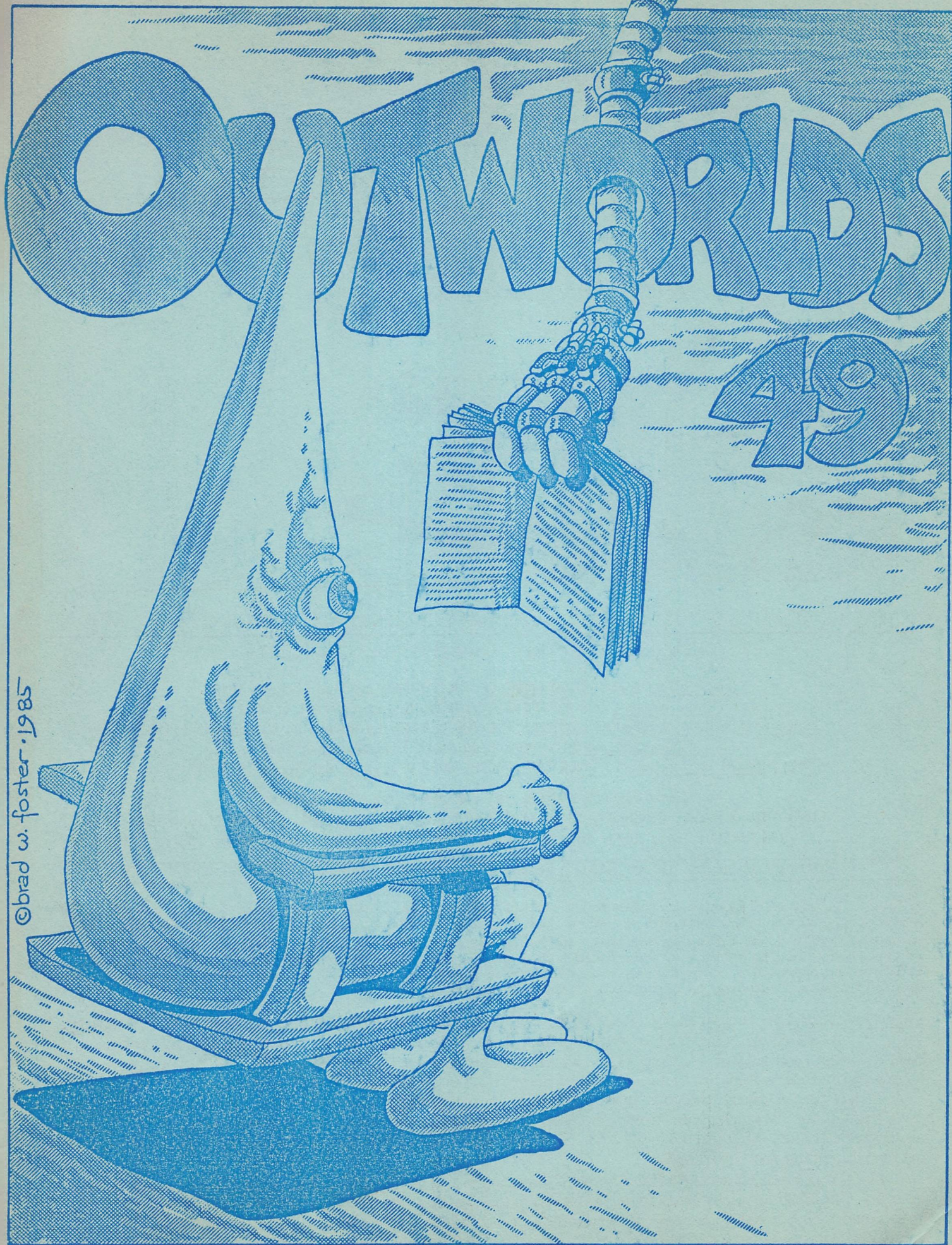
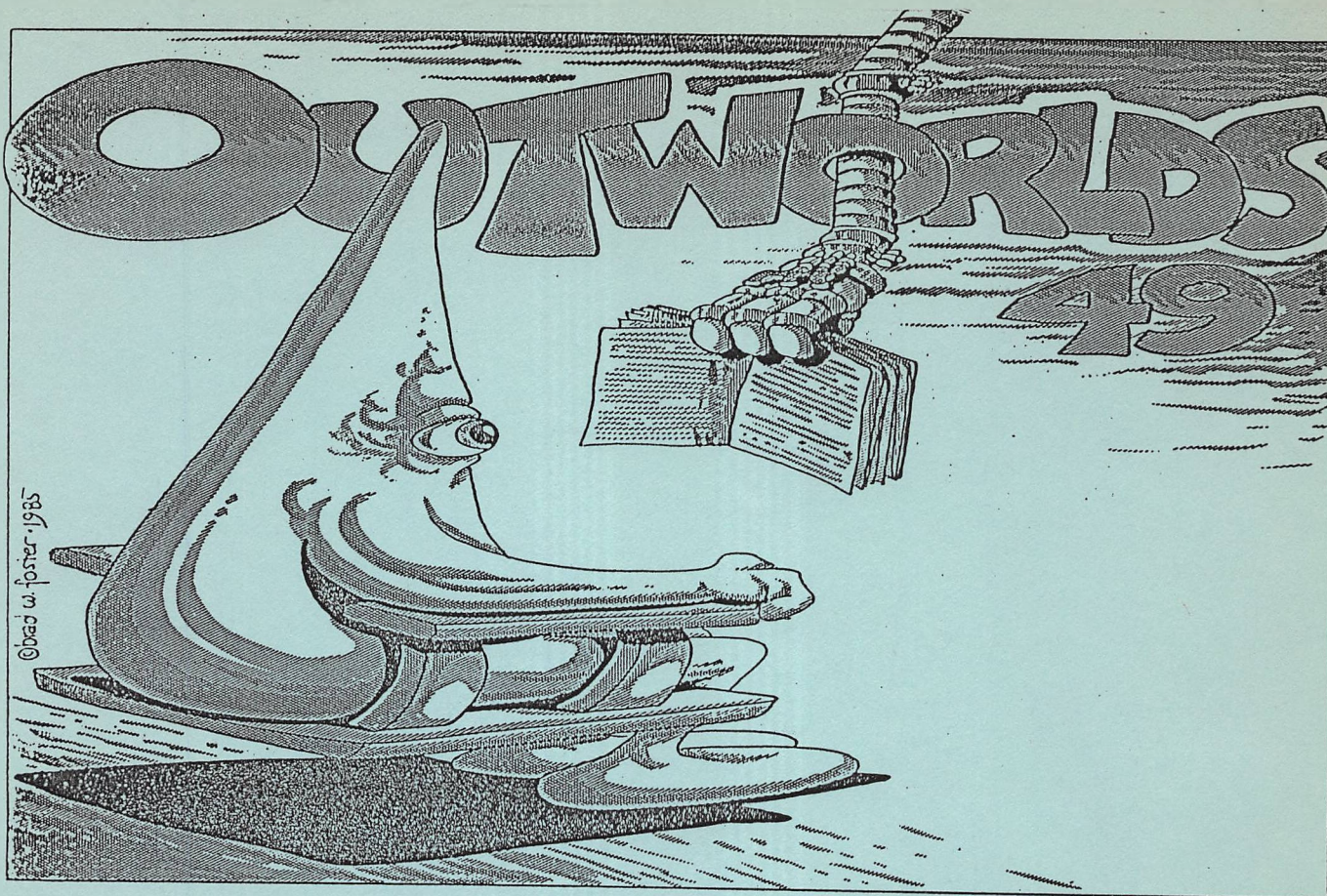


LOC 4/4/87



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OUTWORLDS 49 -- A Fanzine For Corflu IV

fanac future § FOOTNOTED FANAC OF THE FUTURE; by Dave Locke § 1613

fanac present § A BYTING COMMENTARY; by Jodie Offutt § 1617

fanac past § HUGO GERNSBACK'S SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE; by Robert A. W. Lowndes § 1620

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Cover by BRAD FOSTER § Backcover by WILLIAM ROTSLER

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Editorial Whim, or: Thish: \$2.00 § Nextish: \$3.00 § Subs: 6/\$10.00 § My Publication #149

2/23/86: ...and when it came to be Thursday nite, February 13th...late...I ~~was~~ tempted to at the least insert a stencil...and tap out a date and perhaps a sentence or two---simply so that I could tell the inquiring ~~wilds~~ hordes at Corflu 3 the following day that, indeed, I was working on an issue... After all...despite my years of experience, not to mention my well-honed social graces and legendary conversational abilities...I still find it easier to approach a convention with a new issue in hand; something both to hide behind, and to use as an opening gambit...depending on circumstances and inclination...

4/2/87: ...and so it went...and so it is---except that this time I have just a bit more to do...than to get to a Corflu. 'My' Corflu starts in less than 24 hours (one could say it has already commenced; I have a living room full of visiting fans...watching me make a fool of myself on videotape. That too will happen again this weekend!). I have a lot to do still...but hopefully it will be fun...and then I can...

It has been a year: the move [note the Coa]; the third mimeo self-destructing; a job both rewarding and less than; a lot of videos; new 'toys' [a Canon PC-25 copier...and one still in a box until next week]...and a convention to do. I would like to thank those who supported me for TAFF...and the Contributors for their patience...during the sabbatical...

Right now I'm enthused about fanzine publishing again...so I have to guard against saying rash things... However, OUTWORLDS is back: Next issue will transcript the Live OW at Corflu; OW 51 will catchup Locs from before...and then... Well, as long as I have fun it will continue...in one form if not the other...

FOOTNOTED Fanac of the Future

DAVE LOCKE

What follows is a transcription of the first article done for an audiotape fanzine. The zine was UNCLE ALBERT'S ELECTRIC TALKING FANZINE #3, edited by Larry Tucker, and was dated October of 1981.

So far as I knew then, and so far as I know now, this was not only the first article for a cassette fanzine but also the first illustrated article (leave it to a fan to not only want to be first but, at the same time, different).

The idea that generated this article did double-duty and also resulted in THE FAN CHANNEL, an article which appeared in Denise Parsley Leigh's GRAYMALKIN #6 of December 1981.

The temptation was great to do a rewrite on this article; particularly the fannish takeoffs on television shows of the day. Temptation was resisted. Footnotes will be used, instead.

This entire operation is brought to you at the editorial request of Bill Bowers, known locally in Cincinnati as "Bill" or "Mr. Bill", except in certain Irish pubs where he's known as "Al Curry's straight-man" (at least, according to Al Curry).



Hi. My name is Dave Locke, and the title of this article is FANAC OF THE FUTURE. Jackie Causgrove will be illustrating it.

You know, I've done articles for dittoed, mimeoed, offset, and xeroxed fanzines, and I've been doing them for twenty years. Now Larry has come along with a tapezine, so I'll do an article for that. And when Larry comes out with a videotapezine, I'll be ready.¹

I wonder how many fanzine fans are aware of the existence or content of UNCLE ALBERT'S ELECTRIC TALKING FANZINE? And how many know of the existence of an apa conducted via computer (and containing a lot of terminal idle chitchat)?

Probably not too many, but obviously fanzine activity is moving into the future right along with everything else. Disclaimer: most everything else. Scratch that: make it "along with some other things."

So much for the present. How about the future?

Here's where things get really fuzzy, and not just a little fuzzy. How does one see into the future? How do two see into the future? Well, the techniques are there. Where? You can extrapolate on the leading edge or thrust of the present, if you're of a mind to do such a thing, and providing you have any idea of what that means. You can view the past and the present as a sweep into the future. You can roll panther bones on your living room carpet. You can read your horoscope.

Well, let's thrust the present into the future. Right here. Let's do it. To hell with caution. Let's use the economic model presented by the calculator, where science becomes available to the home about ten years after business gets hold of it.

But first let's pause for an illustration by Jackie Causgrove.

Wearing a zodiac-symbolled hat -- the standard Alexis Gilliland model, only with a propellor spinning on top (we fan artists must add our own touches when stealing from one another) -- a sorcerer is gesturing wildly at a CRT terminal. The lines are boldly drawn using a minimum of shading. I rely on thick and thin strokes for the foreground portion of this illo. With stippled pen-work, the image of a crystal ball is depicted fuzzily on the screen. Its center is dark and murky, with a few bright spots, like globular clusters in a star field, glowing here and there. This all symbolizes Man's search for accurate forecasting throughout the ages, as well as the reverent awe which is accorded those who claim ability at seeing the future. Sorcerer or Stock Market Analyst: is there really a difference?

Thank you, Jackie. So what might the future hold for fandom, besides a Hugo category for best tapezine?

How about holographic projections of art shows and masquerades? How about video conference-call parties? Imagine clones being cultivated for things like guest-of-honor functions or parties that you don't really want to go to.

If the matter transmitter is invented, there are many practical applications in fandom. We wouldn't have to contend with hard travel to conventions, and beyond that we wouldn't need hotels. Every fan who wants to participate could throw open their transmitter for the weekend and we would wander in and out of each other's residences. The larger places could be used for most program items, and the mass functions could be done on bid-contract with restaurants, stadiums, and arenas anywhere. There would be no lines at the burger palaces because we would list the booth numbers of several thousand in the Program Book. Your booth number would be your membership number, and no one would have to crash in anybody's room unless they're too heavy to drag to the transmitter.²

Computerized mailing lists can drive your word-processed fanzine into the memory of your readers' home computers, and you might even allow access to anyone else who might want to try a copy. Apa distributions would, of course, be distributed and not accessed. So would letters, where you weren't simultaneously on-line and talking to each other.

Add video. Envision videotaped mailing comments with the voice in stereo, and all the ummms and uhhhs coming through the left speaker.³ And Rotsler illos the size of your television screen.

Of course, there would be problems. The Faan Award⁴ categories would have to be broadened. There wouldn't otherwise be any category to handle such things as a videotaped fanzine from the crew at the Bozo Bus Building⁵, or a videotaped letter of comment done by Taral Wayne while dressed up as an alien. New entertainment categories would be proposed and argued into boredom. There might even be a new award category for the best presentation of an argument for or against a new award category.

Well, okay, that's all pretty mild stuff. How about this? With the advent of cable television we're facing a situation where everybody and their grandmother can potentially have their own channel. Special interest programming will abound.⁶

I can see it now ... The Fan Channel.

What kind of programming would we have on the Fan Channel? Well, I'm glad you've asked, because I have several ideas in mind, most of which will likely stay there.

I envision many different fan programs. Here are a few.

WALKING TALL ... The Official Editor of FAPA wages battle against the deadwood.

MEETING OF THE MINDS ... Arthur Hlavaty discusses politics, morality, and other affairs of state with Claude Degler⁷, Francis T. Laney, and Hugo Gernsback.

- 4] An incestuously bad idea which went far toward disproving the notion that only the good die young.
- 5] A four-story brick building which served as a Slanshack until condemned by the city of Minneapolis.
- 6] Except that we will resist all temptation to develop a farmish equivalent to what is known locally as Taft Broadcasting.
- 7] Subsequent to the reading of this article, Bob Tucker discovered Claude Degler alive and well and living in Indianapolis, and subsequent to that Claude appeared on a fan panel at a convention in that city. So far Bob has said nothing about spotting Fran Laney or Uncle Hugo, but you never know.
- 8] There are some things that Man was not meant to be reminded of. Let's leave this as being esoteric.
- 9] This was back when Mike was more concerned about such things.
- 10] Or, now, send them to Mr. Bill. Send them most anywhere, actually, but remember: don't send them to me.

[illegible]

...thank you, Mr. Dave. Bill here...and I'd just like to remind all of you respondents that, indeed, my address is 6828 Alpine Avenue, #4, Silverton OH 45236. Really. Trust me.

* And I have a footnote to Mr. Dave's 3rd Footnote: LARRY TUCKER, 3358 Chelsea Circle, Ann Arbor MI 48108. ...I give you Larry's new address, not only because you should check out his various audio & video fanzines.

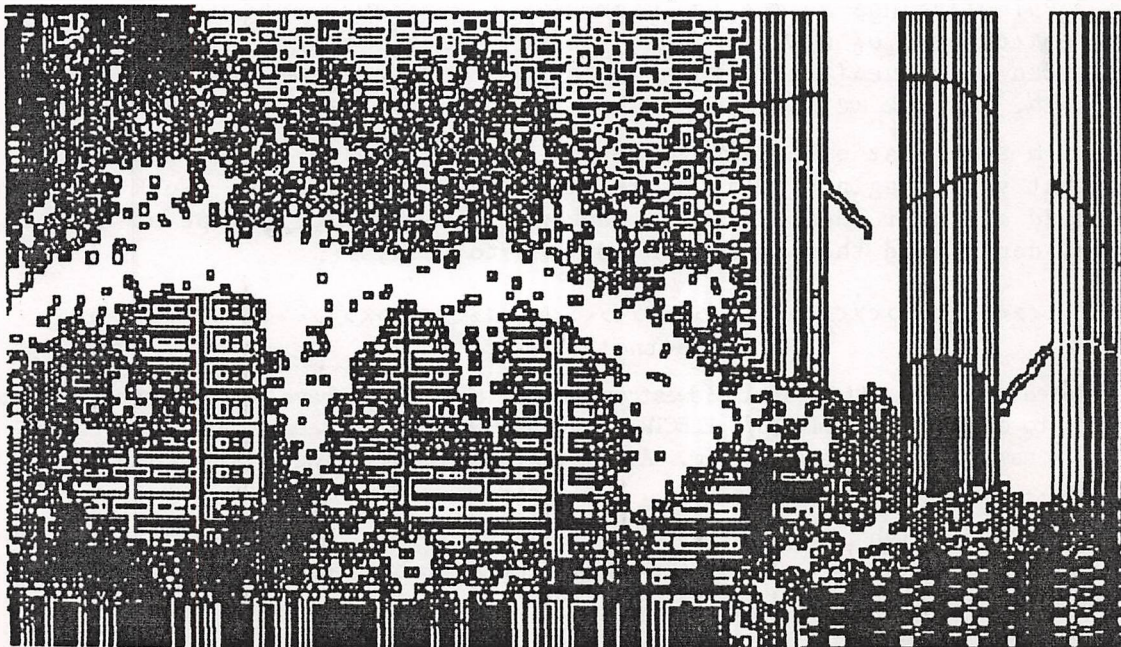
In less than a week, as I write, OUTWORLDS 50 will be 'out'—as a 'Live Fanzine', delivered at Corflu IV. But not all of you will be there; I realize that, and I'm considerate—so there will be a post-con, printed transcript/Corflu scrapbook version of OUTWORLDS 50. But that alone, will not capture the essence of what some of you will miss...so there will also be audio cassette and videotape Editions of OUTWORLDS 50. Collect the set!

The printed [\$3.00] and audio [\$5.00 at cons; \$6.50 by mail] Editions will be available from me...

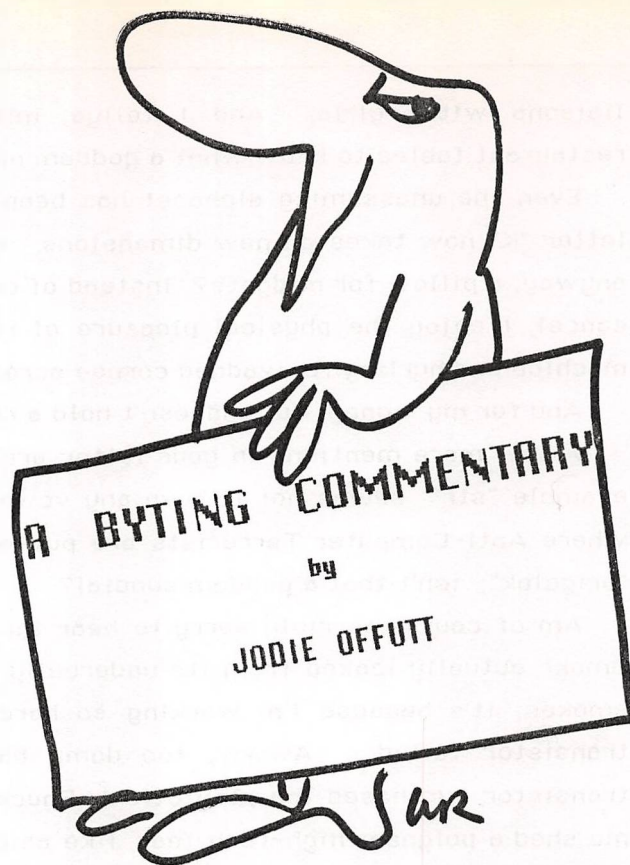
...and I will 'edit', but Larry Tucker will videotape, produce...and distribute the video OUTWORLDS 50. [See, I told you there'd be relevance to noting Larry's new address.] He can 'handle' both Beta, and the format that is the choice of the majority ~~who elected Ronald Reagan~~. Larry's 'terms': For tape exchange, blank tape should be accompanied by \$2.50 for postage & handling. Otherwise, \$10.00 in person, or \$12.50, including postage and handling.

Although the 'Live' version will undoubtedly be longer, all the rehearsals and the off-Corflu run notwithstanding, I plan to edit down to 90-minutes for the cassette versions. The printed will be whatever it takes...

Health & wealth permitting, I hope to have all three post-Corflu editions out before Midwestcon 38, the last weekend in June. No 'promises' though...I've learned my lesson. For the moment. ...you do believe me!?



SLEIGH



This summer I was lucky enough for my husband to buy me an Apple Macintosh computer. The first thing I did with my new MAC was write letters to my children--in childlike excitement about my new toy. Andy, who has had a Mac for over a year, had already written about its wonders to the kids--at some length. What follows is a letter from our son Chris, who, after reading about the Mac for months in letters from his dad (and seeing the showoff fonts, italics and so on), reached the end of his rope when he received computer testimonials from parent number two.

Dear Mom and Dad,

Please pardon this letter. My paper is ordinary, not possessing corrugated edges. The print is light because I use a ribbon; remember those? For emphasis, I have to resort to old-fashioned underlining and capital letters. Instead of a screen, above my "desk" is a note reminding me to sit straight. When I run out of space at the end of a page, I have to manually re-insert a fresh sheet of paper. I know, I know, hopelessly primitive . . . Mistakes are fixed with lower case x-ing, too.

The bright side: I for one don't have to learn a vocabulary including "font" (a French device for public water), "accessory mover" (a kid who carries the heavy end of the couch for five bucks an hour), "icon" (a science fiction convention consisting of one person), "pict" (the land of Kull's right-hand savage, sort of a barbaric my-man-eachday), or "byte" (a sophomoric British spelling of the past tense of Johnny-Bill's habit (that nasty kid that lived next door when I was five).

Disk, to me, is still a frisbee or a hubcap or a full moon. Data is a

liaisona witha girla. And I tellya, mister, I've hustled enough restaurant tables to know what a goddam menu is!

Even the unassuming alphabet has been dragged in. That poor ol' letter "K" now takes on new dimensions. What the hell is microsoft anyway, a pillow for midgets? Instead of command, I type. Instead of cancel, I enjoy the physical pleasure of ripping the paper from the machine and hurling its wadded corpse across the room.

And for my money, Puter doesn't hold a candle to brass!

A few more mentions in your letter are even more confusing. For example "str" seems not to own any vowels. It probably is a place where Anti-Computer Terrorists are put when captured. Another is "origclok"; isn't that a goddam sundial?

Am of course terribly sorry to hear that your machine fried, Dad. Smoke actually leaked from its underbelly, eh? When my typewriter smokes, it's because I'm working so hard and fast, not because a transistor failed. Awww, too damn bad . . . Your poor little transistor purchased the plantation! Shucks. That downright makes me shed a poignant high-tech tear, like acid rain. I have a friend who knows about transistors. After a year of therapy, he was back in men's clothes again, leaving his female sibling's bureau alone.

You and your transistor have my boundless sympathy. For that matter, so do the families of kamikaze pilots. As well as baseball players who strike for a few more hundred thousand bucks. (Notice how nice the word "thousand" looks on paper. Try saying it. There, you can still do it. Thousand. A liquidy sound indicating vast amounts. "K" sounds like a neurotic woman in the mid-west. Or the abrupt thrusting of breath when punched in the guts.)

By the way, this Mac shit has got to go. No way am I going to begin calling you MacMom and MacDad. It makes me feel like Ronald fucking MacDonald! Every letter I receive is filled with MacReferences. Sure I know part of my heritage if Irish, but this is going way too far. It is all influencing me in a negative way. As a confirmed vegetarian, I find myself boycotting mackeral these days. My house plants are on the floor after I threw away their macrame hanging cords. Sure, you all want me to visit more often, but I can tell ya right now, forget it! The thought of crossing the MACon-Dixon line makes me shiver. I've even quit watching the Tonight Show due to that master of back-up laughter, Ed you-know-who.

This user-friendly bit is bunked-up baloney. How can a machine that smokes (and not even after sex) be the slightest bit friendly. If so, accepting that absurd premise, my typewriter is downright user-kindly. User-ardent. User-affable. Me and my machine have a different relationship; we're monogamous! None of this disk shit for us; no dice! It's rude for me to refer to us as having a "user"

relationship; I'm not a cheap self-serving exploiter of my typewriter. Oh no! We are one, a unity. I clean its keys with care. Massage its tired body, caress its flawless carriage. I am not some adolescent "user" carving niches in the bedpost of typing. Are you kidding me? We are equal, the typewriter and I. And you know what else? It would never betray me by frying its innards. Just as it knows I won't go out and buy the newest, most efficient one on the market.

I respect my machine, and guard it most effectively against mice. We don't need a mouse, my typer and me. When I want to draw, I resort to a pencil. Remember them? Short rod filled with a soft substance that leaves residue when moved across a sheet of paper. They're pretty handy items--when you can get hold of them! A primitive form of software, I guess you might call 'em. At one time they were used to write letters-- back in the medieval age.

"MacDraw", indeed!

I don't know what to think of the older generation today. A beard and long hair, for god's sake! I should have foreseen the ugly future back when you acquired your first dashiki. Damn thing looked like curtains for a summer cottage. And you, Mom, are just as bad! I used to love it when you had a sewing machine. Now that's in the trash, right? You and your laughing gas and computer. Dad and his bourbon and computer. Me and my tap water and typewriter. What is the world coming to . . .

A VCR next, right? I'll bet my bottom dollar there'll be a VCR littering the living room soon. Already, the advance guard is in the kitchen--a microwave. (And I always thought a microwave was a farewell from a distance.)

Let me ask you all something, seriously. Does the cordless telephone _ work? I've heard tales, but dismissed them as heresy. And one more thing--just how high is the IQ of your food-processor? Is it comparable to the automatic coffee maker or what?

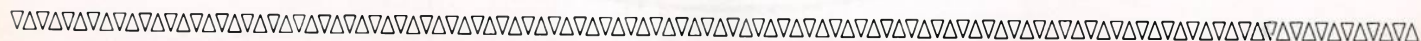
Jesus, I'm getting old. External drive used to mean a motorboat with a visible engine. Wang was slang for penis. Modem was a word from Dada poetry. An apple a day kept the doctor away. Fat Mac was a circus sideshow event.

I'm stricken with nostalgia at age 27! Yes, at one time I had parents; now they are users. They used to have a son, but now he is a high-tech dodo, an American aborigine with a stick shift car, a manual camera and the multiplication tables memorized! My folks--a pair of damn neo-macs!

That's it; you are hereby disinherited!

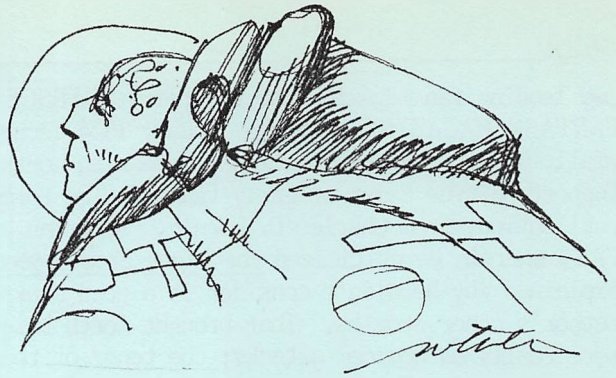
--with genuine human love,

/s/Chris



Hugo Gernsback's





Understandings

ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES

The Science Fiction League was founded in February, 1934 (the day of the the month was not stated), but readers of WONDER STORIES, its sponsor, did not hear of it until March, when the April 1934 issue came out. On the editorial page, we saw "THE SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE, An Announcement, by Hugo Gernsback", and in the center of the page was a reproduction of the League's symbol, which would appear on the cover of the next issue, and would be used on buttons, stationary, and other impedimenta of the League. It was circular, with SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE printed in the outer section; within was a reproduction of a detail from Frank R. Paul's cover illustration for The Shot Into Infinity, which was the feature novel in the first issue of SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY, dated Fall 1929. The detail shows the spaceship Geryon (little more now than a nose-cone, as it was perhaps the first step-rocket described in fiction) with rockets ablaze and the Earth in the lower right.

The announcement was not much more than a teaser of the "Watch this space next month" variety, but it did give some essential information: "The Science Fiction League is a non-commercial membership organization, without dues or fees of any kind. It is purely a literary, scientific organization for the betterment and promotion of scientific literature in all languages. Anyone who is interested in science fiction can become a member of the new League. There will be a number of honorary members, whose names will be published in the next issue of this magazine."

A magazine-based club was by no means a new thing; various western and adventure pulps had them. But they were small-scale things, generally related to the specific magazine—not to western or adventure fiction as a whole. The person joining the Science Fiction League would have to deal with WONDER STORIES as its headquarters, but would not be under any specific obligation to support WONDER STORIES exclusively, or even at all. In THE IMMORTAL STORM, Sam Moskowitz notes that here was a new departure for Hugo Gernsback, in a way; heretofore, he had boosted various "Young Men's Science Clubs", members of whom were also science-fictionists; but the new organization was centered upon science-fiction itself. Moskowitz also notes that, while Managing Editor, Charles D. Hornig, was generally credited as the ideaman for the League, Hornig himself (in some published autobiographical notes) states that the idea was first broached by Gernsback.

The editorial for the May 1934 WONDER STORIES spells out the details of the League, and is one of the few editorials by Hugo Gernsback, in any of his science-fiction magazines, that extends beyond a single page. This one runs five pages, with an announcement that more details can be found in the back of the book.

The first thing we see is a list of "Executive Directors": Forrest J. Ackerman, Eando Binder, Jack Darrow, Edmond Hamilton, David H. Keller, M.D., P. Schuyler Miller, Clark Ashton Smith, and R.F. Starzl. Hugo Gernsback himself is Executive Secretary; Charles D. Hornig is Assistant Secretary. You will recognize some of those names, but who were they at the time?

Forrest J. Ackerman was an avid reader, collector, and fan. At that time, "fan" did not mean quite the same as it does now; there just weren't facilities for most of the activities that contemporary fans engage in (and it was the League that inaugurated the potentialities for some of them). In 1934, a science fiction fan was usually a young male who was (a) an avid reader—and sometimes collector of science-fiction; (b) a letter-writer, whose missives appeared frequently in the readers' sections of the various magazines; (c) a correspondent of other fans, and, most rarely (d) a founder or member of a science club for science-fictionists. A few such clubs existed—some local, others mainly through correspondence. A few issued club organs at times, over various periods. But none were out-and-out science-fiction clubs; they were dedicated to science, and discussions of science-fiction were side-effects, as it were.

Ackerman was well-known to readers who followed the letters columns, and had also had articles in the

two leading fan magazines of the time: SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST (which had just changed its title to FANTASY MAGAZINE, with the January 1934 issue—it started in 1932) and THE FANTASY FAN. Both were small, quarto-size publications, appearing monthly, and were hand-set and printed at cost rates by Conrad Ruppert—a true Saint of early fandom. The former had a fairly large staff, while the latter was a one-man publication, from Charles D. Hornig. Ackerman had gained notoriety from a letter published in THE FANTASY FAN, wherein he criticized The Light From Beyond, by Clark Ashton Smith [WONDER STORIES, April 1933] and explained why he didn't consider it a good story—although he stated that he had thoroughly enjoyed the author's other stories. That brought forth blistering replies from H.P. Lovecraft, and Smith himself, that were really *ad hominem* attacks; the tenor of them was that only a semi-literate moron could fail to like so great a story. That was not either author's greatest hour; Ackerman himself comes across better, even if you consider The Light From Beyond an excellent story, as I do.

Eando Binder was the joint pseudonym of Earl and Otto Binder, brothers, whose first story had been published in AMAZING STORIES, October, 1932. (The First Martian.) Before that time, we had seen long, thoughtful letters from one or the other in AMAZING STORIES. Eando Binder was becoming a "name" author for WONDER STORIES; his tale of the future wherein the surface of the Earth was uninhabitable, The Spore Doom, had copped the cover of the February 1934 issue.

Jack Darrow was the most prolific and widely-known contributor to the letter columns after Ackerman himself. "Darrow" was a pseudonym; his real name was a difficult-to-pronounce one—it looks Polish—and while I may have it somewhere in my files, I am at a loss where to look. No matter; he never became any kind of professional in science fiction.

Edmond Hamilton was among the most popular fantasy and science-fiction writers of the time. He had started in WEIRD TALES in 1926, and had written many science-fiction stories for that magazine before his initial appearance with The Comet Doom in the January 1928 issue of AMAZING STORIES. (Apparently Hugo Gernsback had never read any of those earlier stories; he hailed Hamilton as a most promising new author in his blurb for that cover-copping story.)

David H. Keller, M.D., was among the most prominent and controversial science-fiction writers of the day. He was one of the four outstanding Gernsback discoveries in the 1928 issues of AMAZING STORIES. The other three were Edward E. Smith, Ph.D., Philip Francis Knowlan (Armageddon 2419 AD, which introduced the character that would later be known in a radio series and comic strips as Buck Rogers), and Jack Williamson. Keller was the first to appear; his debut was The Revolt of the Pedestrians, in the February 1928 issue. He would appear in all the science-fiction magazines of the period except for ASTOUNDING STORIES—either under Harry Bates, who considered Keller totally incompetent as a writer, and F. Orlin Tremaine, who would have been happy to publish him had Dr. Keller sent him some science-fiction manuscripts. Unfortunately, Keller sent him only weird material—after that type of story had been dropped.

Gernsback was always happy to run good stories by scientists and doctors, and never failed to make their status clear. (On the other hand, Keller, for example, did not insist on the title: all of his stories in WEIRD TALES were bylined simply David. H. Keller.) Gernsback insisted on using academic titles, because that showed that respectable scientists and doctors did not consider science-fiction as sensational trash, and did not fear to run their stories under their own names.

P. Schuyler Miller was another fan who had written many thoughtful letters for the readers' departments before he became a writer. His first-published story was the first-prize winner for the February 1929 contest—story cover on AIR WONDER STORIES: The Red Plague. By the time it appeared, AIR WONDER STORIES had been combined with SCIENCE WONDER STORIES, but the contest was not dropped. The four prize-winning tales appeared in WONDER STORIES in four successive months, starting with Miller's in the July 1930 issue. That, however, was not his first sale: Gernsback already had accepted Dust of Destruction, which was the cover-copping tale for the February 1931 issue of WONDER STORIES.

Miller's fiction was all of good-to-excellent quality; it is sad that, today, he is probably remembered only for his long-lasting book-review department in Campbell's ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION and ANALOG—a department that continued until his death.

Clark Ashton Smith is remembered as a high-quality writer of exotic weird tales, and most of his best work did appear in that magazine. However, he sold a number of stories to Gernsback, starting with Marooned in Andromeda, which took the cover for the October 1930 WONDER STORIES. After several more, which were little more than highly imaginative adventure stories in otherworld settings, he began to abandon the pulp formula and write at his top quality for WONDER STORIES, starting with The City of Singing Flame (sic) which inspired one of Paul's most fantastic covers. That appeared in the July 1931 WONDER STORIES. No one realized that the title should have been The City of the Singing Flame, until Arkham House reprinted it.

R. F. Starzl was another Gernsback discovery, who contributed to the other magazines, as well as ARGOSY, during the few years that he was selling stories. His debut, another cover-copper, was Out of the Sub-

Universe, in the Summer 1928 issue of AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY, and may have been the first story dealing with human beings somehow shrunk into the microcosmos that took thought of the fact that, should such a thing be possible, *time* would go *much* faster for them than for us. He was nearing the end of his appearances in early 1934, but was still remembered with affection.

Managing Editor Charles D. Hornig was an avid reader and collector, and in 1933 brought out the first issue of THE FANTASY FAN. It was in competition to SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST at first, but with the second issue concentrated on articles about the literature of fantasy and weird fiction (including outstanding material in current magazines). His magazine was dated for the month in which it appeared, so the first issue came out in September 1933. He sent a copy to Hugo Gernsback, who was impressed enough by it to invite Hornig to come in and see him.

Who was more surprised when that interview took place is anyone's guess: Gernsback, to find that Hornig was a 17-year-old boy, in high school, or Hornig, who found that Gernsback wanted to offer him the job of managing WONDER STORIES. At any rate, the deal was made, and Hornig got right to work. His name appears on the masthead of the November 1933 issue (on sale October), but since it must have been almost completed by the time he came aboard, it can't be really called a Hornig issue. But he soon made his personality felt in the magazine. He was well read; he had good taste and also a sense of fun. Fans felt he was really one of them, and they were right.

By April 1934, Hornig was doing a good job under conditions far more difficult than anyone outside realized at the time.

What were the science-fiction magazines like in April 1934? We must go back briefly to the previous year, which was a distressing one for all science-fiction followers. In January 1933, AMAZING STORIES was still a large-size magazine, $8\frac{1}{2}$ by $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches, under the editorship of Dr. T. O'Connor Sloane, who was approaching 80. The publishers had just started an important experiment: illustrative covers had been eliminated, and symbolic designs had replaced them. The old comet-tail logo had given way to a more sedate one. For years, many readers had complained that the gaudy covers by Paul, Wesso, and Morey misrepresented the magazine, making it look cheap and sensational. Now, it had a novel and almost "respectable" appearance, and the words "Scientific Fiction" also appeared on the cover.

Did that help circulation? Apparently not, or at least not much. After seven issues, Morey's illustrative covers re-appeared on what would prove to be the final large-size issue. The August and September 1933 issues were combined and it was announced therein that the next issue would be dated October and would be pulp-size: 9 and $\frac{3}{4}$ by 6 and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

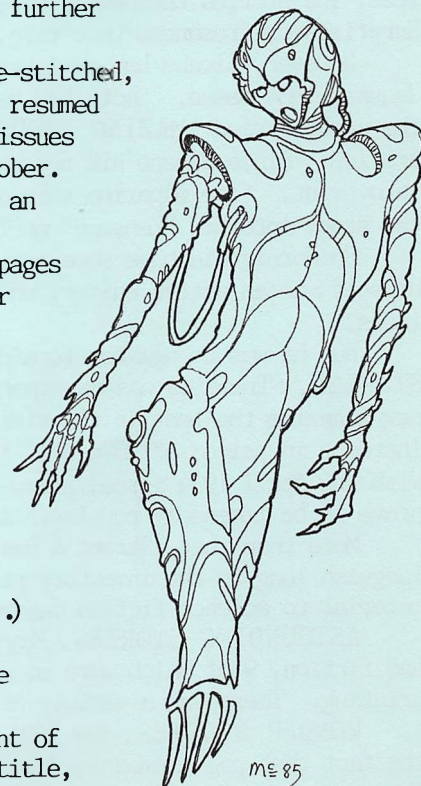
The big AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY still existed, but it had gone semi-annual, and the Spring-Summer 1933 issue was the last to contain new fiction. Two further all-reprint issues would appear, and then the magazine would disappear.

WONDER STORIES was large-size, but had reduced to 64 pages, saddle-stitched, selling for 15 cents. With the April 1933 issue, the former thickness was resumed (100 pages) and the price raised back to 25 cents. Later in the year, two issues were combined: June was followed by July-August, followed by September-October. Then, without advance notice, the November issue came out, pulp-size, with an announcement that there would be no further changes in format.

WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY was gone. It had been reduced to 100 pages (from 144 at 50 cents) at 25 cents with the Fall 1932 issue, and the Winter 1933 issue (on sale in December 1932) had been the last.

ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE, published by Clayton, saw its final issue (dated March 1933) in January. Actually, the January 1933 issue (on sale in November 1932) was supposed to have been the final one, thought there was no hint of that to the readers. We saw an announcement that the next issue would start a new serial by Dr. Edward Elmer Smith: TRIPLANETARY. That was an independent novel which the author had described in an interview as a "wild and wooly" story he was just having fun with..(He meant that he was taking greater liberties with science than he had in his "Skylark" stories and in SPACEHOUNDS OF IPC.) Editor Harry Bates had been let go, but was called back when Clayton found that there was enough material on hand to put one more issue together. The cover had already been engraved.

What we saw in January 1933 was Wesso's cover for the first installment of TRIPLANETARY, but with a large space cut out at the left bottom, and a title, Salvage in Space, by Jack Williamson, printed in blue upon the white area.





Bates wrote a paragraph into the Williamson story to account for the cover scene. Inside, there was no serial, nor any announcement of stories coming in the next issue. It was clearly the end.

None of the science-fiction magazines supposed to be monthlies published 12 issues in 1933, and during the summer—as you deduct from the notes above, for three months only one new issue appeared. Then in September, we saw a revived *ASTOUNDING STORIES*, published by Street & Smith and announced as on sale the third Wednesday of each month. That first issue was hardly inspiring; about half the stories were weird tales, and except for one or two drawings by an artist then unknown to science-fictionists, the interior artwork (as well as the cover) had no feeling of science fiction either. (That "then-unknown" artist was Paul Orban, who would become well-known.) There was a slight improvement in the second and third issues; and with the fourth (dated January 1934) we saw an issue with all science-fiction content and a definite improvement in the artwork. (Mark

Marchioni, who had done much work for Gernsback, joined the staff.) Still, it didn't quite compare to the two older magazines, and the newly-installed letters department had the same policy as the one in the Bates-Clayton issues: no editorial comments on the readers letters. But each succeeding issue of the new *ASTOUNDING STORIES* was in some way an improvement over the previous one.

Now let's return to the situation that young Charles Hornig was up against when the Science Fiction League started with the May 1934 *WONDER STORIES*:

AMAZING STORIES was 144 pages, 22 of which were given to ads and departments. That left 122 pages of fiction and artwork, including the cover. Leo Morey was now the sole cover artist and inside illustrator. Dr. Sloane did not order stories or otherwise seek out authors; he read what came in, picked out what he considered good enough to print, and put it in his pile. Any particular story might linger there for two years, or more, before it was published; and then the author had to wait and wait for payment at $\frac{1}{2}$ cent a word or less. The stories themselves were usually good, usually well-written, but somewhat old-fashioned in feeling. Surprises or freshness were rare.

However, Sloane had delighted his readers by running *TRIPLANETARY* as a 4-part serial, starting in the January 1934 issue. Smith had sent it to Gernsback, after Harry Bates returned it; Gernsback rejected it, so the author tried *AMAZING STORIES*, although he did not like the way that Sloane had edited his earlier stories. Since Sloane did not see the story until 1933, we can say that he took quick action in getting it into print. (The magazine version, to my mind, is better than the revision that Smith undertook later to fit the story into his "Lensman" series.)

So Hornig did have some competition from *AMAZING STORIES*, although it wasn't very formidable. Hornig himself was an active editor, who worked with authors and did everything he could to get stories with new ideas.

But he was up against formidable competition from F. Orlin Tremaine, editor of the new *ASTOUNDING STORIES*. Tremaine was an experienced hand and a lover of science-fiction; he was determined to make his new magazine the best in the field. With the March 1934 issue, the magazine had added 16 pages without an increase in price; at 20 cents, it was the biggest of the three titles, at the lowest cost to the reader. With the April 1934 issue, a new serial, *THE LEGION OF SPACE*, by Jack Williamson, had started; it would prove to be immensely popular. And Elliot Dold had just joined the art staff.

More than that, Street & Smith paid writers 1 cent a word upon acceptance, and accepted stories did not languish long in the inventory pile. Tremaine sought out every author who had previously contributed good material to science-fiction magazines, and insisted that the stories be really new in one way or another.

ASTOUNDING STORIES, May 1934, has 17 pages of ads and departments: that left 143 pages for artwork and fiction, 9 of which were occupied with an installment of Charles Fort's *LO!*, which Tremaine was re-printing. There was a variety of illustrators, too.

WONDER STORIES, May 1934, was 132 pages for 25 cents. The actual numbers of pages was disguised by the fact that page-numbering throughout a 12-issue volume was continuous; you had to use a little arithmetic. When we speak of a 160-page, 144-page, or 132-page magazine, we do not mean that the last page ever has that

number; the front cover is page one, back cover page 160, 144, or 132.

The May 1934 issue has 109 pages of fiction; the rest is departments and ads; departments are "Science Questions and Answers", and "The Reader Speaks", printed in very small type. With the June issue, several pages would be allotted to the new "Science Fiction League" department. Thus, WONDER STORIES, at 25 cents, offered fewer pages of fiction than either of its rivals. That was partly compensated for by the somewhat thinner, more closely-leaded type that Gernsback used. (But in a few months, ASTOUNDING STORIES would go to a similar, thinner type, which would add another 10,000 words to their count.)

Where WONDER STORIES differed from its rivals was in the many serial novels translated from German or French. Those were nearly always much better written, though not always as exciting, as British and American science-fiction novels in the magazines. As for new stories by British and American writers: they were not "sat on", once accepted, for years—but six months headway is not abnormal. However, the wait for payment after publication (at $\frac{1}{2}$ cent a word or less) was getting longer and longer.

The object of the Science Fiction League, Gernsback stated, was "...to disseminate and spread the cult and art of science fiction in the most energetic manner." How? "By word of mouth in the school and classroom, by getting new readers to read science-fiction magazines, by inducing motion-picture corporations to run Science Fiction films, by getting newspapers to publish Science Fiction stories, by getting broadcast stations to broadcast Science Fiction, etc. ..."

Gernsback stresses again that he considers Science Fiction as chiefly educational literature. "The average man is not scientifically inclined and misses much in life because of his poor scientific education. When he is converted to Science Fiction, his scientific education then quickly becomes such that, sooner or later, he understands what is going on around him, which his fellow man is usually ignorant of."

There were five rules of the Science Fiction League.

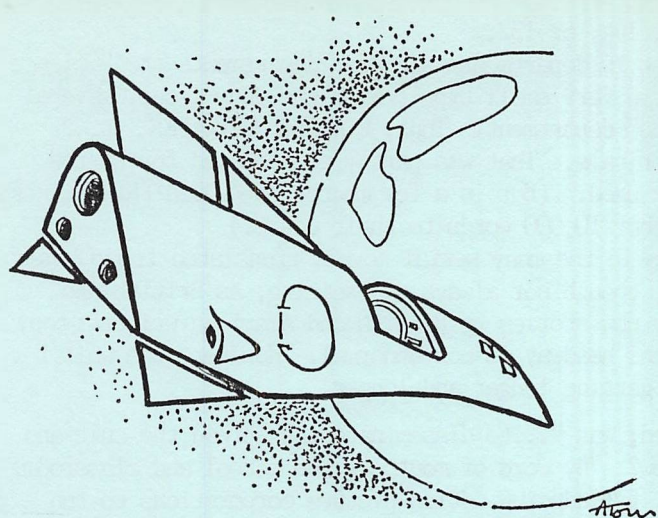
- "Rule 1. — That I will observe all the rules and regulations of the Science Fiction League laid down herewith.
- "Rule 2. — That I will at all times, use my best efforts for the dissemination of Science Fiction to the best of my ability, by mail, by personal solicitation, whenever the occasion rises.
- "Rule 3. — That I will promptly answer all correspondence addressed to me by League members.
- "Rule 4. — That I will be governed by the rules and regulations of the Science Fiction League, and will help in promoting the principles for which the League stands, so far as shall be in my power, as long as I remain a member in the League.
- "Rule 5. — That I agree to return my membership badge and certificate if, for any reason, my membership is discontinued."

Readers were assured that "...the League has no income whatever, except from the sale of a number of items which are purchasable only by supporting members of the League." The following "essentials" were available: Emblematic letterheads for members' correspondence; Insignia (also called lapel buttons) to make it possible for League members to recognize each other; emblematic paper seals with League facsimile, emblematic envelopes. "They are priced at cost, plus a small percentage to defray the normal operating cost of the League." The price for the letterheads was 50 cents per 100; for the envelopes 50 cents per 100; for seals, 15 cents per 25; for the League lapel button 35 cents—you could also get one in gold for \$2.50.

However no member was *required* to purchase the "essentials", and there may have been many, like me, who delayed buying them for some time after joining. (I never did buy any stationary.) The cost of joining was only 15 cents for the membership certificate; the applicant had to fill out a brief application form whereby, from his signature, he pledged himself to abide by all the rules and regulations of the League, and to classify himself as belonging to one of five groups: Professional (state which, such as doctor, lawyer, etc.), Business (state what business), Author, Student, or a fill-in blank for any other category. You also had to give your age, and there were a few lines for remarks if you wanted to make any. And if you lived near enough to Headquarters, you could pick up your certificate there—no 15 cents charge.

The application coupon was double-sided, so that the applicant could cut it out from the magazine without losing any other text. If you wanted to join, but didn't want to mutilate your copy of WONDER STORIES even so much, a letter with stamp enclosed for return postage would bring you a printed application form.

What privileges did League members have, not enjoyed by non-members? Gernsback stated that the League would be recognized by most publishers of books and magazines, and other organizations. "By using the official League letterhead ... you are automatically put in a position to obtain the best prices on books, subscriptions, etc. When writing to commercial firms in this class all you have to say is, 'As a member of the Science Fiction League, will you kindly allow me the customary discount to which I am entitled?' The request, in most cases, will get you a preferential discount, while private individuals cannot obtain them."



I myself never had occasion to make use of that ploy, but I don't doubt that other members did work it to advantage in some cases.

Further regulations regarding details of chapters would come later.

Did I join the Science Fiction League at once? No, I didn't. The "rules" seemed to put too much of a demand upon me, making me a virtual traveling salesman for science fiction as it were—and I detested any sort of soliciting or canvassing. On top of that, I was quite shy and felt very defensive about being a science-fictionist; I had experienced both ridicule and rejection in relation to it. No one I knew personally would look at a science-fiction magazine except to sneer or make scathing remarks. I had had a few correspondents, though.

At any rate, this was early April 1934, and in

mid-month I'd be going into the Civilian Conservation Corps for my first tour therein. What bothered me most about leaving home was that I'd have to leave my magazines behind me. My father agreed to purchase WEIRD TALES and WONDER STORIES for me each month that I was away (enrollments were for six months, and took place quarterly) and I'd possibly be able to find copies of AMAZING STORIES and ASTOUNDING STORIES wherever I was. At that time, CCC enrollee's were paid \$30 a month, but \$25 went to your "dependent" (a parent or relative) while you got \$5 cash a month. However, I always found the food adequate and often tasty; and certainly other provisions were adequate—although one *did* have to get used to the aroma of outhouses, particularly in hot weather.

So not only did I not join up in April 1934—I didn't get to read anything more about the new Science Fiction League until I got back from camp—that was in Maine—at the end of September.

Starting with the June 1934 WONDER STORIES, "The Science Fiction League" became a fanzine within the regular magazine. Certain features, such as how to join the League, and what was expected of all members, would be repeated each issue. But there were also paragraphs on particular League subjects, suggestions and questions from members, reports of what other science-fiction clubs were doing, and a growing list of Proposed Chapters.

The June number opened with the note: "As this issue goes to press, the May number, which contains application blanks, has not yet been published, and at the present time, we have only our honorary members." That suggests something about the lead time in the magazine's publishing schedule. (Earlier, it had been possible for a subscriber—particularly in New York City—to write a letter of comment immediately after receiving and eagerly reading a new issue, and see it published in the following one. But now subscribers might see a new issue on sale before receiving their copies.) We do see comments from readers and from the Honorary Members in relation to the preview of the League in the April issue. Needless to say, they are enthusiastic.

Dr. David H. Keller notes, in part: "We are living in a rapidly changing world. Years ago, nature study formed a large part of the interest of the young. It was possible to make collections of birds' nests, eggs, rocks, pressed flowers. People lived in the country. All of life was different.

"The present age is scientific. The collection of airplane models now replaces the hobby of egg collecting. A boy is now building his own radio at an age when he was building a stone boat fifty years ago. He is playing with electricity instead of baby calves.

"His literature has changed. Thirty years ago, the hero of juvenile fiction was satisfied to become a successful merchant; now he must reach the moon in a rocket ship; instead of collecting valentines, he wants complete files of science-fiction magazines and is made happy by gathering manuscripts and autographs of his favorite followers of Edgar Allen Poe.

"So in your idea of forming a Science Fiction League, you are properly giving all of us what we want, because of all of America interested in science are young in ideas and ambitions and dreams, irrespective of real age. I am honored to be asked to be a member, and want to help in every way."

Further on in the department is an announcement that Dr. Keller will give one of his manuscripts to each of the first ten members of the League. They will receive the manuscripts by writing him a letter telling why they enjoy his work, and listing their three favorite Keller stories. The editor replies that each of the first lucky ten will be furnished with the Good Doctor's address, so they can write to him, and that their names will be published in the July issue. (Keller was widely known as the "Good Doctor". Today Isaac

Asimov enjoys the sobriquet.)

Of those first ten, whose names we saw in the July issue, only two would be remembered thereafter very long: George Gordon Clark, member #1, whose activities are detailed in *THE IMMORTAL STORM*, and Kenneth Sterling, member #4, who had had a story in the March 1934 *WONDER STORIES*; he would appear a few times more in print, most notably in a collaboration with H.P. Lovecraft: *In the Walls of Eryx*. It appeared in *WEIRD TALES*, October 1939.

What many members wondered about was: How they were to know who the other members were? Would members' names and addresses be listed each month, or would members get copies of the membership list, with names and addresses?

Headquarters (hereinafter referred to as HQ) said "No" to both questions. Publishing a complete list would very likely result in some members receiving more mail than they could answer, not to mention mail they preferred not to answer. Another means would be provided: Members who wanted correspondence would write to the League stating that they would like to hear from other members interested in such and such, in such and such an age group, in such and such a location, etc. Those requests would appear in the League columns, and members requesting correspondence would then be required to answer such letters promptly.

HQ could not prohibit any member from writing to any other member, of course; but no member was required to answer any unsolicited mail.

Under the heading of "Doings in the League", we find that author Lloyd A. Eshbach is going to give an address to a group of men and boys on the prophetic nature of science fiction. He would like to have some application blanks in the chance that some members of the audience would like to sign up. Request granted.

More interesting is this paragraph: "For years, Raymond A. Palmer of Milwaukee has built up a powerful scientific organization known as the International Scientific Association, popularly known as the ISA. This institution, Mr. Palmer informs us, has chapters all over the world, totaling more than 400 members. As his first step, he intends to make the ISA a branch of the SFL, with each group of members a chapter of the SFL ..." That seemed like good news, but it didn't work out so happily.

The July issue also instituted the "Science Fiction Swap Column", whereby fans could advertise wants and offers relating to old science-fiction and fantasy magazines and books at a very low insertion price. However, that was not an official SFL activity, nor were ads confined to SFL members.

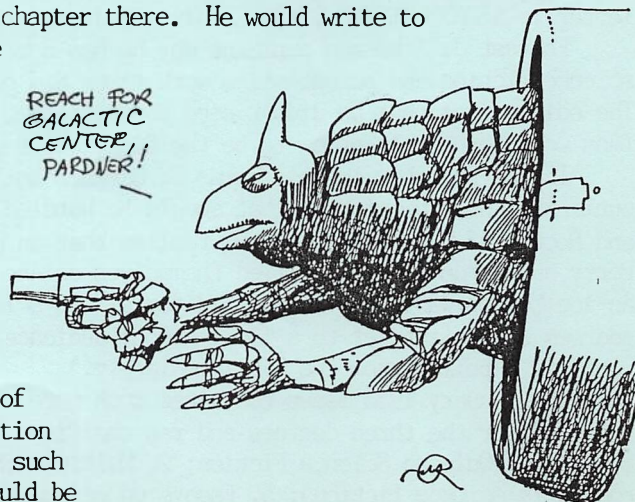
In the August issue, we read of another already-formed club planning to align itself with the SFL. William S. Sykora (member #208) writes a letter of glowing approval, concluding: "You will undoubtedly find many members of the International Cosmos Science Club, following the lead of our secretary, John B. Michel, and myself, in lining up with the new organization." No doubt, some of them did, but the ICSC later amalgamated with the ISA.

The comment on Sykora's letter says: "We want all other science-fiction clubs to become branches, chapters, of the League." However, no other club could join the SFL as a unit: each individual member of the club, or of the particular branch or chapter of the club, must join the SFL separately; then, if all members of a particular branch or chapter joined, the club could then be known as, for example, the "New York ISCS Science Fiction League". And, of course, new members of that branch would have to become SFL members, too.

That apparently put an end to the possibility of such joint chapters of the SFL. While some members of the other clubs did join the SFL, fans on the whole resented obligatory joining; and therein lay the seed of later rivalry—and some hostility—between independent science fiction clubs and the League.

The August issue spelled out how chapters were to be organized. A member living in an area where no chapter already existed could volunteer to form a chapter there. He would write to the League thus stating, and in the earliest issue possible thereafter, his name and address would appear in the "Proposed Chapters" section. Members in the area were invited to write to him, and when he had three or more interested members, he could call an organization meeting, then send a report of it to HQ, listing the names, addresses, and membership numbers of his colleagues, and request a charter. In the issue following that, his branch would be announced as the Such and Such Science Fiction League, and would be listed under chartered branches in each issue thereafter.

HQ lay but two requirements upon chapters: (1) a copy of the minutes of each meeting must be sent to The Science Fiction League promptly; (2) while chapter dues were permitted, any such dues *must* be on a voluntary basis; and no chapter member could be



expelled for not paying dues, agreed to or not.

In large cities more than one chapter was permissible, but if two members volunteered to form chapters in the same general area (such as Manhattan) the first volunteer would be given the opportunity to form the chapter. Volunteers would be the directors of the chapter, and might appoint officers; but the government of the chapter was thereafter at the will of a majority of the members.

The September issue ran a list of those original ten members who were eligible for original manuscripts from Dr. Keller, and stated which manuscripts had been awarded them—also noting that three of the ten had not yet written to Dr. Keller. There is also an apology and retraction of the statement in the July issue that SFL letterheads would have the member's name on them. It was found that that would increase the cost far beyond the value of the individual printing of the member's name. It showed again that the league was not a money-making institution in disguise, nor were members even agitated to buy the "essentials".

There is a list of requests for correspondents; two examples will suffice.

George Gordon Clark, 8709 15th Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y., wishes to correspond with other members, of both sexes, between the ages of eighteen and twenty. Location unlimited.

Paul Freehafer, Box 12, Payette, Idaho, Member Number 294, ... will be glad to strike up an acquaintance with members between the ages of sixteen and twenty, living in Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho.

Clark would have his brief day of glory; Freehafer would become a well-known, and still remembered, fan in later years.

In the October issue, Alvin Earl Perry, Member Number 355, wrote: "As you no doubt know, there are many science-fiction fans who make a study of this particular branch of literature, and who become so proficient that they know almost everything, and can do almost everything, connected with science-fiction. Why shouldn't their knowledge be of some worth to them; why shouldn't they be rewarded for what they have done in raising science-fiction to the high level it occupies today?

"My suggestion repays them for gathering their store of information. It is simply this: Give to all fans who are able to pass certain tests, etc., degrees. Let there be two such degrees: a Stf. B (Bachelor of Scientifiction) and a Stf. D. (Doctor of Scientifiction)." He then proposes the kind of tests, etc., that would have to be passed to qualify and the editorial reply was that it sounded like a good idea: What did other members think of it?

In the October issue, Holmes H. Welch, Member Number 416, wrote: "I hope that the League will not forget the fact that science-fiction, theoretically, should be based on present or near-future science, and that in writing science-fiction one is, or rather should be, trying to present a goal for the present-day scientist to work for, as, if you want to use a simile, putting an electric hare in front of a greyhound and causing it to run a short distance ahead of the dog all the time.

"I also hope that the League will do its part in purifying science-fiction by not only condemning weird stories as unfit to bear in the name of science fiction, but also by classifying authors not only by originality, etc., but also by style of writing. At the present time, many authors are degrading influences because of bad style. ..."

HQ comments that the League is out to boost science fiction, not to condemn weird tales, which have their place in literature and are appreciated on their own grounds by many science-fiction lovers.

Apparently, the league did not live up to Member Welch's standards, for about a year later he had a long letter in ASTOUNDING STORIES wherein he denounced science fiction as hopeless trash.

Forrest J. Ackerman explains why he has not volunteered to head a League chapter in San Francisco. His science-fiction and science-film work takes him out of the city, away from home too often and for too long. The editor says that he didn't need to apologize, but it was probably a good idea to explain; certainly some fans would expect Ackerman to be the Director of a local chapter.

In the December issue, Thomas S. Gardner builds upon Perry's suggestion for science-fiction degrees, outlining the type of test that should be hurdled for each of three, rather than two levels: Bachelor, Master, and Doctor of Scientifiction. HQ replies that an announcement will appear in the next issue, and that members Perry and Gardner had qualified themselves as Ace Members for the suggestions. (Another way one could become an Ace Member was by having an "editorial" on science fiction published in a local newspaper, or giving an address on the subject to a local school audience, etc. Any member misrepresenting himself as an "Ace Member" would be expelled from the SFL immediately.)

The January 1935 issue contained much more than just an announcement; it spelled out the qualifications required for the three degrees and ran the first Science Fiction Test. There were 7 parts to the test: 1, General Quiz on Science Fiction; 2, Multiple choice; 3, Completion; 4, True or False (2, 3, and 4 were all rooted in science fiction); 5, Essays on science fiction; 6, Personal opinions, and 7, General Science.

All tests had to be received before December 21, 1934 (except for foreign members, for whom the deadline was January 21, 1935). You could join the league, if you weren't already a member, and apply for the B. Stf. degree, with your test papers enclosed simultaneously. That is what I did. Looking over the questions today, I couldn't answer a number of them that I'm sure I *did* answer then, without looking them up—and that was strictly forbidden. Applicants were on their honor to reply strictly from memory. How I managed to answer any of the General Science questions is also beyond me today. I was never strong on science.

Soon thereafter, I received my League membership certificate, and found that I was Member Number 630.

The January issue also announced the formation of the first two chapters of the League: Number One, the Brooklyn Science Fiction League, George Gordon Clark, Director; Number Two, the Lewiston Science Fiction League, Stuart Ayres, Director. That's Lewiston, Idaho. Aside from the two directors in question, none of the names of those two chapters' charter members are memorable.

Theodore Lutwiniak, of Jersey City won his Ace membership by having an article on science fiction in THE UKRANIAN WEEKLY—the English supplement published by a larger Ukranian-language newspaper with a national circulation.

I don't remember now whether I received the notification from League headquarters that I had passed the examination with a score of 94% before or after I saw the results printed in the April issue. At any rate, the euphoria that might have been mine upon getting a B. Stf., even though I realized that it was not comparable to a college degree, was dissolved by the first paragraph in the League department for February 1935.

It was brief and blunt. "We have decided that those who have successfully passed the First Science Fiction Test, published in our last issue, will be designated as First Class Members instead of Bachelors of Scientifiction. In place of Masters of Scientifiction, we shall have Ace Members. Our former Ace Members will hereby become Active Members. There will be no Doctor of Scientifiction degree. Those who have answered our questionnaire unsuccessfully will be added to our Active Members for their efforts. This organization will award no degrees."

There was no explanation, either then or later. I suspect, however, that various academics associated with Hugo Gernsback objected strenuously to the very idea of a non-academic club, with no academic status whatsoever, awarding degrees. The only puzzling thing to me now is why and how Gernsback let the notion get as far as it did.

Those members who pailed to get passing marks on the first test could try again, of course. At no time, however, were the names of failed members mentioned. Perhaps some of those who passed the second test were trying again.

Needless to say, I felt downhearted. But that didn't stop me from becoming a little (though not a lot) more active as a fan. I'd already adopted the nickname "Doc" in the CCC's in Maine and made it stick. I only used it in science-fiction activities; letters published in 1935 were signed "Doc Lowndes", and that was how I was known when I first began to meet other science-fiction fans in 1936.

Four new chapters were announced in this issue: The Erie Chapter, #3, Jack Schaller, Director; The Los Angeles Chapter, #4, directed by E.C. Reynolds; The Monticello Chapter, #5, directed by William Rothelder; and The Mayfield Chapter, #6 (Mayfield, PA), directed by John Tomczyk. Of the charter members of those four new chapters, only one name remains memorable; David A. Kyle, secretary of the Monticello chapter.

There is an announcement that Walter Koch of Germany is a member of an English circle and is translating League information into German; he hopes to found the Duesseldorf Science Fiction League.

In the March issue we read of two more chartered chapters: Lebanon, PA, and Jersey City, New Jersey. I shall mention further chapters only when either the director, or at least one of the charter members, became well known to fans in general. The list of Proposed Chapters grows and grows, and among them was the Darien Chapter, of which I was the proponent.

The first controversy in the League grew out of a complaint by William S. Sykora. (Imagine that!) It seems that another member had written to him on SFL stationery offering various back-issue science-fiction magazines and books for sale. Outrageous! thundered Will; the SFL is a non-commercial organization and we are only supposed to receive letters from other members when we have solicited them. HQ felt otherwise. Examining the "ad", as it were, it did not seem that member Bernard Novitsky was asking untoward prices for the wares he was offering; nor again was any recipient of his notice obliged either to buy them or to answer the letter. Unless it were established that Novitsky was cheating people in some way, HQ saw no harm in the matter. What did other members think about it?

HQ reported in the March issue: "... Up to date, we have received many letters in reference to this, and not one of them was on Mr. Sykora's side." Like HQ, they could not see why a person should complain upon being solicited to buy articles that fall in with his hobby, with no obligation. One comment, from Honorary Member and Executive Director Jack Darrow was printed as a summary: "In answer to the argument on Mr. Novitsky's circulars: I would much sooner get such circulars than some of the stuff I do get in the mails."

The April issue gives details of how those who took the first science-fiction test came out. Forty-four tests were received, and only three flunked; the other forty-one applicants are listed chronologically (date received, dates not being listed, however). I see that mine was the 7th to arrive, while David A. Kyle leads off and one William Frankel had the last entry.

The highest score proved to be 97%, and it was a three-way tie: Forrest J. Ackerman, Lewis F. Torrance, and William Dellenbeck. The latter two were seen in the lettercolumns throughout the period.

Second highest score was 95%, and six applicants made it, two of them still remembered: Julius Schwartz and Milton A. Rothman. Schwartz was the first author's agent to specialize in science fiction and was editor of FANTASY MAGAZINE: Rothman became a well-known fan, and sold stories to Campbell and Frederik Pohl later on.

The "show" position was 94%, and I shared it with one other member otherwise forgotten. Below me, but still in the 90's, were Donald A. Wollheim (93%), his rating being shared by Thomas S. Gardner, and Arthur H. Gnaedinger—son of Mary Gnaedinger, who would be the editor of FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES and FANTASTIC NOVELS. David A. Kyle and Lionel Dilbeck had 92%; Paul Freehafer had 91%, and Vernon H. Jones shared the 90% with A.L. Selikowitz—who would later be a "hero" in the struggle of the ISA vs. the SFL.

The lowest passing score was 70%, but no one squeaked through that way, although one applicant was close to it, with 71%.

How was I able to answer most of the "general science" questions correctly? Well, I had taken a physics class in high school—but there's no doubt that I had picked up the bulk of my information from the science-fiction magazines. That covered not only the stories, but the editorials and the "Science Questions and Answers" in Gernsback's titles.

The only requirement for the "Opinions" section was that you write at least 100 words in reply to the questions. Anyone who could write 100 consecutive, coherent words was sure to pass. We had to name our favorite author, our favorite story, and our favorite magazine. There was a wide variety of nominations in the first two categories, but Dr. David H. Keller came out on top with 12 votes and John W. Campbell had 7. Stanton A. Coblentz came out third because he was the only one of the other nominees to receive more than one vote.

In the "favorite story" category, The Moon Pool, by A. Merritt was in first place (7 votes). Dr. E.E. Smith's "Skylark" stories (two had appeared at that time: The Skylark of Space and Skylark Three) tied with The Exile of the Skies, by Richard Vaughan. Vaughan's novel ran in the January to March 1934 WONDER STORIES, and had rivaled Smith's TRIPLANETARY in kudos from the readers. It's an interplanetary adventure tale with a truly cosmic sweep, and is much better written, and with more adult characterization, than found in Smith. ("Adult" here does not refer to sex; sex did not exist in the science-fiction magazines of the period.) Two votes each (one of them mine) went to The Human Termites, by Dr. David H. Keller, The Second Deluge, by Garrett P. Serviss, and The Final War, by Carl W. Spohr.

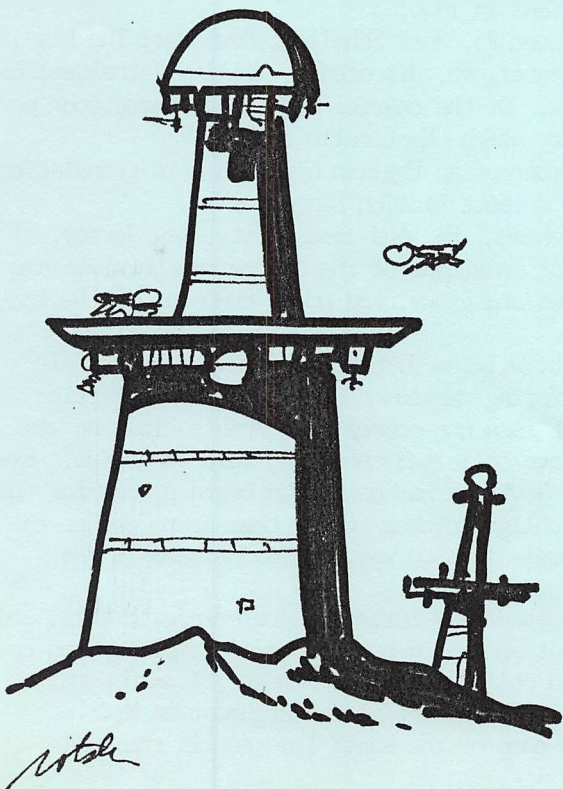
Keller's novel was a wild fantasy on termites, based on sound entomology. He suggests that termites are ruled by central intelligences, which have been studying Man even while Man has been studying them. They "evolve" warrior termites 20 feet long, and plan to wipe out humanity.

The Serviss novel was reprinted in AMAZING STORIES 1926/1927 and had recently been reprinted again in AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY. It tells of Earth's passage through a "watery nebula", which results in worldwide deluge, and of Cosmo Versal's scientific "ark" through which a portion of humanity are saved.

Spohr's novella (WONDER STORIES March/April 1932) was an excellently written tale of a future war that destroys civilization. There are no "good" or "bad" sides; we are not told which nations are fighting which other nations. No one wins; the war finally stops.

Applicants were asked to answer honestly about their favorite science-fiction magazine. One replied, "No favorite," while 24 picked WONDER STORIES. I'm not certain, but I think that that was my choice, too, at the end of 1934—for all my appreciation of ASTOUNDING STORIES. But if the latter had had a letters department wherein the editor commented on each letter, my vote might well have gone to Tremaine.

As to other items, HQ reports: "A huge majority, forty,



really believe that science-fiction has a very promising future, two doubt that it will, and one thinks that it is questionable. Many of those who voted 'yes' claimed that their answer would be 'no' if it were not for the Science Fiction League, which is awakening the country to the existence and value of science fiction."

Hmm, there's something amiss with the arithmetic here: three doubters out of 41 would make the number of the believers 38. Was the word "nearly" omitted from Hornig's original copy, or was he counting the votes of those who failed the test?

Instead of printing all the correct answers in the SFL department, HQ sent each entrant a sheet individually, giving correct answers to questions whereon the applicant erred.

The grand finale to Sykora's complaint comes in a letter from him in this issue, wherein he congratulates the SFL for honesty in airing the complaint, rather than covering it up, and fairness in the way it was handled. A most diplomatic reply which nonetheless suggests that Sykora hadn't changed his mind.

With the April 1935 issue, we come to the halfway point of the Gernsback Science Fiction League. It is now firmly established; there are a number of chartered chapters, and an increasing list of Proposed Chapters—some, but not all of which would become chartered ones.

The government of the League was something like a monarchical commonwealth or federation. Each chapter was required to have a republican type of government, once chartered. The member proposing the chapter was pro-tem director, and could and could appoint a secretary, treasurer, etc. But once the chapter was chartered, the director, and any other officers, had to stand for election by the members. The pro-tem director and members drew up a constitution, which had to be submitted to HQ for approval; thereafter, it could be amended by a majority of the charter members, but there were two items that HQ—which was not subject to any sort of elections—required of all chapters.

First, the chapter could set dues for its members, but such dues had to be voluntary: No member could be expelled for either non-payment of dues agreed upon, or declining to pay dues at all. Chapters were free, however, to expel individual members on other grounds, providing that HQ concurred in the justice or necessity of such expulsions.

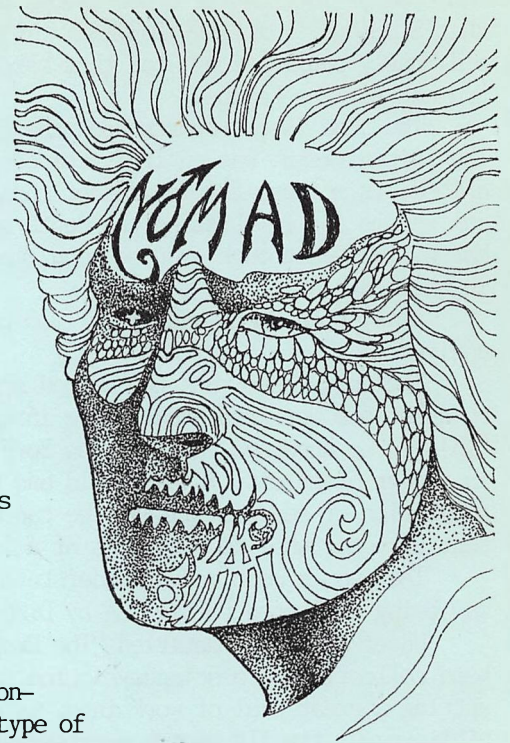
Second, minutes of all official meetings must be sent to Headquarters. In the monthly League section, some such minutes are often summarized, so that all members can read about what a particular chapter is doing—both as suggestions for other chapters or to make joining a local chapter more attractive to unorganized League members.

No member was *required* to join a chapter except those who had applied for the advanced status in the League that taking the science fiction test would confer. There was no chapter in my own area (the Stamford district, Darien being part of the Town of Stamford), so the only way I could qualify for taking the test was to volunteer to form a local chapter. That I did, proposing the Darien Science Fiction League. Little came of it. Eventually I heard from two other League members, and we got together for an organizing meeting. That was a fiasco: the two members proved to be 12-year-old boys, who had just started reading science fiction a few months before. The age-gap was too much for me; there was nothing I could talk to them about, aside from stories in the latest issues of WONDER, ASTOUNDING, and AMAZING STORIES.

Among the chapters now chartered were two that are still going today, though under different titles: The Los Angeles Science Fiction League became the Los Angeles Science and Fantasy Society. The Philadelphia Science Fiction League became the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society.

With the May 1935 WONDER STORIES, we start to see reports of meetings of the various chartered chapters. On the whole, they have little interest today, but there are occasional individual touches, such as the report of the Mayfield chapter's party at which "John Tomcsyk, the Director, constructed, as a novelty, a model rocket ship with a high-frequency machine inside, which gave off sparks as it was drawn around the hall..."

Andrew Lenard, of Hungary, tells of an article he wrote in German, which was published in a German magazine; he sends an English translation. Of more interest is a long letter from P. Schuyler Miller, who tells of the benefits of searching out old science-fiction and fantasy publications in little-known second-hand stores, and winds up with the suggestion that the League compile a bibliography of science fiction in magazines before 1926, as well as those in non-science fiction publications issued later. That would help



collectors both in searching out old magazines that had interesting science-fiction items, and saving them the time of looking for other issues of the same magazine which had nothing of interest for them. He notes that SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST did run some indexes, such as those of science-fiction and fantasy in the old Munsey publications, but that hardly scratched the surface. HQ agreed that this would be an excellent project for the League.

The June issue reports upon the first fan magazine inaugurated by a chapter; THE BROOKLYN REPORTER. The initial issue was entirely composed by Director George Gordon Clark, and most of the material, as described, is science-fiction rather than science-fact slanted. Among other things, are requests for a practical scheme for celebrating the tenth anniversary of science-fiction magazines, which would actually be in March, 1936—although even so soon, most fans assumed that the April 1926 AMAZING STORIES had come out in the month of April.

Alas, both March and April 1936 passed without any special notice in any of the magazines of a tenth anniversary.

The July issue runs the second science-fiction test, which was laid out the same way as the first, though no questions were repeated. More interesting was the first paragraph of the section titled "Chapter News": "This is to announce that our New York Chapter is about to undergo a re-organization. This chapter is located in the greatest city in the world and has less members than many in small towns—only five members in a population of seven millions! We can account for this only by a uncooperative spirit on the part of the present Director who, as President of a 'competing' club, is fighting on the other side of the fence. ..."

That was a most modest understatement, as you'll see in THE IMMORTAL STORM. The New York Chapter was being delivered to the ISA by Director William S. Sykora.

Under a section entitled "The Proposed Bibliography", we read: "J.O. Bailey of Chapel Hill, N.C., has been collecting rare science-fiction for many years and asks us to wait until his bibliography, which he is putting a great deal of work into, is completed, before we go ahead and publish one of our own. ..." Bailey's bibliography finally became a different book, PILGRIMS THROUGH SPACE AND TIME, published in 1947.

The August issue tells us that there are now twenty organized chapters in the League, including Leeds, England; and now a chapter in Belfast, Ireland, is announced. Membership in the League is approaching the 1,000 mark.

Each month, now, a complete list of chapters, and members' names (and numbers) would appear—though no addresses were given. We find that one Fred G. Pohl, Jr., is a member of the Brooklyn chapter; the author, Dr. Miles J. Breuer is a member of the Chicago chapter—which has the highest membership list of all; and Bob Tucker is Director of the Bloomington chapter. Tucker had just recently started his burlesque organization, The SPWSSTFM (The Society for the Prevention of Wire Staples in Science Fiction Magazines) and I had joined it. On the other side of the question, Donald A. Wollheim formed an anti-SPWSSTFM organization. Both sides wrote letters about the organizations to the magazine editors, and some were published. F. Orlin Tremaine ran some such letters in ASTOUNDING STORIES, but Hornig joined in the spirit of the two factions in the letter columns of WONDER STORIES. This was all fun and there were no victims; but the real feuds, in deadly earnest, were already in motion behind the scenes.

The Los Angeles chapter was nowhere so near as lively as it would become later on. Top spirit was shown in the Chicago chapter, whose director, author Edward E. Chappelow, says that he has only one complaint as a member of the Chicago chapter. "When we hold a meeting, no one wants to go home before midnight—and I least of all."

The Brooklyn chapter was now the most lively one in New York. Members of other chapters—Donald A. Wollheim, for example, were contributing material to THE BROOKLYN REPORTER, the third issue of which was judged by HQ to be a distinct improvement over the first two. It would become widely known throughout the League. I myself appeared in the BR, but do not remember if I had anything published there before 1936.

In the September issue, HQ announces that the 1,000th member of the League would receive a full line of League essentials and a year's subscription to WONDER STORIES as gifts. Thereafter, every new member whose application put him (or her—there were a few female members) on the 100 mark, would get the same benefits free.

Right below that is a brief paragraph wherein the tumult behind the scenes in the New York area comes in to the open. Under the heading "Three Members Expelled" we read:

"It grieves us to announce that we have found the first disloyalty in our organization. We have discovered that three of our members, who run what they consider a competing club to the SFL, have done all within their power, through personal letters and published notices, to disrepute the League, WONDER STORIES, and the Gernsback outfit by spreading gross untruths and libelous slander to other science-fiction fans and authors. They joined the League only to be able to attack it better. We are extremely sorry that we cannot know every fan's intentions when applications are received, but we have proved that only three-tenths of one percent wrong in our enrollment, so we hope that other members will forgive us. These three members we expelled on June 12th. Their names are Donald A. Wollheim, John B. Michel, and William S. Sykora—three active

fans who just got onto the wrong road."

Hmm, perhaps the worthy Assistant Secretary had forgotten (or didn't know) that there's no such thing as "libelous slander". Libel and slander are both forms of defamation, which may be actionable—grounds for a lawsuit—but "libel" is written defamation, while slander is word-of-mouth defamation. But there's no doubt that the three were engaging in both kinds; and, in later years, Wollheim acknowledged that his expulsion was entirely justified—he had been doing exactly what he was charged with doing.

New chapters had been formed in Newark, N.J., under the direction of Robert Bahr, with Sam Moskowitz as one of the three charter members—that would be the first mention of him in print—and Nunteaton, England, under the direction of Maurice K. Hanson, who would become a prominent British fan, and (surprise) in Stamford, Conn., with me as director. That was June 24, 1935. At the first meeting, we had decided to form the chapter, then try to find other (and, I devoutly hoped older) members to give us sufficient numbers to draw up a constitution. That would have to be approved by HQ, of course, but it never happened. Under chapter news, we read that the next foreign chapter would very likely be in Sydney, Australia. A new one in Bronx, was also in the offing, with Herbert E. Goudket as director. Goudket would be one of the first fans I met, later on, when I attended my first meeting of a fan club.

The necessary attention given to a bit of uproar in New York gives a false impression of the League as a whole. There were as yet no feuds nor inter-chapter (and inter-club) intrigues outside of New York City.

The October issue gives the results of the Second Science Fiction Test; twenty-eight out of twenty-nine entrants passed, and one of them, William H. Stanberry had the highest score yet: 98%. Raymond Peel Mariella, then very prominent in "The Reader Speaks", received 97%; two members had 95%; and Herbert E. Goudket, William S. Christoff, and Olon F. Wiggins (who would become a prominent fan later on) tied my own earlier score of 94%. Jim Blish passed, but only with 72%; I'm sure he did perfectly on the science questions, but knew very little about science-fiction history.

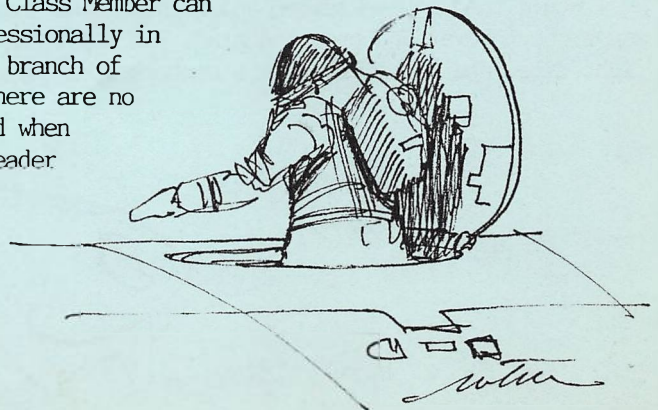
Dr. David H. Keller, Dr. Edward E. Smith, and John W. Campbell, Jr., came out again as favorite authors. There was a much wider range of favorite stories. The Exile of the Skies, by Richard Vaughan received four votes, but no other story had more than two—The Man Who Awoke series, by Laurence Manning, and Dr. Smith's The Skylark of Space—not the series as a whole, as before.

The most surprising essay upon a favorite character comes from Jim Blish (in consideration of his future career): "My favorite character was, and still is, though he no longer appears in science-fiction, Anthony Gilmore's steely-eyed, two fisted adventurer, Hawk Carse. I suppose his cowboyish cast affects my childish mind, although I prize myself on having higher intelligence, but his lightning draw, his flashing attack, his ever-ready ray-guns, all contributed to the 'terrific kick' as my favorite author so aptly puts it, which the colossal, soul stirring, flaming tales of Elliot Leithgow, Ku Sui, and my hero which flowed remarkably from Mr. Gilmore's pen, gave me. His plots, while a little 'wild-westernish' were scientific and had such a great effect upon me that I was drawing diving spaceships with blue and orange pencils in school for days after reading one of his stories. Hawk Carse!"

Jim was a little over 14 then, had been introduced to science-fiction with the April 1931 issue of ASTOUNDING STORIES, and did not read any of the other magazines until early 1933, when the Clayton magazines folded up. I may have sneered a little at his choice—after all, I was 18 going on 19 at that time—but I find my own (mature?) opinions published then as hard to bear some years later as Jim undoubtedly found that one.

In the December issue (WONDER STORIES had gone to bi-monthly publication) we find that the Australian chapter is in existence, and that there are now over a thousand members in the League. One member asks if someone who has passed the science fiction test can take another one. HQ replies: "A First Class Member is not allowed to re-take the Science Fiction Test to try for a higher mark. Only persons who fail are allowed a second trial. A First Class Member can become an Ace Member by having five stories published professionally in newsstand magazines and writing a 5,000 word thesis on any branch of science-fiction, or science-fiction in general. So far, there are no Ace Members in the League." HQ notes that it's appreciated when members write separate letters to the League and to "The Reader Speaks", although it's perfectly OK to put two separate letters in the same envelope.

The February 1936 issue (on sale December 1st, 1935) ran the third Science Fiction Test, but we would never see the results. The following issue, April 1936, would be the last published by Hugo Gernsback. In that issue, he announced that WONDER STORIES would no longer be a newsstand magazine, but would continue as a mail-order



publication. Readers would clip the coupon in that issue, so arranged that it could be made into a letter, upon which postage had been paid. That would, in effect, amount to a subscription; each issue received would contain a bill for 15 cents, which the subscriber would then remit in a postage-paid envelope.

Insufficient returns from this plan resulted in Gernsback's selling the magazine to Ned Pines, owner of a large pulp chain of magazines.

But that was not known at the time that the April 1936 section of the Science Fiction League was closed and printed. We learn that there are now almost twelve-hundred members and thirty-six chapters (both here and abroad), and numerous other chapters in the proposed category. One of the new chapters announced is in Glasgow, Scotland.

The New York chapter has been reorganized; the Brooklyn chapter has resumed publication of THE BROOKLYN REPORTER; and the East New York chapter is about to issue an organ titled ACTURUS. The Chicago chapter has also brought out an official organ, THE 14 LEAFLET. Under "general activities", we find that Assistant Secretary, Charles D. Hornig, has been visiting chapters all over the country—and getting a better reception than he did in the former New York chapter.

There was no June 1936 issue of WONDER STORIES, but the first issue of THRILLING WONDER STORIES appeared from Beacon Publications early in June. It was dated August, had 132 pages, and would be continued as a bi-monthly. The volume numbering was continued from the final issue of WONDER STORIES, but the August issue started a new volume and there would be three issues to a volume henceforth. All stories were complete; that was the policy of all the "Thrilling" titles, under the editorial directorship of Leo Margulies. Oldtime fan, and newtime author, Mortimer Weisinger was the managing editor, though his name did not appear on the contents page.

The Science Fiction League continued as a separate department, "... conducted for the members of the international Science Fiction League in the interest of science fiction and its promotion. We urge members to contribute any items of interest that they believe will be of value to the organization."

There were some changes in the list of Executive Directors; it now read: Forrest J. Ackerman, Eando Binder, Jack Darrow, Edmond Hamilton, Arthur J. Burks, Ray Cummings, and Ralph Milne Farley. There was a list of new chapters, of foreign chapters, and of standing chapters. There were also requests from members for correspondents, and chapter news. Most interesting of all was the list of new members, with their complete addresses; that would continue, issue by issue.

To join the League now, one merely had to fill out a coupon, and include it with the name strip of the issue from which the coupon was clipped. The applicant had to enclose a SASE; there was no other charge. The applying member pledged himself or herself to "... abide by all rules and regulations." But nothing was said as to what those rules and regulations might be.

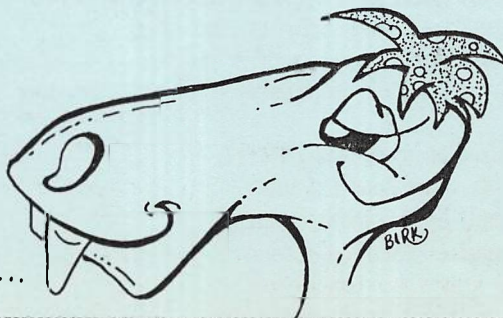
There would be no further science fiction tests, or degrees of merit or whatever among the members. In time, Donald A. Wollheim, John B. Michel, and William S. Sykora clipped the coupon and were accepted as new members. Membership numbers had now been dropped.

Some chapters continued for a time; others changed their names. But it was from the early chapters of the Gernsback Science Fiction League that organized fandom arose. The independent societies, sometimes in cooperation with League chapters, continued to publish official organs for awhile; in a few years, they would cooperate in setting up science fiction conventions. And soon the independent fan magazines began to appear.

There would be attempts to found a national fan organization, incorporating all of the science-fiction and fantasy clubs, but nothing came of them. Fans were then, as they are now, highly individualistic. Many joined the original League because it was new and exciting; but once fans got the idea of independent clubs which could survive without a central organization, the need for the Science Fiction League passed. Eventually it disappeared entirely.

Would fandom have arisen and become as we know it now without Hugo Gernsback's pioneering efforts? You can argue forever and prove nothing. The important fact is that the Science Fiction League *did* arise at the right time, and Hugo Gernsback's contribution to science-fiction fandom remains formidable.

---ROBERT A. W. LOWNDES; 9/30/85



how true....

BILL BOWERS
1874 Sunset Ave.,
Apt. 56
Cincinnati OH 45238
(513) 251-6870

"I was going to do something different...

...and start off with the title.

*** ...in nine "speeches" [and one 'Not A Speech'], I seem to have used up most of the opening gimmicks/gambits. At least the obvious ones.

Still, I have this notion, you see. Given that I am attending more conventions ... than publishing issues of fanzines ... I can foresee the day when the two numbers briefly match.

Let's pick a number.

...say at 150. Each.

Which leads to this scenerio of ... while I am handing out my 150th fanzine, at my 150th convention, it will include a transcript of the 'Speech' that I will deliver at that convention.

My 150th.

By that time, I may actually get around to starting one with the title, but in the meantime, I have a lot of catching up to do. And we might as well start with this, Number Eleven ... otherwise known as: ..."

...err... Actually ... this ... here ... today ... is slightly more than my Eleventh Public Humiliation; even if I'm unsure of the actual number, it is still far short of three digits.

That 'opening' was excerpted from something I wrote in early 1980: It was published in a minor fanzine -- GRAYMALKIN, I believe the title was -- just before my 86th convention... and shortly after having published my 106th fanzine....

For some reason, after returning from the LA Worldcon in 1984, I thought of this exercise in numerology ... and carefully crafted a plan, a publication/attendance schedule designed to culminate at something called Confederation -- over Labor Day weekend. 1986.

Dateline: October 4, 1986.

A Progress Report:

Ten Months ago I published my 145th fanzine. The Atlanta Worldcon was my 149th convention. oops!

This left me with two choices of how I could spend the month of September, 1986:

I could publish 5 fanzines.

...or I could simply declare it all Close

Enough For Fanac ... and say ...

WELCOME TO MY 150th SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION!

...and that's really not too many...considering I'm only 25.

...Fannish Digital Time.

Now, then, we all know why George Martin is a Guest here...

...well, perhaps that is a presumption.

Just in case there are still some of you who are still uncertain of WHO ... or WHAT ... George Martin is -- we will pause momentarily while you turn to the appropriate page page in your Program Book -- Page 10 -- and read the brilliant and witty in-depth profile of George therein. Offhand, I don't recall who wrote it ... but whoever it was, the profiler is

certainly a master of tacit, discretion ... and stonewalling....

Ahhh... Are we all back now?

As I was saying ... we all know why George Martin is a Guest here...

...but one or two of you might just be wondering who I am -- and just what the hell I'm doing here...

...rather presumptuous of those of you so wondering, I must say...

Still, although I certainly know who I am ... I too on occasion wonder just what the hell I'm doing here...

So let's muddle through this together....

It's possible that I'm here because I'm someone that Linda Michaels looks up to...

...but if that were the only criteria ... at least 90% of you would be up here with me!

So I suspect that it has something to do with the fact that I QUOTE do UNQUOTE fanzines ... and have done so for some time, and with some frequency.

Why... I just published an issue. Only ten months ago!

...and I'm going to do another one.

Real Soon Now.

Now you all know what a fanzine is .. right?

For the few of you who don't ... we'll pause briefly ... while you dig out your program books again...

...no, I guess that won't work--this time.

I'd try to describe what a fanzine is ... but by the time I finished ... we could all have gone home ... and published one.

In the beginning, what defines a fanzine has nothing at all to do with ---

1 Method of reproduction.

1 Frequency of publication.

1 Size: Either dimensionally or number of pages.

...or 1 The exact method of data entry.

I have seen fanzines done with hectograph -- and ones super-slick offset with f-color covers -- but most of those generated over the past 56 years have been mimeographed [and that is still the method I'm most comfortable with: it feels right] even though there is an increasing number of fanzines using office copiers...

But there have always been variations: in the 40s Bob Tucker did a vinyl...i.e., record/fanzine.

More recently, Larry No Relation Tucker has been issuing a series of audio cassette "electric talking" fanzines ... and he has gone on to a video-taped fanzine -- the third issue of which came out this spring.

Why, there have even been two (that I know of) "live" fanzines, complete with cover, articles and illustrations -- presented at conventions.

My ultimate ambition is to "publish" the very first holographic fanzine.

...but, in the meantime, next spring I'll be "publishing" a 'Live' fanzine... which will be

recorded, videotaped, and transcribed for post-con cassette, video, and printed editions.

Four versions--same issue number; the same basic material--but four variations...

But that still doesn't define "what" a fanzine is...

Contents...that which is being reproduced and distributed--no matter what the format--do, I suppose, more precisely establish the parameters that separate a fanzine from other genre's of publishing.

In the beginning [They tell me: Even I'm not that old!] fanzines were essentially 'Little Magazines', complete with formal covers...and the contents were primarily concerned with science fiction--either critically with reviews and articles--or by publishing (usually bad) amateur science fiction stories.

There are a few of this type still around, but they are in the minority.

Now...a fanzine may not even mention science fiction--for years at a time.

The contents may be entirely editor-written, or contain the musings of SFPros...and, once in a while a transcript of one of George R.R. Martin's convention Guest of Honor speeches...

Me?

Well..., I've published the big, fancy, pretentious/pro-laden fanzines...and that made me fannish-famous--and lost me 8 Hugos.

And I may do it again some day...

But now... Well, as I said a month ago--on a panel in Atlanta--the type of fanzine that I publish is one that...had the first fanzine I ever received been one of mine...I doubt if I would have gone back for more.

It is rather personal--with some outside contributors--but done primarily for my own amusement.

"Restricted Accessibility" is a term that was levelled at my fanwriting--and therefore at my fanzines--and I suppose it's true of my life as well.

This is not by design...

...but it is by intent.

I started doing fanzines because I was a very shy kid and it was the best way I knew of communicating. I kept doing it, bigger and fancier, until people began noticing me--which was really neat. This is "Egoboo"--the currency of fandom.

But eventually the fanzines got so big and fancy that they were "work"--and eventually more people were responding to me and to what I was doing--then I could respond to in kind...

So I phased out, for awhile.

...after a time, I started getting 'lonely'--and the mailbox was not quite as full as previously--so I started doing fanzines again... Small and simple, at first--but

And so it went.

And so it goes---

In a letter, Linda suggested that I might quote like to speak on the history, make-up, function or somesuch of fanzines unquote.

I suspect she suggested this to avoid having me speak on fannish politics--or my sex life--but I don't think she understood the complexity of what she asked--or my skill in evading the issue.

Let's just say that fanzines can be a lot of fun.

And everyone should--just as I say about marriage...everyone should try one, once in their life--

Just don't make a religion out of it.

A long time ago, a very wise person--albeit a Canadian--said that fanzines are the art of the possible vs. the impossible dream.

As far as I know, it's been almost as long since Peter Gill has done a fanzine. --but perhaps he is still dreaming the dream?

What is a fanzine?

Very simple, really.

A fanzine is what I mean when I say the word--because, as with art--I may not know what I like--but I know what is good.

...and that's why I'm here.

...even though that's not the WHY of what I am...

You see...Joe and Linda originally asked me to be the TOASTMASTER of this convention. I was flattered...but though I am not one to nit-pick (I do that for a living)--I did feel compelled to point out that since, at least at the Contradiction's I'd attended--they didn't have their Guests of Honor make speeches...

...it would tend to render the title "Toastmaster" rather non-functionary...

"Fine," said Joe. "You can be Fan Guest of Honor."

Somewhere along the line--I think it was in July when I received the "Official Contradiction Letter" from Linda stating, among other things that I would make quote A speech of NO MORE (PLEASE!) than 1/2-hour or so duration following the luncheon unquote--that I began to suspect that this year the Guest of Honor would be making a speech.

You know...had I remained "Toastmaster", I could have done two things:

1) Introduced George in considerably less time than this has taken...simply by pausing while you turn to Page 10 in your Program Book;

2) ...and besides--I could have used the time spent writing this...done a fanzine instead--and shown you what one was.

But that would've been too simple. For all of us!

You know...this time...I was going to do something different-- ...and finish up with the 'title'.

Ah, well ... maybe next time...

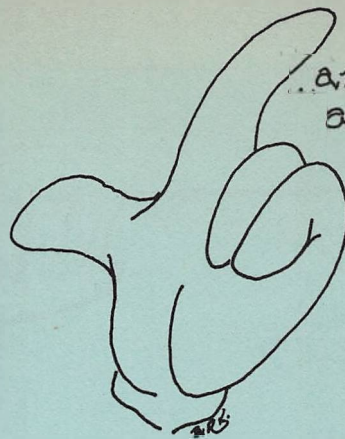
Let's pick a number. Say ... 200?

Thanks for listening...

---BILL BOWERS [Contradiction 6; 10/4/86]

Bob Tucker

CONVENTION SPEECH, SORT OF...



and here we have
a commercial
message from
our sponsor!

MY FRIENDS--and you still are my friends at this point--I am here today to reveal to you a new wonderdrug! Yes, friends, a modern medical miracle that is guaranteed--I say GUARANTEED--to cure every ailment known to fan, bird, beast and book reviewer. This wonder drug is the miracle of the ages, this is the great discovery of 1986. Never forget that.

This miracle drug is the greatest advance in medical science since the discovery of fire-water. I must tell you that samples were submitted to the American Medical Association --and the good doctors were speechless. What is this marvelous boon to fandom, you may ask? I'm glad you asked that question.

Friends--and you are still my friends at this point--today I bring you, for the first time in 76 years, Dr. Halley's Comet Pills! They are *not* sold in drugstores, *not* advertised on national TV, and they will *not* again be available for another 76 years! In a moment I will tell you where to buy them--but first, what can they do for you?

Friends, Dr. Halley's Comet Pills cure everything known to fan or foe. Do you have something? Anything? These pills will heal!

Let me ask: are you a fanzine editor or publisher? If so, pay heed. Comet Pills will absolutely protect you from stencil slippage, mimeo mange, and Gestetner gall. These tiny time pills will absolutely positively cure typos, gaseous editorials, lackluster con reports, punk poetry, flatulent fan fiction, and 30-page crudzines! They will also save you the embarrassment of cranking out drunken one-shots and taking money from subscribers.

Only--I repeat--only Comet Pills will ward off that dreadful fan affliction known as "Twonk's Disease"! Dr. Halley's Comet Pills will prevent gafia, fafia, trufan-itus, and those closely associated ailments, scurvy and distemper. Comet Pills have been known to wipe out Collector's Itch.

Let me ask you again: are you a convention fan? Ah, there is hope for you, friend. Do not despair. For a safe and sane convention weekend take two Comet Pills before you leave home. Comet Pills will protect you from the horrible after-effects of Nashville Swill! Are you a compulsive party hopper? Comet Pills will stop your hop! Are you in mortal fear of that wild woman from Chicago? Comet Pills are as effective as garlic and the cross!

Are you timid? Are you afraid to enter a room party and join in the conversation? Do not fear. Dr. Halley's Comet Pills will cure that compulsion to put your foot in your mouth. When you attend a convention like this one, do you suddenly feel faint, do you lose your steely resolve, do you want desperately to avoid certain rooms of low repute? The answer is Comet Pills! My friends, Comet Pills will stiffen your spine.

Comet Pills will give you the courage to avoid poker games, hearts tournaments, and the sordid blandishments of Beam's bourbon.

And now--did you come to this convention seeking a weekend romance? Were you filled with lust and desire? Did you anticipate a willing dancing partner? Comet Pills can cure *that* disorder! Comet Pills heals broken hearts, fractured egos, and mild cases of black eye. Remember Dr. Halley's wise advice: "Two pills tonight, tomorrow uptight."

Comet Pills--the bright hope of fankind. *Not* sold in stores, *not* advertised on national TV, but in a moment I will tell you where to buy them.

Are you, or have you ever been, a con chairman? Are you now, or have you ever served, on a con committee? Oh, there IS hope for you! Comet Pills offer salvation. They can cure insanity! They will banish that dreadful disease known as "Smoffing"!

Dr. Halley's Comet Pills actively discourage chicanery, double-dealing, dictator-itus, and that compelling urge to "Do it again next year". Con committees can benefit from Comet Pills. Take two before bedtime--and *never again* will you suffer that compulsion to inflate the attendance figures, hike the cost of the dealer's tables, or up the hanging fees in the art show. You will feel SO euphoric that you may even vote to cut the cost of membership fees!

Comet Pills. Never again--no, never--will you know that devilish urge to dip into the treasury to meet next month's car payment! Dr. Halley's Comet Pills will positively cure you of the desire to be a con chairman. They will prevent you from volunteering for *anything* involving that loathesome four-letter word: WORK.

Friends, take Comet Pills. Banish--I say BANISH--the wimp from the wimpy zone!

And now---I promised to tell you how to obtain the wonder drug of 1986. Remember, they are *not* sold in stores, *not* advertised on national TV, and they will *not* again be offered for 76 years! Good friends, Dr. Halley's Comet Pills may be purchased for only one dollar a bottle--under the table in the dealer's room next door. Find the dealer with the sly expression on his face. He takes Comet Pills, and he will see you coming.

Always remember: Dr. Halley's Comet Pills are the salvation of fankind, and a source of inspiration to the Big Name Pros. Two pills tonight, tomorrow a Hugo winner.

---BOB TUCKER

[Midwestcon 37; June, 1986]

