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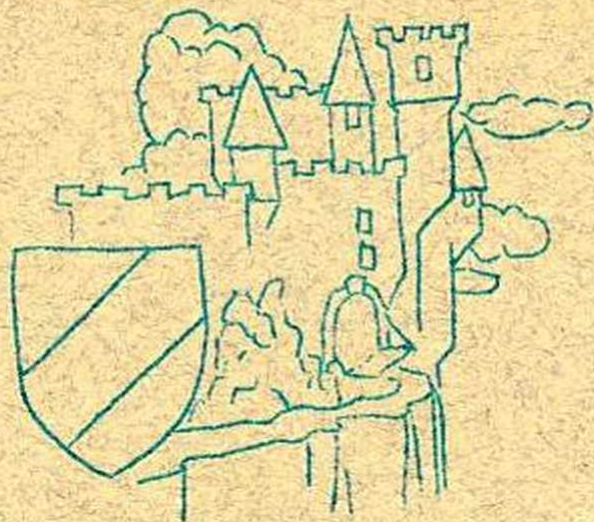
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4

JULY

1

SHANGRI LA



Cover..... Russ Hodgkins

Editorial..... Bill Daugherty.....PAGE 3

Institutions of Art.....Ted Carnell.....PAGE 5

Case of Jonathan G. Fann.....Bill.....PAGE 10

Marsic Hills L.A.....Bill Crawford.....PAGE 14

Starchar.....Ted Carnell.....PAGE 15

This Magazine is published in Los Angeles by
Mr and Mrs W. J. Daugherty, New address will
be announced soon...

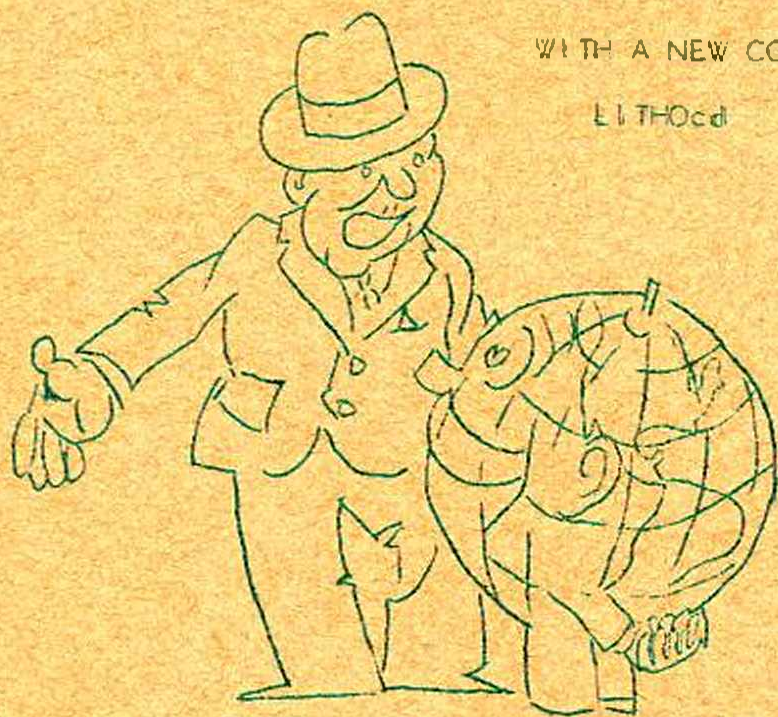
A STARLIGHT



PUBLICATION

It is more than a pleasure to dedicate this issue to Ted Carnell, it is a privilege for this fan of fans in the British armed forces is truly a science fiction fan. Excellent examples of this fact are his two articles printed in this issue.

ON THE BACK OF THIS EDITORIAL IS THE COVER ORIGINALLY INTENDED FOR THE ROCKET BUT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE THE MAG OUT AT THIS TIME. IT WILL BE ISSUED IN THE FUTURE WITH A NEW COVER
LITHOed



Yes, fandom is really going to show the world a few things this year. New fan mags will be born, new fans will be entered into the fold, all in all it's going to be the greatest year that fandom has yet encountered.

BUT
Most of all fandom has
Got to unite

Yep... It happened on
JUNE 28th

Now it's

Mr and Mrs Daugherty
of
Hollywood

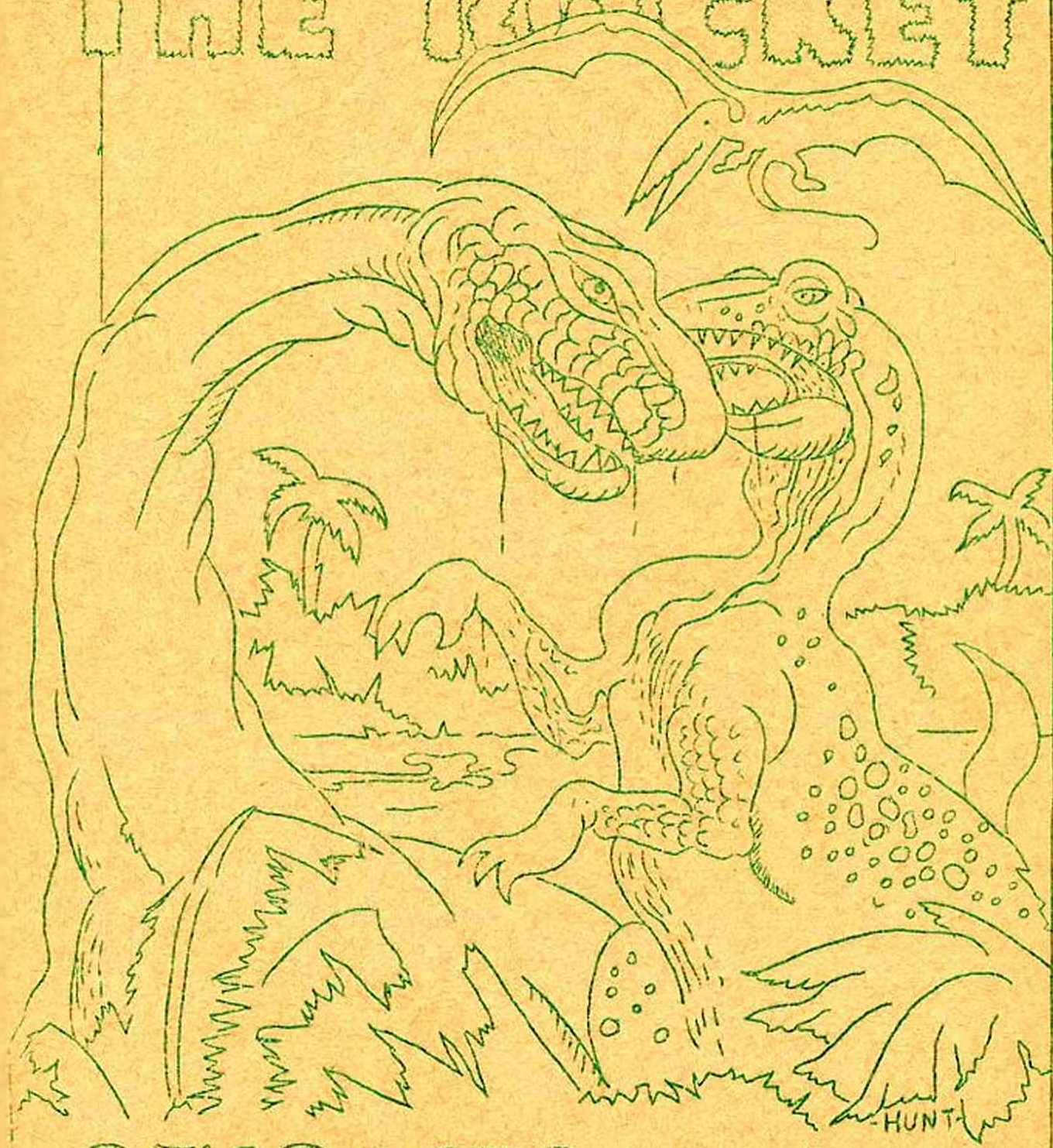


VOL 1

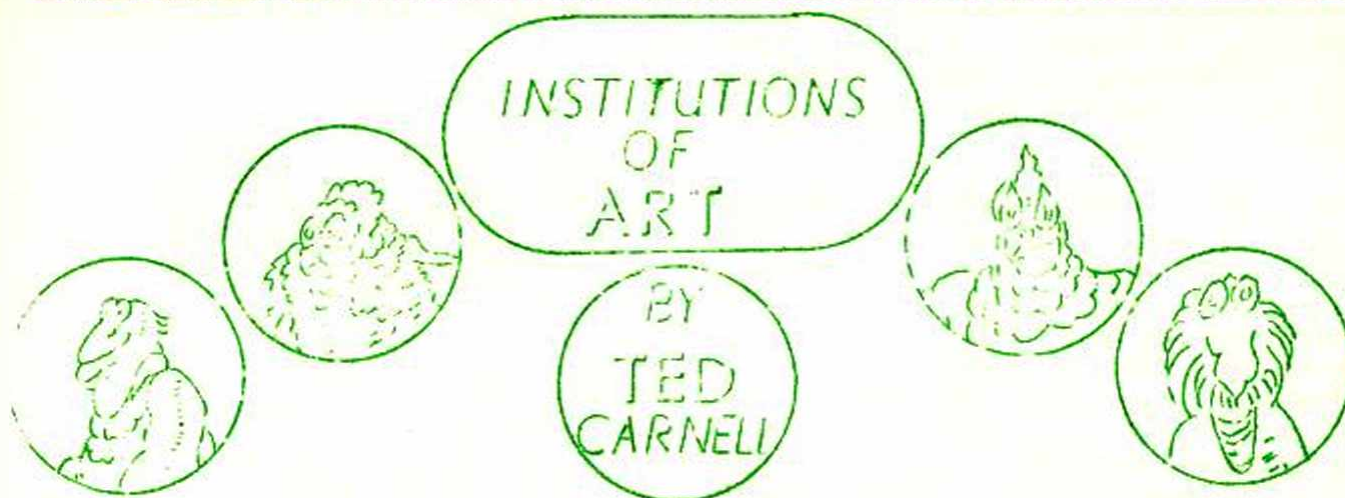
NO. 2

THE

ROCKET



DINOSAUR ISSUE
JUNE 1946



uch paint has flowed upon the canvas since that previous article of mine. "Art! I Choke!" was written. Unfortunately, it was published nearly a year afterwards, which made it so out of date that it read like a paper dug from the archives of an antedeluvian society. Unfortunately, that is, for the critics, but fortunately for me as it makes the writing of a sequel so much easier.

Since the beginning of 1939 the whole aspect of science fiction has undergone a fundamental change. The increased number of publishers publishing futuristic brands of literature as a means to their (remun-erative) ends, has widened the competitive field so much that those who have some knowledge of the game are already showing signs of strain with the fiction angle, so with the art side. The illustrations have, in many instances, taken on a more vital aspect than ever before and competition has become far greater and more interesting than it ever was.

The most profound changes have occurred to the Institutions of Art themselves -- that is, Paul, Wesso, Brown, and possibly Morey, in that order. They represent the pre-1939 era, which was built by and round them; built in a stifflingly tight circle which will take some breaking but the cracks are already appearing. The early results from the Widner Art Poll were not exactly surprising because the ardent fans are most likely to reply first; and amongst the ardent fictioneers are the majority of Institutionists -- those that worship at the shrines of the above-listed.

Many fans will naturally argue that, because the Widner Poll has listed certain artists in an order of popularity (? -- my quarry), the Poll must be correct. On the contrary, I disagree most emphatically. Paul (at this writing), hasn't been placed first on merit, but on sentimental slop. Solely because the Institutionists are still suffering from a hangover of yesteryear. Because, in those days, Paul hadn't the competition he has today, and he conformed to all the rules the addicts wanted him to, he made a great name for himself.

And an Institutionist will deny that the great can ever be eclipsed.

That statement goes for Brown and Wesso too. But let's back track a little in Time and catch up the thread of Art where I was choked off previously. At that time of writing, I mentioned that I liked the re-

freshening difference of Fugue, Krupa, Schonburg and other newcomers who were sticking their necks out for a basting.

For a while only. Their "freshness" became stale when they entered the realm of Mass Production. To wit, every illustration comes out of the same box neatly tied up with a ribbon labelled "Imitation". None of these new men have made a serious attempt to produce anything but stereotyped illustrations. If the story contents of AMAZING are an experiment in encouraging new readers (if we are to believe certain statements elsewhere), I cannot agree that the art work is.



The first blow against the Institutionists was struck by CCC Campbell. (My initialing stands for "Convention - Cobweb - Cleaning"). Quietly and without any flag waving, Howard Brown slipped off the cover staff. If you check with the late 1938 ASTOUNDING'S, you will notice that on several covers Wesso came in. With the inception of astronomical covers, Brown slipped out faster. This was an unprecedented step, for, with the exception of a Wesso cover in June 1937, Brown had done every cover since Street&Smith took over from Clayton.

At first the change wasn't particularly noticeable. Schneeman did a cover and received a certain amount of praise. But a muttering began to be heard when Frew, a newcomer, didn't reach anywhere near previous standards. The muttering rose to a howl when Campbell used even more unknown men. Rogers' first cover was good, but was immediately followed by some very poor stuff by Gladney. The howl echoed right across the Atlantic and reverberated back again -- and still Campbell persisted with his cobweb cleaning.

Interior artists of long standing either altered their technique or went the way of the authors who couldn't change their styles to conform with the new requirements. Dold dropped out, and another outcry burst forth. I have an idea that Elliot either ran into illness or found a more remunerative outlet for his talents. Wesso was curtailed also in the reshuffle. Taken all round, the changes were not at all well received, and the Institutionists took a peek round the rest of the field for a place to hang their worship on.

Ah-ha! Allah be praised! Back in the fold was Paul, doing sterling repetition work throughout a variety of new magazines. What matter the literary standard against the incomparable worth of The Institution of science fiction? But, hero-worship did not rest there. A newcomer with a flair for offtrail art had also become an Institution.

Virgil Finlay, by his exceptionally fine work in weird illustrations and quickly carved a niche for himself. On the strength of this the ardent Institutionists pleaded, argued, and demanded to have him appear in science fiction. After much pressure (presumably), Campbell got Finlay to do a cover. Despite all the excuses Finlay devoted care to make, there is no denying that Virgil fell down badly on the job. His effort was easily the second worst on ASTOUNDING for many years back -- the worst being Frew's effort. You will notice that Finlay hasn't been back since, and I doubt if he ever will be.

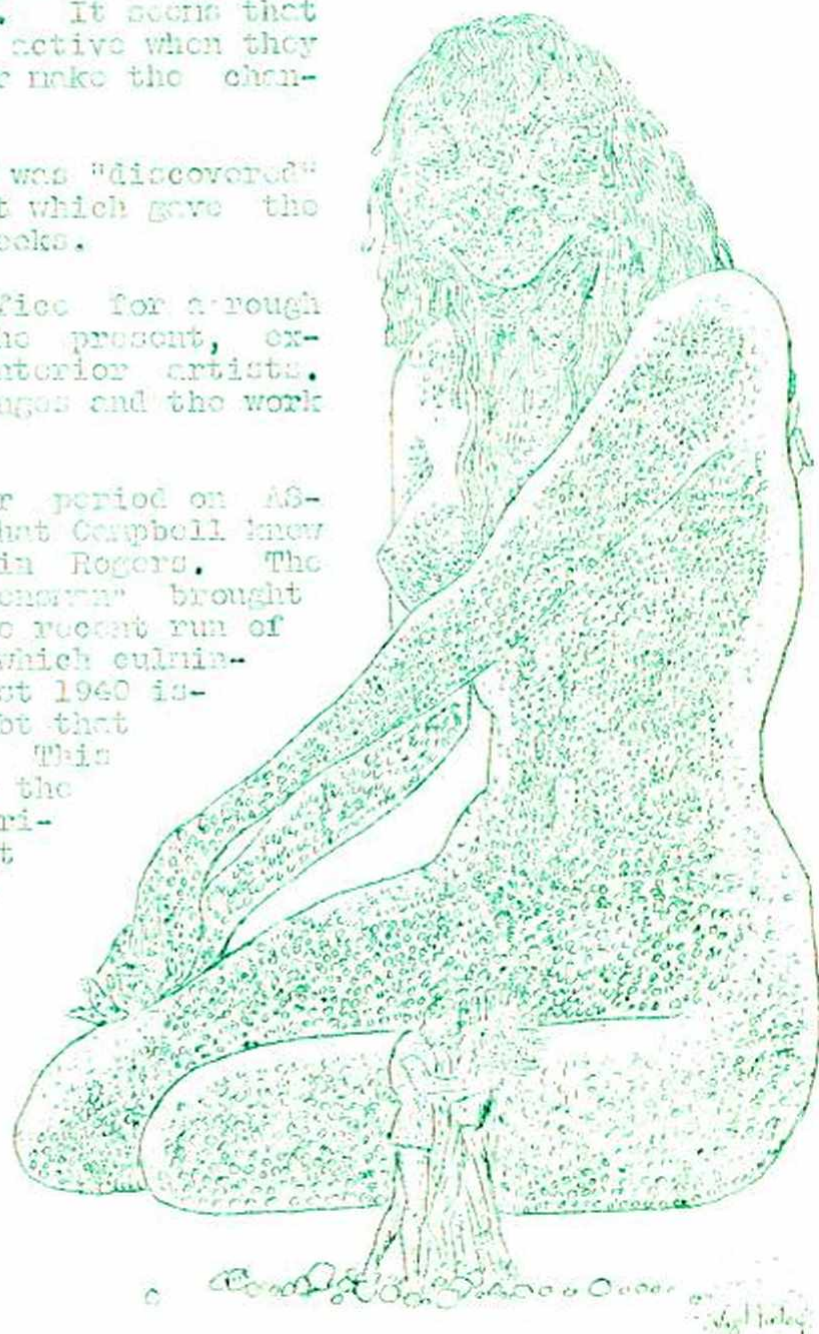
The newcomers were still crawling however. On UNKNOWN Campbell had experimented with Scott for a while, until Cartier was casually brought in for a few interiors. And when Ed took time out for THE ADON and did a cover, I think Campbell knew his prayers had been answered. In this instance, too, the Institutionists remained quiet. It seems that they are only extremely active when they request the alterations or make the changes.

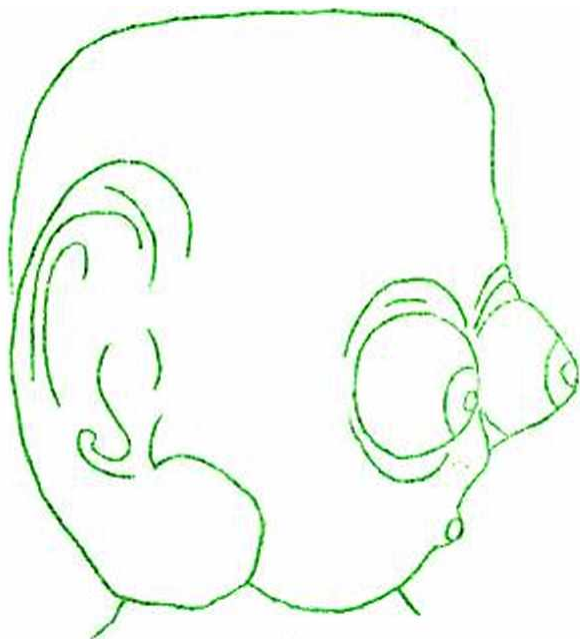
For instance, Hannes Bok was "discovered" and a rave notice went out which gave the I's a spotted fever for weeks.

The foregoing should suffice for a rough summary of events up to the present, excluding, in the main, interior artists. Now to evaluate the changes and the work produced.

After the trial and error period on ASTOUNDING, it is evident that Campbell knew that he was going to retain Rogers. The first cover for "Grey Lensman" brought forth due praise, and the recent run of increasingly good covers which culminated (to date) in the August 1940 issue, prove without a doubt that Rogers has come to stay. This spaceship cover is by far the finest, most natural contribution to futuristic art work that has yet been made. None of the institutions yet have ever closely paralleled it with all their years of experience -- and they've had some fine efforts at times.

Cartier will, I think, prove to be one of the finest "buyers" fantasy-literature has yet seen. He is gifted with an insight into





bizarreness which comes out from everytine, because he does not fit into the stereotype illustration school. There's something about his work which makes it appear alive and realistic though retaining "other worldliness."

The interior artists on these two magazines don't stack up quite so well over the same period. The Isip's, Kramer, Kolliker and the resurrected Orben haven't yet attained perfection with their fresh styles that the Old Guard had become so accomplished with. E. Isip leads the field so far, with Schneeman, using a new style, close behind. You may remember that Campbell asked for reaction on the latter's illustrations for "Gray Legion." Schneeman made the

grade and stayed, the Institutions did not and went.

These new artists just had to come in if Street & Smith hoped to retain leadership of the field. Obviously, as they had changed the fundamental basis of the literature they were using, it wouldn't do to retain any vestige of the old fashioned days. I applaud the entire efforts made in both the literary and illustrative standards under the Campbell regime.

Meanwhile, Brown, over on the "Standard" group, has been going downhill rapidly. It may be through editorial requirements or through the color schemes he has recently employed. At any rate, he is nowhere near the standard he was during 1936-38. Wense, also mainly over at "Standard" keeps much to his old style. He doesn't improve or change at all, and I doubt if even his most ardent admirers can now rave over his work.

Paul, freelancing here, there and everywhere, still draws the oldtime readers and a large number of newer readers who have been led to believe that Paul stands for the all-highest in fantasy art. This appears to me as a fantasy in itself. Ever since the year Paul has been mass-producing his illustrations; every one practically the same. They become as boring as the stilted seriousness of Krupa and company, although considerably better.

As for Finlay, I feel that he would do best to stick to weird illustrating -- if there is sufficient to keep him occupied. There is not a lot of clever art in Virgil's work, as anyone will discover if they make a careful study of his work. The disguise comes in the variety of stippled backgrounds he uses. It gives the desired effect of weirdness and bizarreness that was a refreshing change from the rut WIRE TALES had also got into. But it doesn't wear well -- and it certainly doesn't come out well in science fiction. In fact, after a short while it looks somewhat of a mess. Now, that makes it tough on Finlay -- his best bet so far is the Huncy group, and perhaps he will make a

stand there. At least, his illustrations are more in keeping with those older and "queerer" type of stories.

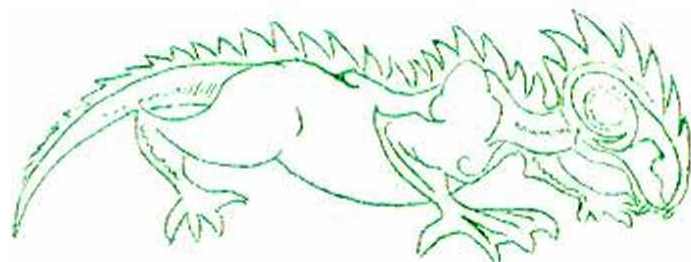
And, if Finley gets a thin time, I can't see many breaks coming for Hannes Bok unless he changes his style. His work is the nearest to Epsteinian art I have yet seen in magazine form. It may be a controversial point, but my reaction to Epsteinian art is that it is putrid.

I'll hand it to Editor Pohl for obtaining Bok for interior work --- in these days of intense competition it is a good puff for a magazine to get hold of someone in the public eye. And Bok certainly is in the public eye at the moment, having been raved about from the Pacific to the Atlantic -- by the fans. But I still don't think Hannes will make the grade unless he changes his style. There isn't room for two weird illustrators relying solely upon incongruity....

Of the various "staff artists" used by the various other publishing concerns, I think the least said the better. They haven't the faintest idea of what is needed, and never will have.

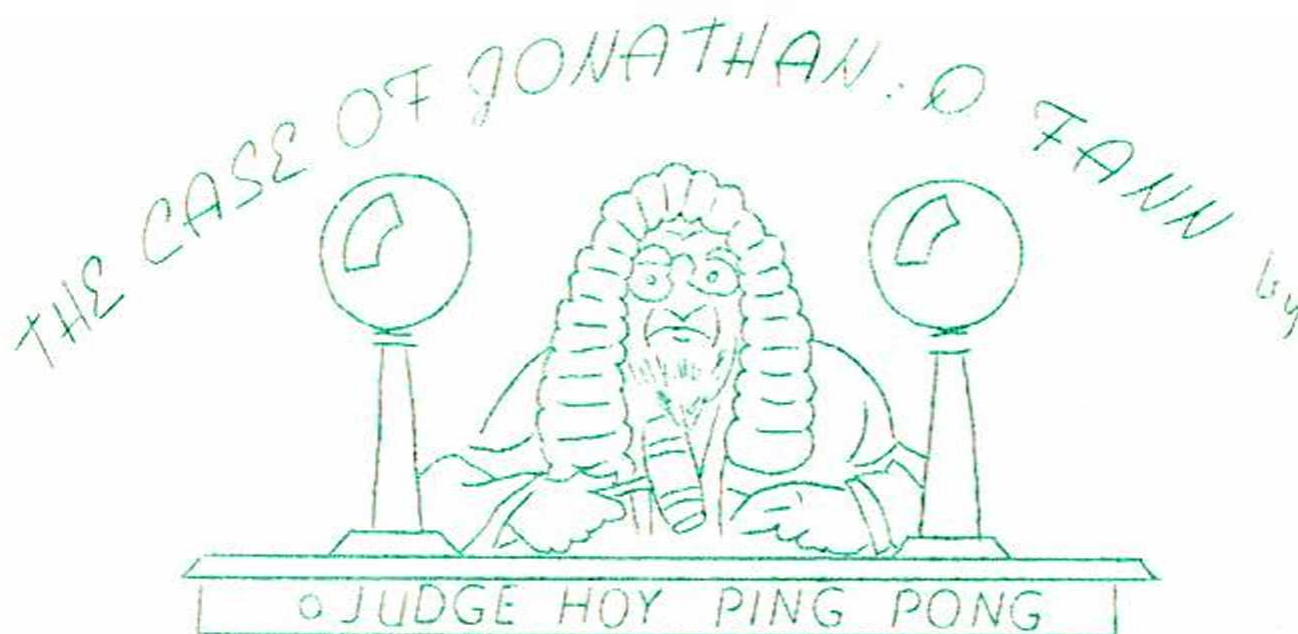
Despite the violent outcry concerning this article -- and I expect some of the Institutionists to squawk to high Heaven -- there will probably be one factor they will completely overlook. That is, that if the very foundations of science fiction literature hadn't changed by now, it would have been as extinct as it was before 1926. It could not have possibly dragged along in the rut it was in at the 1937 period. It had to change or die! And if the literature made the grade, why not the new artists?

The sooner the Institutionists recognize this and stop maudling about their past idols, the sooner there will be more space in the Readers' Columns for worthwhile subjects.



SCORPIO

ARTHER LOUIS JOQUEL II SHANGRI LA



As the lone figure struggled up the incline, a brassy tin horn somewhere in the background burst forth with a single tinny snort.

An old man with square specs and a long white beard looked up from his game of cribbage to peer between the bars of the gate:

"Cripes! Another!"

At the peal of the horn the figure straightened, glanced about to note if he was seen, and marched proudly up to the shining gates, chest out and manner pompous. At a command from an unseen watchman he stopped.

From somewhere a cherub appeared, unfolded a scroll and read the local equivalent of the Riot Act. The figure before the gates gathered himself up in proud disdain, as if the cherub had openly hinted that he needed policing!

The cherub vanished, and the old man stepped forth, specs in hand.

"What's yer name?" he snapped.

"The name, Honorable sir," replied "it", "is Jonathan Q. Fann. I was known far and wide on Earth as 'Grand Old Fann'."

"We don't need the fancy gaff around here, young feller," square-specs snorted. "You're plain ordinary folks, speaking plain: langvish, and we don't put up with airs. Now. You seek admission. By the rules and regulations of the Establishment, we must first inquire into your past. You say convince; skip nothing important."

"Do you mean, venerable one, that I am to recount the moments of my life on ---"

"Yes!" the white beard waved--"out that short and get busy!"

Tell, let me refresh my memory a second. I suppose I am best known for the great service I was to fellow-beings back there--. Especially my brethren following the same ~~hobby~~ as I. In fact, it was through my efforts that it became ~~more~~ their more hobby: it was converted into the most important thing in life!

Yessir---we fans just about ran the country. Editors of all the magazines bowed to my -- I mean our wishes, publishers rose and fell upon our whims. Politics depended upon us to exist. We found that the communists were loutish fellows who were more interested in politics than science fiction. We exterminated them. Technocrats soon followed. There was no room for such organizations in fandom who openly advocated surplanting Democracy!

All the petty 'isms' and 'lists' were wiped out. We hunted down every atheists and agnostic and -er liquidated them!"

"Yeah," the old man interrupted dryly. "I .. ah .. interviewed a few of those who were liquidated just recently. I believe they mentioned you."

America and science-fiction advanced nobly under my guiding hand!" the speaker threw back his head as if already tossing his halo about. "I humbly take all credit for doing the great Service. But that isn't all. I was the life blood of the Fan Magazine."

"The what----?" questioned the old man.

"The Fan Magazine.....a great science fiction institution. A fan magazine is a small amateur publication printed and distributed by us fans, and contained material of interest to us and science fiction."

"Go on --", the old man seated himself and propped his chin in the palm of a bony hand. "You interest me strangely."

"I must modestly admit that my magazine --- I called it Fann's Mag -- was the leader of the amateur press. I suppose that in it's long and glorious existence it published just about every fan author worth any note at all ---- that is, those who believed in Democracy and science-fiction you understand --- and many professionals received their start from me. "Fann's Mag" regularly presented the best fiction, articles, poetry, illustrations and letters. All other fans modeled their little efforts after it.



THIS IS A BRIEF SECTION DEVOTED
TO ALL OF THE POOR FELLOWS WHO WERE
UNABLE TO ATTEND THE DENVENTION' YOU
HAVEN'T REALLY LIVED UNTIL YOU HAVE
ATTENDED AT LEAST ONE OF THE ---

SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTIONS



"Then too, I helped untold scores of those other magazines. A magazine but needed my magical name upon the cover or contents page to draw readers like flies to honey! -- hch, if you will pardon the simile -- , I suppose I was rated as the most popular writer of the time, and in several popularity polls ranked highest."

"You -- what -- highest?" white-beard mumbled beneath it.

"I beg your pardon?" inquired Jonathan Q. Fann.

"Nothing....nothing....just an old man talking to himself. Get on with your story. And it's only fair to tell you that you are speaking into a hidden microphone. That person down there --" and a thumb jerked downward, is listening to your recital too."

"Well, there isn't a whole lot to tell. Of course I had my share of fiction in the professional magazines. You see, they were printed under a pseudonym; the editors thought perhaps it might arise some question, if they appeared under my own name. They were quite popular. In fact, the pen name I employed is almost as well known and respected as my own. But the, I really shine in fandom..

"I sponsored many things in fandom. National conventions, small state conferences; saw to it that they were skyrocket successes. I suppose I subsidized more fan magazines than any other six fans together. In short, and to sum it up, everything fandom is today, it owes to me."

"What was that?" the old one asked?

"I said," Jonathan patiently repeated, with the air that he realized he was talking to an old man and must therefore be lenient, "I said, "everything fandom is today, it owes to me." I might enlarge upon that statement and say that if it wasn't for me, I shudder to think of the state science-fiction might be in today!"

"--- and Democracy," beard-and-specs added.

"And Democracy. Yes sir." Jonathan was quite proud of himself. He stood in perfect respectful silence while the old one raved to himself a moment, and then went to a box fastened upon the wall. Pulling open a little door there was revealed a telephone, the wires disappearing downward through a cloud.

The aged gentleman then carried on an animated conversation with some one unknown on the other end of the line. Violent nods of his head, and alternate shakes accompanied his words. In the end he was heard to mutter: "so you won't have him, eh?", and hung up to close the door.

"I am prompted to ask, before informing you of my decision," the old fellow said, "about a party or group you haven't mentioned in your....

r... 'purges'. What about these "fascists"?

"Oh, I'm afraid I know very little of them sir. They operate exclusively in Europe, away outside of my sphere of knowledge."

"I see," -- dryly. "Well, young man, will you have a cigarette? There is no fire in the existence you are about to enter. Smoke up." Specs offered a pack of cigarettes.

"Oh no, thank you just the same, but I don't smoke. But my curiosity prompts me to ask a question. I thought that in there all was paradise. Do you mean to say you are not allowed to smoke in there?"

"Young man!", snapped white-beard, "just who said you were going in there?"

"Why... why... you sir. You said there was no fire where I was going, so obviously I am not destined for.....you know, down there! Where else is there left to go?"

"Have you ever heard of Limbo?"

"Limbo, sir?" Jonathan was puzzled. "Seems to me I have. What of it?"

"Well, punk, that's your destination. We won't have hide nor hair of you in here, and his nibs down there threatened revolution if we sent you down to him; the answer is Limbo. Son, the answer is you just ain't worth a damn nowhere. Limbo is your fate---"

--and so saying he yanked a lever, a section of cloud opened under Jonathan. Fann and with a well placed kick to propel him, he fell feet first down a black chute. After him came the sarcasm of the old man above:

"Next time chump, don't be so damn perfect, and maybe we'll let you in either of the two better-known places."



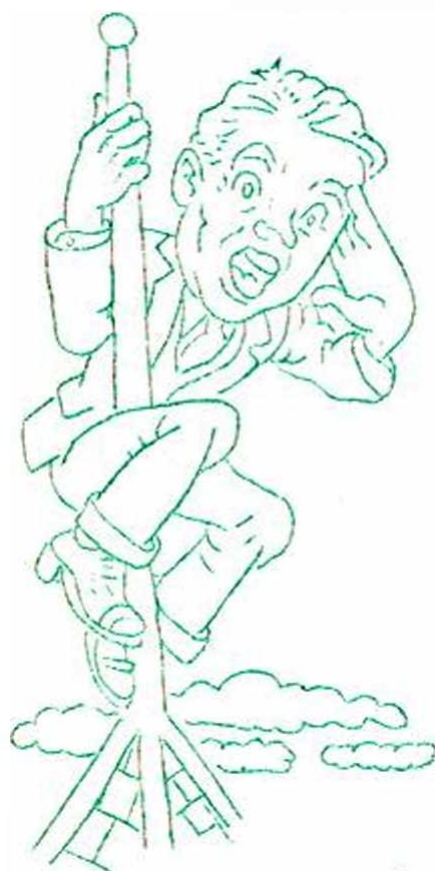
FINIS

POLARIS

PAUL FREEHAFFER
BLACKER HOUSE
CALTECH - PASADENA

MARSIE HITS L.A.

by
Bill Crawford



"Hello, there, Science-Fiction Fan, I'm sure glad to know you. How's everything on Mars?"

"So you still want to meet the members of the LASFS, whose meetings you've listened in on often, ... Okay, Fella, but I'm certainly glad you have made yourself invisible. From what you've told me about yourself, I'd hate like the devil to have the Los Angelenos see you --- no offence, of course. The same thing will be true when I go back to Mars with you, you know....."

"Well, come on, then, let's get started. It's a quarter of seven. We'll have to walk to the corner of Figueroa Ah, here we are.... and there comes our car. Careful, now, don't brush against anyone.... You take the seat next to the window. I'll sit on the outside...."

"This is Ninth street, you know. We transfer on Broadway."

"Hey, lady, can't you see this seat is taken.... What do I mean taken? Well, er-, oh.... all right then, I'm sorry. To - to....."

"Come on Fella, let's get out of here before that cantankerous old dame glares a hole through me. I think we'd better walk up Broadway."

"You say that you are disappointed in Los Angeles. Well, so was I, but don't let it get you down. Wait till you see New York...."

"Here we are in front of Clifton's. Now, for gosh sakes, watch your step. I'd hate to wind up in Norwalk.... Stay as close to me as possible while I get my dinner.... Be careful. That lady behind you must have bumped you, she acts as though she'd been a ghost. I think I'd better get a pain instead. I can order later.... Ah, thank gosh that is over.... Okay, I'll help you up those steps, but if they take me away in a puffed car you'll have to get us out.... Guess our gravity is pretty tough on you, though, isn't it?"

"Look at that fool staring at me.... Too bad I didn't wear basketball tog...."

"At last, Fella, the Little Brown Room! Tarry here a moment and I'll point out the members before we go in...."

"That tall, handsome, blonde young man sitting at the corner of the table there is, of course, none other than the great Forrest J Ackerman, number one fan of Terra! Active for more than ten years, he's still intensely interested in science fiction and fan activities, not to mention his 'Tongue of Tomorrow', and I don't know what else. It's an impenetrable mystery to me how he finds time to do all he does, for in addition to his many hobbies and outside activities, (enough in themselves to take up all of an ordinary human's time), he puts in eight or ten hours a day on his man sized job with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, where he does everything but own the place....."

"The petite girl with the black hair and snapping eyes who's seated next to him is none other than Morajo! She's the smallest, in point of stature, scientist I've ever met. You'd never think that she had been through college and has been a bookkeeper for quite some time..... Morajo is interested in every phase of science fiction and fan activity. She's quite an able Esperantist too.... She and Morris together publish "Voice of the Imagi-Nation". I might add that she is a swell person, but then we haven't anything else in the LISTS...."

"That blonde with the green eyes and the nice, if shy, personality, is Eleanor O'Brien alias Dejah Thoris; and that lovely brunette beside her is the vivacious "Jimmy" Laney, both personal friends of our director, Mr. Daugherty. Both girls are recent, but valuable additions to the Society, and are taking an active interest. I haven't been able to discover what interests they have outside of science fiction--although I do know that "Jimmy" loves dancing, and Eleanor thinks books on Voo-Do are terrific."

"Yes, you guessed it! That dark-haired, rather tall gentleman,---with the slightly prominent nose is none other than Charlie Hornig, ex-editor of Science Fiction and Future Fiction. Charlie's a bright young fellow with plenty of ideas who well deserves his present success. He is also, as you may remember, one of the founders of the Science Fiction League. Charlie writes continuities for Cornsback's comic mag, and is also endeavoring to build up a literary service. He was recently quoted by Director Daugherty as constantly answering all questions with a humorous remark; "Science Fiction stinks."



The rather heavy-set, smiling guy in the blue suit is Ray Bradbury, one of the dispensers of wit and humor in the society. Incidentally, he wrote an article in the last copy of Sweetness and Light that was really terrific. Ray's a great guy, but watch out for his stale ones! At present he's wrapped up in dramatics and a certain Movie Starlette. He spends about four hours every day selling papers and takes life easy the rest of the time."

"You wonder who that tall, dynamic-looking guy at the head of the table is? Well, my dear, Horton, THAT is our director; Walter Daugherty. The man who, with his indefatigable energy, is putting new life blood into the organization. That thin face hides a wealth of ideas and the lean body possesses the energy to put them across. He has a large circle of friends and is doing his best to get them interested in science fiction. He slaves nine hours a day, and six days a week, for North American Aircraft, but likes his work intensely and takes it very seriously. He is a versatile character, having the good fortune of being able to do most anything....."



"That cherubic, stocky fellow next to him is the other half of NASFS's wit, Inc. -- Mr. T. Bruce Yerke. Mr. Yerke writes minutes as no other has ever written them or ever will write them, or for that matter, ever can write them! When he's really in form he practically turns the place into a bedlam of laughter. He is still in school, but you will be hearing of him in the near future....."

"That well-built fellow beside him is Russ Hodgkins, number two fan of terra. Yes, he probably got those cheaters from reading too much science-fiction His interests are many and varied. Sweetness and Light, the Magazine of science fiction, is his publication---and what a publication! He is also an active Technocrat. Maybe you can tell him something about that. That's what you have on Mars, isn't it? (I might add, that Bradbury and Yerke are also deeply interested in the movement.) Russ was on his way to building up a nice little business of his own, but has deserted it, apparently, in favor of eight hour a day slavery at North American....."

"You notice that empty chair between Russ and Mr. Brady? Well, that's no--only I'm not there--which brings us to Mr. Brady, with his blonde, hair and chubby face. He is from Beverly Hills, and is still in school....."

"That brown haired, dark eyed girl next to him is Fogo....Yes, I know you've heard of her.....she's been an active member for a number of years. She is now a private secretary in a prominent tile company." The quiet looking gentleman seated next to her is Paul Froehner from, Payette, Idaho. Paul is attending college at Pasadena and plays in the college band. He is the able editor of Polaris, and a heck of a swell fellow....."

"Well, I guess that's all that's here tonight. Make yourself visible, and follow me old chap....."

"Hello, gang, I'd like to introduce a scientifiction pal of mine--from Mars....."

"Well, I'll be darned.....I never saw them do that before... Such manners.....Well, I'll be a"

"Come on out from under that table, Fella, Ray, Charlie!! I see you!"

"Well, you look kind of silly under that chair...and without your gavel too.....dear....dear..."

"Frechafer, you know better than to try to sink through the floor..... Heavenly days,....HE DID IT!!"

"Jinny, you just can't possibly get into Russ's pocket, 'specially when he's trying to crawl through the ventilator....."

"Say, was that Pogo and Eleanor who just made that awful hole in the wall??..."

"And there's Brady and Yerke both trying to crawl into opposite ends of Walt's portable Radio!!"

"My, oh my, what a rumpus!! Say, Fella, I never did get a good look at you.....Holy Sacred Cow!!! L-O-O-K, Marsie, o-l-d p-a-l.. o-l-d b-o-y, pleas-seeeee gooooo awayceeee!!!! Charlie! Ray! For God's sake move over!!! Here I come!!!!....."

~:FINIS:~



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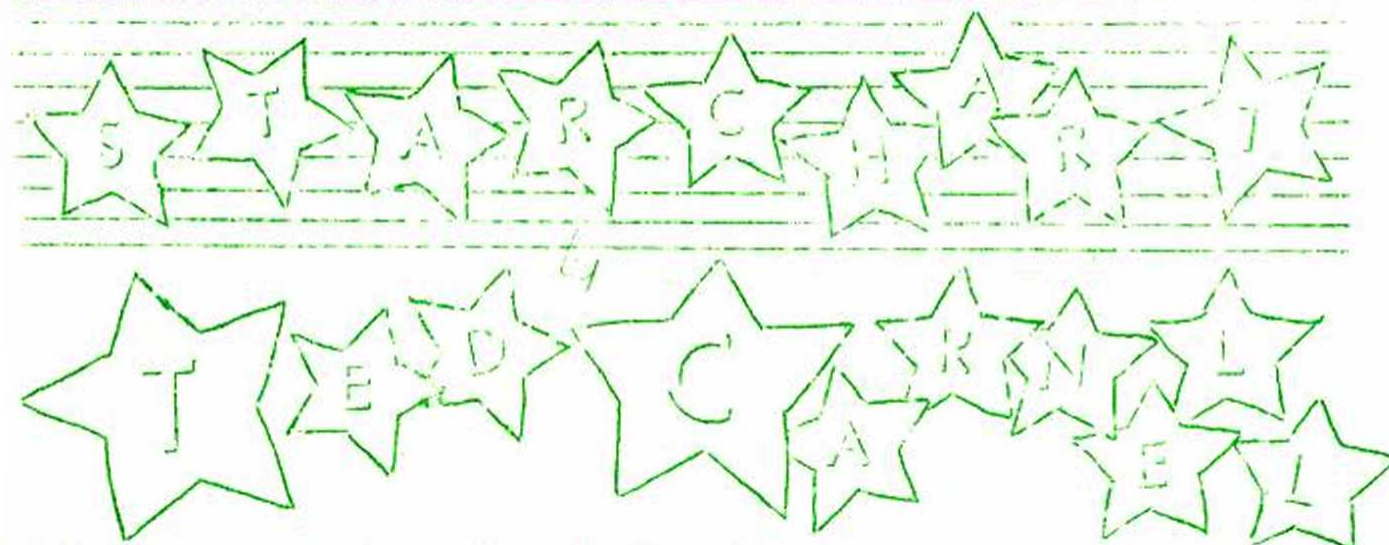
for your copy of the

SHANGRI LARECORI

A RECORDED MAG FROM THE HEART OF THE

SHANGRI-LA OF SCIENTIFICTION





Quite by accident I recently learned that fan Don Brazier was endeavoring to whip up a private poll on the best and worst yarn in ASTOUNDING during 1939. I also gathered that he was experiencing the usual difficulties --, the lack of enthusiasm on the part of his brother fan to spend a little energy, and a couple of cents. Having been sadly disillusioned on this score myself, I still endeavour to help a colleague, be he three, or three thousand miles away from my seat of operations.

In any case, anything appertaining to the Street and Smith twins is usually meat, drink and soul message to myself, so a few moments checking wouldn't exactly cost me much sleep.

Did I say a moment or so? My mistake -- I couldn't foresee just where my thoughts would lead me to, although I always endeavour to keep them clear. After a half hour's cursory deduction, with the emphasis very much on the curse, I had to admit that I'd picked a particularly tough proposition. Not because there were so many good or outstanding stories to compare, but because the top (and bottom) yarns as shown by my Star Chart all had a level rating.

I had better explain this Chart before proceeding further. Like most members of the peculiar people, I index all the stories and authors, add peculiar markings to swastika, stir well and boil for five hours. After which, I compare with the Analytical Laboratory, call Editor--Campbell a so-and-so, and start again. I think that I have developed the star system to perfection in rating the yarns -- some people prefer plums, or bouquets, bananas, brickbats, even bombs -- but for Science Fiction, stars are astronomically correct. Correct?

Therefore, with the star buildup I have made since 1930, I can quite adequately draw up a comprehensive Star Chart at a given moment either for an author, issue or year. So can you. -- Or can you?

A 5-star (*****) label indicates a "classic" yarn, and is only bestowed upon all-round perfection; ideas, plot, literary standard and general handling. Proof of just how hard it is for an author to be credited with a five star story can be seen immediately when I state that out of 463 complete stories in Street and Smith ASTOUNDING, there have only been fourteen such recordings on my chart -- and that is

right up to the current issue (March 1940)!

stories in the 4-star (****) variety represent an outstanding achievement, but for one reason or another do not quite swing into complete perfection.

A 3-star (***) rating represents Very Good, while the lowly 2-star (**) is used for up-to-standard variety. It is not until the 1-star (*) is used that poor stories come under consideration at all, and to make allowances for the rank bilge that occasionally creeps in, have allocated a minus-star (-) which stands for plain lousy. Like the 5-star variety, the minus yarns are also hard to obtain.

You will notice that there is not actually a great deal of difference between 4-stars and 2-stars. The difference is probably worked out in the actual craftsmanship; usually poor writing or plot formation knocks those extra two stars off.

1939 brought me many long hours of enjoyable reading with ASTOUNDING, so many that I was appalled to note that there was not a single 5-star rating in the year! This led me to an immediate comparison with the issues of 1935 and 1936, which were reckoned to be peak years for the magazine. The former logged three 5-star stories and the latter four! Yet, in my own estimation, I enjoy the presentday type far greater than in those earlier years. Something definitely seemed to be loose in the hinges, so I drew up the ratings for the years, only including from 5-stars.

	5-STAR	4-STAR	3-STAR
1934	2	?	?
1935	3	7	26
1936	4	3	13
1937	1	2	20
1938	2	12	28
1939	-	11	19

Surprising? Sweet shades of Hesse! Notice the curve away from "classic" yarns and the downward drop through to 1937 of the outstanding stories?

Then the sudden quick build-up of outstanding and very good stories -- when Campbell took over!

While compiling this bunch of statistics, I had to take into consideration the fact that my personal reading reactions have changed considerably during the past three years. I have learned much concerning actual literary values -- am still learning, come to that. Therefore, my first consideration now is taken from the literary standpoint where as previously I would root for a good plot and to hell with how it was written.

To make this article a fair summary from an average reader's viewpoint I took the trouble of spending weeks re-reading all stories rating 5-stars and over, cross-checked with Readers' Letters, and, latterly, with the Analytical Laboratory. Notwithstanding all this, I have only changed the star markings on five stories, and none of those in particular were in the 5-star or 4-star category.

To still further bring this into line with the general reader, I have taken into consideration the extensive voting of the Professional Science Fiction Association, which, during 1939, was inaugurated and gained tremendous popularity. Each member voting on the best stories in and read each month and sending them in to myself at London.

1939 then, with 72 complete stories in the year, represented by eleven 4-star stories, gave birth to a particularly fierce hardhead. Because every one of those eleven were totally different in every respect except in the literary quality, which was excellent.

They were: HAIDEN VOYAGE, LIVING FOSSIL, COSMIC PIONEERS, ONE AGAINST THE LEGION, CLOAK OF ARESIR, SPECIAL FLYING, THE HORROR, GREATER THAN GODS, GENERAL SWAMP, LIFE-LINE, and SCULPTORS IN LIFE.

Right away I can see two stories in that list some of you will probably condemn ---- GENERAL SWAMP and SCULPTORS IN LIFE. I will defend my recordings, naturally. Engelhardt put over his story with the name of Burroughs and in the true Burroughs style. So much so, that if it had had ERB's name underneath the title you would have been fooled completely. West's yarn gained it's place solely upon literary grounds, and actually ranks bottom in my personal choice.

From the remaining ten I worked down to three -- de Camp, Heinlein and C. L. Moore's stories, and from there to the latter's GREATER THAN GODS. That yarn nearly rates a 5-star recording, but doesn't quite, because it didn't stand out on its own. It had to be worked out.....

Perhaps during 1939 Editor Campbell had much to think about on UNKNOWN -- a fact which, I think, proves itself. Therefore, ASTOUNDING had to take second place in build-up consideration. Proof that he is now napping up the magazine during 1940 is that I have already recorded one 5-star and four 4-star stories during the first three issues of the year!

NO! That 5-star doesn't go to Smith, but I will deal with his stories a little later. Meanwhile this 5-star business had better be elucidated a little more to prove that I know just what I am talking about,



'YOU BET BUD'

HE'S BEEN DRAFTED
BUT HE STILL MEANS

BUSINESS WHEN AFTER

LE ZOMBIE

box 260 bloomington, illinois

ere are the recordings, including 1934.

In that year, two yarns, McClary's REBIRTH and Jack Williamson's LE-
 ION OF SPACE. 1935: Campbell's THE HIGHTTEST MACHINE, and two of
 Weinbaum's -- THE RED PERI and PALAZZO PLANET. 1936: Williamson
 again with THE COMETEERS, Lovecraft's SHADOW OUT OF TIME, Stuart's
 FICTIONAL LOSSES, (One of the purest literary efforts he ever had
 published), and Leinster's THE IMMORTAL INVASION. 1937: Stuart
 again --- FORGETFULNESS. 1938: McClary's 3000 YEARS, and Hubbard's
 THE TRAMP.

Not a very lengthy list, is it? I can almost sense the rumble of
 brains going into action and asking "Where is . . ." -- and naming
 many stories not rated above. Perhaps they are in the 4-star category.
 In any case, something must have been wrong with them if they are not
 listed above. Minute though it may be.

For instance, where is Dr. Smith? Right in the 4-star class, and is
 the only author to keep his graph level. Judging by the extreme re-
 action accorded to Smith stories through the ages, he cannot possibly
 record 5-star ratings. Many readers bluntly state that his stories
 are puerile junk -- another section rave that his works stand entirely
 above the level of any other author. Until the majority agree one way
 or the other, if ever, I am reserving final judgment. Personally, I
 have never fallen for that type of super-cosmic adventure, but you
 will note that I can log a 5-star for such a story -- Campbell's.

Smith therefore, has been a very big problem. But I have been able to
 carry out a unique experiment----one very few fans of long standing
 can lay claim to. I recently read GALACTIC and GRAY LENSMAN through,
 as one story -- the first Smith epics I had ever read! I said "ep-
 ics" -- those reckoned to be in the top class. Then, through a for-
 tunate instance, I acquired the missing issues and read The SKYLARK
 series through without a break. While I must admit that from SKYLARK
 THREE the Smith genius really comes to the front, he still does not
 rate the coveted 5-stars. His literary standard has improved 100%
 since SKYLARK OF SPACE (which, incidentally, I found to be the fun-
 niest yarn ever published in science fiction. Unconsciously so, of
 course. And only because times have changed). Smith loses out be-
 cause he stretches imaginative writings beyond the bounds of reason-
 able comprehension.

Let us take a look at these 4-star recordings, then. There are only
 24 of them excluding 1939, and you may be able to work out for your--
 self just why they didn't reach the top class.

1934: SKYLARK OF VALERON.

1935: THE EINSTEIN EXPRESS, Weinbaum's THE LOTUS EATERS, Taine's
 TWELVE-EIGHTY-SEVEN, Bates' ALAS, ALL THINKING, Stuart's THE INVADERS
 and NIGHT, and Schacner's I AM NOT GOD. (Who throw that brick?)



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1936: van Lorne's STRANGE CITY, Binder's SPAWN OF ETERNAL THOUGHT and C. L. Moore's TRYST IN TIME.

1937: Norman L. Knight's FRONTIER OF THE UNKNOWN, and Stuart's OUT OF HIGH T.

1938: GALACTIC PATROL, Schere's ANACHRONISTIC OPTICS, Wellman's IEN AGAINST THE STARS, Gallun's SEEDS OF THE DUSK, Stuart (again!) with WHO GOES THERE?, Robert Willey Loy's ORBIT 23-H, Burks' THE TRAPPER, Gold's A MATTER OF FORM, de Camp's THE MERMAN, and HYPERPILOSITY, del Rey's HELEN O'LOY, and, lastly, Simak's HUNGER DEATH.

My, my! How times change! Notice that swing up in quality and quantity after Campbell took the reins? And the terrific swoop away from the old stereotyped science-fiction with it's cosmic-bending space warps and what have you? The new blood coming to the fore, the old authors fading out, the new requirements of high literary standards! Above all, notice the number of authors who repeat 4-star performances!

Having digested this galaxy of stories and authors, it would be only appropriate to find the star issue of the years. Despite some of those terrific earlier yarns, the graph shows a surprising lack of good yarns backing them up! It is not until 1938 that the majority of short stories come up to 3-star standard. Not surprising, therefore, that the September issue of that year carries more stars than any other issue. 5-stars for THE TRAP, 4-stars for ORBIT 23-H and THE TRAPPER, 3-stars for DOUBLE! DOUBLE!, IMPULSE, X1-2-200 and ROBOT'S RETURN. The only 1-star poor story was Wellman's TREASURE ASTEROID.

A few moments study of the authors' individual graphs reveals why Stuart was and is the most popular writer of science fiction, despite the handicap of now being an editor, which, he admits, is the main reason for curtailing his wordage. Out of 15 stories, he rated two 5-stars, five 4-stars and eight 3-stars. Not one 2-star recording, and I have no doubt that practically every reader of this article will totally disagree with my ratings for each story. NIGHT I was informed today, by a local reader, rates the coveted 5-star. Many others will think likewise, and I think that it is a harder job to actually rate Stuart's work than it is to classify Smith's.

Schachner, the prolific, with 42 stories, records one 4-star, nine 3-stars, and the surprising low of four minus yarns out of the total of twelve I have listed over the ages.

de Camp's graph shows his excellence immediately. Eight stories, three 4's, two 3's, two 2's. Not including his articles which rate 5-stars each. Yet Gallun, second most prolific author, with 32 stories, has only one 4-star and three 3-stars. Of the authors with many acceptances in the magazine, Vincent appears most popular, and is actually improving under the new conditions.

SHANGRI-LA RECORD

Others in the top class, and this list is incomplete, are Simak; C.L. Moore; Williamson; Casey; del Rey, with six 3-stars and one 4-star; Heinbaum -- with a rating of two 5-stars, one 4-star, four 3-stars and one 2-star. Heinlein and many others I have not worked the actual statistics out for.

As UNKNOWN was directly responsible for the variations in the 1939 standard of ASTOUNDING, this article would not be complete without some brief reference to the Star Chart recorded for that magazine. Especially as the first full year was recently completed with the February issue. In this magazine, although the ideas in the stories are based upon pure fantasy, it has actually been the literary ability of the respective authors which has swung the entire project over. I even go so far as to state that the literary standard has been practically the sole basis of existence, for UNKNOWN is more near to fairy tales modernised than any other type of fiction I have read.

In one year the magazine has built a veritable galaxy of stars on the chart and brought to the fore several authors as its mainstay. Others will no doubt be developed, but for the first year Hubbard and de Camp overshadow all others. This, I believe, is entirely due to Editor-Campbell finding two outstanding men who grasped immediately his requirements -- I almost forgot Guernsey, who has also been 'developed' purposely.

Out of 66 stories, the chart logs six 5-stars, ten 4-stars and 15 3-stars. All the more surprising when taking into account the fact that, the first three issues stumbled along until authors could more adequately get the hang of what was needed.

5-star ratings were: SINISTER BARRIER, DIVIDE AND RULE, Kuttner's THE MISGUIDED HALO, and three Hubbard yarns -- SLAVES OF SLEEP, THE GHOUL, and DEATH'S DEPUTY.

Including his stories in ASTOUNDING as well, Hubbard's personal star chart is nothing short of miraculous. 8 stories, five 5-stars and one each 4-3-2.

Since I first commenced checking all the foregoing data, the readers' voting on the best stories for the year have begun to appear in the magazine. Here, as in ASTOUNDING, my Star Chart conforms adequately with those published reactions.

Let us take the 4-star ratings: THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE, THE CHEERLY--MAN, NONE BUT LUCIFER, THE ELDER GODS, (Stuart there again), THE ENCHANTED WEEKEND, A GOD IN A GARDEN, ANYTHING, THE MONOCLE, LEST DARKNESS FALL, and ON THE KNEELS OF THE GODS.

As Campbell himself recently pointed out in SPACEWAYS, short stories always have a tougher time when stacked up against the lengthy stuff. A short story rated in the 4-star category is really the equal of a 5-star long story.

What will be the trend of 1940? Can enjoyment be carried even further with these two magazines? I honestly think it can, and shall be quite prepared to log higher ratings as Campbell really begins to obtain the stuff he asks for.

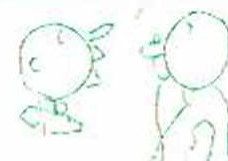
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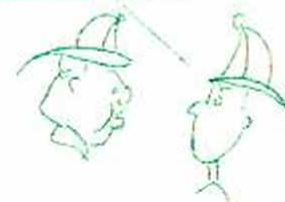
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