



SHANGRI-LA

R. SWANSON

EDITORIAL

This is SHAGGY

Number 16.

We hope that
you like it.

SHANGRI-LA

NUMBER 16

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SHANGRI-LA is the official organ of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, whose new address is now 1305 West Ingraham Street, Los Angeles 13, Calif. "SHAGGY" is issued eight times a year, at 15¢ the copy, or, better yet, become an Associate Member, and receive it as part of your perquisites of Membership. Address all monies and an occasional (or oftener) letter of comment to TREASURER, LASFS, at above address. If you live close enough, or ever visit California, you are cordially invited to attend meetings of the Society, at the above address, any and every Thursday evening at 8:15 p. m. You'll enjoy yourself, we are sure. We always do!

THE ASTOUNDING DECLINE

by ALAN HERSHEY

As a reader of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION who's always been more than enthusiastic over John W. Campbell's magazine, and what it means to science fiction, it is with regret that I note the continuance of a steady deterioration which began approximately four years ago.

I began reading the magazine with the first issue, and have never missed an issue. I awaited each issue avidly -- once upon a time. Now, I would just as soon read any other magazine of its type. In fact, I am finding a marked preference for recent issues of STARTLING, THRILLING WONDER and SUPER-SCIENCE.

I have discussed this deterioration with other fans in the Los Angeles area, and generally speaking, their feelings on the subject appear to agree pretty well with mine.

What is wrong?

In recent months I have tried to figure out what the trouble is. The results of my probing follow:

I worked on the premise that a science fiction tale is still only a story, and possesses the same fundamental requirements of any story.

What are the requirements of any story?

Well, I would rank the prime requirement as emotional appeal. This requirement is closely tied up with the so-called "conflicts" which are necessary to construct a sound story. The three types of such conflict are -- man against man, man against himself, and man against his environment. In the days of ASTOUNDING'S glory, the major conflicts were of the first two types. But since the Bomb, most of the stories have turned to the third type -- man against his environment. In the opinion of many pro writers, this is the most difficult type of story to handle, and the most unsympathetic if not handled well.

That brings us to the second thing wrong with ASTOUNDING. A typical line-up of writers in the early 1940's might read as follows:

Von Vogt, Heinlein, Padgett, Del Ray, Sturgeon, Cartmill.

All of these men, aside from their science fiction bent, are first rate story craftsmen. Their tales have sound motivation and

good story value -- invariably. Their characters are good. Their action is well constructed. And they have something to say. All of them think of the story first, and science fiction last. All of them stick pretty closely to the first two types of conflict; man versus man; and man versus himself.

In recent years the lineup of writers has changed, alas, for the worse. The old timers are still present, but their stories are not as frequent. A horde of new writers have appeared, more or less beginning with George O. Smith, who are not story craftsmen. The general run of them appear to have good technical backgrounds. And nothing else. Their stories lack human interest, and fall flat. Lacking either the colossal imagination of a Stapledon (who does not know how to write a story but has a great scientific background) or the colossal writing ability of a Padgett (who forms the other extreme of not much scientific background) they are a group of mediocrities who lower the standards of the magazine despite the fact that their scientific background is probably better than any previous group of scientifiction writers.

Thumbing through a copy of ASTOUNDING more than four years old, then thumbing through one that is newish, brings several interesting differences to light. The covers have become esthetic rather than lurid. The intellectual and artistic approach has over-replaced the "action" type of cover of yesteryear. It is highly debatable whether this change is good or bad. My opinion is that it is bad because it formulates a point of view which carries through the whole magazine.

The mag has become smaller in size, and smaller in contents. There are fewer stories. There are more articles. The type of article has changed. The dinosaur has been replaced by the electronic calculator, figuratively speaking. In other words, once again human interest has been replaced by scientific approach.

Personally, my reaction to this is irritation. I don't buy the mag to read the articles. There are any number of other places I can read articles of that ilk. In addition, we now have the coy, pseudo-article, such as thiotimiline. This was amusing the first couple of times, but as it begins to appear more frequently it loses its appeal. Once again, human interest is lacking.

All in all, I would say that the fundamental trouble with today's ASTOUNDING is that it has become too high class. Campbell, in his urge for technology, has forgotten the emotions and allowed a flock of writers to sneak into his mag who have nothing to recommend them except a little vocabulary on the scientific side.

In contrast, the November, 1948, ASTOUNDING popped up a few days ago. If this is an ideal issue -- and we must assume that it is, since it was more or less put out as such -- then why in Heaven's name inflict on us most of the other issues of the past few years? From the looks of it, Campbell is still aware of what constitutes a good magazine. From the looks of two dozen issues in

the past four years, Campbell no longer knows how to put out a good magazine.

Is the deterioration in ASTOUNDING Campbell's fault? Is it the fault of the material he receives? Can we assume that the output of the first class writers is insufficient to fill up the mag?

I believe that the answer to all of these questions could be a blanket negative, with certain stipulations

The stipulations enter in answering the question of whether the deterioration which has occurred is Campbell's fault. I believe that the fault may be partly that of the editor, but has come about mainly because of certain extraneous factors having to do with magazine policy which, of necessity, have influenced editorial policy. It is because of certain magazine policies, I believe, that top authors are not appearing as often. And because Campbell's stable of stories has been thinned, he has been forced to turn to new authors who have not turned out to be as competent story tellers as the old school. This does not excuse the horrendous articles, which Campbell claims appear through popular demand, nor the size of the magazines. There is always some talk going on about paper allowances in respect to this shortcoming, but personally, I cannot understand how other mags can get around it when ASTOUNDING can't. It also does not explain the general tone of the magazine which, to me, appears to have become distinctly "Holier than thou".

But within the limits of general story weaknesses, I think that Campbell can be at least partly excused. The facts presented in the next couple of paragraphs come from pretty reliable sources. I am reasonably certain that they are correct:

ASTOUNDING pays a maximum rate of 25 cents a word, even to their top writers. There may be a couple of rare exceptions to this, but not more than a couple. This was fine before cost of living indices began to burst and science fiction was still an unimportant facet of the publishing field. Today, more than one of the science fiction mags are willing to pay better rates to top authors.

When ASTOUNDING publishes a story they tie up just about all the different kinds of copyrights attached to a story. Other mags in the field today are willing to purchase on a basis of first N A serial rights only, in addition to paying a higher rate than ASTOUNDING. Obviously, an author has to eat to live just as well as any other type of mortal. In these days of anthologies, reprint magazines and science fiction translations into many other languages, authors are a bit unhappy about tying up all of their rights with one magazine.

I understand that many book publishers will not touch any collection originating from ASTOUNDING with the proverbial ten-foot pole because they do not wish to get involved with the grief

that Street & Smith may give them. When they publish a collection, they often depend on a foreign language translation for a good part of their profits, and S. & S. have a habit of refusing rights to foreign language translations.

So there is a great deal more to the ASTOUNDING decline than appears on the surface. In addition to being involved with editorial policy, it is also deeply involved with general magazine policy.

And unless this state of affairs changes, I have a hunch the decline may become a landslide.

* * * * *

THE GREAT LEVELLER

by Henry Eichner

Of things we mortals must perform there really is but one
I hope and trust the doing of may prove to be much fun;
'Tis uttered oft, and truly so, we finite creatures must,
Since out of dirt we have been made, return to it as dust.

The body, true, may turn to dust -- what matter if it do --
The ego, soul, or "what will you" begins a life anew;
It matters not, if in this sphere, we live a life sublime
Or live it rotten to the core -- we go, when comes our time.

It is my hope that when I go to join those laid at rest
I may be man enough to laugh and hold that Death's a jest;
For after all, there's none come back to tell us of that climb
Which, though we hold in hope or fear, we all must reach in
time.

Anent this "Great Adventure", it is my plan to go
With laugh on lips, and song in heart -- methinks 'tis
better so.

Written here is my belief -- the proof we must await
'Til one who's left this vale of tears returns from past
the gate.

WRITTEN WITH DUE RESPECT,
AND APOLOGIES IN ADVANCE,
TO YOU WHO KNOW ---

this article is submitted
by helene mears

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Cloth is made non-inflammable by washing it in salted water after having rubbed it with alum beaten up in the white of an egg. (Precipitous or saturate, hummm?)

To be able to handle red-hot iron, rub your hands with red arsenic and alum mixed in the juice of lark and laurel gum. (Yuk, yuk, Arsenic, by gum)

Scorpions and snakes can be driven out of your house by the burning of the lung of a donkey in it. (I should hope so!)

To prevent rats from coming into your house, burn the hoof of a horse. (Where? Is this also effective for the two-legged species?)

To cure a drunkard, make him drink wine in which an eel has been drowned. (Not 'oppens to the eel? On second thought, not 'oppens to the drunk?)

Cooked in goose fat, earthworms cure saraches. Drunk in wine they dissolve calculus. (Elementary or advanced?)

To avoid getting drunk, take before your meal a spoonful of olive oil, mixed, if possible, with two spoonfuls of betony water. (G-g-gul-lp.) ((Wouldn't it be simpler just not to drink intoxicants?))

An infusion of parsley is good for women if their periods are irregular. (I thought it was verbs ...)

The ash of elm, maple, ivy, or birch, is an astringent. Galienus also used it to stop nose bleeding. (The bravo, noble soul!)

The size of eggs is increased by mixing diluted red chalk in the hen's food. (Country farmers please note.) ((Also, you can do it by raising ostriches instead of hens.))

For sciatica use cow dung cooked under cinders in vine or in cabbage leaves. (But who wants sciatica?)

Hot cow dung also cures the sting of bees, hornets, wasps, etc. (Useful stuff, wot?)

For boils and carbuncles, sheep dung diluted in vinegar and made into a poultice is a sure cure. (I ~~see~~ hear you!!)

Dried periwinkle, powdered and mixed with powdered earthworm induces love. A pinch dropped into food is sufficient to excite him who swallows it. (!!!!)

AND FURTHERMORE, DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Lustral water, a powerful philter, is obtained as follows: In a fountain of white marble, storm water is collected, and at the end of five years, killed in this are thirteen doves, a virgin trout, a sheep, a bull, a black cat and a white dog. It is then put into crystal flagons, and subsequently used for aspersions accompanied by incantations. (How's that again, Charlie?)

In order to know whether they will get married, girls throw one of their shoes from the foot down the stairs. If their shoe falls toe upward, there is no marriage; if the heel is upwards, then a marriage will take place after as many days, months or years as the shoe fell in steps. (Hmmm, is this a slur?) ((Caution: Take your foot out of the shoe before you throw it down stairs.))

Slipping, if on fruit, means flirtation; on the lawn, fainting in the open air; in the water, love and tears; on parquetry floor, fainting in an enclosed space. (Moral: Watch your step!)

A garter, if lost, indicates a proposal, coming soon to the owner; if coming undone, beware! (Truer words were never...)

A dandelion in seed, when blown upon, tells you that you are loved passionately, if all the seeds fly off at once; if a few seeds remain, there may be some unfaithfulness; if many remain, indifference is found. (Cad!)

As a protection against toothache, say "Struggole faiusque lecutate, te decutinem dolorum persona". (Huh???)

Teasel, dipped into mandragora juice, brings puppies to a bitch. (So, my Biology teacher was wrong.)

To become irresistible, states Schwaeble, it is at bottom sufficient to rub yourself with verbena. (Aren't you getting a bit too personal, Bub?)

This same writer goes on: A mixture consisting of 20 grammes of essence of clove, 10 grammes of essence of geranium, and 200 grammes of alcohol at 90 degrees. Wash your hands and arms thoroughly so as to open the pores, then rub yourself

with the mixture. It acts, he assures us, on the genetic senses. (Goshwowboyoboy!!!)

These, and many more interesting and informative (Goody!) ideas and facts are yours for the browsing. These particular tidbits of the unusual were garnered here and there in the pursuit of a recently published (1945) encyclopedia, "The Complete Book of the Occult and Fortune-Telling" (Tudor Publishing Co., of New York.)

For that forth-coming rainy, damp day, why don't YOU look in to the fascinating, compelling, thrilling, and informative ideas (???) which are presented (in print, too) solely for your benefit ... (Also for the benefit of publishers, printers, writer, ad infinitum?) Well, why don't you?

* * * * *

It seems as how
a lot of correspondents
do not yet know
that the
LOS ANGELES SCIENCE-FANTASY SOCIETY
has moved their
Club Room

We are no longer at
the Bixel Street address,
but are now
located at
1305 W. Ingraham Street
Los Angeles 13,
California.
HOW ABOUT LETTERS OF COMMENT?

by CLARE WINGER HARRIS

Some twenty years or more ago
For science fiction I did yearn,
But all that was available
Was H.G. Wells and Jules Verne.

I searched for the fantastic yarn
On many a stall and library shelf,
And, being unsuccessful there,
I wrote some science yarns myself.

There was one of far-off Venus
And the insect life up there;
Again a babe on Neptune,
And one of alien spawn.

There was an artificial man,
A Menace from distant Mars,
A certain diabolic drug,
And creatures from other stars.

I then chose evolution,
And one of ancient Rome;
No matter what I wrote about
'Twas always far from home.

I cared not for the Present,
And that, in fact, is how
I titled my short stories --
"Away From the Here and Now!"

MISTRESS OF FANTASY

by Louise Liepiar

I have no intention of taking any glory from the numerous brochures on the "Masters of Fantasy" that have appeared in some of our favorite magazines, but in my opinion they should move over and let a big-eyed, tiny person have a little room.

On December of 1942, Astounding printed "The Flight That Failed", by E. Mayne Hull. From that day on, her niche has been widening.

True, it has been some time since we have had the privilege of reading anything by her, but what she has given us, leaves a pleasant lingering taste.

In her story "The Ultimate Wish", the nature of said wish troubled her for some time. Whether there was any connection or not, I can't say, but it was while she was working the floor over with a broom that the idea came to her. After all, Death was the only answer that would serve when anyone like Lola was concerned.

Those who only know Mayne through her writings, can have no idea of her sweetness. To hear her talk, and in her actions, one would never dream of her being able to write such a thing as "The Patient". But the twinkle in her eye shows how she could conceive of a demon being haunted as the character was in "The Wishes We Make".

But here in Los Angeles she is known not only as a writer of Fantasy but as one of the most charming of hostesses. As a cheese and cracker addict, I have found my match in her. True, at times when we are lucky enough to get it, the cheese almost has a mind of its own and is quite old enough to sprout legs and walk, but by main force we hold it down and force it to lie quiescent on its prepared wheaten bed. And the teapot is the most overworked piece of furniture in the place. I think Mayne has made tea drinkers out of more coffee hounds than you could imagine. About nine-thirty the kettle goes on and the gang collects around the table. What the mortality is on the food, I can't tell you, but if any one can eat more than a bunch of hungry fen (come to think of it, they don't HAVE to be hungry) I for one don't know who they are.

I've gone rather far afield on my subject, so I'll get back to it.

Every STF reader remembers the Artur Blord stories.

From March '43, when "The Contract" saw the light of day in Astounding, we have lived the adventures of that interstellar financier. Next, came "Abdication" in April '43. "Competition"

June '43 only whetted our appetites for "The Debt", which was published in December of that same year.

The series was broken at that point by "The Winged Man", then in January '45 we meet the arch villain in "Enter the Professor". "Bankruptcy Proceedings" in August '46, brought the series to a sudden close. However, hope is in sight. There is a long novellette spinning around in her typewriter someplace, that will probably, on publication, bring on howls for more.

Canadian-born Mayne will soon receive her final papers which make her a citizen of the U. S. And we could use more like her--not only as a person, but as a "Mistress of Fantasy".

* * * * *

JOHN CARSTAIRS — SPACE DETECTIVE

Book Review by

Dorothea M Faulkner

This book, by Frank Belknap Long, is a series of short "whodunits", done in the style of "Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy", with inter-planetary trimmings. As in all proper detective stories, the hero has that absolutely indispensable adjunct without which no private eye can operate. Nick Charles has his Nora, Sam Spade his Effie, and John Carstairs, naturally, has his Vera Dorn. Love is always on the verge of blossoming, sex always about to present its leering visage, but the end of each story finds the romantic status quo unchanged. One wonders how long this can go on.

The book's main claim to originality is that in each case the villain is some weird form of extra-terrestrial plant life. Here is still another conflict, which Forry did not mention last week -- man against vegetable. (Among us, this is principally exemplified by the sight of young children repulsing their spinach). But the author has made this theme a botanist's nightmare of malignant plants that fight right back.

There is no attempt at characterization, and no underlying philosophical implications are to be found. The style is rather choppy, due to short sentences, and short paragraphs, and the dialogue, frankly, is strictly from corn.

But on the whole there is a freshness and originality in the author's development of the stories which does much to redeem the somewhat juvenile style. The appeal was made mainly to the adolescent reader and I imagine such would find it vastly entertaining. (As a matter of fact, I enjoyed it myself).

THE INCREDIBLE PLANET

A Review by

Earle Princeton

Back in the days of the old ASTOUNDING, when science fiction hewed to the mechanistic super-atomic line, an intergalactic battle disposed of millions (at least) of spacecraft without the use of the econo-socio-psychological subtleties employed by the decadent, effete, and self-conscious authors of today. Men were men!

If the hero of the story couldn't think up a new invention in three or four manuscript pages, the author was paid off in intergalactic rejection slips. You were either capable of describing the processes of turbo encabulators or you weren't. That was that.

Some of us smile at those stories now. Our stories have more significance today. The writing is better. Stories are clever, have the human touch to them. When today's reader puts down a story, he thinks a little, and, for all I know, he is probably better off for it.

Generally speaking, today's stories have more appeal for this reviewer than the opi of the early and mid-nineteen thirties, but those tales had a certain intangible element in them which seems to be lacking in today's fiction. Were it necessary to sum up that quality in a single word it would be -- gusto.

A good case in point is "The Incredible Planet", by John W. Campbell, Jr., a previously unpublished novel which is now offered to us by Fantasy Press. Neatly printed and well designed, it retails for three dollars, and is well worth it.

A sequel to Mr. Campbell's "The Mightiest Machine", it details the trials and tribulations of Mr. Aarn Munro (physical and intellectual superman) and company. With the exception of some fascinating interludes, of which more later, the book is a succession of battles with all sorts of people, and with all sorts of weapons. Honestly, it is just one damn thing after another.

Let us put our criticism of the book in this one paragraph, and go on to encomiums later. All plot is centered as to whether our heroes will win their current engagement. You know damn well they will, or at least retire scathed but recrudescant. The description of the gestation of new theories is prolix and incomprehensible to the lay mind, if, indeed, it may not be ludicrous to adepts in the physical sciences. Character delineation, with several notable exceptions, is atrocious. Worst of all, too much is packed into too little space. Mr. Campbell has three books, and the suggestion of a fourth, crammed into one tome. But ... damn it, it is a great book.

Why? For one thing, because of several wonderful passages in the book. The description of the world that is older than our galaxy moved us deeply. The story of Chiron, the Centaur, was a great bit of imagery. And the description of that strange place where gravity warped space, and affected men's minds, was as neat a bit of applying modern scientific concepts to atmospheric writing as I've read in science fiction.

Further, this book is unmistakably science fiction. Even though, as mentioned, much of the writing is overdone, the sheer intensity of the author's attempts to use present day scientific theory in fictional construction of the inventions, machines, and weapons of tomorrow communicates itself to the reader. Somehow, it could, someday, be possible.

This book is one with the Doc Smith super-sagas. It is just as "dated" as are the Skylark stories. It could not have been written twenty years previous, and it could not be written now. That it is printed at all today, testifies to the drawing power of that type of fiction. For, surely, such a story could not be published in magazine form today. It would be cut, edited, have to be rewritten in parts, have to have sex introduced.

By all means buy it. For somewhere in the book is something you will like. If it is slam-bang science fiction, you'll find it. If it is mood, in the Don A. Stuart style, you'll find it. If it is some of that wonderful stuff that you remember used to be printed but isn't any more, you'll find that.

But don't look for the super-smooth, streamlined pulp and semi-slick stuff of today. John W. Campbell, one of the titans of the deep-space epics writers of his day, changed all that in 1938.

Will those stories ever reappear in the slicked-up forms of today? Will we again have the hard-hitting interplanetary yarns, full of heavy pseudo-science, pointing out just how the laws of the universe operate to give us the new whambo-type electronics dis-gun? It is to be doubted.... Darn it!

Why? Because that period of science fiction in which this sort of stuff appeared was written by a generation of writers whose introduction to science (both reading and writing) occurred shortly after they had been influenced by the spate of exciting news about tremendous discoveries and exhilarating theories as to the nature of time and space. That news was reflected in what they wrote.

To our knowledge, no new and basic discovery in physics has occurred in the past ten years. The fact of the atomic bomb was merely an application of previous science. It had been anticipated by sci-fi, and the plethora of stories which followed in its wake finally resulted in a cease fire order by pro editors.

Newer discoveries, so far, lie in the...((Cont'd on Page 22)

HOW DID IT HAPPEN TO YOU?

by FREDDIE HERSHEY

Come on, now, 'fess up. How DID it happen to you? How did YOU become a fan? And when did you REALIZE that you were hopelessly enmeshed in the thrall of fandom? And why?

What happy(?) combination of genes; what traumatic shocks of your extreme youth; what accidental choice of a prozine, when you first started reading at night under the covers; what chance of a choice of comrades in school; what story; author; or first attendance at a fan club meeting started you on the merry maelstrom?

Perhaps you were just born lucky! Your father was an electrician, and one of the first to make a crystal radio set, and you became gadget-happy at an early age. Or did your dear Mother sing you to a dreamful sleep with songs of the Little Folk? A number of the younger fan are second generation fan. Are YOU?

Or were you the sad, lonely, misanthropic youngster who was never good at games in school, and sought your vicarious thrills in the early pages of Amazing Stories? Don't be ashamed if you were. A large majority of fans owe their first allegiance to the "good old days" of stf and ff as portrayed in that venerable mag. Could you silently sneer at the childish antics of your school-fellows as they ran after a football, or high dived into the local swimming hole, while you clutched to your spotless bosom the daring adventures in space of your latest galactic hero? How above it all you were. Still are, aren't you?

Or did some kind soul initiate you into the mysteries of stf or ff when you reached high school? "Whatcha readin'?" you ask so innocently one day in study hall of the "new boy". And to keep you from blacking his eyes after school, he diffidently handed you a very Bemish-covered mag. You might have thrown it around somewhere in your room, having decided to borrow it, and only re-found it again one rainy afternoon, when the team couldn't practice. And before you knew it, you were far and away on Mars (where was Mars, again?)...or Venus, or thumbing to the last page to see if the mad scientist really did destroy the whole universe.

And so the day came when you asked the "new boy", "Got any more mags like this? Not bad for a rainy afternoon." And he was a true missionary, intuitive, and saw the makings in you, and so came over one not-so-rainy afternoon, and let you look at a stack of his old mags. Brother, you were lost from then on, or didn't you realize it? For all so soon the "new boy" became your best friend, and through him you learned that the promags would print your letters of comment and you got into a Readers' column, And then you got pen fan pals and you were well on your merry way.

Was that how?

Or, did you yearn all alone for others of your ilk, while you avidly devoured every book and mag you could get, until some fine day Fate in the shape of a notice in some second hand book shop, or a plug in a prozine, or a tiny announcement in the local paper or what have you .. led you to wander down to the local fan club? What a place? What a wonderful conglomeration of fannish faces? What a mess of books, mags, pictures, printing material, conversations, smoke ... and there YOU stood!!!

Not for long, however. Someone discovered that you were new, wrapped you in the warm flow of exchanging names, asked all sorts of personal questions in a rush and turned you over to somebody else, who did the same thing. Inside of ten minutes, you had met from between ten and twenty people ranging from masculine to feminine to neuter, aged from fifteen to sixty-five, and shaped from thin, gangling, hollow-eyed, starved-out students to ample, motherly grandmothers. You were IN!

The first meeting probably sounded like so much gibberish. Fans argued about things that made no sense whatsoever, and you began to wonder if you had come to the right place. But along the line somewhere, someone mentioned Heinlein's new serial, and your little ears began to wiggle happily again. And then the speaker of the evening gave a talk on electronics or something. By then you were too busy or too dizzy to listen, and only the mumbled or whispered cross-talk of your right and left-hand neighbors penetrated. Club politics. If only you knew who those people spoken about were. The details were delicious. You couldn't help looking around and trying to guess.

Your future rests here. If you were not frightened away from attending future meetings at the club by precocious adolescents, predatory females, questioning wiseacres, suspicious old members, wild-eyed arguments, and the seeming lack of talk about anything to do with sf or ff, and/or any number of the host of weirdities and oddities that seem to crop up at one's first meeting (so you are solemnly assured) it's all decided.

You come back. You buy the club mag. You get to say a few words about some little pet thing or pceve or have an anecdote on an author or something. The idea is that they listen, and after the meeting, you suddenly hand over some money to the treasurer, and become a member. So painless. So painless, (or was it the first time?) to give a talk at a meeting, or write a piece of undying and deathless prose for the club mag. And you are asked to join other groups. Once you begin to join, you're lost. Your name goes on the waiting list for FAPA; you send a buck to the Convention committee:

((For 1950, it's the
NORWESCON
P O Box 8517,
Portland 7, Oregon))

you fill a questionnaire for the NFFF, and join that; and depend-

ing on your age, got wound up in YF, SAPS, an honorary membership here, an associate membership there, and soon your whole life is full. So full that your gals forsake you or join up in desperation also; your Mother groans in despair at the weird collection of creatures that invade your house, all unasked usually, at the hours of the night that the phone rings, and the hours you keep visiting your new pals. Your old friends seem dull and uninteresting and drift away, your correspondence pile becomes a litter on an apple crate in the corner of your room, and you lay awake nights thinking of articles to write, or how to answer whosis's attack in another fanzine.

There it is! From a normal, well-integrated individual with a normal life consisting of the average amount of females, beer, movies, work or studies, a hobby or two that YOU rode; you are now involved in a way of life. Your stamp collection lies mouldering in some drawer. Need the dough for some new book just out? (Oh, sure, you collect, too). The swell gun your Pop finally got you after three years of begging, is still, in pristine newness, on the closet floor; that slick chick in Pomona is half-forgotten. She doesn't read fan stuff and that gang scares her, and how can you go dancing on the evenings when there are meetings? You now have responsibilities to the club; and committees; have stuff to write, and maybe by now you edit a fanzine of your own!

If so, only you know the work involved. Remember the first stencils? Remember the stuff all laid out on the table? The papers, pencils, ink-eradicator (you were later to learn that beer was better for this), clips, old issues of fanzines, oh, and what not. And the final glory of holding your own creation in your ink-smudged hands. What greater glory?

And life became more and more complex and wonderful. You got to call a few authors by their first names, went to see the fantasy shows with the gang, lay on various and assorted floors and yakked and yakked as only fans can on their pet peeves and loves. You reread the old mags, tried art work, became enthralled with conventions and conferences, and considered a will leaving your crud to the Foundation.

See what I mean?

Last September, as I was winging my way back from Florida in a cushy DC6, I never knew what was in store for me. I was a simple, well-integrated soul, stamp collector, night-club habitue, baseball fan, and a reader of catholic tastes, leaning slightly towards fantasy.

When I got home, my dear husband whispered the magic letters of a fan club into my shell-like ears ...

L A S F S

and IT HAPPENED TO ME!

* * * * *

THE BOAT DANCE

 Pile the dry wood on each camp-fire,
 Heap it higher .. higher .. higher;
Let their light be flaming brighter
 While we dance our Boat Dance.
This, our newest boat, is lighter
 Than we've ever made before.

Thank Great Mowgli, god of waters
 -- Build the fires higher, Daughters --
Praise our god who gave us fishing,
 Praise him with our Boat Dance;
Thank him that this boat goes swishing
 Faster than boat went before.

From the jungle by the sea-shore
 -- heap more fuel on, oh, much more --
There we found this splendid teak-wood
 -- Onward with our Boat Dance!
Never was such straight-grained sleek wood,
 Never boat like this before.

Hail, O Mowgli! Grant thy blessing
 -- Keep the dance-fire's height progressing --
Fill our nets with swimming creatures
 Bless again our Boat Dance.
Show to us thy kindly features
 Which we've never seen before,
While we thank thee, through our Boat Dance,
 Thank thee, god whom we adore.

From "Songs of the Dawn Men"

THE HUCKSTERS, 2050

by TORCHY

Her fingers trembled with moist anticipation, yet she passed her tongue over suddenly-dry lips. Could she ... would she measure up to this great responsibility?

Koreth knew there was no margin for errors -- this was not like the old earth days, when a writer could type out a spiel, edit it, have it blue-penciled, corrected and set into print. No, once she sat down, placed her fingertips on the grooved keys (so like the ancient typewriter of the earth-people) there could be no mistakes ... for the Telesator transferred her finger impulses into a Visicast seen on every telescreen in the Universe.

Koreth knew, too, that she alone had been chosen from among the new mento-trainees as a possible candidate for the position of Uni-writer, the most important advertising opening in the Universe.

The time-minder above her flashed significantly, indicating that time was growing short. Koreth sent a prober into her thalamo-cortical recesses to find her point and in response to the quest, color precipitated words into conscious action

Completely self-possessed, Koreth slowly took the seat, and placed her delicate pink and gold fingers on the sensitised keyboard, then drew a deep breath and, without haste, began.

In the pale, golden-green light of the Room, the three sat. The Educator reached over and pulled the Mentascope into more advantageous view. Almost at once, the picture of Koreth in the sending room faded, as the message she was delivering became visual. The Controller and the Educator exchanged proud glances, and turned to see the effect of their latest trainee's progress. Glina, the tiny, delightful Mediator and Ruler, nodded, turned her shimmering, nebulous green eye-light to the telescreen and glowed.

*****BULLETIN*****REGARDING THE FIRST ANNUAL INTERPLANETARY SPACE TRAVELERS CONVENTION ***** The Asteroid Committee of Pleasure announced today there will be ample space to enjoy the music of Steve Poloroïd and his Planetarians and plenty of room to indulge in the new, popular sport, Suspension-Dancing, plus many other pleasurable attractions*****Friends!!! Do you know the Space-Ship Glide? Can you do the Time-binder Struggle, the Saturn Shuffle, the Jupiter Jump, or the joyful Interplanetary Polka? Can you match the tricky rhythm of the Outer-Space Wobble, or the fantastic sensations of the Undersca Sway? Can you follow the smooth grace of the SPACE-shaking, new Suspension-Dancing? In honor of the coming Convention, the Terrestrial-Steppers Studio, known the

Universe over as the most modern, complete, advanced school of the Space-Dance, is offering a special course, for a limited time, which will include complete instructions in the dances mentioned above, and at no additional cost, eligibility in the famous Interplanetary Hostess League. Don't run the risk of being left sitting in front of your telescreen to watch others enjoying all the pleasures of the First Interplanetary Space Travelers' Convention. Take advantage of this offer, new classes forming all this week. Come in NOW!!!

* * * * *

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ON ALL THE JOYS OF THIS

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BOOK REVIEW

MAYA EXPLORER: JOHN LLOYD STEPHENS AND THE LOST CITIES OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND YUCAT'AN -- by Victor Wolfgang von Hagen (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press: 1948. 324 pages. \$5.00)

- If you are interested in archaeology -- and what stfan is-n't? -- here is a book that will educate as it entertains, a book which will bring laughter to the lips, and a gleam of wonder and admiration to your eye. Even if your knowledge of and interest in archaeology is slight you'll prob'ly find something in this book which will amaze and delight you. For instance, your rAviewer is certainly not an archaeologist (the only Rosetta Stone I've ever seen was a rhinestone in the navel of a burlesqueen named Rosetta) though he had a slight interest in the subject at one time. This book re-awakened that interest and gave it new life. To "fear-a-phrase", sometimes the Past is not enough with us.

For this is the story of "the father of American archaeology", John Lloyd Stephens (1805-1852), a man who in his own writings* accomplished "an impossible synthesis: archaeology and sex". Stephens had the eye of a Casanova, and though always very much interested in old ruins there were times when he was just as much interested in making old ruins out of the local girls who -- according to all accounts (especially Stephens') -- were not unwilling.

If John Lloyd Stephens is the Star of this book then Frederick Catherwood must be the Feature Player. Catherwood's engravings of the various Mayan ruins are almost photographic in detail and you'll look far to find a set of lithographs as beautiful, all in one volume! The pix alone are worth the price of the book and I have no intention of "selling the writer short".

From this one book by vonHagen which I read I would say that he is a master biographer and historian. His very detailed accounts are never boring and when he mentions but briefly some of Stephens' famous contemporaries (Poe, Whitman, Jackson, Prescott, Barnum, etc.,) the reader gets some insight into their characters so they are something more than just Famous Names in a history book. His descriptions of the times, the politics, the clothing styles, etc., are more than mere backgrounds for the activities of Stephens and Companions. They give the book something which too many history books lack. Real, honest-as-Bo environment.

I won't be a "story-spoiler", but for those who like a brief recap of the actual events in the story, the following should do: Stephens started out in life as a lawyer, but like many young men of his day, the travel-bug bit him and he didn't try very hard to fight off its effects. After touring the West, he was admitted to the bar and got into politics for awhile. Then off to Europe and

* Arabia Petrae, Incidents of Travel in Greece, Incidents of Travel in Central America, Incidents of Travel in Yucat'an (books by J. L. Stephens).

eventually to Stony Arabia and the ruins of Petra, where his interest in archaeology was intensified. So, after meeting Catherwood in London and being appointed Presidential agent to Central America he takes advantage of his situation and goes exploring. Incidentally, some of his experiences in the Far East were reminiscent of Richard Halliburton -- or maybe it would be vice versa). After rediscovering Cop'an and exploring it (while Catherwood was making some of those wonderful engravings) he travels on and finally gets back to NYC. Before his too-short life is lived he returns to Yucat'an, makes more explorations and discoveries and finally projects and becomes president of the Panama Railway. As has been mentioned, the fairer sex has a great influence on his life and, ironically enough, it was a female of the species which brought about his feverish demise, the species in this case being the Anopheles mosquito. He was buried in an unmarked grave in New York City's Marble Cemetery.

As Poo once said, Stephens was not a profound man, but -- as von Hagen points out -- he was a clever man whose interests were genuine interests and not affections, and for a man of the nineteenth century, singularly uninhibited. Your reviewer believes that vonHagen has accomplished the "impossible synthesis" in this biography. In this instance, I use the terms "sex and Archacology" symbolically. That is, sex representing the real, human people in the book, and "aechacology" representing the events in the book, events -- which like ancient ruins -- reveal to the modern eye the fascinating Past and by comparing the Past with the Present, give insight into the Future.

-- Len J. Moffatt

((Princeton's Review, Cont'd from Page 14))...field of sociology, psychology, semantics. They are, comparatively speaking, new to the public, and to many sf writers. Therefore, they dominate present writing.

As soon as some other branch of science comes into the foreground with further discoveries, (bacteriology, biochemistry, biology and physiology seem to be the best bets), or if there is a renaissance of newsworthy events in the older sciences, then science fiction will shift to those fields.

D'you like the deep-space story? Then watch the news releases from Palomar. Look for reports from White Sands. And hope for the announcement of a unified field theory. (That last mentioned item alone will do it up brown.) When that happens, Doc Smith and John W. Campbell, Jr., will start up again. They'll have to, for how in heaven's name will they be able to restrain themselves?

*

A SCIENCE FAN MEETS THE SCIFIMOB

By Hank Eichner

Due to the fact that, for thirty years, I have been a collector of the literature designated Science Fiction, I felt that I could, justifiably, call myself a "fan". Since I began at the tender age of ten, simple, and rather merciless addition places me at the present age of forty, perish the thought! In any event, I spent many quiet and peaceful years in the purchasing and discarding of the reams of such literature that the last three decades have spawned forth. Too well do I remember my eager anticipation of each new issue of the old AMAZING STORIES, under the seal of Hugo Gernsback. How I used to admire the Paul illustrations. How many hours I've spent in the back rooms and basements of used-book stores, searching for titles I didn't know, by authors I didn't know. How many times I came home dirty and disheveled, but proudly clutching another book to add to my meagre collection. The verbal spankings I received at home, on those occasions, were well worth the suffering -- when balanced against my newly acquired treasure. I don't ever recall buying a new book of the species. That wouldn't have been any fun, and besides, who had money for a new book? Maybe YOU, but certainly not me!

Strangely enough, in all those years I never met up with any one else who collected the stuff. When I remember the looks of scorn that I used to get upon mentioning that I read Science Fiction, the "What's he doing out of the booby hatch?" looks thrust at me, I begin to believe that it took a certain sort of mad courage to not only admit that I DID read such "tripe", but to continue collecting it. Perchance, too, it was those bemused and patronizing glances which made me continue to pursue my course in solitary fashion.

The atom bomb and the end of World War II alleviated, in a marked degree, the scorn cast upon the devotees of Science Fiction. It had to, since fiction was no longer fiction, but FACT! However, I continued along my solitary way, quietly and peacefully. I exhibited the proper respect for the "King's English" when I used it.

Recent events have changed all that! Five-six months ago, I wrote my first fan letter to a popular Science Fiction magazine. I am, at present, still under too much shock to state whether it was a fortunate, or unfortunate, gesture. In any event, shortly after publication of the letter, I began to be deluged by letters from fans all over the country, some praising, some denouncing, statements I had made in my published letter. I found that in my own town was a club composed of fans like myself, and was invited to attend a meeting thereof. I did so shortly after. SOME ONE SHOULD HAVE WARNED ME! I'm certain the quiet of my ways has been

forever demolished. Sanity has fled from its sanctuary in my brain. First and foremost, I met a group of characters, a goodly share of whom are delightfully mad in a pixellated fashion. Certainly, someone should write a story about the weird characters that roam through the Science Fiction fan clubs. While the characters themselves may not BE Science Fiction, some of them are certainly Fantasy! If this be madness, then let me be mad too! I am afearred that I, too, may soon qualify as a charter member. No cause is ever taken up without the utmost of passionate and avid adherence. Everyone gets involved in rabid verbal jousts that amaze me by the energy dissipated. I quickly learned one doesn't use "King's English" when a slang expression or abbreviation will do. You don't say "Science Fiction", you say "stf". Thus "stf-mag". You don't mention magazines (pardon, "mags") by their published name, you speak of FEM, FN, T&S, SS, aSF (though why the "a" is lower case, I don't yet know) and AFR. "Mags" are Fanzines Prozines, Letterzines, etc.; Various clubs and groups are spoken of as LASFS, ESTA, SFI, QSFL, NEFF (spelled NFFF), FAPA, SAPS and so on ad nauseum. The words TORCON, CHICON, CAPICON, WESTERCON, NORWESCON and CINVENTION are bandied about my head.

I have listened to learned harangues on non-Aristotelianism, on Semantics, on Cybernetics, on the World of Null-A, and similar befuddling subjects. Where, oh where, has my world of peace and quiet gone? Oh for those happy days when all I had to do was simply read a book and enjoy it. I am entrapped twixt Scylla and Charybdis, and turn and twist as I may, I find no escape. My head may be bloody, but it is as yet unbowed. Gallantly I am trying to pierce the veil into this new world of the Scificmob.

Do you know what a BEM is? I'm beginning to have a faint inkling. Do you know what "egoboo" is? I found out the hard way -- no comment. Someday, if I study my lessons hard enough, I may learn what "Stefnal" means. That has thrown me since I first saw and heard it. I continue to labor under the fine delusion that in the distant future, my studious application, I may arrive at the point where I can hurl forth the word "Stefnal", and others of its esoteric significance, with complete impunity, and know what the hell I'm talking about.

Now I must retire to my Ivory Tower to brood upon it, and to gird my loins for the nerve-shattering attack that the coming meeting will bring.

Besides -- my keeper says I've been out long enough for today!

*

JUST A MINUTE

By the LASFS Secretary,
Arthur Jean Cox

September 22nd; 638th Consecutive Meeting:

The club's one and only Forrest J Ackerman returned from Eastern parts just in time to announce the treasury held \$10.00. Mr Ackerman, author of the forth-coming book, "Beyond Civilization to Cincinnati", announced to startled multitudes that he was resigning his life-time position as Treasurer of LASFS. He explained that during his few weeks stay in the hinterlands he had been overwhelmed with a feeling of relief -- yes, a feeling of relief at no longer having to guard that most sacred possession of the Club, the Treasurer's box; no longer being responsible for this organization's vast financial resources, and always being faced with the tempting knowledge that all he needed to get that new Cadillac he wanted was courage, daring, resourcefulness and lack of integrity. Since he was departing we decided to appoint someone who didn't have these qualities -- that is, the quality of lack of integrity -- so Freddie Hershey was given the post. Kenny Bonnell made a motion that Forrest be made Super-Honorary Treasurer. Russ Hodgkins objected that there was no provision made in the constitution for such an appointment, but that just shows the slovenly way in which these acts are drawn up. Incidentally, 4E received the position by unanimous acclaim.

Forrest's Tale of Two Cities -- Cincinnati and New York -- was the major attraction of the evening. He gave many impressions of his trip .. He revealed to us little tidbits of his newly-acquired esoteric knowledge of the East; such as the fact that two new science-fiction anthologies will be issued in the not-too-distant future, and that's not counting Frederick Fell's annual volume. The two mentioned are 1) an anthology to be edited by Groff Conklin and published by Perma-Books, a company which puts out 35¢ and 98¢ celluloid-covered volumes, and 2) a new pocket-book anthology of science-fiction, this one to be edited by Judith Merrill. Lastly but not leastly, he gave a review of Max Erlich's The Big Eye, in which a planet, about to collide with earth, gives the appearance of a huge eye staring out of the sky because of a single, great round crater on its surface. Eph Konigsberg suggested as a slogan for the story, "Big Planet is watching you".

September 29th: 639th Consecutive Meeting:

Forrest amused us with a story of how he had just come once again into the possession of a book, "The Gold Tooth" by John Taine, which he had lost in 1930. The book, which apparently had gone through many hands since, still has his sticker inside it saying, "Forrest J Ackerman -- Scientifictionist". Wonder what the chances are of borrowing it -- always wanted to read TGT A talk by Freddie Hershey on goms; at least I think it was on jewelry, but she kept talking about vegetables -- carrots being polished -- and how this stuff cost plenty of lettuce! Freddie illustrated her talk with an actual exhibition of her own collection of stones. "This marxite from South Africa; this is red marxite from Russia and this last is a piece of marble from Vermont." It

was noticed later that a few of these precious stones were missing. No one knows where they went but there are those who think that "Diamond Lil Leipiar" inherited her fortune awfully sudden. Stan Mullen, popularly known as the Round Man, is working on the case.

October 6th; 640th Consecutive Meeting:

Forrest, who arrived late, gave a short report on the new policy of AMAZING STORIES and FANTASTIC ADVENTURES. It seems Howard Browne, the new editor, intends to eliminate all comic-book stuff and primarily wants fiction that has good human-interest.

The book raffled this week was Ley and Bonestell's magnificent "Conquest of Space" and was won by Charlotte Armstrong, wife of Lyle Armstrong, one of the editors of Cosmos Pub. Co. Mr. Armstrong was here supposedly looking for new talent. Cosmos is the publisher of two Jerry Walker science-fiction novels and is interested in more fiction of the same type.

October 13th; 641st Consecutive Meeting:

Talk this week was by Dr. Edward F. Rothkirch who spoke on "The Sleep Machine". Dr. Rothkirch, a former practicing psychologist from the East and now -- I believe -- vice president of a West Coast research firm, told of his work with using record play-back devices for learning while asleep, and the studies being made by universities and firms on this new technique. He described many difficulties and also the advantages of learning thus. Several UCLA students seemed immensely interested; mid-term exams were almost upon them.

October 20th; 642nd Consecutive Meeting:

Daugherty read an article on the history of Halloween. Ackerman announced the new mag "Man To Man" (he thought it "Fan To Fan" which was why he bought it) carried a story, "International Incident", somewhat stf being laid in 1960. The main talk was by Member Rick Strauss on "Magic". He said he wanted to review the subject as scientifically as possible. He reminded us that scientists say 99% of our mind is sub-conscious. He spoke of thought-forms and their relation to auras. He had many books with him, which were passed about, that members and guests might look at certain illustrations of which he spoke. He also used recordings of various ritualistic music to enhance his talk.

The speeck was very interesting. He used many rough sketch drawings, made on a large hanging pad, to illustrate many of his points.

October 27th; 643rd Consecutive Meeting:

Fifteenth Anniversary Meeting; Halloween Costume Party.

Alan Hershey revealed why he appears only at night: he came as a vampire. Freddie Hershey came as Margot of Urbs; Len J Moffatt as SE vanVogt's Gilbert Cosseyn; Hal Curtis as Fu Manchu. Dave Fox and Eph Konigsberg came as the Invisible Man; EEEvans, looking very much like himself, as an Experimental Model Android; Cecillia Yakutis came as one of the Invisible Mourning Ones from New Crete ("Watch the Northwind Rise"). No one saw her. Rose-mary Cook as Carmen; Louise Leipiar and Dorothy Faulkner as three-eyed women; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Eichner in blackface. Wendy Ackerman was the "Dole-gate from Sirius", Forrest

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

WELL, THEY'RE LETTERS AREN'T THEY?

RICK SNEARY (South Gate in '58) misspells:

Dear SHAGGY:

Well, just finished #15, and will dash off a note of comment on same.

I want to tank friend Len for so kineally putting my name in so many places. I assure you his prices are the lowest to be found anywhere. Of course the fact that I snagged the notes of Bradbury and vanVogt to add to the report may have been partly responceable for the reduced rate. The remer that I twisted vanVogt arm tell he droped them is quite unkind. I nearly asked him to sign his autograph, and left while he was thus ingaged.

We'er (Moffatt and I) are sorry to see we cheeted Joquel III out of one point. Moffat, who has just cut Hank Spelman to II½, for his rebellion in F A P A, was nodoubt carryed away with his new found Dictatorialial powers.

Mr. (?) Princeton starts out very well with his second article... That is as a follower of the Laney, Burbee, school of jernalism. The idea being to find falt with everything, and leave no un-understood stone unturned in the surch to find something wrong. I don't see anything wrong with a third or a fouth round of reprints of H.P.L., or Mertermmer Slunk. Since when does Augie come down and beat you into buying his stinking books. -- Sure we want better books with better stories. But since when has the likes of any one bothered a publisher? You, Bradbury, or the Atlantic Monthly could blat about the cheep books being put out, and as long as thos cheep, stinking, and crummy old books keep bringing \$3 a pence, Derleth and Fell, and all the rest will go on. The only answer I see is for Mr. Princeton to go into the book publishing business abd drive those amatureish profesionales out of the feild.

Loving yours,

RICK SNEARY.

Then there's a character named STAN WOOLSTON, who indites thusly:

Number 15 Shangri-La was a quite sprightly publication, suh. Give Len a tap on the back. His commentary as editor was remarkable in some respects; some of the repetitions made me think of the axiom of the advertising man, to beat the message into the reader. Yet the fact was the FANNUAL ad was in solitary grandeur. This potent publication is top-rate, neat, and deserving of wider advertisement. At a buck a toss it's the way to get a lot of info that's unavailable elsewhere.

I like reviews: reviews about "Space Cadet" are excellent in one respect:

they are usually favorable. But I've read several and there should be more recent ones worth a nod of approval. What about the NEXT story by Heinlein about the space boys? It should be out soon, shouldn't it? I'll probably read it with about as much zeal as SC itself.

The Earle Princeton article is good. Interesting, though not controversial. I agree that more publicity to the goings-on of such sharkers (or perhaps a better name would be "non-business men") who don't have a standard policy of common-sense business fairness. (All printers except the most backward have a standard and pattern that they try to comply with in spelling, grammar and all other such mechanical details. Even the kind of type used for the title page, the number of blank pages, the makeup of the contents page and all others, have been fixed by custom over centuries of use. These customs lead to a mechanically neat book if complied with; but human relations are as important in its sale as its physical "correctness".

There is a united fantasy book group who have semi-united their policies for the purpose of selling their wares in a cooperative way. I would be in favor of a larger group, made up of all stf and fantasy houses, who unite in agreeing to certain requirements of worth; to make a book readable in contents if it means rewriting or cutting; to keep from false impressions of originality; from avoiding reprints to the saturation point (whatever that is) and beyond.

I'd prefer Princeton's article be called a hell-raising story rather than the L. Major Reynolds opus. Fiction can be good and still rate lower than articles or other items to me, because I like brief items as a rule -- especially in fiction. It quite often takes longer to competently write fiction, and fanzine space is limited. Over 6 and a half pages were used ... Yet if it had been stf I'd probably have cheered.

Dorothea Faulkner's poetry tickles me, especially the Lullaby one. Maybe because it tells a story, and briefly. I advocate that fiction be kept to one page, for best results to fan editors. (And for prozinos, I prefer that the story be on the longish side.)

Rick's poll write-up evoked smiles. But it, and the Westercon II, both seem liberally sprinkled with Moffattisms.

I've been thinking of the 'zine, and now something has come to me -- the dearth of pics. There is one worth looking at, and it is about post card size. The other is a doodle, presumably illustrating the poem about the other-worldly girl with the pale (I suppose) green hair.

Later I'll fill out my request for Associate Membership, and see about a copy of the FANNUAL. Adoooo --

STAN WOOLSTON

* * * * *

Next, from New Castle, Pa., JAMES DUFFEN writes:

I was both pleased and perhaps a little surprised when I saw my letter in the Shangri-LA letter section. I thought you might be publishing the comments

you received, but wasn't sure. I knew -- from Mr. Ackerman -- that you wanted comments, but didn't know that the magazine was having a letter section which, by the way, I like very much and think should be continued.

The fiction this time was really entertaining. Just the right length and not overdone, except perhaps in one spot. The only real criticism I can make of this "hell-raising" story is that it did, perhaps, have one or two too many characters. That is to say, a couple of the characters could have been welded into one, and served the purpose of both just as well. However, it certainly was above average for a story which purports to be done by an amateur. (This I still am inclined to doubt, but one assumes that only amateur writers are supposed to write for amateur magazines.)

The report on the conference and the business about the Fantasy Poll was interesting; what I could understand of it, I should say.

Both poems were excellent with the Lullaby one coming out with top honors. (Needless to say I do not include the Anonymous thing in the poetry category.)

Who is this Weaver Wright who is both a book dealer and book reviewer? I guess I'll have to read Space Cadet after all.

Well, I see Mr. Princeton is back in this issue too, and this time with a three-page article instead of a back-page filler. But he still seems to be very unhappy about everything. What he does not seem to understand is that Fell's Science Fiction Library is obviously aimed at the juvenile market. I've read two of these Fell STF books, and it is very obvious to me. And who ever heard of a juvenile book that was well-bound, well-edited (except, of course, to remove s-x, etc., but that comes under the heading of Censorship), or, for that matter, well-written? I think that these STF stories from the old pulps make swell reading for the kids who were too young to read (or perhaps not yet even born) when the first stories appeared. And children never worry about the appearance or the writing in a book as long as both are on the colorful side. Of course, many adults can enjoy these stories, too, and yet not be termed too childish. They are -- let us say -- an escape from more adult escape literature.

And speaking of adult escape literature brings us to August Derleth's excellent publications, and -- sadly enough -- Mr. Princeton's opinion of them. At least Mr. Princeton agrees that Arkham Books are well-bound and well-printed. His objections to reprinting tales which have already been reprinted are ill-founded, however. He mentions the possibility of Mr. Derleth having a genius for picking good stories which deserve more than one or two printings, but passes that possibility off as a mere nothing, and goes on to praise the Fantasy Reader. Now I agree that the Reader usually has a large quantity of good stories in each issue, but I also believe that August Derleth does have that heaven-sent genius for picking the really great stories of all time, and is doing most of us a favor by reprinting and re-printing the best of these. New readers are coming into the field every day. The world is obviously becoming "STF and Fantasy conscious". And when the books with the good stuff are out of print (and they do become out of print pretty quickly, you must admit) the new comer to the field gets a chance to obtain some of these really good stories in a new reprint edition. True, many of the reprinted items -- some of those in Famous Fantastic and Fantastic Novels, but not all, and some of those in the Hall of Fame series in Startling -- are not worthwhile, except for the new

kiddies. But for the most part the reprinted stories in books are worth the time and trouble to keep on reprinting them for the benefit of old readers who may have missed them the first time(s), and the new readers who have never had the golden opportunity of reading them. Then, too, there are the Collectors who like to have stories in several different editions. I know, for my brother is a collector of Mystery Novels. He has a slight interest in the weird side of fantasy, too, and would probably join in saying with me, more power to August Derleth.

Before I close I must compliment those who made the magazine so enjoyable. The only exception, of course, is Mr. Princeton's article. He, or at least the stuff he writes, just doesn't go down with me.

As usual, I'm looking forward to the next issue, but won't promise I'll write every time, as my writing seems to pile up on me day by day. I'll try, though, if you're still interested in having a letter section...with me in it.

Respectfully,

JAMES DUFFEN

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AUGUST DERLETH writes an exception of Princeton's recent review:

I read with interest Mr. Earle Princeton's "long standing gripe" in the number 15 Shangri-LA. I can well understand that if Mr. Princeton owns all the Arkham House books, he would feel that he was being imposed upon by the percentage of Arkham stories which appear in my anthologies, but I think he has not taken all the factors into account.

For instance, he forgets that early Arkham books were published in editions of from 1000 to 1200 copies only. This, in SLEEP NO MORE, two stories came from Arkham books which only 1000 fans had a chance to buy -- those by Smith and Lovecraft. True, stories by Bloch, Jacobi, Howard, and Heald subsequently appeared in Arkham collections, but at a time when SLEEP NO MORE in turn was out of print, the Heald coming in this month's SOMETHING ABOUT CATS.

In WHO KNOCKS? I used Lovecraft's THE SHUNNED HOUSE principally because it was unobtainable elsewhere; it had not been used in the World Book of Lovecraft's tales. I used SQUIRE TOBY'S WILL because it was one of the rare LeFanu stories heretofore published in America only in our GREEN TEA &c. Stories by Asquith and Bradbury and Coppard and Whitehead were to come subsequently in Arkham collections as apart from anthologies, and thus they were not used from Arkham books.

This is in some respects true of the other anthologies, also. THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD was intended originally to be an Arkham sampler of stories from Arkham books, but was expanded and made more than that. The use of the Lovecraft novel in STRANGE PORTS OF CALL was again dictated by its scarcity, and so was the use of Smith's CITY OF THE SINGING FLAME in THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON, though this title is also in print now in another anthology.

The coming anthology, BEYOND TIME AND SPACE (Pollogrini, 1950) will contain no story by Lovecraft, which may disappoint Mr. Princeton.

It ought to be considered that my anthologies are not edited per se for collectors, but for a wider audience, the intention being to broaden the book-buying public for fantasy, be it weird or science-fiction. In that I believe I have succeeded rather notably, and that very success, which has been beneficial to authors and publishers alike in this field, is the best answer to Mr. Princeton's gripe.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

AUGUST DERLETH

JUST A MINUTE (Cont'd. from Page 26)

— complete with false nose, false teeth and extra moustache -- as the "Delag-8 from Humerus".

Events this meeting were LASFSociety-shaking. Ackerman, Hodgkins and Daugherty, our oldest members and almost charter-members, were presented with beautiful scrolls, the work of Henry Eichner, who was also responsible for the splendid decorations and the "eats". Dave Fox won first prize for his Invisible Man costume, and Freddie Hershey second for her "Margot of Urbs" get-up. Daugherty, Eichner and Freddie Hershey gave a hilarious little skit; then we had some professional feats of ledgermain and prestidigitation by Dr. Harry Segal, who did amazing feats of illusion. He was soo good it was suggested he probably aided his work with mass-hypnotism, the altering of light waves or similarization. This belief was never fully substantiated, but, at any rate the club was completely mystified, amused and delighted.

November 3rd; 644th Consecutive Meeting:

Russ Hodgkins told that the Henry Kuttners plan to attend a university for one to three years, and therefore their stories wouldn't appear so often, although their Padgett-O'Donnell stories will soon appear in book form. Ackerman told of visiting the new STF club formed at UCLA, which already has 78 fan members and a goal of 150.

Alan Hershey read his paper, "THE ASTOUNDING DECLINE", which is presented in this issue of SHAGGY, and then there was a general discussion on the subject, specifically slanted towards that famous November issue of ASTOUNDING. A poll of club members disclosed Sturgeon's "What Dead Men Tell" as the favorite story, getting twice as many votes as all its rivals. The two serials were not included in the balloting, but there was considerable enthusiasm concerning Heinlein's "Gulf".

Freddie Hershey read the poem "A Generation of Reminiscence" (also presented in this issue), by Clare Winger Harris, one of our favorite people.

Scandal reared its ugly head. Director Alan Hershey helped Forrest No-J Period Ackerman raffle the book -- Nelson Bond's "Exiles of Time" -- and guess who won it? Impeachment proceedings against the Director will indubitably be instituted almost any week now.

LOS ANGELES SCIENCE FANTASY SOCIETY

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS:

In response to many requests from all over the country the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society is opening its rolls to ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIPS.

Although many desired this membership before, it was not until our 15th Anniversary meeting that the matter was decided favorably.

The membership affords many advantages. It brings you regularly the club organ SHANGRI-LA. It replaces the old subscription plan by giving you the magazine and a membership at a reduced rate. The club organ alone has here-to-fora cost \$1.35 per year to those who purchased it.

Now, as an added bonus for early applicants we are sending in your first bundle THE LAST TWO ISSUES of SHANGRI-LA and will also send the December issue edited by EEEvans as soon as it is off the press. Therefore you will be receiving \$1.85 in club publications as your membership subscription does not officially begin until January 1, 1950.

With your first mailing you will also receive your ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP CARD. You will be notified also of all Special Meetings of the group.

There are two ways for you to join:

#1 Send in your application and \$1.00 (no stamps) and we will immediately send you your bonus bundle and enter your name on the membership list after approval by the membership committee.

#2 Send in your application for membership and immediately upon an O.K. by the executive committee we will send you the bonus bundle and you can look it over. If after looking over the issues you desire the membership then just send in your dollar within 30 days after the mailing of your bundle and your membership will be entered on the rolls.

This is your opportunity to enroll in one of the largest and oldest Science Fiction clubs in existence. Don't wait but write us today at 1305 West Ingraham, Los Angeles 14, California and receive your bonus package by return mail.



SHANGRI-LA

R. SWANSON