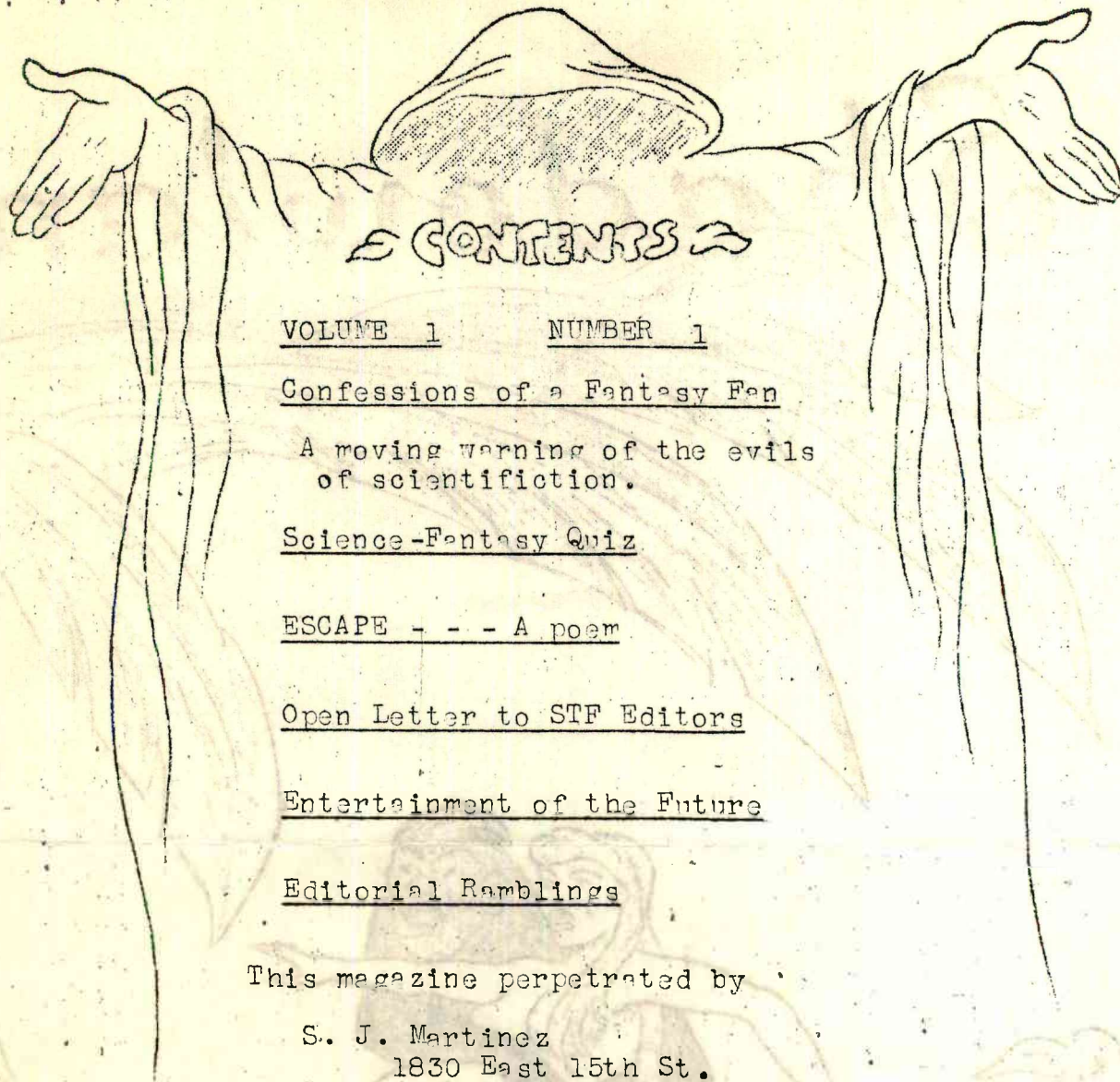


Shadowland



Volume 1 Number 1



CONTENTS

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1

Confessions of a Fantasy Fan

A moving warning of the evils
of scientifiction.

Science-Fantasy Quiz

ESCAPE - - - A poem

Open Letter to STF Editors

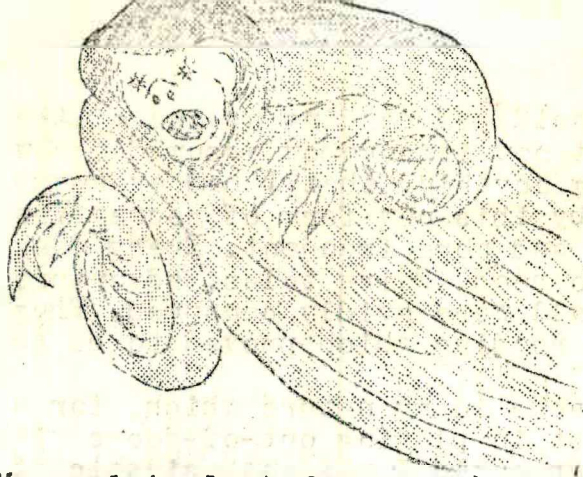
Entertainment of the Future

Editorial Ramblings

This magazine perpetrated by

S. J. Martinez
1830 East 15th St.
Tulsa, 4, Oklahoma.





Confessions of a Fantasy Fan

My soul is lost forever, beyond all hopes of redemption; a willful thing, moving as it pleases, utterly disregarding my demands and supplications; a vague fantasy which eludes my grasp and flaunts its independence in my face; an integral part of myself which I am unable to control, yet which stops me in all of my endeavors; a thing which should be my slave but instead has become my master. It is my fate! Say or do what I may, there is no way I may escape it.

But worst of all, this condition has all come about through my own negligence. I, myself, led my own faltering steps to my doom. It was I who relaxed my vigilance and in so doing allowed this curse to come upon me unawares. There is no-one whom I can revile, nor can I blame a soul for condemning me to such a fate, other than myself. And what is more (Oh bitter Justice!) I cannot so much as raise a finger in protest against this veritable Frankenstein monster which has turned upon me. It is useless to resist. Now that I am in its clutches, all that is left for me to do is to meekly obey its bidding and do my best to warn others so that they may escape a similar fate.

* * * * *

I was born in the thriving metropolis of Chicago on September 20, 1916 amid the roar and bustle of the passing cabs, the rattle of the swiftly approaching "El", the screeching of whistles, the blare of horns, the rumbling of huge trucks, the shrill cries of peddlers and newsboys, and all of the myriad sounds and confusion that are found in a big city. How strangely were those surroundings to resemble the resultant confusion of my own life during later years. But then I was blissfully oblivious to the menacing shadow that was hanging over my life, awaiting its opportunity to exert its evil influence upon my as yet uncrystallized character. Ahh, if only I could have been warned!

But I am digressing! I grew up and went through school like any other average boy; I made passing grades; I was interested in games and all sorts of athletics; in fact there was nothing that would mark me as being different from my care-free companions. But as the years rolled by, there came a subtle change.

My parents had the habit of bringing home 3 to 10 books from the library every Saturday, little realizing what an insidious influence this practice would have upon my susceptible nature. One week I accompanied them, went through the awe-inspiring experience of getting a library card all my own, and a short time later emerged triumphantly bearing "Alice In Wonderland" and "Peter Pan". Of such powerful ingredients was my early literary diet composed.

Before this time I had always considered reading as one of the necessary evils of an education, but now it somehow assumed a new charm that was wholly different from anything that I had ever experienced before. I was fascinated by this new form of recreation. My trips to the library became more and more frequent. Every week I would bring home piles of books to read. Fairy tales, adventure stories, mysteries, ghost stories, all were avidly consumed. Thus I slowly cultivated a deep love for reading which proved to be the first step in my downward path.

As time went by, there came a change in my nature which, for a while, escaped my notice. My interest in playing out-of-doors with other boys of my age waned; no longer could I wax enthusiastic at the sight of a mere ball-game; mere outside activity held no charm for me; only in my books could I find the enjoyment and stimulation which my body required. The thrill of the unknown and exotic led me onward to new adventure. Books became the controlling interest in my life. When I was in the midst of a story, Heaven and Hell themselves could not move me. I was an automaton, a senseless figure, oblivious to my surroundings, while my inner consciousness roamed at large over land and sea, into haunted castles and echoing halls, in deep crypts, and windy cemeteries, amidst the throbbing of voodoo drums, and in the silence of the pyramids. Unhindered my spirit drifted back through the streams of Time to the early Stone Age. Filled with rapture it watched the primitive cave-men battling against a harsh, cruel Nature; early tribes struggling for an existence in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles; great civilizations rising and falling; the march of Progress as evidenced by the changing life upon the face of the old globe we live on. But there I did not stop. Still thirsting for adventure, my fancy traveled far into the Future and gazed awfully upon the indescribable wonders of an advanced science; civilizations of cosmic immensity; inventions and discoveries, infinite in their scope; an advance of culture that appeared incredible in the light of Today's meager knowledge.

And so my soul wandered on in search of new, more exciting adventures. Unnoticed my self-control began weakening. I got books to read which my better judgement would probably have frowned upon, but that inner longing for life, sparkle and adventure did not give it the opportunity. Thus blindly, I plunged ahead, unmindful of the horrible obsession which this practice would soon lead to. Soon I became restless, discontented. Books were becoming too dull, too tedious. The stories were too long and cumbersome to suit me. The adventure was there, but so diluted down that much of its rich, heady flavor was lost. I began searching about for some answer to this puzzling dilemma.

Then it was I turned to magazines! Before this time I had always ignored the paper-backs. They impressed me as being a cheap, gaudy, shallow type of literature in which there was little to be found, either in content or in interest. I had more or less scorned them as a type of procrastination indulged in by morons...or worse! I considered them as being beneath my dignity and unsuited to my needs, as a true connoisseur of the literary field. They might be all right for an unintelligent, uneducated loafer, but as for me...well, hardly!

But then, one day, while waiting to have a particularly annoying wisdom tooth extracted by my dentist (Oh fatal hour!) I chanced to pick up a copy of Unknown Worlds for lack of some better method of employing my time. Carelessly I opened the magazine and glanced through it. An illustration caught my eye and I paused to read.

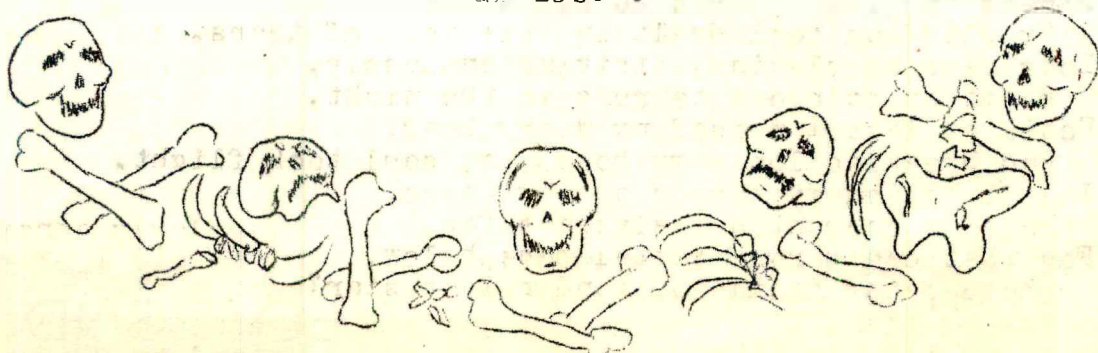
I was entranced! Here was what I had been searching for! Here was the answer to my restless longings! Here were thrills and chills, unhampered by long tedious passages laden with dull, uninteresting phrases and repetitious description. Eagerly I went from story to story. All thoughts of my poor, aching tooth had vanished. I was transported to a land of spirits and werewolves and genies living in bottles. I traveled to far-away planets and delved deep into the forbidden arts of Black Magic.

Since that fateful moment when I chanced, purely by accident, to stumble upon the vicarious pleasures of fantasy magazines (The ultimate step of my downfall) my life has been one of abject slavery to this all consuming passion for paper-bound adventure. I cannot work! I cannot play! I cannot think! I cannot sleep! At home, in the office, on the streets, at the dinner table, my thoughts are constantly upon the stories I have just read. I have been forced to give up my job as I was unable to concentrate upon what I was doing. My entire existence is now one of misery and suspense, waiting until the next issue of each scientifiction magazine comes out. I am known by sight at every news-stand and second-hand magazine shop in the city. I know the name, type of content, and quality of every fantasy magazine published. I can recognize my favorite authors by their style (and plots) and look forward eagerly to any new stories they may write. I have even turned to fanzines in an effort to assuage this dreadful thirst for weird fiction. I write reams of letters to other equally possessed souls; I attend conventions of fans; I even attempt to write the horrid stuff myself. To such extremes as these has this horrible obsession carried me, helpless. I find myself bound hand and foot, completely possessed by this evil habit.

In vain have I tried to break myself of this degrading practice. It has become an urge in my life that will not be denied. At times I have tried to abstain from this sinister power of evil for a week or two and immediately my existence is turned into a living Hell. I become jumpy; my nerves are on edge; I am in torment; my whole being seems to cry out in protest; I am tortured in body and soul; vague thoughts and fancies flit through my fevered brain, whispering, jeering, jibing, until I feel I shall go mad. The whole world is laughing and shouting at my plight. I am filled with raging fire. Blood-chilling specters rise up and haunt me in my bed at night. Life about me tears on at a break-neck pace leaving me giddy, helpless. My whole existence is one of misery until at last I yield to my nemesis.

Too late I realize the folly of my ways. Too late I pause in my headlong plunge for regrets. There is no retreat. I am doomed to live a life of restlessness and discontent, all because of my own foolish desire for adventure. My passion has proven to be my downfall. I cannot escape! No-one can help me!! It is useless to resist!!!

I am lost !



SCIENCE QUIZ

Here's a chance to test your general knowledge and have a little fun at the same time. Answers will be found on page 9. No peeking!

- (1) What common chemical is known as dihydrate of oxygen?
- (2) What is a poltergeist?
- (3) What is the speed of light?
- (4) Who wrote the famous fantasy story "Dracula"?
- (5) Which is heavier, a pound of cork or a pound of balsa wood?
- (6) Who or what was "Apis"?
- (7) What is the most abundant metal found in the earth?
- (8) What is curare?
- (9) Which of the planets is nearest to the sun?
- (10) What is a tesseract?
- (11) Approximately how many average sized ants will it take to weigh one pound?
- (12) Who was Anubis?
- (13) If you were on the moon would you weigh more or less than you do now?
- (14) If a Fahrenheit thermometer reads 32° what does the Centigrade thermometer next to it read?
- (15) What is it that a man does standing up, a woman does sitting down, and a dog does on three legs?

ESCAPE

I once was earthbound, wretched mortal who,
Midst dark and shadows knew a million fears.
Afraid to lift my eyes to stars above,
My plodding soul dwelt in this vale of tears.
Long days of slaving, striving endlessly,
Beset by fearsome terrors in the night,
Until at last I raised my weary head,
And breaking loose my bonds, my soul took flight.
I left behind my terror and my fears,
To roam enchanting universes far,
For what can harm a mortal here below,
Whose fancy dwells up yonder in a star?

AN OPEN LETTER TO SCIENTIFICTION EDITORS

I am a stfan! I read 'em all! But....I would like to register a small complaint. I wonder if some of your stories are what your average reader wants? I doubt it very much! I find that Personally I am very much disappointed, quite often.

Why do I read scientifiction? The answer is simple...for enjoyment and relaxation. And I don't think I'm too much different from the average fan, either. If a story furnishes me entertainment and holds me from start to finish, I figure it is a good story. When I read a story and end up feeling let down...frankly, I think there is definite room for improvement. What is wrong with these stories? Just this! The average reader wants to be entertained, not scared! I don't mean the ghost story type of scare, but the morbid type of tale prophesying dire doom for all mankind..the kind that is supposed to make the reader think! Gosh! That's not what he bought your magazine for. He wanted to read something that would help him forget his troubles, not add to them!

What does a stfan want? He looks for three things;stimulation, education, and relaxation. Sounds paradoxical, doesn't it? But let us examine each of these three factors.

Our friend, the average reader, usually leads a pretty hum-drum existence. He works hard every day to try and hold his own against rising prices and shortages. He has a thousand and one little worries and cares to give him the jitters and ulcers. When he gets a good story with plenty of action, he forgets his own problems and assumes a new personality. He undergoes experiences which satisfy his adventurous spirit and give him the stimulation which he cannot obtain in his prosaic daily routine. His imagination, even though it may be weak in itself,is given a helping hand as he is led by the author down the exciting paths of high adventure. This then is the mental rub-down which gets the cob-webs out of his brain and leaves him feeling fit as a fiddle.

In addition, let us face it, he gets a large measure of sexual stimulation from these self-same stories. Scenes in which thinly clad females cavort about displaying their always perfect charms are not designed to appeal to the readers artistic or esthetic sensibilities, no matter what the editor may tell the censor. But even more so, these stories are mostly subtly designed to pander to the secondary sexual urges of the reader, namely his sadistic instincts. He gets a vicarious inner thrill out of seeing the different characters in the stories tortured or mistreated. In support of this I would like to quote a passage from Jack Woodford's excellent textbook on short story writing "Plotting" in which he describes the requirements of a scientifiction story.....

".....The basis of all science fiction stories must be scientific fact, or thereabouts. Actually, of course, all this voodoo about science, etc., is just a blind for sadism. In most of these stories there is a beautiful girl, and she is forever being squeezed by octopi, squeezed by long nosed Boogie Woogies or what not. That is the purpose of the whole story, to take the reader through a perfect carnival of sadism, with an excuse for it so larded over with scientific fact, and other such scholia, that even the most assiduous censor can't get the goods on the author, the editor or the publisher."

That is what the expert has to say about it and who am I to disagree with him. Right or wrong, it undoubtedly makes the stuff sell and personally, I am not averse to a little titillation with my reading. So much for the stimulation angle.

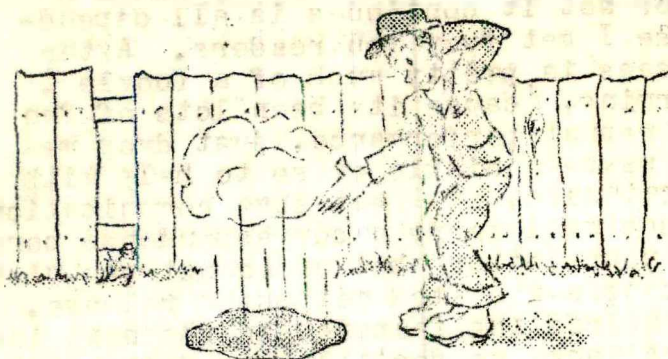
I doubt if many sfans actually read these stories with the idea of obtaining a scientific education from them, in spite of the fond hopes of the editors to the contrary. Personally, I take everything I read in these magazine with a grain of salt, including the "fact" articles. Not that I believe the editors are actually trying to put anything over on me, but simply the hard facts of the case; the features are chosen for their sensational values rather than their scientific worth. Most of them are "off trail" science and what they lack in proven facts, they more than make up in imagination. But don't get me wrong....these stories have a definite educational value. They are helpful in that they produce a certain receptivity to new ideas in the mind of the reader. The biggest drawback to the advancement of scientific research is the natural tendency of the human mind to reject anything new or contrary to known fact. This characteristic is never found in a science fiction readers. So, while their actual educational value may be questionable, they are an invaluable supplement to scientific study.

And finally we come to the entertainment value. Here is where so many stories fall down. After all, this is the readers basic reason for reading. He wishes to relax, be amused, and forget his troubles. My pet peeve is that serious story which usually ends on a tragic note and is written to leave the reader with a moral...or something! People have enough worries of their own without shoulder a bunch of imaginary ones, in addition.

A good example of this is the now famous Shaver series. It is not the purpose of this letter to enter into the raging controversy over these stories... fact or fiction? But here is a perfect example of an unsatisfying story, as far as relaxation or enjoyment is concerned. The mantle of truth is flourished throughout these stories for the sole purpose of giving the reader uncertainty and doubt as to dangers that may threaten his actual existence. Undoubtedly this grips him, but it sure doesn't do much to relax him. If they are fact, write them up as such and present them in a scientific manner, properly explained and documented with proof. No scientist ever launches a half-baked theory upon the scientific world without first obtaining all possible data to support or refute it. He doesn't say "Here it is! You prove it isn't so!" On the other hand, if it is only a cunningly contrived form of fiction with the suggestion of truth to catch the reader's fancy... well, that's a pretty low trick on the reader, and such tales have no business masquerading as truth.

So, Mr. Editor, these are the facts of life, at least as one reader sees them. How about giving us a little lighter fare? Stress the adventure, comedy, and by all means the fantasy and science, pseudo- or otherwise. But please don't try to give us more worries and cares, disguised as escape fiction! Let's keep it strictly for the enjoyment of the fans. O.K. ?

Incidentally, I wonder why Hollywood with all of their recent advances in the art of trick photography, have made no attempt to produce a good, A-1 scientifiotion story. Something to match H. G. Wells "Things To Come" ?



"Hey, come back! I didn't mean for you to really go there!"

1. Plain, ordinary water.
2. A noisy spirit that tries to break up a seance.
3. Approximately 136,300 mi./sec.
4. Bram Stoker
5. They each weigh just one pound.
6. The sacred bull of the Egyptians.
7. Aluminum.
8. Arrow poison of the Orinoco Indians, also an antidote for the poison strychnine.
9. Mercury.
10. Four dimensional projection of a cube.
11. Fourteen thousand.
12. Egyptian jackal God of the necropolis, guide of the dead.
13. Less, about one sixth in fact.
14. Zero.
15. Shake hands, of course!

ENTERTAINMENT OF THE FUTURE

In the past hundred years, what a vast change there has been in the recreational habits of mankind. True, there have always been available the traditional wine, women and song to please man and amuse him during his leisure hours, but today in addition to these basic entertainments there have been added numerous refinements and variations. From the early fights and contests of skill have risen the multitudinous fields of sports and games, in the latter category, mental as well as physical exercise and stimulation being afforded. The early stage with its live actors gave way to "moving pictures" which were further refined through the addition of sound and color. Further, the entertainment world was brought directly into our homes through the medium of radio and phonograph which has ever improved in scope and fidelity and now is in immediate danger of being supplanted entirely by that new star on the entertainment horizon...television.

What of the future? If the next hundred years see comparable advancement (and we are spared from the atom bomb) man's recreations should indeed be wonderful to behold. What will they be like? Will movies and radio go still further? Will other senses be gratified in addition to sight and sound? Will three dimensional reproduction give even greater fidelity? Will electrical or mechanical or chemical stimulation of our sensory nerves provide new sensations and recreations? And, probably most interesting of all, what legislation will be provided to control or prohibit these new pleasures? For in the end, forbidden diversions are the sweetest!

Here is ample opportunity for fortunes to be made. Man has ever been ready and eager to spend his hard earned money for things that will afford him pleasure, to the extent of pinching on the necessities of life. So friend, if you wish to exert your inventive genius, do not delve into deepest science to develop involved industrial processes. Just find a new way for man to amuse himself!

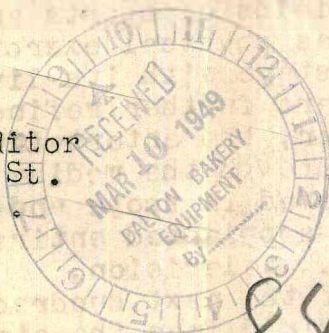
And this, gentle reader, winds up the introductory issue of this virgin fanmag. Whether or not it continues is all dependant upon the kind of a response I get from you readers. After all, a magazine which nobody sees is pretty much of a fizzle. Don't think it ain't been charming, 'cause its been lots of fun and if you're interested in a repeat performance, just drop me a line with your address, and maybe a nickle or so to help with expenses and postage and stuff. Also, if I get some communication from some of you, the next issue will carry a correspondence corner. Be sure and indicate in your letter whether or not you wish it used in the mag. No confidences violated without a release.

I am planning a number of interesting features in the next issue; stories, articles, and art work, so don't let me down and I guarantee you will get your moneys worth. With modest blushes I will admit this first issue was a one man show, however if any of you fans would be kind enough to prepare something in the way of a poem, story, article, in fact any suitable feature, I will be only too glad to include it in the next issue. While this first shot is necessarily short, future copies will carry a minimum of twenty pages, exclusive of advertising.

And incidentally, those of you who have fantasy books or mags to trade or sell, or some other ax to grind, all such advertising matter will be accepted at the rate of \$1.00 per page, a quarter or half page prorated accordingly. We reserve the right to refuse publication of anything considered unsuitable.

SHADOWLAND

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