

The

# NEOLITHIC

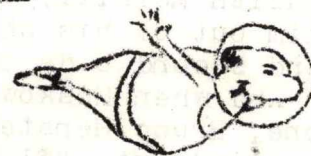
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Editroolings: The Hibbit;  
or There and Back Again.....1

Sherlock Holmes at Camelot.....7  
by Dean W. Dickensheet, I.S., B.S.I.

A Comet Tale: Cometose Remarks.....8  
by Roger Firestone "A Hibbit!"

Clay Tablets.....8  
by Divers Persons



with the pictorial aid of: Bjo, Rab, Dick Schultz, T.H. White

## THE HIBBIT; or THERE AND BACK AGAIN

### Part I: There

At the Pittcon, I shared a room with Bjo Trimble and Ingrid Fritzs. This did not mean that I saw a great deal of them, because we did not use the room much. However, at one point, I did manage to corner Bjo, and she drew onto my name tag the girl and exclamation which are reproduced above along with the little man who causes the girl's remark. Bjo explained to me that the hibbit is analogous to the science fictional folk song, or filk song.

Bjo's cartoon was particularly appropriate, because the Pittcon turned out to be a filk song convention. This was hard on the people who hated folk songs and the people with perfect pitch, but was great fun for everyone else. From Friday evening on it was hard to be out of range of singing (or facsimile thereof). It would have been impossible to prevent the filk singing, in any case; both Hal Shapiro and Sandy Cutrell were huckstering songbooks, and they discovered quickly that the easiest way to sell their books was to find a group of people singing, encourage them for a while, and then hold out the books; there were several guitars at the con and a somewhat larger number of guitar players who played a continuous game of Musical Chairs with the instruments; and the Penn-Sheraton had left two unguarded pianos on the Convention floor. In other words, if the Pittcon had been a character in the Ring Cycle, it would have had a leit motif of a guitar plunking.

The Official Welcome came almost on time, and then SaMoskowitz and Isaac Asimov dragged several authors on stage. SaMoskowitz auctioned, Asimov describing the best points of each one, and soon L. Sprague De Camp, Hal Clement, Randall Garrett ("I want you to start with a figure commensurate with his."), Doc Smith, Willy Ley (he wasn't there at the moment, but Lou Tabokov modeled for him), Judith Merrill, and Isaac Asimov ("Girls, you will like to bring him out of his shell.") were sold. The bidding was peculiar. First and second bids on De Camp were \$2.00 and \$20.00, for example. And when Moskowitz opened the bidding on Garrett, Ted Johnstone, Bruce Henstell, and Bruce Pelz, speaking in impromptu chorus, cried out, "\$1.98!" A few minutes later Ted bid \$6.66 on him, and he was finally sold to Ted and Henstell for \$7.29.

By 8:30 Saturday evening, the Costume Ball was well started. Off in one corner Juanita Coulson was singing folk songs; in the opposite corner Harlan Ellison was talking and gesturing, unaware of the shock awaiting him; and all over the hall were fans, plain, fans, with cameras, and fans, in costumes that shown, flashed, and twinkled. George Heap came in as a magnificent orc in armor with the eye of ~~CS~~ Sauron on his shield. Tombstone Johnstone plonkered him. Gandalf the White strode about the room, trying to convince people that his name really, truly was Don Studebaker. Bjo Trimble came in as an "ordinary green unicorn". Dick and Pat Lupoff, garbed attractively in lightning on red, wandered about muttering "Shazam". Steve and Virginia Schultheis came as Eofandom and First fandom, and Sylvia White came as a cave girl. Dick Schultz came as a counter-revolutionary ("Castro for President; Tucker for Vice").

Bruce Henstell came as Harlan Ellison and walked over to Ellison. He froze in mid-gesture and stared at Bruce for a while. "My god," he said.

The prizes for best costumes were to be Bjo ceramics, and all the masquers, with the exception of Bjo herself, hoped to win one. After a time, Doc Barrett shepherd-dogged the masquers into a line and had them circle the hall. A large number of Curtises and Don Thompson were the Best Group as various senses (of wonder, of humor, of science, the necessary 35-50); Stu Hoffman was Most Monstrous; Earl Kemp, dressed in silver from the skin out, was Most Beautiful; George Heap was Most Bizarre; the Schultheises were Most Humorous; and a certain reluctant unicorn was Most Original. The unicorn was further distressed when it won Grand Prize, but the others forced it to accept the awards.

After the ball, the fen went off to various entertainments, some to parties, some to hear the Misfit Glee Club and other acts, and some to watch the premiere of THE MUSQUITE KID. The movies, however, were put off till the end of the Floor Show, and Hal Shapiro took advantage of the crowd already gathered in the movie room to try to sell his song-book. I started to buy



one and found that I'd left all my money in my room. So I asked if I might have a song-book and pay him Sunday. Nasty ol' Hal beamed, announced that I could have one for free if he could have a life subscription to my publications, and handed me a song-book. Hal, how come you're such a nice nasty ol' man?

Ted Johnstone and I began to sing some of the songs from Hal's book. Harlan Ellison, sitting near-by, winced. He rose. He snatched the book away from us. He began telling schticks. People began to laugh. Randall Garrett passed by and suddenly found himself telling jokes with Ellison. They had just finished a twisted version of "Our Lady's Juggler" by Anatole France, when Isaac Asimov passed by and was dragged up front. Imagine, if you will (or dare), a mixture of the Three Stooges, the Marx Brothers, and the Goon Show. Their act consisted mainly of insults (Ellison sets Garrett by Asimov and tells Asimov "Now you can feel thin." Asimov retorts saying "You stand by me so I can feel tall, too."), and they were thoroughly delightful. Oh yes, and THE MUSQUITE KID was good when it finally came. So were ROCK FIGHT and LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, though a serious film, THE WORLD BESIDE US, was rather disappointing.

"The Purple Pastures" by Carl Brandon, adapted by Bruce Pelz, was put on Sunday afternoon with Bruce as Ghu, Ted Johnstone as Gabriel, and Earl Kemp as Rucker. Praises to them all, and, especially, to director Jim O'Meara and lighting man George Price. They had problems. First problem was short rehearsal time. It was not so much solved as ignored. Second problem was that Bruce only knew half his lines. However, the audience never did seem to realize that when Ghu glanced at the ground, he was reading the cue cards concealed in his hand. And then there were plenty of smaller problems. Sunday around noon, for instance, we were informed that Bjo, who had a medium-sized part, had lost her voice. The director looked unhappy. The understudies, all of them men, looked helpless. "I'm a pretty quick study..." I said in a meditative tone. So I played my own part and Bjo's, too, and enjoyed myself thoroughly.

So the rehearsals for "The Purple Pastures" went nicely, and, when the time came to start, we were all feeling reasonably confident, except those of us who had been approached by Bruce Pelz and given some of his little cue cards. Several excellent lines, most of them insults to Garrett, had come to his mind, and he stuck them into the play. We forgave him, though, because one of the new lines drew the biggest laugh in the production—Ghu: "Ghu demands respect!" Zeba: "Who does he think he is, Randy Garrett?"

Fan productions being as they are, there was a long delay when we should have started. In the delay, Eric Bentcliffe came quietly, cautiously up to the piano at the front of the hall. He swung into loud, rhythmic music, one foot pedaling,

the other beating time. I was surprised. Actually, I should not have been. Eric might look like a hobbit, especially when placed next to Giant Don Ford, but he did not have any hobbit-like reserve. He was more like Bilbo Baggins (that is, like Bilbo after he became an elf-friend), and he had the kindly, courtly manners of Bilbo Baggins. Eric also had an amazing memory for names, and seemed to be able to remember the names of everyone he met. Eric is a ghood man.

When the delay was over, our audience was still with us, thanks to Eric's sudden piano recital, and the play went off well. Afterwards, Ted, Bruce, and I wandered round to the Art Show Room singing Gilbert & Sullivan and songs from the BOSSES' SONGBOOK. A group of like-minded people gathered round us, and Sandy Cutrell sold some more BOSSES' SONGBOOKS.

The banquet was held Sunday evening. Its most serious event was James Blish's speech. He spoke on the curious attraction that science fiction has for its writers and readers, and tried to analyze what makes up a good sf story. The speech had some minor faults. For instance, I think he left humorous sf stories out of his analyzation. However, I hope that whoever has reprint rights to it has a magazine with a large circulation, because it was well worth the standing ovation it received.

Asimov, as master of ceremonies, was in high spirits, or just possibly the other way round, and he did his usual job of living up to the high reputation he has at that post. He took the opportunity to apologize to Willy Ley, explaining that he had been criticized for describing Ley as "the second-best writer of science articles in the field" during the Auction Bloch. "Willy," he said, "I'm sorry you're the second-best writer of science articles in the field."

The Hugo awards were made at the end of the banquet. This event is serious, but Dr. Asimov does not like things to be serious when he is talking. Dramatic, yes. Exciting, yes. Not serious. The good doctor pays little attention to gravity, except when writing crazy Buck Rogers stuff. So the awarding was comic and serious at the same time. We laughed, we applauded, and we meant both laughter and applause.

CRY OF THE NAMELESS was the Best Fanzine. Shy Wally Weber turned rose-pink and sat still when the award was announced, hoping that one of the Busbys would take it, but he was closest, and he had to take it. F&SF was the Best Magazine, Ed Emsh, finally, was the Best Artist, and "Flowers for Algernon" by Daniel Keyes (in F&SF, April, 1959) was Best Short Fiction. Rod Serling's TWILIGHT ZONE was Best Dramatic Work, and Asimov read a gooey letter of thanks from Mr. Serling. Asimov told us that Serling had been promised that his Hugo would be delivered



by a sexy redhead—would Bjo please come accept it for him. Last of all, Asimov announced STARSHIP TROOPERS as the Best Novel, and looked around for someone to deliver it to Heinlein. As he stared into the audience, a tall, dignified gentleman came to the Speakers' Table. Robert Heinlein, coming to his first convention in years, had come to accept his Hugo with half an hour to spare. Two more awards were given: a special Hugo for Hugo Gernsback, and the EEVans Award, which was given to Sam Moskowitz.

The business meeting came after the banquet. This was one of the few events at the Pittcon without any singing. This was just as well, since very few people there seemed to have any breath control. L. Sprague (Directator) De Camp guided the meeting skillfully, and around midnight it was over. Seattle is the site of the next convention, dues are up a dollar for those who attend (they remain \$2.00 for non-attendees, and are \$1.00 for people outside this continent), Hugo nominations are open and awards are restricted to convention members, we thank Ben Jason who designed the present Hugo rockets, two motions were referred to committee, and one motion was tabled.

After the meeting, folk-singers began gathering. Soon they found a large room with a piano. Guitars were brought in. A song-fest had begun. Jock Root explained in Calypso rhythm how he got to the convention ("I Shoulda Taken De Train"). Ted Johnstone, Sandy Cutrell, Juanita Coulson, Bill Silverman (a neofan from Minneapolis), Jock, and others soloed, demonstrating the beauty and humor of folk songs and filk songs. The audience sang, hummed, clapped, or simply listened. They sang...and sang...and sang...and Sunday evening ended Monday morning at 7:00.

Monday was a rather quiet day. Bjo sat in the Art Show Room. She had expected some thirty entries in the first Fan Art Show, and had received one hundred thirty. Several paintings had been sold. So she sat there smiling and tallying up votes for the Most Popular painting. The smile disappeared as she discovered there was a tie between "Mountain of Fire" by George Barr and "Moloch" by George Metzger. She was dashing around trying to find some people who had not yet voted when Harlan Ellison came in. He was still eligible to vote, and he set about examining the paintings. He came upon "Leavetaking," a picture of a girl embracing a unicorn by Bjo. This oil was the only painting Bjo had entered, because she had thought it would look odd if she entered many pictures or won many prizes in the show she herself had organized. Ellison fell in love with the painting. He dashed about finding people eligible to vote and persuading them to vote for "Leavetaking". It won first prize. It also placed in another category. Bjo and her ordinary unicorn had taken half the prizes in sight, including Rod Corling's award

Monday night, the Calivan began drifting, small-car load by small-car load, over to the house of Jack Harness's folks. The few fen left wandered through the dark halls of the convention floor. There were only three lighted rooms, the Art Show Room, the N3F room, and the ladies' lounge. A few people sat and talked in the Art Show Room. The Cult put out a one-shot in the N3F room. H. Beam Piper and Sandy Cutrell led a dirty filk song session in the ladies' lounge. At 5:00 AM almost everything was quiet. Bjo, Ingrid, and I said good-bye to Ted and Bruce (who were going to bunk in the Art Show Room) and went downstairs. We were to make the last trip to Harness's, but no small car was in sight. Bjo cursed Ron Ellik feebly, and we all went to sit in the lobby. Al Lewis and Jim Broderick suddenly appeared—or perhaps they'd come down with us to say good-bye; I wasn't what you'd call alert at the time—and we chatted a little. Ingrid, sitting straight up, dozed in a chair. Bjo had keeled over into a small sofa. However, she had keeled over into a rather uncomfortable position. She kept murmuring and trying to get past the edge of sleep enough to shift herself. Al Lewis rose suddenly, picked her up, dropped her into a reasonable position, and was rewarded with a grateful mumble. He started to return to his seat, looked back at Bjo, took off his jacket, laid it over her, and sat down again.

At last the car came back. We got in, sent upstairs for Bruce to come along because there was room for one more person in the car, and reached Harness's about the time we should have been getting up for our "early start". We got up around the middle of Tuesday morning. The Harnesses, saying that we'd been kind to Jack, fixed us an excellent breakfast-lunch. "We'll have to try being nice to him, too," said Bjo. Around noon, Ed Cox, Bruce Pelz, Andy Main, and Rebel Lee got into Ed's Volvo; Ted Johnstone, Ernie Wheatly, Ingrid Fritzs, and Jack got into Al Lewis's Peugeot; and Billern, Bjo, Ron Ellik, and I got into Billern's Hillman. We examined the sun and the road maps, pointed the cars in the right direction, and headed westward.

to be concluded

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Note: this con report is not full-size ("No room, no room!"). I have done a long conrep which Norm Metcalf is printing, and I've tried to avoid telling things the same way in the two. The conclusion to this, in the November NeOL, will be a travel report.



## SHERLOCK HOLMES AT CAMELCT

"Holmes, if you'd lived a few centuries ago, they'd have burned you alive!"

Dr. John H. Watson in William Gillette's Sherlock Holmes

Since the foundation of Sherlockian scholarship, a topic second only to the study of Dr. Watson's wounds and wives has been the consideration of the genealogical origins of Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Birth registers have been combed in all parts of England, from Sussex to Northumberland, as well as in Ireland, America, and France. Searches have been made back to the 17th century, and proponents have linked him not only to the Vernets, but to the Gerards and the Clarks. One theory has not, however, been adequately considered. It is a strange possibility indeed, but for all its strangeness, it possesses the faint gleam of truth, however improbable it may be.

In The Sword in the Stone, written by British historian T.H. White and published in 1939, one of the central figures is Merlyn the Magician, a personage made famous in the "Morte d'Arthur" of Sir Thomas Malory. At one point in The Sword in the Stone, Merlyn requests a familiar spirit to produce his hat. At this there appear in succession a beaver hat, a smoking cap, a sailor's hat whose lettering suspiciously suggests "H.M.S. Pinafore," and a deerstalker. Merlyn then calls the familiar to task, stating that he wants the hat he was wearing now, not "a hat I was wearing in 1890. Have you no sense of time at all?" The magician's owl, Archimedes, then suggests that Merlyn ask for the hat by name: "Say, 'I want my magician's hat,' not 'I want the hat I was wearing.' Perhaps the poor chap [the familiar] finds it as difficult to live backwards in time as you do."

"Deerstalker," "hat I was wearing in 1890," "live backwards in time"!!!!??? "Ask for the hat by name"? If one is a magician's hat, what is the other? A detective's hat, of course.

An improbable theory, yes. But who are we to doubt the possibility of the abilities of one of the greatest of the White Magicians. And how much it would explain! Miraculous escapes at Reichenbach and elsewhere, flashes of insight not really properly explainable to Dr. Watson, feats of almost superhuman strength. Is it then the truth?

One obvious solution would be to ask the historian involved, Mr. T.H. White; but I fear such an inquiry would be of little value, for in the adaptation of The Sword in the Stone, published as part of The Once and Future King, the episode is expunged and suppressed. Is this the work of that "gentil knight," Sir Mordr...

pardon, Mr. Adrian Conan Doyle? Or is the connection between Merlyn and Sherlock Holmes akin to the true history of the Giant Rat of Sumatra, a revelation for which the World is not yet prepared?

Dean W. Dickensheet, I.S., B.S.I.



#### A Comet Tale

#### COMETOSE REMARKS by Firestone

Monitoring the short wave band, I heard a series of very curious noises. Correctly deducing them to be Morose Code (transmitted by lonely people), I translated it as "I have a suggestion for the platform of the Anarchy party: give the country back to the jungle." I realized at once that it was a message from the Orbiting Borogove. It went on, "My latest interest is trains. I am developing one model much in favor with the airlines and trucking agencies. It is a special type that goes into tunnels but does not come out..." The rest of the message was lost through static.

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#### CLAY TABLETS

from GEORGE W. KARG, August 6, 1960  
4104 Basswood Road, Minneapolis 16, Minnesota

Information just reaching me impells me - in spite of our budding hatred - to take stylo (or is it stiletto?) in hand, and set the record straight.

Miss Arnason is no more mythical than the unicorn. I do not claim that she is believable - she is not - but anyone who knows her well will admit - freely - that there is no imagination now



in existence capable of creating her in her full glory. One of those mediaeval painters who produced really bloodcurdling Last Judgments might have thought her up after a bad night, but the modern mind is too narrow and fundamentally decent.

Not that Miss Arnason has a strange, Transylvanian look to her, for it is more solid and Scandinavian. No, it is something else - something less evident and innocent. Something that attracts the odd and unsavory to her, until I am the only entirely sane and human friend she has.

I am quite willing, myself, to be thought nonexistent. I am the dull, commonplace sort of person whom any man on the street could have invented in a spare moment or two. Miss Arnason is another matter altogether, and a stern regard for the truth forces me to state, without equivocation, that, as unfortunately as it may seem, Miss Arnason is real.

[I asked eaa about this letter. She remarked that George does himself an injustice, but that, in any case, Mr. Theodore A. Johnstone, who wrote the letter to which George replies here, has no right to quibble about names. My own feeling is that George does me an injustice.]

from DOC WEIR, 6 October, 1960  
Primrose Cottage, Westonbirt Village, Nr. Tetbury, Glos. England

As regards what you said about Sir Arthur Sullivan, here is a sidelight on his character that may be new to you (if it isn't, I can't help it, and I'm glad to find you so well-informed, anyway!). While he was in Vienna with James Groves (afterwards the editor of the monumental five-volume Dictionary of Music), they started enquiring after the fate of the many missing manuscripts of Schubert's words. They found that his most usual publisher had long since gone bankrupt, the residue of his estate going to his lawyers, to whom he had been heavily in debt. This law firm had ceased to exist, but a modern firm had taken over its business. On enquiry, they were told: "Oh, there's several cuboards full of junk that we took over as the archives of the old firm, but we've never found time to look through them—they're all stored down cellar if you'd like to go down there and browse around."

They did, and at about nine-thirty at night, when they were three-parts choked with dust, they came across some tattered sheets of music paper manuscript, which, on examination, proved to be the original orchestral parts of the incidental music to "Rosamunde" (at that time quite unknown) untouched since its crashing failure after only two stage performances! They spent the rest of the night copying them by candlelight, and then,

since none of the coffee-houses was yet open, they were too excited to sleep, and so overjoyed (they were both then aged twenty-four) that they didn't know what to do, they went to the nearest park and violently played leapfrog over each other for a couple of hours.

"E Pluribus Ectoplasm": objection! "So Henry's still up to his old tricks." Still, indeed! Anne Boleyn was the very first wife he ever executed: I will not have our dear Henry (and he the Supreme head of the Church) libelled.

["Correction accepted, though my own impression was that the conversation only referred to the marriages, not to the means of getting out of them. And after all, "if Bloody Mary [had gotten] in, the monasteries [would have been] denationalized." And do you know who wrote those words?]



A rider goes with this issue of NeoL, except for those people who received copies of it earlier. The arrangement described in it for printing Sherlockian-fantasy items applies only to the first one, "A Sherlockian Christmas Carroll". That will give me an idea of what arrangement would work best, and the situation will change then. Most likely I shall decide to sell McArdle Press publications to non-members for 25¢ or 50¢ (2 s. or 4 s. in England).

"I understand that you have a special today on brooms."

HAPPY HALLOWEEN, EVERYBODY

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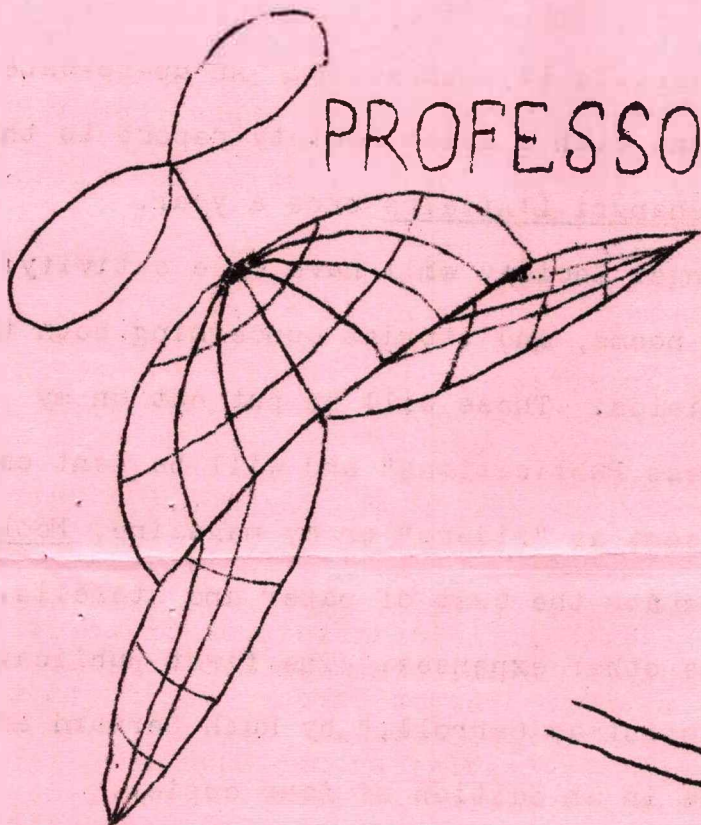


Mr. Dick Schultz  
1915 9 Helen  
Detroit 34,  
Michigan



the

# PROFESSOR CHALLENGER SOCIETY



Founders: Ruth Berman of the Sussex Vampires

Robert R. Pattrick of the Trained Cormorants

A few months ago, Bob and I had begun work on this scion. Bob had prepared the first draft of this announcement just before his death.

This is to announce the establishment of the PROFESSOR CHALLENGER SOCIETY. Membership is open to all persons who have a taste for both the Canon of Sherlock Holmes and the field of science fiction. There will be no meetings and no dues. There will be but one officer — an Honorary President with no duties. To this post we nominate Mr. Anthony Boucher, with the title of Derringer. Ruth Berman will act as secretary.

To join, send a letter or postcard to Ruth Berman at 5620

Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis 17, Minnesota. An up-to-date membership list will be sent with a Scion Society report to the Baker Street Journal and Shangri L'Affairs once a year.

The Professor Challenger Society will have one activity: the printing of articles, poems, and stories concerning both the Sherlockian and fantasy fields. These will be put out on my mimeograph as "McArdle Press Publications" and will be sent out to all members, and also sent as "riders" on my magazine, Neolithic. The authors will be charged for the cost of paper and stencils. McArdle Press will pay the other expenses. The first publication is to be "A Sherlockian Christmas Carroll," by Ruth Berman and Ron Whyte, originally done in an edition of four copies.

— RB

An alphabetical list of those who, in friendship or in print, have shown themselves to be members. Additions would be appreciated.

Anderson, Karen	Johnstone, Theodore	Tullis, George
Anderson, Poul	McGuire, John	Tullis, Mrs. G
Arnason, Eleanor	Martin, Dick	Whyte, Ronald
Baring-Gould, William	Metcalf, Norman	
Berman, Ruth	Mills, Ellis	
Boucher, Anthony	Palmer, Stuart	
Cox, J. Randolph	Patrick, Robert	
Derleth, August	Pelz, Bruce	
Dickensheet, Dean	Peterson, Robert	
Dickensheet, Shirley	Piper, H. Beam	
Dickson, Gordon	Reynolds, Mack	
Fitch, Donald	Trimble, Bob	
Green, Roger Lancelyn		McArdle Press Publication