAZING managed to start the year with something exceptional, despite the general run of their stories. In 1936 they didn't, altho I enjoyed Kostkos' "We of the Sun" in the February issue. April finds Professor Jameson for the nth time, but a little better than usual.

In August, I liked Hassel's "He Who Shrank", altho I'm probably in a class by myself there. But it wasn't until the October issue that AMAZING had anything really good during 1936. It was Campbell again, and with one of his greatest stories "Uncertainty." This is one of the few stories which I'd care to call a "classic", and there is great temptation to stop typing and do some re-reading of this story. Science-fiction lost one of its greatest writers when Campbell became an editor.

But that was the last great effort of the old AMAZING, for during the entire year of 1937 I can find no story which seems worthy of mention, nor is there anything in the two issues of the old AMAZING published during 1938.

The April 1938 issue appeared under the same format as the preceding issues, and had the same editor, T. O'Connor Sloane who had been with the magazine from the start. Observant readers, however, will notice that the publisher was no longer Teck, but Ziff-Davis, and so can probably be considered as the first of the Ziff-Davis AMAZINGS. However, I, along with most other fans, consider it the last of the Sloane AMAZINGS -- and somehow, we regretted its going. For this was essentially the same magazine which had first popularized science-fiction. Its fault was that it kept on printing the same type of fiction, rather than changing to meet the requirements of a more advanced and demanding reader. Even in the later years, there is a sort of quiet tranquility about most of the Sloane AMAZINGS which is sometimes enjoyable.

As you've probably guessed, this is being typed directly onto a stencil (as is everything else in INSP) without any notes and with no props except stacks of magazines which I leaf thru as I type. This is the 4th page, and I've just completed the old AMAZING, which gives some idea, for the first time, of the size of the job I've undertaken. Ah, well, I can only try and hope that I can finish the job. I hate to waste the stencils I've already cut. So bear with me friends while I go back to 1929 and bring the other s-f mags up to date before finishing the Ziff-Davis AMAZING.

Science Wonder Stories

GERNSBACK TRIES AGAIN

The first issue of SCIENCE WONDER STORIES was dated June 1929, just two months after Gernsback had left AMAZING, and for the first time the idea of competition was paramount in science-fiction. Gernsback had brought others from the AMAZING staff with him into the new magazine, chief among them perhaps being artist Paul. SCIENCE WONDER generally followed the same lines in size and format as AMAZING, but science-fiction had grown and was more lively than it had been in the beginning. Consequently, the first issue of the new magazine was quite an improvement over the first issues of the old.

This, unfortunately, is one magazine about which I can make very few statements, due to the usual collecting difficulties. I've had somewhat phenomenal success in picking up first issues of s-f mags, and have the first issue of SCIENCE WONDER. But it is the only one of the 12 monthlies that I do have, and likewise the only quarterly I have is the Vol. 1, No. 1. And that isn't much to go by.

That first issue had H. G. Wells' "The Diamond Maker", but the rest of the stories are new and generally quite good. Lead is given to Lester and Pratt's "Reign of the Ray", altho the Paul cover is based on Marshall's "Warriors of Space". The latter was a story of the invasion of earth, which was old even at that early date. My own choice for best story of the issue is McDowd's "The Marble Virgin", which concerns the turning of a statue into life. Humorous as the idea sounds, the story was fairly realistic altho written in the slower and heavier style popular at the time. Goblentz' "The Making of Misty Isle" wasn't bad, and is especially interesting today when the papers are full of reports of volcanic islands rising in the Pacific. Sometimes science-fiction does come true.

The Fall 1929 Quarterly has a striking Paul cover -- striking, that is, from the use of colors. Scene is a simple one, just a spaceship floating in space with a few typical Paul spacesuits hanging around it apparently making repairs. But the background, which is evidently supposed to represent space, is a vivid gold in color. The effect, from the newsstand point of view, is striking.

Lead novel in the Quarterly was a translation from the German of Gail's "The Shot Into Infinity", which I haven't read, but which seems to be remarkably similar to Verne's immortal flight to the Moon story. With my penchant for picking obscure stories, I'll choose Parker's short "Gravitational Deflector" as being quite delightful. Clare W. Harris' more serious "The Artificial Man" also had merit.



AIR WONDER • STORIES

WINGS WERE NEW

In July 1929, just one month after the first issue of SCIENCE WONDER, Gernsback started still another science-fiction magazine, one devoted to the future of aviation. AIR WONDER stories had a short life, only 11 months, but is still remembered almost with reverence. In appearance it was strikingly similar to both of the other science-fiction mags already on the market, and the cover artist was, of course, Paul.

It seems amusing now to look at the illustrations of futuristic airplanes and see such things as exposed landing gear and other former types of design which have been dispensed with on present planes. In this one industry, at least, science-fiction lagged behind reality.

The first column of one story, Keller's "The Bloodless War", is truly prophetic. The first sentence is "In 1940 the United States was unprepared for war." And the story concerns an attempted surprise invasion of the United States by Japan. Unfortunately, Keller is a little off the beam in his ideas of the actual use of airplanes in warfare. He speaks of sending a "large fleet" of 25 planes to destroy New Orleans, and the planes happen to be single engine types carrying a single bomb which weighs "over a ton". Still, the story was good.

Skipping to the November issue, we find one of the most startling of all Paul covers. The scene shows a golden city on top of a chandelier supported by nothingness in the middle of a cerise sky, with pencil shaped airships darting about. Title of the illustrated story is, naturally enough, "Cities in the Air" and the author is Edmond Hamilton. In the story it is explained that the cities are located in the sky to free them from dust and bacteria. Apparently the simpler process of air conditioning was overlooked. The story concerns a war in the next century between the 3 all-dominant powers on earth and is quite good. Had the late war turned out differently, the premise of three powers with centers in New York, Berlin, and Tokyo would have been quite feasible. In the story, Peking is used instead of Tokyo for the Asiatic capital. In the same issue, I also like the burlesqued "Suitcase Airplanes."


To start 1930, AIR WONDER presented George Allan England's "The Flying Legion", deservedly one of science-fiction's classics, altho it's another case wherein reality has caught up with the science-fictional devices so accurately described. So far as the science goes, this story is one of the most accurately prophetic ever written.

In March, Hamilton's "The Space Visitor's" is a good story which exploited the theme of the immortal "Sinister Barrier" by quite a number of years. The May 1930 issue was the last of the AIR WONDERS and had no stories of unusual merit, altho Repp's "The Sky Ruler" was the best of the lot.

20¢ ASTOUNDING

STORIES OF SUPER-SCIENCE

SUPER SCIENCE AND SPACE PIRATES



The advent of the Clayton ASTOUNDING with the January 1930 issue was interesting from a statistical point of view. For the first time a science-fiction magazine was started by someone other than Hugo Gernsback; for the first time a science-fiction magazine was published in small size and for a price of less than 25¢; and for the first time a science-fiction magazine was in the hands of a publishing company primarily concerned with fiction mags rather than science magazines. The Clayton ASTOUNDING was primarily interested in reaching the general reading public rather than a selected group.

It is unfair to say tho, that the new magazine was not so much interested in the quality of their stories as they were in circulation. The same charge can be made of a number of other magazines, including the Gernsbacks. True, the Clayton mag specialized in adventure, but they were often excellent science-fiction. Not generally realized now is the fact that Clayton was one of the foremost quality publishers of the time, altho they used pulp format. The leading Clayton mag of the era, FIVE-NOVELS, had the reputation of consistently printing stories of the best slick quality. So the new ASTOUNDING wasn't just another "pulp". The editor of the Clayton ASTOUNDING, as every fan knows, was Harry Bates.

1930 was one of the big years in science-fiction history, and the new type of literature was becoming increasingly popular. With the start of ASTOUNDING, there were no less than 4 monthlies on the market, and it's not generally known that in 1930 there were a total of 41 monthlies and 8 quarterlies published, a figure quite a bit in excess of that of today, and comparing favorably even with the banner years of 1940-41.

Cover artist for the new mag was Wesso, who held that spot, I believe, for every issue of the Clayton mag, and generally did a good job altho his pictures generally suffered from an overdose of action in line with the magazine's policy. The story titles in the first issue are a key to that policy -- "The Beetle Horde", "The Cave of Horror", "The Stolen Mind", "Invisible Death". My own favorite in the issue was the simply-titled "Tanks" by Leinster, altho it is somewhat doubtful if this can be considered science-fiction. It was realistic enough, but concerned a supposed war in 1932 which ended with the as-yet-unproved assertion that infantry was no longer useful in war. Maybe I'm just prejudiced thru being a former infantryman. Leinster also had some accurate prediction of the invaluable use of what he called "fog-gas" in war, which was of interest to me because I was primarily concerned with screening snakes for my first two army years. Suffice it to say that this is one story I've read several times. Cover spot on that first issue was given to "The Beetle Horde" by Rosseau, and the story is about as the title would indicate.

During the time that it was published, the Clayton ASTOUNDING was my favorite reading, possibly because I was at the age where I appreciated that type of story more than the stuffy seeing stories in its rivals. Unfortunately, I wasn't collecting at the time, and a number of those stories are but memories. In the issues I have managed to collect, there are a number of stories which I remember reading at the time. Three such stories are in the February 1930 number -- Vincent's "Old Crompton's Secret", Pelcher's "Mad Music", and "The Thief of Time" by Meek. Why those particular stories stand out I don't know. Guess that I just enjoyed them.

In March started on of Cummings' best novels (he occasionally wrote good ones), a straight interplanetary adventure called "Brigands of the Moon". The April number brought more good adventure with Burks' "Monsters of Moyer". The pace for the new mag was being set. More adventure in May, with Rousseau's "The Atom-Smasher" best liked.

In July there started one of the best of all the Clayton ASTOUNDING serials, Burks' "Earth the Marauder" which reversed usual procedure and made the Earth the invader rather than the invaded. In the same issue was Wright's "The Forgotten Planet", first of the excellent John Hanson stories. September brought Breuer's unusual "A Problem in Communication", a story well ahead of its time.

And that completes my stock of 1930 ASTOUNDINGS, so we skip to March 1931. That particular issue is one to remember, if only for the enjoyment I got from it at the time. Two stories are worthy of note, Cummings' "Beyond the Vanishing Point" (Cummings could do things with his life-in-an-atom plots until he wore the idea out) and Williamson's "The Meteor Girl." On re-reading, these stories don't seem quite so good, but the memories of them are nice.

The July 1931 ASTOUNDING is something of a banner issue, and I remember every story quite vividly, altho it's been years since I read them. It's hard to pick my favorite from them, so I'll go in contents page order. First was "The Doom from Planet 4" by Williamson, which captured my youthful fancy almost as much as did Winter's "The Hands of Aten". But I'll pick Holmes' "The Slave Ship from Space" as best of the issue, despite the title. Even by modern standards, the Schachner-Zagat "Revolt of the Machines" is good. Last comes another Cummings story, "The Exile of Time." I only have the last installment of this, but from memory I'd say the whole thing was good.

October had Starzl's "In the Orbit of Saturn" -- space pirates, but good. Another jump, this time to January 1932 and Burks' "The Mind Master". I don't have its predecessor "Manape the Mighty", but remember both as being good. In June of 1932 I liked Vincent's "Vulcan's Workshop", Simak's "Hellhounds of the Cosmos" and Ernst's "The Raid on the Termites."

At this stage, evil days descended on science-fiction. The depression was at its depth, and strangely there seemed little time for such escapism as science-fiction. ASTOUNDING was forced to skip two months and reappear in September as a bi-monthly. It was almost the end. In September, Schachner's "Slaves of Mercury" stands out, with Andersby's "Disowned" following closely.

Last issue of the Clayton ASTOUNDING was March 1933, and it left the field in a mild blaze of glory with such stories as Vincent's "Wanderer of Infinity", West's "The End of Time", Williamson's "Salvage in Space" and Leinster's "Invasion". In the latter story, Leinster again proves himself quite a prophet, altho not of dates. He uses the term "United Nations" but is 42 years off on the date in which it started.

Thus the Clayton ASTOUNDING left the field, after compiling an enviable record. It especially pioneered in the development of the well written science-fiction-adventure type story. In this brief resume, I realize of course that I haven't mentioned any of the outstanding stories, such as the Hawk Carse series. I just don't have them for reference now, altho memory of them is still vivid.



EXPERIMENTATION

WONDER STORIES was actually not a new magazine but a continuation of the original SCIENCE WONDER, and the dropping of the word science in the title took place in June 1930. It was supposedly a combination of SCIENCE and AIR WONDER, but practically AIR WONDER was dead and after completing a serial which had been left dangling with the demise of that mag, WONDER no longer claimed any association. Gernsback, of course, was editor, with David Lasser listed as managing editor and Frank R. Paul as art director. Paul's art direction seemed to consist of doing all cover and interior illustrations himself.

The first issue had two pretty good stories, Kately's "Incredible Monstrosity" and Raymond A. Palmer's "The Time Ray of Jandra." Nothing particularly exceptional in that first issue, and nothing to indicate that this was the mag which was to be unquestioned leader for the next few years. The whole theme of WONDER STORIES seemed to be experimentation -- experimentation in story themes and writing styles, in format, in price, in policies. And that willingness to try something new brought forth several classics and a number of interesting stories.

Once again, I'm compelled to skip issues quite often in this resume, due to lack of completeness in my collection. First skip is to October 1930 where we find Hansen's "The City On the Cloud" the most interesting of the group. C. A. Smith's "Marooned in Andromeda" is also worth while reading.

With the November 1930 issue, WONDER changed to small size for a brief period. In that issue, my best liked story was John S. Campbell's (not John W.) "The Invulnerable Scourge". Next, a long jump to the May 1931 WONDER and several good stories. There is the beginning of a very good translation from the German of von Hanstein's "Utopia Island", Williamson's "Through the Purple Cloud", Pratt's "War of the Giants", and John B. Harris' "Worlds to Barter". The latter is my pick of the issue. The August number offered the Schachner-Zagat "Venus Mines, Inc.", Herbert's "The World Within", and Stangland's "The 35th Millennium."

By April, 1932, WONDER was again in large size and published on slick paper, one of the most pleasing formats in the history of science-fiction. The stories, generally, were pleasing too. Best among them, probably, was Thomas D. Gardner's "The Last Woman". This story bears a resemblance in plot and title to West's "The Last Man", printed earlier in AMAZING. The resemblance was intentional, but what was intended partially in burlesque turned out to be an excellent story in its own right. One of the greatest of all pessimistic future-war stories was in this issue too, Carl W. Spohr's "The

Final War". Also of decided merit were Campbell's (John W.) "The Electronic Siege" and Stangland's "50th Century Revolt." The May issue couldn't quite keep up the pace, but it did see the printing of one of my personal favorites. For straight burlesque there has never, in my experience, been anything to equal the farce by one Epaminondas T. Snooks, D.F.G. called "Why the Heavens Fell". Relegated to last place in the issue, as are so many of my favorites, I've never read a short with so many laughs, and never seen a better story ending. This was a classic.

August 1932, and still large size altho back to pulp stock. Liked Beat-ties "The Platinum 'Planets'" better than any of the others. "The Space Coffin" by Hilliard was also good. September has an experimental cover instead of a Paul illustration, but none of the stories are worth mentioning except possible Stangland's "Crossroads of Space". In October there is the likeable "Master of the Asteroid" by C. A. Smith and Coblentz' "Planet of Youth".

With the November 1932 issue of WONDER came another experimental cover and a price drop to 15¢, the first time a s-f mag was ever sold for that price. No particular stories worth mentioning. December had the excellent "Space Rays" by J.W. Campbell and the very good "Time Express" by Schachner. The Campbell story is a burlesque to rank with the best of that type.

March 1933 has a couple of stories of interest, one of them being "The Robot Technocrat" by Schachner. The other was the first in a popular series, Manning's "The Man Who Awoke." Like too many popular series, this one kept going too long until it was worn out.

In April, WONDER went back to the 25¢ price, altho keeping large size. Schachner again came thru with a good story, "The Revolt of the Scientists", and Miller's "The Forgotten Man of Space" is worth reading. In June, Binder's "Murder on the Asteroid" is good space-opera.

Like the other s-f mags, the depression had caught up with WONDER, and at this stage the mag went bi-monthly briefly. In the July-August issue we have Pragnell's "The Isotope Men" heading the list. October has the excellent "The Moon Tragedy" by F.K. Kelly.

With November 1933, WONDER went back to both small size and monthly publication. Perhaps I'm peculiar, but the only story in this issue which seems to stand out is another of the humorous burlesques which WONDER presented so frequently. This one was the Fedor-Hasse "The End of Tyme". None of the stories in the December issue appeals particularly, and so we come to 1934, the year so many fans remember so reverently.

January 1934 started one of the greatest years in the history of science-fiction, and WONDER played a great part in this, altho not the leading part. In this issue was the start of Vaughan's "The Exile of the Skies", which many fans rate among the classics. I liked the story, but don't consider it worthy of that high a rating. It was well written, but the science was too weak for really great s-f. Also of interest was Ray's "Today's Yesterday", which I liked but which many others didn't. February gives us Cuthbert's "The Sublime Vigil", one of the most beautifully written stories I've ever read.

March is the month in which Williamson's "Xandulu" started. It is also the month in which Keller's "The Literary Corkscrew" and another lovely burlesque "The Brain Eaters of Pluto" were printed. April has J. B. Harris' good space-opera "The Moon Devils" and Starzl's doomsday story "The Last Planet".

May presented one of the best of Paul's covers, a skyscraper being engulfed by a flood, and the start of the Science Fiction League. The league was the first attempt of a prozine to unite fandom, and did some good. As every fan knows, the LASFS was formerly the LA S.F.L. For the stories, I especially liked a this-time-serious attempt by Snooks, "Traders in Treasures". It's one of those gems which it's easy to pass up on first reading. In June 1934 there is the Keller story "The Doorbell". Keller was a master of the science-horror-mystery combination.

The July 1934 issue of WONDER is one of the best single issues ever to be published. There was, for instance, Manning's "Voice of Atlantis", one of the best of the popular Stranger Club series. There is also the start of Binder's near-classic "Enslaved Brains". And there is one genuine classic, by a new writer. This latter is Weinbaum's first, and in the opinion of many, his greatest story, "A Martian Odyssey". The Odyssey represents Weinbaum at his best, and Weinbaum at his best was practically unbeatable. There have been sharp disagreements about the exact stature of Weinbaum among s-f writers, most people placing him near the top. True, Weinbaum was a good all-around author as later stories proved, but his real genius is recognized in stories such as this, which has a charming naturalness in a tale of other worlds that nobody else has duplicated. Weinbaum's plots were good, but there have been better; his human characters could stand improvement; but in the field of extra-terrestrial life there has been no one who could write with the charm and realism of Stanley G. Weinbaum.

August has the Fedor-Hasse sequel, "The Return of Tyme". In September we find a pair of unusual stories which are of merit, Manning's "The Living Galaxy" and J. B. Harris' "The Man from Beyond". October's best is Binder's "The Thieves from Isot", which is plenty good.

In November we have the Weinbaum Odyssey sequel "Valley of Dreams", a story which is almost up to its predecessor, and we have the start of Binder's great "Dawn to Dusk". In December, I liked Palmer's "The Time Tragedy" best.

Nothing very outstanding to open 1935, but in the February issue there is Binder's "The Robot Aliens". March is better, because of the start of "In Caverns Below", a Coblenz satire which I greatly enjoyed. There was also the fairly unusual "The Eternal Cycle" by Hamilton.

April draws another blank, and May is marred by "The Waltz of Death", one of the worst stories I've read. In June 1935 the price of WONDER went down to 15¢ again, but the stories improved. Best was another Manning Stranger Club story, "Seeds from Space." In July we have the start of "The Green Man of Graypec" by Pragnell -- almost straight adventure, but not bad. August is an improvement, if only because of the humorous Weinbaum, "The Worlds of If." This was the first of the van Manderpootz stories, a series I liked, altho many didn't.

In September we have another Weinbaum "The Ideal", but the top story in the issue is Bartel's "One Hundred Generations." Liked Phillips "Martian Gesture" in October.

By this time WONDER was almost through, and at the end of 1935 went bi-monthly again. A couple of very short shorts feature the December issue so far as quality goes. One is Connell's "Dreams End" and the other is "Red Moon" by Sterling.

1936 saw only two WONDERS. In February, Weinbaum's "The Point of View" stands out, and Burkholder's "The Mad World" is unusual and interesting. At least WONDER wasn't afraid to continue experimenting. Best story in the April 1936, the last, issue of WONDER is Gardner's "The World of Singing Crystals."

Wonder was probably mourned by fans more than any other s-f mag had ever been, and its passing was a severe blow to the field. During the 7 years of its publication, WONDER had presented far more than its share of great and near-great stories. It had introduced quite a few of the best writers in the field, and above all it wasn't afraid of stories with originality. It was probably this latter feature, together with the interest shown to fans, that mostly accounted for its immense popularity. The magazine was good, and from its start in 1930 until about the end of 1933 it had been the unquestioned leader in the field. Still, many fans have enshrined it with a halo which it doesn't quite deserve. Many of its best stories appeared during the time when many of us were first reading science-fiction, and stories which we read then often appear better in retrospect than they really were.

A STREET & SMITH PUBLICATION

ASTOUNDING

STORIES

OCT
1933
20th

THOUGHT-VARIANT

1933 had been a bad year for science-fiction, and not a single mag had appeared with the September 1933 dateline -- the only time such a thing has happened in the literature's history. But in October 1933, things began to pick up. Bot WONDER and AMAZING went back to monthly publication. But the most important development at this period, and one of the most important in the history of science-fiction, was the revival of ASTOUNDING. The Clayton ASTOUNDING had folded several months before, and now the title was picked up by the largest and best known of the pulp publishers, Street and Smith. Like Clayton, S & S set fairly high standards, and it only remained to be seen what the editorial policy of the new magazine would be.

Editor was F. Orlin Tremaine, and Tremaine has been one of those most influential in the development of s-f. Luckily, he was apparently given a free hand so long as circulation standards were met.

That first, October 1933, S & S ASTOUNDING wasn't especially exceptional, and about half the stories were of a weird or fantasy nature. Best of the purely s-f stories was the Gilmore space-opera "The Space Coffin". The next issue was a big improvement, with Williamson's unforgettable "Dead Star Station" heading the list. This is one of the greatest shorts ever printed. Also liked was West's "Plane People", despite the weak science.

It was probably the December 1933 ASTOUNDING that first started me on the road to ruin and rabid prozine reader. Before this issue I'd read fairly steadily all 3 s-f mags, but without any exceptional interest. Now I started reading them all regularly, and ASTOUNDING became almost an obsession. I see now that I'm going to have a hard job in writing about the ASTOUNDINGS of 1934-35. There will be a desire to stop typing and re-read innumerable stories, and to mention almost every story. During this period, and for that matter right up to the present, ASTOUNDING printed so many good stories that, in the interests of keeping this to a reasonable length, I'll have to omit many stories which would have been listed had they appeared in some other mag.

This December 1933 issue had Wandrei's "Farewell to Earth" and Locke's "The Machine That Knew too Much". But the story which seemed outstanding to me and probably got me into the habit of reading s-f regularly almost to the abandonment of all other literature was Schachner's "Ancestral Voices". Time has dimmed some of the luster from this story, but it's still interesting reading, and deserves classic classification.

1934 opened with another classic, Wandrei's "Colossus"; and also contained Schachner's "Redmask of the Outlands". The Coblenz "Confessions of Dr. DeKalb" also deserves listing. "Colossus" really gave indication of the unusual story

themes (later called thought-variants) in which ASTOUNDING was to specialize.

February continued the pace, with McClary's "Rebirth" and Peregoy's "Short-Wave Castle". March 1934 gave us Williamson's "Born of the Sun" and Schachner's "The Time Impostor".

April was one of those fortunate issues which has just about everything. This issue had the start of another classic, Williamson's "The Legion of Space", one of the truly great s-f novels. It also had the near-classics, "A Matter of Size" by Bates and "He from Procyon" by Schachner. Bates, the former editor of the Clayton ASTOUNDING, often turned out exceptional stories. Schachner was, at this time, just about the top writer in the field. As if stories like these weren't enough, that same April issue had the start of the Fort article "Lo!"

May couldn't keep up that pace, but it didn't do badly. There were the indefatigable Schachner with "The 100th Generation", "Succubus" by Ziska, and Diffin's "The Long Night." June brought forth the Leinster classic "Side-wise in Time" (about as good a name for the branches of time theory as has been suggested) and Vincent's "Rex". In July we have Fearn's "Before Earth Came" and the Zagat space-opera, "Spoor of the Bat."

The August issue was almost up to that of April, indeed "legion of "Space" was still running. But the outstanding feature was the 3rd and last of the Skylark stories, E. E. Smith's "Skylark of Valeron". There were also "The Last Men" by F. B. Long and "Warriors of Eternity" by Buchanan-Carr of outstanding merit.

September has "Famine on Mars" by Kelly. October is outstanding because of C. L. Moore's "The Bright Illusion". Vincent's "Cosmic Rhythm" was good.

November 1934 gave us one of those unforgettable masterpieces which is worth reading many times, Don A. Stuart's "Twilight". This was the first story published under the Stuart name, and it wasn't until several years later that it became general knowledge that Stuart was actually J. W. Campbell. Either name belongs near the top of any list of s-f writers, and for beautiful writing you have to go far to beat "Twilight". Schachner's "The Great Thirst" in the same issue was good.

The December 1934 ASTOUNDING was lovely. There was the start of a classic, "The Mightiest Machine" one of J.W. Campbell's greatest novels. There was another classic, Gallun's "Old Faithful". And there was one of the most controversial stories from a science standpoint of all time in van Campen's "The Irrelevant".

1935 opened with Weinbaum's first ASTOUNDING story, "Flight on Titan", but prize of the issue goes to F. B. Long for "Green Glory". The February issue is good, with Schachner's "The Ultimate Metal", another Weinbaum "Parasite Planet", Long's "The Great Cold", and the best story of the issue, "The Machine" by Stuart. The March issue slipped a bit.

A couple of very good stories of non-human life mark the April 1935 ASTOUNDING. Best is probably Vincent's famed "Prowler of the Wastelands", altho Weinbaum's "The Lotus Eaters" isn't far behind. In May we have Stuart's "The Escape", Binder's "Set Your Course by the Stars", and Daniels' simply-titled but excellent "Stars". For June there is another Stuart, "The Invaders" and Bates' excellent "Alas, All Thinking!". Worthy of note in July are the Gallun sequel "Son of Old Faithful", Hamilton's "The Accursed Galaxy", and another magnificent Daniels short "The Far Way."

In August 1935 we get a couple of good sequels, Stuart's "Rebellion" and Schachner's "The Son of Rednask", in addition to Williamson's "The Galactic Circle" and West's delightful "The Phantom Dictator". September has C. L. Moore's beautiful "Greater Glories" and F. B. Long's "Sky Rock".

October is good. There is one of Schachner's best, "I Am Not God", the sequel to "Twilight", Stuart's great "Night", Weinbaum's "The Planet of Doubt", and Daniels "The Way of the Earth". Daniels is a writer seldom heard of today, and his untimely death was probably all that kept his from being one of

the field's best known writers.

The November 1935 ASTOUNDING had Binder's "Ships that come Back" and two good Weinbaum's "The Red Peri" and "The Adaptive Ultimate". The latter was quite a bit different from the usual Weinbaum, and it wasn't until after the death of the author that it was disclosed that this story, published under the name of John Jessel was actually his. One of Weinbaum's best also stood out in the December issue, and proved that he was still master of the c-t story, "The Mad Moon".

To begin 1936, ASTOUNDING had Schachner's "The Isotope Men" and Van Lorne's "Strange City". That Warner Van Lorne was actually editor Tremaine was a well-kept secret for quite some time. February 1936 is the month that ASTOUNDING first had trimmed edges. The stories weren't exceptional. March brought "Mad Robot" by Gallun and "Entropy by Schachner.

ASTOUNDINGs covers generally weren't so good, but April featured a very lovely spaceship by Brown. As for stories, there was Binder's "Spawn of Eternal Thought" and Gallun's "Child of the Stars", the latter being one of the "Old Faithful" series. May had "The Cometeers", Williamson's first sequel to "Legion of Space". June had a new writer, Ross Rocklynnne, in a good cops and robbers story "At the Center of Gravity". It also had the first of a series of astronomical articles by J. W. Campbell.

July 1936 has a Stuart story written more in the style of Campbell, "Frictional Losses". In August we get Weinbaum's "Proteus Island". September is unexceptional. 1936 was another bad year for s-f, and ASTOUNDING was slipping, tho not to the same extent as its competitors. WONDER had already fallen, and AMAZING was all but dead. Still, the pace of 1934-35 wasn't being kept.

October is better, because of Gallun's "Godson of Almarlu". Gallun had become the standby that Schachner had been a couple of years previously. The latter could still be depended upon tho, for in November we find Schachner's "The Eternal Wanderer" ranking with Rocklynnne's "Anton Moves the Earth" for top honors. December has C. L. Moore's "Tryst in Time". All in all, 1936 was a pretty lean year.

1937 opened with nothing especially worth noting, but in the February issue we have Willey's (Willy Ley) "At the Perihelion" and Russell's "The Saga of Pelican West", a space-opera which is pretty good. In March there is Gallun's "Fires of Genesis", and April has Rocklynnne's "Water for Mars", "Sands of Time" by P. B. Miller, and Bond's "Down the Dimensions". May, not so good.

June is a big improvement, with Schachner's "Earthspin", Jones' "Durna Rague Neophyte", "Two Sanemen" by Saari, and especially "Forgetfulness", one of Stuart's best. The July 1937 ASTOUNDING has Schachner's "Sterile Planet" and "Frontier of the Unknown" by "Norman L. Knight". In August begins Williamson's "Released Entropy", along with "Jupiter Trap" by Rocklynnne.

September 1937 is another of those special issues that seem to appear every so often, altho at this particular period they were few and far between. In this issue began E. E. Smith's "Galactic Patrol", first of the immortal "Lensman" series. There was also Schachner's well-known "Past, Present and Future", along with de Camp's "The Isolinguals" and "When the Sun Went Out" by Binder. October has one of those truly great stories which is worth hundreds of run of the mill stuff, Stuart's wonderful "Out of Night". Under the Stuart name, Campbell did just about the best writing that has ever been known in science-fiction. November is a bit of a letdown, except possibly for "Lost in the Dimensions" by Schachner.

With the December issue came a change in editors, and the later ASTOUNDING reviews will be handled farther along in this chronicle. The Tremaine AST had run for 4 years, and had published during that period probably more stories of genuine merit than had any other s-f mag, or even than any other s-f mag had ever published. The Tremaine ASTOUNDING had brought a badly needed fresh outlook to science-fiction, and I look back upon it with almost a feeling of reverence.

With the December 1939 issue, TWS went monthly, giving the field of s-f 3 monthlies for the first time in over 4 years. As for stories, there were Binder's excellent Anton York novel "The Three Eternals", Kuttner's space-opera, "Suicide Squad", and Wellman's "The Einstein Slugger".

In January 1939 I like Wellman's "The Day of the Conquerors". February had Tremaine's "True Confession" and C. A. Smith's "The Great God Awto". Best remembered story in March was Gold's "Perfect Murder".

April wasn't so good, but May had Bond's "Prisoner's Base". Williamson's "The Sun Maker" was excellent in June. July uneventful.

Binder was back with Anton York in "Secret of Anton York" in the August 1939 TWS, which also had worthy of note Wellman's "There Was no Paradise" and Friend's "The Impossible Highway". Don't recall any of the stories from September as being outstanding. Wellman's "The Worlds of Tomorrow" wasn't bad adventure in October. Bond's "I Shall Stay These Couriers" was excellent in November. December closed TWS' most prolific year from a quantity standpoint with Hamilton's "Gift from the Stars" and Wellman's "The Life Machines".

Kuttner's "Remember Tomorrow" in January 1941 was good, but Burks' "Citadel of Science" was even better adventure. February issue just fair, with no outstanding stories. March had Jameson's "Dead End". April gave us Simak's "Earth for Inspiration", a better grade space-opera.

With June 1941, TWS was back on bi-monthly schedule again, but had nothing worthy of particular note. For adventure, Hamilton's "Son of Two Worlds" wasn't bad, nor was Wellman's "Space Chore". In October I recommend F. B. Long's "Plants Must Grow". December 1941 has nothing of note.

I've decided, partly for the sake of brevity, not to continue past the 1941 datelines in this review. I've read and have on file a few 1942 mags, but this has got to end somewhere, and so it is at this point that the review of TWS ends. During its period of publication, TWS offered several outstanding stories, a number of good ones, and many poor ones. Concentration was mostly upon adventure, and it's surprising that good stories cropped up as often as they did. My main complaint with TWS was the habit of printing one of their notorious Bug Eyed Monster covers, and then having one of their staff writers do a story around it. Such a method is hardly conducive to good science-fiction.

AMAZING STORIES

ADVENTURE FOR ADOLESCENTS

AMAZING STORIES, with Ziff-Davis as publisher and Raymond A. Palmer as editor, has probably stirred up more controversy among fans than has any other prozine. Palmer has done many things to alienate fans, and in return fans have done many things to alienate Mr. Palmer. Both sides have been at fault,

THRILLING WONDER STORIES

THE BUG-EYED MONSTER

The Gernsback WONDER had folded with the April 1936 issue. The title was taken over by one of the larger pulp publishers, a new word added, and the first issue of THRILLING WONDER STORIES was dated August 1936. For its first issue, TWS had the names of Cummings, Merritt, Kline, Zagat, Binder, Weinbaum, etc. Actually, the stories failed to live up to their authors, altho Binder's "Hormone Menace" and the posthumous Weinbaum "Circle of Zero" were fair. But TWS did provide quite a bit of competition at a time when it was badly needed. It was bi-monthly at first, the first s-f mag to start off on such a modest basis.

Second issue was n't much of an improvement, with Burks' "Dictator of the Atoms" perhaps being tops. But by December 1936, TWS was well under way. In this issue were Campbell's "Brain Stealers of Mars", Weinbaum's "Brink of Infinity" and Binder's "Static".

February 1937 wasn't too much, altho I liked Jacobi's "The World in a Box". April brought Zagat's "Flight of the Silver Eagle" in the best space-opera tradition -- but I like good space-operas. Nothing exceptional in June.

August was lifted quite abit by another Campbell, "The Double Minds". October had Campbell again, with "The Immortality Seekers", along with Giles "Via Etherline" and Binder's "A Comet Passes". The Giles "Via" series was good. For December there was Campbell again with "The Tenth World", and Williams' "Beyond That Curtain".

February 1938 opened the year well with Binder's "Life Eternal", F. B. Long's "We, the Invisible", and Giles' "Via Asteroid". April brought the first of another series, Kuttner's "Hollywood on the Moon". Liked a couple of the shorts in June, Peterson's "The Reinmuth Rider" and Williams' "The Man Who Looked like Steinmetz", and in August there was Giles' "Via Death".

October had Campbell again, axiomatic of a good story. This time it was "The Brain Pirates". Also, I liked Jacobi's "Cosmic Teletype". Only story I remember particularly from December is Simak's "The Loot of Time", almost straight-adventure.

Another year, and February 1939 had a lovely cover, altho nothing much in the way of reading matter. April was better, with Hawkins' "Men Must Die", "The Jules Verne Express" by Binder, and Clark's "Experiment".

June 1939 was the tenth anniversary issue, and TWS tried to put out an exceptional issue. They almost succeeded, with Taine's "The Ultimate Catalyst", Weinbaum's "Dawn of Flame", Binder's "Moon of Intoxication", and the Williamson space-opera "Passage to Saturn." But their other names didn't quite come thru, which caused a let-down feeling. August brought Kelvin Kent (Kuttner) and another new series in the first Pete Manx story, "Roman Holiday". In October there were Campbell's great "Planet of Eternal Night", Gold's "Hero", and one of the best of the series, Giles' "Via Venus".

and the break eventually became so wide that there was no hope of reconciliation. I've done quite a bit of Palmer-baiting myself, all of it on the grounds that the stories he was publishing weren't fit for reading by even a semi-intelligent adult. However, Palmer was actually trying for a new market -- the myriad of comic-magazine readers who were interested in having their type of material presented in prose. And Palmer has been successful in this.

Actually, at first, Palmer tried hard to please fandom. Himself a fan and former writer, Palmer displayed quite an interest in fandom, to the extent of giving up the back cover position, richest of advertising profit space, to stuff of reader interest. His various columns and letter sections reflected this interest. But the chief fault was in the stories.

June, 1938 was the date of the first Ziff-Davis AMAZING, and it had an experimental type cover, in that it was a full color photograph. However, science-fictional scenes didn't lend themselves too well to actual photography, so the idea was dropped after one or two trials. None of the stories in the first issue were of interest.

With the possible exception of Pease's "Horror's Head", the October issue was unimportant, so far as stories were concerned. But that issue did introduce a new cover artist, Robert Fuqua. Fuqua's covers are perhaps unique in their clarity among s-f magazines, and this artist does especially remarkable work on machinery. In August, which I'd overlooked for a moment, I liked Farley's "Time for Sale".

AMAZING jumped to monthly status with the November 1938 issue, and in that same issue Hamilton's "The Man who Lived Twice" was fairly interesting reading. In December there were Fragnell's "Ghost of Mars" and Binder's "Master of Telepathy".

In 1939, regardless of what one thinks of Palmer's later policies, it must be admitted that there were quite a number of stories, mostly adventure type, which could be classed as good by any standards. One of these was in the January issue, and was the first of Binder's Adam Link stories, "I, Robot". This particularly story had a realism and interest which weren't apparent in the later stories about this character. Why is it that a writer will damage the reputation of a truly outstanding story with uninspired sequel after sequel. I'd give "I, Robot" a classic rating. In the same issue, and very good, were Wellman's first Hok, the caveman, story, "Battle in the Dawn" and Coblentz' "Death in the Tubeway". In February we have Van Lorne's "Wanted: 7 Fearless Engineers". For March, there is "The Strange Flight of Richard Clayton" by Bloch.

In April, Ayre's "World Without Women" was the outstanding story. For May, we have Reed's "Where is Roger Davis?" and Asimov's "The Weapon too Dreadful to Use". June was unimportant. A new writer, Don Wilcox, had "The Pit of Death" in the July 1939 issue. For August, we have Wilcox again, this time with "Wives in Duplicate", along with Bloch's "The Man Who Walked through Mirrors". Williams' "Rocket Race to Luna" and "When the Moon Died" by Wilcox were best in September.

Another story of classic merit came in October. This time it was Bond's famous "The Priestess Who Rebelled". Same issue had Binder's "The Missing Year". Nothing in particular came from the November 1939 AMAZING. Bond's "Fugitives from Earth" was tops in December.

1940 opened well, with Bond's "Sons of the Deluge" in the January issue. February had nothing worth noting, but in March the Steber space-opera, "Black World" was good, and Bond's "The Scientific Pioneer" was even better.

Liked Kaletsky's "Revolt of the Ants" in April. Nothing in May. The Wilcox adventure, "Slave Raiders from Mercury" was good in June, as was Rocklynne's "The Mathematical Kid". July is another blank, as is August. The AMAZING policy at this time was beginning to bring forth a seemingly endless list of stories of uniform un-merit. From stuff such as this is a good-selling magazine made, but it's tough on those of us with hopes of reading a good

story at least once in a while. Despite Palmer's assertions to the contrary, AMAZING did have a policy to which the writers had to write down. September 1940 is an improvement, because of Rocklynne's "The Man who never Lived" and Powell's "The Synthetic Woman". October brings Wilcox and "The Voyage that lasted 600 years". Nothing worth noting in November or December.

It was in January 1940 that AMAZING presented a new Burroughs' story, "John Carter and the Giant of Mars". This was far from being Burroughs at his best, but competition was none too good, and the story tops the issue. Wilcox's "Battering Rams of Space" is best in February. March had Burroughs again. April, not so good.

May 1941, was supposed to be the 15th anniversary issue of AMAZING, altho it was a month late. It was the first of the super-sized issues which later became so prevalent. Out of the multitude of stories, only two had much merit, and they were both by Wilcox, "The Lost Race comes Back", and "The Iron Men of Super City". Burroughs again in June, and not even that much in July. Burroughs again in August.

It was about this time that I stopped reading AMAZING, altho I still continued to get the issues to add to my collection. Now, I don't even do that.

MARVEL

15¢

SCIENCE STORIES

SEX

In August 1938 came the first of the deluge of new titles, MARVEL SCIENCE STORIES. Up until this time, all s-f mags had been one continuation or another of the original 3, ASTOUNDING, AMAZING, and WONDER. MARVEL did quite a bit of experimentation trying to find the correct formula for a successful s-f mag, but never quite succeeded, altho they came close.

The first issue had a classic, Burks' wonderful "Survival". Burks has been called the King of the Pulp, because of his phenomenal wordage and ability to write in a wide variety of fields. But he could, when he tried, really write, and I think he must have had a special liking for science-fiction. He had turned out quite a few remarkable stories for the old Clayton ASTOUNDING and also for the Street and Smith edition. But, to me, "Survival" topped anything else that Burks had ever done. Altho supposedly a bi-monthly, MARVEL was actually on a quarterly schedule, and it wasn't until November that the second issue appeared. This one had Burks' excellent sequel, "Exodus", and these two stories together make one of the best series ever published in s-f. Those first two issues also had unbridled sex, in two stories by Kuttner which con-

sisted mostly of the author trying to find all possible ways of having the heroine lose her clothing.

The February 1939 MARVEL made it 3 in a row by again presenting a story worthy of classic rank. This time it was one of Williamson's best, which is the same as saying excellent, "After World's End". With a start like like, it certainly seemed as tho MARVEL was destined to go places. The February issue also brought a temporary end to the sex element, and had a nice Coblentz short, "The Weather Adjudicator".

Unfortunately, the April-May issue was a let-down. The Taine novel "Tomorrow" was printed, but it was a slow, tedious, generally uninteresting sort of story. Vincent's short "Newscast" was better. The August issue presented run-of-the-mill science fiction, with nothing especially noteworthy.

At this point, the publishers evidently felt that they had been right the first time in the printing of the two Kuttner sex-stories in the first two issues, for the name of the magazine was changed to MARVEL TALES, and for two issues sex and sadism reigned supreme.

In November 1940 the mag went back to s-f, and Gallun's "A Dictator for All Time" wasn't bad. The name of the mag at this point was just MARVEL STORIES. In April 1941, Williamson's "The Iron God" was interesting.

A NOVEL OF THE FUTURE COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE!

STARTLING STORIES JAN.

The companion magazine to TWS, published in alternate months, STARTLING STORIES, was started in January 1939. STARTLING featured from the start the idea of a long novel in every issue, together with the popular "Hall of Fame" idea of reprinting stories, mostly from the old WONDER. Needless to say, the success of any one issue depended almost entirely upon the worth of the lead novel.

The first issue started well, with Weinbaum's "The Black Flame". Strictly adventure, this story was good, altho it was in a field which did not show Weinbaum at his best. Second issue was also good, with Binder's space adventure story, "The Impossible world".

May 1939 fell down a bit, with Hamilton's plagiarism of "The Prisoner of Zenda" entitled, fittingly, "The Prisoner of Mars". July 1939 was good, with Wellman's "Giants from Eternity". Williams' lead story in September not so good. Williamson's "The Fortress of Utopia" in November wasn't up to the author's best, but was worth reading. So STARTLING finished its first year with 4 hits and only 2 misses, not a bad batting average.

January 1940 had Hamilton's good adventure, "The Three Planetears". The Kuttner effort in March wasn't so good. Wellman again, with "Twice in Time" in May, a vastly better grade story, and one of the best to appear in STARTLING. Binder's "Five Steps to Tomorrow" in July was good. Friend in September

ber and Kuttner in December were both a bit off the beam. Score for the 2nd year of STARTLING: 3 hits, 3 misses.

Hamilton wasn't too good in January 1941, and even Wellman slipped a bit in the March issue. Friend's "The Water World" in May was fair.

July was much better, with Williamson's "Gateway to Paradise". The Burroughs brothers failed in September, altho I liked F. B. Long's short "Prisoners in Flatland". Willard's "The Gods Hate Kansas" was fair adventure in the November 1941 issue. Score for the 3rd year; 1 hit, 2 bunts, 3 misses.

This review perhaps hasn't been entirely fair to STARTLING, which, by its very nature must be primarily a futuristic adventure magazine. It's actually generally good, but so much depends on that one story that it's hard to judge it in the same manner as other mags.

DYNAMIC SCIENCE STORIES

DYNAMIC SCIENCE STORIES was a companion mag to MARVEL, and a very short-lived one. First issue was dated February 1939, and had quite a lovely Paul cover. The lead story, Coblentz' "Lord of Tranerica", wasn't too bad, but the rest of the stories were just average.

The April-May issue was DYNAMIC's second and last. DeCamp's "Ananias" was good, and Binder's lead story "Prison of Time" was fair.

SCIENCE FICTION

AND ESPERANTO TOO

Until 1939 every science-fiction magazine had had a title which in some way reflected the idea of incredulity. In March 1939 there finally appeared a mag with the perfect title of SCIENCE FICTION, altho the title was somewhat out of place with the masthead slogan of "Fantastic Stories of the Future". Editor, to start, was Charlie Hornig, who had been last editor of the old WONDER. The first issue had a Paul cover, and a lead editorial by Hugo Gernsback himself.

I have a personal regard for SCIENCE FICTION which is out of all proportion to its actual merit, because it was thru it that I was introduced to organized fandom. The inevitable happened, and I eventually wrote a letter to a prozine, the letter was published, and from then on I was lost. It just so happened that SCIENCE FICTION was the magazine I picked for that first letter.

That first issue was practically all space-opera, and not very good space-opera. The second issue, June 1939, had one of Paul's best covers, and some stories which were quite a bit better. Best was Binder's "Where Eternity Ends", and also good were Gardner's "The Traitor" and Coleridge's "The Black Comet". I'm not even trying to unravel the host of pseudonyms which dotted SCIENCE FICTION's pages, but just listing the name given on the contents page.

More space-opera in the August 1939 issue, best of them being Gallun's "Strange Creature". October had nothing in particular. December is another blank. Liked Jacobi's "Sky Trap" in March 1940. The June 1940 issue has fair adventure in Clive's "The Voice Commands", and some pretty good space-opera in "Proxies on Venus" by Bond and "Castaways in Space" by A. R. Long. The space-opera stuff in October 1940 wasn't so good.

January 1941 had one story of merit, Barnes' "Forgotten Future". March and June were equally unimportant. The September 1941 SCIENCE FICTION, now under the editorship of Lowndes, had some good space-opera shorts, Gordon's "Revolving World", Kaletsky's "Heavy Cargo", and Morley's "A Matter of Philosophy".

At this point, for purposes of this review, SCIENCE FICTION ended. Actually, it was combined with FUTURE FICTION, altho at a later date it was FUTURE FICTION which was combined under the name of SCIENCE FICTION. But that was after 1941.

SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY generally had one reprinted novel, together with a group of new shorts, and the first issue was dated Summer 1940. The reprinted novel was Romans' "The Moon Conquerors". Kaletsky's "Space-Ship Derby" was best of the shorts. The Winter 1941 issue reprinted Gails "The Shot into Infinity", already mentioned in SCIENCE WONDER.

The 3rd issue, the Spring 1941, had a new story as lead novel, Repp's "Rescue from Venus", which wasn't too good. There was also nothing exceptional about any of the shorts. The Summer 1941 Quarterly reprinted Cummings' best story, "Tarrano The Conqueror". I also enjoyed Woods' "Earth Does not Reply".

FUTURE FICTION

FUTURE FICTION, companion to SCIENCE FICTION, first appeared in November 1939, and featured much the same sort of general space-opera as did the latter. In the first issue, Haggard's "World Reborn" was fair. In March 1940 I liked both Williamson's "As in the Beginning" and Asimov's "Ring Around the Sun". Best in July was probably Rocklynne's "Prophecy of Doom". Olsen's humorous little short "Our Robot Maid" is the only story in November that stands out in retrospect, altho at the time I'd probably have rated a couple of the oth-

ers higher.

The Wellman "30th Century Duel" in April 1941 was fair, and Lavond's "A Prince of Pluto" was good. Lieber's "They Never Come Back" was good space-opera in the August edition.

The October FUTURE FICTION was combined with SCIENCE FICTION under the FUTURE name, and under the editorship of Lowndes. Best of the stories was Pearson's "Pogo Planet". Best in December 1941 were a couple of the shorts, Morley's "No Star Shall Fall" and Crouche's "Salvage Job".

PLANET

STORIES

SPACE-OPERA SANCTUARY

PLANET STORIES was dedicated to the proposition that the generally most successful s-f story was the space-opera-adventure type, and proceeded from the start to publish stories of that type almost exclusively. They have, incidentally, generally printed very good stories along those lines. The first s-f mag to publish on a quarterly schedule, they have the excellent record of following that schedule to the letter.

The first issue of PLANET was that of Winter 1939, the winter issue of PLANET, unlike other mags, being the last of the year instead of the first. The first issue provided the general motif for all PLANET covers, that of the scantily clad girl, imperiled by semi-human monsters, being rescued by the hero. Best of the stories in the first issue was the Pratt-Manning "Expedition to Pluto".

In Spring, 1940, we have Selwyn's "Revolt on the Earth-Star" and Rocklynn's "The Tantalus Death" as best in the issue. Rocklynn is again best in the Summer edition, with "The Forbidden Dream". Fall has Bond's "The Ultimate Salient", one of the best stories ever printed in PLANET, Williams' "Quest on Io", and Wollheim's "The Planet that Time Forgot". At the end of its first year, PLANET was doing nicely in its specialized field.

Some shorts, Danzell's "Castaway", Rocklynn's "Atom of Death", Bond's "Beyond Light", and Brackett's "The Stellar Legion" feature the Winter issue. It was Rocklynn again in Spring 1941 with "Exiles of the Desert Star".

Most interesting item in Summer 1941 was Bond's try at poetry, "The Ballad of Blaster Bill". Cover on this was by Finlay, with the usual PLANET subject. Paul did the cover for Fall, with no change in the pattern. Best of the stories were Binder's "Vassals of the Master World" and Bond's "Shadrach".

The Winter 1941 issue had an interesting cover variation. This time it was the scantily clad girl saving the hero. The stories were much better. There was Bond's "The Lorelei Death", Moskowitz' "Man of the Stars", Norman's "A Planet for Your Thought's", Hasse's "Thief of Mars", and F. B. Long's "The Mercurian". In general, very nice space-opera.

CAPTAIN FUTURE

WIZARD OF SCIENCE

SUPERMAN IN PROSE

I've always felt that it would be possible to present an intelligent s-f mag based upon one character, or better yet, one particular future civilization. CAPTAIN FUTURE was such an attempt, but was far from being the successful answer. Quite rightly, it has been condemned by fans.

It wasn't too bad at the start. Altho the character, Captain Future, was nothing special or different from a hundred other s-f characters, author Hamilton did have a pair of good characterizations in Grag, the robot, and Otho, the synthetic man. The writing was passable, for science-adventure, and I managed to read the first few CFs. I was reading everything in those days.

CAPTAIN FUTURE was a quarterly, which about right for frequency of appearance. The first issue was the Winter 1940. However, I'm not going to mention any particular story, or do much of any discussing of the stories. This is one magazine which it would be best to forget, and is just the type of stuff a non-reader invariably associates with s-f.

CAPTAIN FUTURE suffered from one incurable fault which it has in common with many of the series of stories based upon one character which have appeared in many s-f mags. Each story tries to outdo its predecessor in scope of action, until the whole thing gets out of hand. According to the author's reasoning, after his character has saved the world in one story, he can't possibly go back to a more prosaic task in the next. Eventually, he winds up saving the universe, leaving the puzzled author to wonder what happens next.

In addition to the lead Captain Future novel, CF printed shorts, most of them quite poor. It also printed, serially, s-f reprints of longer stories, starting with Keller's "The Human Termites". Obviously, a quarterly is not the ideal place to publish serials, and the first one took a year to finish.

In the Winter 1941 issue, CAPTAIN FUTURE started another serial, Edward's "Mutiny in Space", and this one was finished in only two installments. The two shorts in this issue are also of merit, Brown's "Not Yet the End", and a better type space opera by Vincent, "Grave of the Achilles". In the Spring number I liked Binder's "Ice, F. O. B., Mars". Binder had another good short in Summer, "Memos on Mercury", and this issue started the reprinting of Manning's "The Man Who Awoke".

In the fall, 1941, issue, F. B. Long had what was probably the best original story printed by CAPTAIN FUTURE during its first two years. Title was "Long, Long Ago", it's a slightly different space opera, and might be worth looking into if you're one of those who just filed away his CFs without reading anything in them. I almost missed this story myself.



10¢ ASTONISHING STORIES

What the field needed, decided the powers that be in the publishing field, was a good 10¢ s-f magazine. So it was that in February of 1940, ASTONISHING STORIES became the first and, to date, the last dime mag in s-f. The name was a natural, having been used for a long time as an imaginary name, due to its resemblance in both sound and meaning to AMAZING and ASTOUNDING. The most surprising thing about it was that many of the stories were good.

In the first issue, for example, was the well-known "Half-Breed" by Asimov. Also very good was Gross' "Chameleon Planet" and Gregor's "Asteroid". "Elephant Earth" by Barclay was another outstanding story, a perfect example of something or other, irony I guess. At any rate I enjoyed it and thought the whole issue superlative, notwithstanding some tripe by Kummer. The greatest appeal lay in the freshness of plot and idea prevalent in most of the stories.

April 1940 had Vincent's "Master Control" and Simak's "The Space Beasts". June slipped on the percentage of good stories printed, but came thru with one genuine classic, Rocklynne's "Into the Darkness", an almost perfect job of handling a difficult theme. Rocklynne is one of the most consistently good writers in the field, and in this story he outdid himself.

In August there was nothing exceptional, except the return of Jones' Professor Jameson. October had some good shorts, among them Grosser's "Mister Island" and Gallun's "Stepson of Space". December gave us the Asimov sequel, "Half-Breeds on Venus" and Wellman's "Rocket of Metal Men".

February 1941 wasn't especially interesting, but the April issue had "Hereditry" by Asimov, "Our Director" by Harry, and "Beyond Doubt" by Heinlein. The unusual types of stories which ASTONISHING was printing were its greatest asset.

Gottesman's "Mars-Tube" was best for September, with Hasse's "Farewell to Fuzzies" also good. November 1941, and the last ASTONISHING in this review, had the Rocklynne sequel "Daughter of Darkness". Practically everything said about the original goes for this one as well, altho naturally it didn't have quite the freshness of "Into the Darkness". Same issue I liked very much DeCamp and Hubbard's "The last Drop" and, for some unaccountable reason, the Brackett space-opera "Retreat to the Stars".

ASTONISHING, more than any other s-f mag at this time, specialized in unusual type of stories, and for some of these it is best remembered. Incidentally, the same holds true for any other mag, and the stories which are remembered longest, outside of those really good ones generally considered as classics, are those of an unusual type.



SUPER SCIENCE first appeared in March 1940, a month after its sister mag ASTONISHING. It was bigger and sold for the more standard price of 15¢. And it was good. Actually, of course, SUPER SCIENCE and ASTONISHING were the same mag, just sold on alternate months under different names. The same holds true of all other pairs of bi-monthlies put out by the same editors and publishers.

The first issue suffered from an overdose of world-saving stories, but had two that were very good, Rocklynn's "Trans-Plutonian Trap" and Gallun's "The Lotus Engine". It also had the start of the Science Fictioneers, rival to the SF League of WONDER.

Second issue is remarkable because of a pair of stories by a pair of stray authors from ASTOUNDING, de Camp and Heinlein. The latter usually published his non-ASTOUNDING stories under the name of Monroe, and will be referred to as such in this review. His story this time was "Let There be Light", and very good too. De Camp's story was "Juice".

Nothing particularly remarkable marks the July issue. Asimov's "Strange Playfellow" was best for September. November had de Camp's "Asokore Power".

January 1941 had Rocklynn's "Collision Course", good space-opera, and Stangland's "Buckethead". In March came one of the best stories to be printed in SUPER SCIENCE, de Camp and Miller's long "Genus Home". Probably an ASTOUNDING reject because of story policy, this one was good. Asimov's "History" is worthy of mention.

May slips a bit, with Hawkins' "The Rannie" being best. There were a couple of good stories in August, de Camp's "Invaders from Nowhere", a somewhat different sort of invasion story, and Grosser's unusual "Willie Wins A War".

SUPER SCIENCE, like ASTONISHING, went quarterly with the November issue. Actually, it had gone on quarterly schedule the previous issue, but was still listed as bi-monthly. It was in this November 1941 issue that several of the magazine's best stories were published. There was Tanner's "Tumithak of the Towers of Fire", reviving a character who had been missing for years, there was Bester's "The Biped, Reegan", there was Kuttner's adventure story, "Red Gem of Mercury". But first and foremost, there was Monroe's "Lost Legion". Even when it wasn't for ASTOUNDING, Heinlein could write.

SUPER SCIENCE and ASTONISHING were about the best of the many titles that sprang up in the field from 1938 to 1941, and I'm hoping that they will be revived at some future date with policies similar to the old.

COMET

TITLE WAS TOO ACCURATE

History of COMET is, unfortunately, a very short one. The first issue was December 1940, and the magazine had the optimism to announce itself as such. For the first two issues it kept to that schedule. Editor was one who had done so much towards improving the quality of science-fiction that he older ASTOUNDING. The lineup of writers was good, and it seemed like the set-up was a favorable one. But somehow, COMET missed.

The first issue, which had a Morey cover, the best story was Breuer's "The Night". Also good were Wellman's "Bratton's Idea" and Gallun's "Moon". Yet even about these stories there was nothing unusual enough to be remembered. Just good, solid science-fiction.

Second issue cover was by Paul (Paul and Morey alternated on the covers) and this January 1941 COMET had one very good space-opera, Peterson's "The Lightning's Course".

The March issue was really good, and it seemed as tho COMET was getting started. Hocklyne's "The Immortal", Williamson's "The Star of Dreams", and Coblenz' "Headhunters in Numerica" were perhaps the best, the first being exceptionally good. "We are One" by Binder features the May COMET.

Last of the COMETs, July 1941, had E. E. Smith's "The Vortex Blaster". A good story, this, but Smith isn't at his best unless he can write a long story. Also liked the Sinaak-Jacobi "The Street that Wasn't There". The title of COMET was a bit too accurate. Like its namesake it burst into view with brilliance and as quickly faded away.

STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES

STIRRING SCIENCE, which has my nomination for being the worst title ever

used, was supposed to be the fan's delight. Many of the stories were fan fiction, but unfortunately fan fiction isn't generally of too high a caliber.

Half of STIRRING SCIENCE was fantasy, and it was in this section that most of the good stories were printed. Since this is strictly a science-fiction review, I'll ignore that part, which greatly shortens the list of stories to be mentioned.

The first issue was that of February 1941, and had one very good story, Gottesman's "Dead Center", one of the best satires on the "super" story ever written. Gottesman, as every fan knows, was Cyril Kornbluth, and under other names wrote the best of STIRRING's fantasy. April and June had generally poor Futurian fiction.

COSMIC STORIES

COSMIC came a month after STIRRING, and Wollheim did a little better on this one, from a science-fiction point of view. After the first issue, editor Wollheim even changed the name to COSMIC SCIENCE-FICTION.

Best stories in the first issue, March 1941, were Arnold's "Mecanica", Lowndes' "The Martians are Coming", Gottesman's "Return from M-15", and Asimov's "The Secret Sense". In May I liked Gottesman's "Dimension of Darkness", "No Place to Go" by Bellin, and Tanner's "The Improbable". I'm not even trying to unravel the Futurian pseudonyms, but just putting them down as they appear on the contents page.

Last of the COSMICS was that for July 1941, which had a very good Dold black and white cover. As for stories, there was Gottesman again with "Firepower", Corwin with "The City in the Sofa", and Davies' "Interference".

Most of the stories listed above would have been lost had they been printed in ASTOUNDING, altho in COSMIC surroundings they don't seem too bad.

ASTOUNDING

SCIENCE-FICTION

I'm not certain as to just when John W. Campbell, Jr., became editor of ASTOUNDING, but am using the issue of December 1937 in lieu of a better one, as it was at least around that time. The results of that change of editorship are well known, and resulted in the best science-fiction ever published in a magazine -- or anywhere else for that matter.

The Clayton ASTOUNDING had been good, the Tremaine ASTOUNDING even better. In fact, under Tremaine, the magazine had been the best ever published up until the Campbell era -- so Campbell really had a job to do if the magazine was to improve still farther.

The December 1937 issue having thus been arbitrarily set as the beginning of the new era, I'll proceed with a discussion of its contents. The improvement in stories was not definitely noticeable at first, and in this issue I liked best Schachner's "City of the Rocket Horde", Binder's "The Time Contractor", and Russell's "Mana".

1938 opened with a story by the editor under the Stuart name, "Dead Knowledge", which was up to the high Stuart standard, and also of note were Wellman's "Pithecanthropus Rejectus" and Ayre's Weinbaunesque e-t story "Whispering Satellite". February was not so good, altho one story worthy of mention was Giles' "Wayward World".

March was wonderful. First and perhaps foremost was the change in names to the present ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION, and the stories were so uniformly excellent that it's hard to single any one of them out as best. If I had to make a choice, I'd probably pick R. D. Miller's "The Master Shall Not Die!", which almost gets classic recognition. Also not-to-be-forgotten are Elstar's "Something From Jupiter", Wellman's lovely "Wings of the Storm", Casey's "Flareback", Williams' "Flight of the Dawn Star", Peterson's "Martyrs Don't Mind Dying", and the start of Burks' serial "Jason Sows Again". All this in one issue! The improvement was now noticeable.

April was almost the equal of March, with one of those quietly outstanding classics that crop up every now and then heading the list. This one was Del Rey's "The Faithful". There was also McClary's very good "Three Thousand Years", de Camp's "Hyperpelosity", Gallun's "Iszt - Earthman", and Palmer's "Matter is Conserved". After two such superlative issues a let-down was to be expected, but the let-down wasn't so bad. First, there was one of Williamson's greatest novels, the classic "The Legion of Time" which started in May 1938. There was also Casey's "Static" and Lane's "Niedbalski's Mutant".

Best for June was Wellman's "Men Against the Stars".

For July 1938, I liked best Simak's "Rule 18", and Rocklynne's best of his cops and robber series, "The Men and the Mirror". One of the stories in August was definitely a classic, the Stuart "Who Goes There?" The theme was not new, but the treatment was one of the most excellent ever given a story. Same issue had Burks' "Hell Ship", Kuttner's "The Disinherited" and Heckman's "Asteroid Pirates".

The Hubbard serial "The Tramp" started in September, which issue also had Clark's "Double! Double!" Top story in October was Sell's "Other Tracks", one of the best of the parallel time stories, and Simak's "Hunger Death". Rocklynne's "Who was Dilmo Deni?" takes the prize for November. December was quite an issue, with Gold's "A Matter of Form" rating highest, and also getting ASTOUNDING's first Nova award. Also very good were "The Merman" by de Camp, "Helen O'Loy" by del Rey, and the Wellman serial "Nuisance Value".

Best for January 1939 were de Camp's "The Incurable", Jameson's "Mill of the Gods", and Phillips' "Maiden Voyage" in that order. A classic in the February 1939 ASTOUNDING, Williamson's "Crucible of Power", along with "Palooka from Jupiter" a Schachner story I liked very much.

Stuart's "Cloak of Aesir" is tops for March, altho it is closely pushed by a personal favorite of mine, Jameson's humorous, "Children of the Betsy B". There was also Burks' "Follow the Bouncing Ball" and Casey's "Star Crash". See that I neglected the Simak serial "Cosmic Engineers", which began in February.

April has the start of another Williamson Legion serial, and one of the best, "One Against the Legion". Schachner's "Worlds Don't Care" and Jameson's "Catalyst Poison" were very good, altho the latter smacked strongly of fantasy. This April issue had also what is probably the best cover ever used on ASTOUNDING. May has Berryman's "Special Flight" and del Rey's "The Day is Done", an unusual and excellent cave-man. I liked "The Morons" by Vincent, in June.

The first story by A. E. van Vogt was in the July 1939 ASTOUNDING, and it was one of the best, "Black Destroyer", which I'd rate well up among the classics. Also liked were Asimov's first story, "Trends", and Rocklynne's "The Moth". Another new writer with a good story, Heinlein with "Life-Line", came in August -- but I liked de Camp's "The Blue Giraffe", and especially del Rey's "The Luck of Ignatz" better. Also very good was Bond's "Stowaway". The Engelhardt serial "General Swamp, C. I. C." also rated very high, making the issue as a whole a superlative one.

September is down just a little, altho Gallun's "Masson's Secret" and Wellman's "Forces Must Balance" are very good.

The serial starting in October 1939 was heralded as the greatest story of E. E. Smith's career, and I'm not going to argue about that. "Gray Lensman" was not only Smith's greatest story, but was as good as anything I've ever read. The cover portraying Kimball Kinnison, by Rogers, is also excellent. In addition to the lensman, there were Berryman's "Space Rating" and "Rust" by Kelleam. In November I liked Heinlein's "Misfit" and Vincent's "Power Plant".

December 1939 had the excellent van Vogt "Discord in Scarlet", Casey's "Thundering Peace" for good space-opera, and one of the best of the Past-Present-and-Future series, Schachner's "City of the Corporate Mind". Campbell had been editor for a little over two years, and by this time had built up quite a stock of good writers to build a generally superlative magazine. Almost every issue was near-perfect, and even the stories I don't mention would, almost all of them, have stood out had they been in any other mag.

1940 was the peak year for science-fiction, with a dozen magazines on the market, 3 of them being monthlies. It was to be expected that their leader would have a superlative year, and the ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION for 1940 is perhaps the best s-f that has ever been published, both from the standpoint of quality and quantity.

Vincent's "Neutral Vessel" is the best story in the January 1940 ASTOUNDING, closely followed by a pair of good tales from a pair of the regular AS- TOUNDING writers, Heinlein with "Requiem" and del Rey with "The Smallest God".

A classic in February, Heinlein's "If This Goes On - ", first of the string of excellent sociological theme stories which the magazine was to feature in this era. It really rated the blurb "...one of the most powerful stories science-fiction has produced..." Also very good were Fyfe's "Locked Out" and Vincent's "High Frequency War".

De Camp's "The Emancipated" is amusing enough to take first place in March. Another classic, and one of the greatest, begins in April 1940. Altho historically inaccurate, Hubbard's "Final Blackout" is the most powerfully and realistically written story in the history of science-fiction. This story had human beings instead of characters, and it's a story I've read many times with just as much effect as it had the first time I read it. "Final Blackout" is at the top of the list, to me, in science-fiction stories. Same issue had Rocklynne's "Unguh made a Fire".

Liked Kellern's "The Last of the Asterites" in May. Heinlein's "The Roads Must Roll", Drew's "The Carbon Eater", and Vincent's "Deputy Correspondent" are all good in June.

Best of the good stories in July 1940 is one which, to me, has never gotten the acclaim it deserved. Story is von Rachen's "The Idealist", and I'd give it classic rating as an exceptionally powerful job of writing. Also excellent in the issue is Heinlein's "Coventry", another of his superlative jobs of picturing future civilizations. August had del Rey's "The Stars Look Down" and van Vogt's "Vault of the Beast".

Another definite classic starts in September 1940, and in the opinion of many fans, van Vogt's "Slan" is the greatest science-fiction story ever written. I wouldn't rate it that high, but I will call it one of the greatest. Certainly it stands at the top of its own particular type, the tale of the superman. Even after "Slan", there are such good stories in this issue as Heinlein's realistically interesting, in the light of current atom bomb knowledge, "Blowups Happen", Asimov's "Homo Sol", Rocklynne's "Quictus" and the Idealist sequel "The Kilkenny Cats". All in all, September was quite a month.

Bates' "Farewell to the Master" features October. Another of de Camp's Johnny Black stories, "The Exalted" is in the November issue. December is about the poorest issue of the year, but does have Bond's "Legacy".

1941 opens with the start of a near-classic by Heinlein (written under the name of MacDonald) "Sixth Column". Also good in January was the Walton space-opera, "Doom Ship". In February we have the unusual experience of finding a character who first appeared in the Ziff-Davis AMAZING, switching over to AS- TOUNDING. Character is Bond's Meg, the Priestess, and the story, "Magic City", is very good. But the best story in the issue is Heinlein's "--And He Built a Crooked House".

In March it's Heinlein again with "Logic of Empire", D. B. Thompson with "Eccentric Orbit", and Simak with "Masquerade", the latter probably being the best. April has the start of de Camp's "The Stolen Dormouse", a good story about a somewhat illogical future civilization. Best story in April, tho, and a classic, is Sturgeon's "Microcosmic God". Also very good were Asimov's "Reason", von Rachen's "The Mutineers" and a Jamson space-opera, "Slackers' Paradise".

May 1941 is magnificent, with two Heinlein stories both worthy of classic recognition. First, under his own name, is "Universe", while under the Mac Donald pseudonym there is the wonderfully omniscient "Solution Unsatisfactory". Almost a classic is Asimov's "Liar!", while Russell's "Jay Score" is almost lost in the crowd, altho in an ordinary issue it would have been a stand-out.

Best in June were Sturgeon's "Arctian Process" and Schachner's "Old Fireball". In July there is the start of Heinlein's excellent "Methuselah's Children", and runner-up was "MacDonald's" "We Also Walk Dogs". ASTOUNDING's best writers were Heinlein, Heinlein, and Heinlein!

ON CURRENCY EXCHANGE

I'll run the risk of Prexy Stanley and Critic Koenig declaring part of this issue objectional on the grounds of its being non-fantasy, especially since it is Stanley who brought the matter up in the Winter FAN-TODS. So far as quantity, if not quality, goes -- the 31 page "history" should suffice for the fantasy part.

NFS wonders if currency from Canada is passed freely around the border areas. The answer has reservations, but is a yes so far as fairly large business establishments are concerned. Windsor, Ontario, a fair sized town, is just one mile due south of Detroit (If you don't believe the direction is south, look at a map) so there is naturally quite a flow of travel across the border in both directions. With so many Canadians doing shopping on this side of the border, the larger stores all take Canadian currency at current exchange rates. But the man on the street is a bit more dubious and, except for pennies, avoids Canadian money. I can remember a few years back when values were equal that a handful of silver around here invariably disclosed several coins of Canadian origin, and when receiving change one was never concerned with the nationality of the money.

Probably the reason that American money still circulates freely in Canada is that it is more valuable and there is more attraction for it. Even though we do have inflation here, it is far less than almost anywhere else in the world. The dollar (American) is now the keynote of economic stability throughout the world. Canadian money, to an American, is tainted with a vague, if false, sense of distrust simply because it is lower in value. Should the situation be reversed, and the Canadian dollar be higher, doubtless Canadian money would pass freely in the U. S., while American money would be looked upon askance in Canada.

But the situation between the U. S. and Canada is as nothing compared with that between the U. S. and the rest of the world. In France, last year, an American dollar bill on the black market would bring several times the artificially pegged exchange rate in francs. Altho officially listed at a small fraction over 2¢, the franc was actually worth less than a penny. All of which made it very tough on us GI's, since we were paid in francs at the official rate and were practically donating about \$1.50 more to the French for ever \$1.00 worth of goods we bought. Cleaning up on exchange thru the black market was controlled by making it a court-martial offense for an American soldier to have American currency, and by careful checking of any excess amounts of money sent to the states. The same situation holds true in all other liberated or occupied countries, and the U. S. dollar is quite a prize.

Even a subject like this can be turned into science-fiction with some imagination, so let's consider how international, interplanetary, or interstellar exchange could work in an enlightened world of the future.

The best we've worked out to date in our present civilization is the Bretton Woods plan, and not being a banker I'm a bit hazy on the details. But, essentially it seems to provide a system for stabilizing rates of exchange thru a jointly owned bank, any country in temporarily bad financial shape being helped out by the others. Some such system as this would seem to be needed as a basis for our future currency exchange problems.

Not being a banker or knowing anything about the subject is a help when dreaming up something like this, as you don't have to worry about whether or not it's actually practical. Sometimes I think most s-f authors work on that same theory that the less you know about a subject, the better you can write about it.

So first we set up our international fund (or interplanetary, interstellar, or intergalactic as the case may be) and figure out the comparative value of each sociology's unit of exchange by means of tables of exports, imports, manufacturing, cultivation, natural resources and a ouija board.

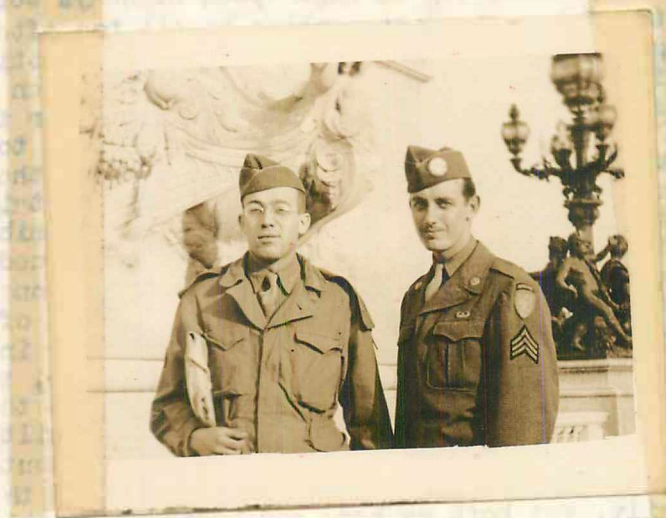
This would be quite a job, for on Mars the unit of exchange might be based upon the value of rare zyntallix crystals. On Thorania II zyntallix crystals are so common they are used in paving streets, and the unit of exchange is based upon the average production of an average Thoranian IInd in a period of one takon. However, a Martian can do 3 times as much work as an inhabitant of Thorania II; and to further complicate things, labor saving devices from other worlds are increasing production so much that the Thoranian IInds are all becoming millionaires.

Eventually all such difficulties are ironed out, and the relative values of the monetary unit of each culture is known. Next step would almost have to be the assigning of an arbitrary universal exchange unit, something like the "credit" unit mentioned in so many s-f stories, probably at the median point in the scale. The terrestrial system of simple exchange directly between the nations involved wouldn't work out so well on an interplanetary, or larger scale. Even here, in fairly complicated deals, all exchanges are generally made with reference to the units of some nation which is economically stable. That currency at present is usually the U. S. dollar, for want of anything with more stability.

But in our universal scale, an arbitrary unit not based upon the unit of any particular civilization would seem best -- since practically all nations on earth use a modified gold standard system, and our universal systems would be based upon a myriad of standards.

Finally, it is probable that most cultures, especially if they engaged in much trade with other cultures, would simplify things still more by adopting the international, interplanetary, etc. standard for internal as well as external use, thus making the same money good anywhere in the universe.

Such a system might even work on earth at present, should some truly international credit standard be adopted not based on any one country. As it is now, national pride generally keeps each nation to using its own system of exchange, often with catastrophic results.



PARIS IN THE SPRING

May, 1945. That's Milty on the left, me on the right. Background is one of the bridges across the Seine, which one I can't remember. Perhaps Parisian Milty would know. Object under Milty's arm is a FAPA mailing. Yes, it was a science-fiction convention, the Parisecon of 1945.

TRAFFIC CONTROL

Stanley presents some interesting ideas about the use of electronic control and other devices to aid the speed, safety, and ease of driving in the future. It's true that motor car manufacturers are constantly making the operation of vehicles a more automatic matter, and it's about time that some thought was put into the possibility of working from the other end of the problem by making highways and streets more automatic.

Electronic control on long stretches of intercity highway are probably quite feasible, and will doubtless be put into effect sometime in the future. Non-electronic devices, such as banked curves which will almost automatically take a car around a turn provided that it is going at the speed for which the curve is built have been in use for years, and their construction is constantly increasing. Driving on long stretches of a modern highway is an easy job, since a constant pressure on the accelerator and a light touch on the steering wheel are all that are needed. But it is still a fatiguing job, since the driver must be constantly on the alert, altho not so much so as in city driving.

Electronic control from the side of the road to keep the car constantly at a given distance from the edge of the road and at a given speed would probably be quite feasible, a joint hookup between steering wheel, throttle, and speedometer controlling the car in response to radio impulses. But I'm inclined to believe that a magnetic flow underneath the road would be even better, and might even operate as a power source, allowing the driver to turn off the motor and just relax until such a time as he wished to turn off the powered highway.

One of the great advantages from a safety point of view in eliminating the driver from work and responsibility on high speed highways would be that he would no longer have the false speed conception he all too often has now upon switching from a high speed to a low speed artery. I've noticed many times, after travelling for a long stretch at high speed and then entering a city, that it's hard to slow down sufficiently to compensate for the change in traffic conditions. You may think that you have slowed down to a reasonable velocity because your new speed seems so much slower than the old. But even for the most experienced driver it is hard to tell for certain without constant observation of the speedometer. This factor is responsible for many accidents, and often serious ones because of the fairly high speeds involved.

But it is in the cities themselves, especially the larger ones, that improvement in traffic control is needed. I like Stanley's idea of leaving the car at the edge of the city and then using small putt-putts for intercity travel. But unless our larger cities decrease tremendously in size, the distance factor from the edge of town to the center would be so great as to render the idea almost useless. A large city extends for miles, and is built up solidly with residences, factories, and business establishments thruout the entire area. In my own case, my job is some ten miles across town and the distance has to be driven twice daily, yet both my home and business establishment are quite a distance inside the greater city area.

I suppose that Stanley is considering some city of the future with a closely knit business center and homes stretching outwards from this center for miles, homes which are not so closely packed together as those of today. Such a system is growing in popularity all the time, and every large city has many such suburbs whose inhabitants commute to the city itself to work. But it takes time to travel a great distance to work, more time than most people care to spend, and there will always be a tendency to live close to the place of employment.

Also, businesses and factories tend to group fairly close together to make for more ease in the interchangement of supplies and materials without which no business can survive. So I look for our city areas to grow larger, not smaller, from the standpoint of residences and business establishments both. I'm not enough familiar with any other of the really large cities, so will use

Detroit as the example of how a large city is built and how it is apt to expand in the future. The really large cities are the basis of our present civilization, our 5 largest containing over 20 million people in their immediate areas, with millions more dependent upon them.

First, there is the central business district with the larger stores and office buildings as a center. This isn't as might be supposed, in the geographical center of the city, as the city was built upon the north bank of a river and the business center so well established close to that river that it would now be unfeasible to move it. This practically limits geographical expansion to 3 directions, since across the river to the south lies another nation, making expansion in that direction more difficult. Expansion of the Detroit area into Canada does take place, of course, but no so rapidly as expansion in other directions. Other cities are similarly limited in the direction of expansion, Chicago being hampered by Lake Michigan from spreading eastward, and New York being at least slowed down by the Hudson on the west and south.

The answer to the problem of entrance to this business areas is solved differently by different cities. New York's rapid-transit subways provide one swift and practical answer, and similar systems will doubtless continue to gain in popularity. Detroit has no rapid-transit system, but depends for public conveyances on slower surface street cars and busses. However, the problems of driving and especially of storing the automobile in the main business district are so great that the easiest system for most of the workers and customers to travel there is by these public conveyances. Heinlein's Rolling Roads might be a more feasible answer to travel in this sort of place than on the long stretches which he proposed.

The projected solution in Detroit is the construction of a huge belt of underground parking spaces on the outskirts of this central area, with further travel being by foot or by short range bus.

Radiating out from the business district is the original residential area containing generally older homes many of which have deteriorated into slum areas. The worst districts in a large city are quite likely to be those closest to the central district, and improvement of these areas is one of the greatest of a large city's problems.

On a perimeter roughly 5 miles from the center is the largest factory belt, and in Detroit a line drawn from automotive factories starting with Ford on the west and running thru De Soto, Graham-Paige, Lincoln, Ford again, Dodge, Plymouth, Packard, Hudson, and finally to Chrysler on the east, describes a fairly accurate semi-circle with a 5 mile radius. Naturally, large numbers of factories, usually smaller, are inside this radius, and the waterfront is lined almost solidly with industries, so many of them that, from a tonnage standpoint, Detroit is the world's largest port.

Even despite its general decrepitness, this area between the factory and business areas is almost ideal for residence from a utility standpoint, since travel between either an industrial or business center is a short trip. An excellent future possibility will be the continued increase of huge mass-dwelling units, apartments, in this area, with homes for week-end use located in suburbs at a distance from the city. This 2-residence idea might be the solution, if the area between the factory belt and the business center were large enough to contain all of a city's workers.

Making this future city large enough for this ideal arrangement would entail moving the factory belt to a more distant line, and indeed such a process has already started. The steel plant for which I work is to move from the 5 mile belt to a newer factory ring 10 miles from the center of the city in the near future, and the expansion programs of many other industries call for a similar move.

Beyond the factory belt is the newer and main residential area, with large, altho secondary, business centers along the main arteries. Detroit

is fortunate in having several of its larger streets radiating from the central business district hub like spokes on a wheel, instead of having all streets on a rectangular pattern. Thus, for many, it is possible to travel on the shorter hypotenuse length rather than on the legs of a right triangle. But, a few miles from the center, these "spokes" are so far apart that they lose much of their effectiveness, and so we'll pre-suppose that our future city will be laid out on the simple rectangle plan.

Now to get back to the traffic element, and its control in a city of the future. We'll have two main destinations for traffic, the industrial belt surrounding the city, and the business district in the city's center, and the problem is the setting up of the best system for handling traffic to and from these areas within the city itself. Suburban areas wouldn't be so much of a problem, because of the relatively lesser density of population and consequent smaller flow of traffic.

Electronic devices, or perhaps magnetic ones, to handle regular motor cars might be of good use on the main arteries through which the biggest volume of traffic flows. Side residential streets aren't so important, altho many accidents occur in such places because a driver is less on the alert. However, until that distant date when robot-control comes into full use, traffic on side streets will almost have to be manually controlled because of the large number of cars engaged in either parking or turning onto other streets.

On the main arteries, electronic control would work magnificently, provided that everyone was familiar with his route and destination. Many people aren't, and the idea of someone in a right hand lane suddenly deciding that he wants to make a left turn at the next corner would be almost as disastrous as ever in heavy traffic. Perhaps accidents could be avoided, but traffic disruption couldn't, for our left turning driver, altho the automatic devices might keep him from turning until the center traffic lanes would clear, is still holding up the cars behind him in his own lane.

The greatest of current traffic problems are the overloading of certain streets, and the driver who is inexperienced and unfamiliar with his surroundings. It is already presumed that our future streets aren't too much overloaded as they are either built to carry more traffic or effective alternate lanes have been constructed. But the unfamiliar driver will still be a problem.

Today, even at peak traffic times, there is no great problem when all drivers are experienced. On my ten-mile jaunt to work in the mornings, practically every other car on the streets is inhabited by someone such as I who drives the same route every day, knows where he is going, and is intent upon getting there with the least possible amount of time and confusion. Only place on the route where I am appreciably slowed down is in the central business section where there is a traffic signal on every corner, and so many of them in the area that synchronization of signals is impossible. Average time for the distance in the morning is 30 minutes.

The trip home is different. There are the same experienced drivers reversing their trip of the morning who know exactly where they're going and how to get there. But there are also a host of the unfamiliar drivers, shoppers, etc., who drive only occasionally, and are either too reckless or too careful in their progress, and in either event holding up traffic. Average time for the return trip is 45 minutes. Saturday at noon is the worst of all, since the greater portion of regular drivers either work all day or not at all. The ones who work half-day, like myself, are in the minority, and Saturday is the biggest day for unfamiliar drivers on business. I'm lucky to get home inside of an hour at this time. Sunday driving in or near a large city is, of course, a nightmare because practically every driver is unfamiliar with his route. And no amount of traffic control, short of full robotic, is going to appreciably increase speed, altho it may increase safety.

Best system in future design of cities from a traffic standpoint, since in our present civilization large cities are a necessity, would seem to be efficient rapid transit, and clearing cities on week-ends.

Best solution would seem to me to be continuation of our present city system of alternate areas -- the central business area, the city residential area, the industrial belt, and finally the suburban residential area, well built up near the city itself, but much more spacious, gradually thinning out to week-end homes. The parts of the suburban areas nearest the city would be all-purpose homes, suitable for the raising of families and for the pleasures generally associated with homes. They would be scattered far more than the homes in the city itself, yet be fairly accessible to the city. Most traffic in this area would be by private car, and each section, even as today would be a small city within itself with its own shopping and business district, doing away with frequent trips to the center of the city. Preferably the inhabitants would be those who earned their living in the nearby industrial belt.

Workers in the business district itself would largely live within the inner residential area, a crowded collection of apartments designed for the bare essentials of living, altho with the greatest degree of comfort and efficiency. These inhabitants of this area would, most of them, have alternate homes in the outskirts of the large suburban areas which would be their actual homes and designed to take advantage of the shorter working time of the future.

The great bulk of travel in this inner area would be by some form of public rapid transit system, preferably underground -- and of course all shipments of freight would be by special routes, thus keeping the streets clear of the slow and bulky trucks that are so troublesome for the city motorist of today. Private conveyance would still be used by those who, thru convenience or choice, prefer to travel that way. It would often be more convenient when shopping, for instance, or when making business rounds with samples as so many salesmen do. But much of the need for travel by private car will be eliminated -- such reasons as my own, for example. It would take me over twice as long to get to work if I depended upon public carriers.

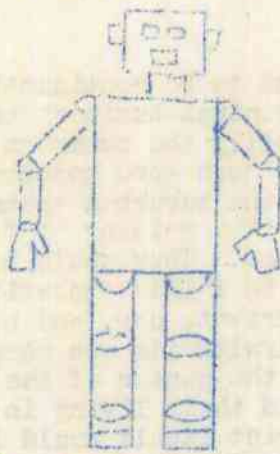
Next issue of INSP I think I'll take up the subject of designing a completely modern city, not based on the foundations of an old one, and thus being able to utilize entirely new ways of providing for greater livability and utility.

ON FANTASY IN FAPA

Wish there was some word which would serve the purpose of dual listing of the weird and science-fiction elements of literature. In lieu of a better one, fantasy will have to be used, since for most FAPA members it seems to fill the bill. But to me fantasy is more closely akin to the weird, or at least belongs to the field of the impossible rather than to the possible. Imaginism might serve, but isn't used enough for familiarity, so fantasy it will have to be, and the term fantasy as used in the following will refer to both fantasy as I see it and to science-fiction.

Quite a number of fans have been protesting the great amount of non-fantasy material in FAPA. I did myself two mailings ago, and it seems that one D. B. Thompson has misinterpreted me. By discussions of fantasy, Don, I didn't mean particularly such things as book and magazine reviews; but such things as you often write concerning sociological conditions and what to do about them. There are many such articles and commentaries in FAPA, and they are the best part of FAPA. I try to write them myself occasionally.

What I was complaining about particularly are the large amounts of material which is written which, by no stretch of the imagination, can be considered as relating to fantasy. In this class I would list many things which do pertain to fandom, such as trips and visits among fans which are often too lengthy and are nothing other than what would happen to non-fans. And the large amounts of space which some fans give to activities which in no way have anything to do with either fantasy or fandom. Sometimes they are interesting, but they are also out of place, so I'll join in the plea for more fantasy material in FAPA.



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