

Science Fiction News Letter

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DISAPPOINTMENT

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures selected the ten best pictures of the year on December 17. "Night Must Fall" was chosen as the best. "Lost Horizon" wasn't mentioned. (Appropriately, and incidentally, "Lost Horizon" had its Long Island premiere at the Fantasy Theatre.)

RADIO

"The Phantom", first of a series of off-trail dramas, was presented Thursday night, December 16, over the Mutual Broadcasting System, at 11.30 P.M. (EST) It dealt with vampirism. More will follow.

UMBRAGEOUSITY

"The Shadow", a recent B-minus picture by Columbia, is entirely unscientific and unrelated to "The Shadow Strikes", a Grand National production based upon the Maxwell Grant series for Street and Smith. Blue Coal's radio Shadow is definitely science fiction. The title role is played by Orson Welles, who, a while back, was "Dr. Faustus" in the Federal Theatre play of the same name.

ASSISTANCE

We today received a letter from Jack Speer, who, altho he hasn't as yet heard of the News Letter, contributes several news items which come in very handily. We hope he won't mind our quoting him: "The September Reader's Digest contains an article condensed from somewhere, 'A College Professor Quits the Communist Party' -- an adventure in futility. The American Magazine's Youth Forum contest for articles on the America of the future should offer a good chance of expression to many of our idealists, but is unfortunately limited to high school and prep students. I wonder if you've seen Cantor's 'Ali Baba Goes to Town'? There was a finely staged flying rug sequence in it that should rate mention in a sciencifilm department."

"Observations while Christmas shopping: A new Big Little Book, 'Flash Gordon in the Water World of Mongo.' Bet a purty that the next one will be 'In the Forests of Mongo.' Few new stff. toys, though most of the old ones still show up. Also Buck Rogers and Prehistoric Animals pencil boxes, SR crayons, etc. Ran across Tom Swift again, after all these years. I know few s-f authors will want to claim kinship with 'Mc Appleton', but it's true that most of his later books have been on the edge of s-f, and one of the recent ones 'His Planet Stone', definitely is. Meteor contains seeds which grow and have medicinal properties; and Swift predicts that they'll later unearth

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proof of intelligent life." (These Tom Swift books are published by Whitman and sell for 25¢. May be had in most Five and Tens. Ed.) "In case you're baffled by the change, Zenith (telepathic tests) is now on the Columbia Broadcasting System." . . . Thanks a lot Jack.

FAN MAGAZINES

The third (December) IMAGINATION has a well-drawn cover by Jim Mooney. Russ Hodzins and Henry Kuttner reveal that they write their articles in English, and that it is against their will(s) that F. J. translates them into Ackermanese. Kuttner interviews E. Hoffman Price and Clark Ashton Smith, revealing that the former's first name is Edgar and that Elmer eats gulash, also that Smith has a cat with humanized vocal equipment and other honey gossip. He (K) also takes over The Fantascience Filmart this month, to your reporter's delight. "The Hazy Hord" continues, and will stretch over four issues instead of three, as was planned. Mrs. Allis Willette Kerlay wrote her version of the radio play "Her Infinite Variety", the scene of which is laid a thousand years in the future, and Ackerman rewrite it with the usual results. There are longer readers' columns this time. We find them a sort of haven to which we can retire after wading thru the rest of the magazine, the reason being that the letters are presented entirely as received, errors and all. Esperanto, etc., are present as usual.

The second PSFS NEWS has 8 pages and contains a---a well. a poem by Thomas Whiteside, Philly's newest convert. The greater part of the issue is taken up by very informal minutes of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, by Ossie Train. Then there is a department called "Stuff", followed by part 2 of the biography of "that sterling 'dan' Robert A. Walde." There is also a picture of RAM for those who have not seen him.

CREDIT

We wish to express our thanks to John V. Baltadonis, who drew the letterhead that graces this issue. More are forthcoming, says he, if wanted.

NOTES TO YOU

The V and X is selling a Buck Rogers Spaceport, which is made of cardboard, for fifty cents. . . . Carl Lennale, Jr., of Universal Studios, who produced "Frankenstein", "The Invisible Man", etc., is supposedly working secretly on a new horror character. . . . The Fordham University "Varsity Show" of Friday, Dec. 17, transported us to Abnormal Tech, the school of 1960. . . . Only California will get the benefit of Walt Disney's technicolor-animated cartoon-fairy tale -- "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" by Christmas. The rest of the country will have to wait till mid-January. . . . Life for Dec. 13, gives production details and summarizes the story, illustrated with colored scenes from the picture. . . . This story has now replaced the other Disney feature, Billy Syphonics, from the Sunday comic pages.

With the compliments of the season,

Richard Wilson, Jr.