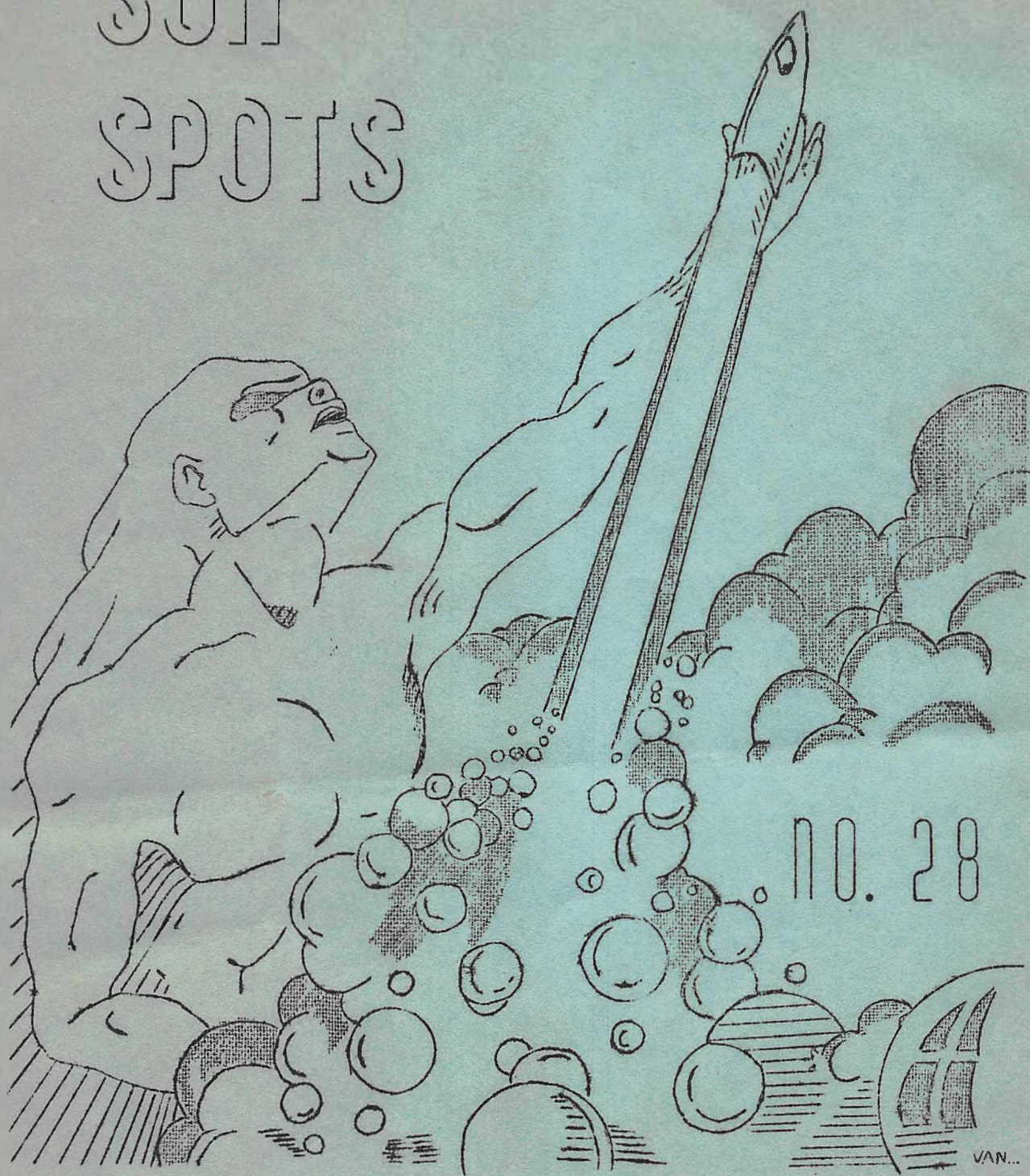


SUN SPOTS



SUN SPOTS

FALL, 1946

E d i t o r :

Gerry de la Ree,
9 Bogert Place
Westwood, N. J.

Contributing Editors:

James D. Breckenridge
114 Mill St.
Westwood, N. J.

Joe Kennedy
84 Baker Ave.
Dover, N.J.

Sam Moskowitz
446 Jelliff Ave.
Newark 8, N.J.

I n T h i s I s s u e

ARTICLES

Three Book Reviews	James D. Breckenridge	5
Weinbaum As A Prophet	Gerry de la Ree	10
The Reader Shrieks	Joe Kennedy	11
Space Flight -- Prelude to Act I	Gerry de la Ree	13
a. What Does Fandom Think?		19
b. What Does Farnsworth Think?		20
"Dawn of Flame"	Sam Moskowitz	21
Why Fantasy?	James D. Breckenridge	29
If A Shonokin Answers, Hang Up . . .	Manly Wade Wellman	34

DEPARTMENTS

Editorial	Gerry de la Ree	4
Authors Are Stranger Than Their Fiction		12
Let 'em Rave	The Readers	23
1946 Beowulf Poll Results		31

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Front cover: "Space Flight" by Ven Splawn

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Sun Spots is published and edited by Gerry de la Ree, 9 Bogert Pl., Westwood, N. J. It will appear from time to time and is free to all those who choose to write a few lines of comment on this issue. We accept exchanges with all other fanzines. Advertising by special arrangement only. This is the Fall, 1946 issue; Volume 7, Number 2; Whole Number 28.

EDITORIAL VIEWPOINTS--

THE passing of Herbert George Wells came as no great shock, for as Jim Breckenridge says elsewhere in this issue (in a piece written one week prior to Wells' death) "Whether he (Wells) still lives is a matter of some dispute." In all fairness, however, it is rather difficult, we feel, to expect a man of 70-odd years to turn out the same quality work he did when in his thirties. As far as scie[n]tifi[c]tion goes, Mr. Wells' last major contribution was "The Shape of Things to Come", written approximately 15 years ago. In fact, the large bulk of his best-known stf works were written and published around the turn of the Century. Our memory of Wells will always be a fond one. The first Wells' novel we read was "The Food of the Gods"; to our way of thinking, it was one of his most memorable fantasies. Dreaming of the future is something we all can do; expressing it, as H. G. Wells did, is a gift enjoyed by all too few of us. . . .

* * *

Recently Charles Burbee, the capable editor of Shangri L'Affaires, conducted a post-card poll in which some 65 fans participated. While Mr. Burbee's intentions were most honorable, it is unfortunate that the results of the poll were so obviously distorted by the voting -- as a body -- of the Los Angeles fans. Mr. Burbee was kind enough to publish the results in two columns -- one showing the votes cast by non-LA fans and the other indicating the number of votes emanating from the California citidel of stefandom. In almost every case, the California votes either gave one candidate a great boost, or another, as in the case of Walt Dunkelberger, an unnecessary slap. Most obnoxious was the voting for the "Worst fan of the year." Prejudiced as we may be, we believe that the Beowulf Poll -- the results of which are published in this issue of Sun Spots -- is a more accurate indication of fan opinion. No poll, however, can even approach perfection.

* * *

It seems each of our authors has something to apologize for this issue. Sam Moskowitz says that in his "Dawn of Flame" review he lists Margaret Weinbaum as one of the five owners of the book containing the Palmer introduction. It appears that Forrest Ackerman, and not Margaret Weinbaum, owns the book. . . Joe Kennedy states in his article that Bernard de Voto's "Easy Chair" column appears in the Atlantic Monthly. Somehow we let this slip through, when subconsciously we knew that Mr. de Voto has always written for Harper's Magazine. We would also like to apologize for the numerous typing errors which appear to have cropped up throughout the issue. One error that we'd like to correct appears in Breckenridge's review of "In Ghostly Japan." On page 6 the word "taby" will be found; it should be tabu.

* * *

The Eastern Science Fiction Association (ESFA), which meets each month in Newark, appears to have blossomed into a thriving organization. It is, without much doubt, the most promising group on the East

(Continued on page 28)

3 BOOK REVIEWS-

BY JAMES D. BRECKENRIDGE

MEMOIRS OF HECATE COUNTY, by Edmund Wilson. New York, Doubleday & Company, 1946. \$2.50.

MR. WILSON is, as you probably know, the literary critic of the New Yorker. Besides knowing a lot about books, he is well informed on matters musical and artistic, and it is about these subjects that he has woven the six stories which make up this volume. He knows what it takes to make a good book, an intelligent as well as an interesting book, and he has put all these things into his stories, so that the final product is a handsome, well-polished exhibit which, while it won't interest everyone, should appeal to those who enjoy good writing and especially those who would like to see it employed on the supernatural.

Three of the stories are not at all concerned with the supernatural (though much the same air of horror tends to seep under the door and invade them). The first, entitled "The Man Who Shot Snapping Turtles", approaches the realm of farce in its satire on such features of modern life as the advertising business, but it, too, ends on a note of half-unravell'd mystery. The third story, "Glimpses of Wilbur Flick", hinging on the not completely novel idea that Communism and Catholicism are quite similar as religions of faith, sketches the life of a rather futile human being who is struggling for an anchor. The fourth story, which takes up almost half the book, "The Princess with the Golden Hair", recounts the narrator's parallel love affairs with a dancehall hostess from Brooklyn and the wife of one of his neighbors in aristocratically suburban "Hecate County."

Story number five, "The Milhollands and Their Damned Soul", is a marvellous takeoff on a distinguished family which founds a literary magazine (some of whose features, like the "Personals" column are awfully easy to identify), then branches out into book clubs and publishing companies, building up a neatly overlapping structure in which each part boosts the other. Through this symphony threads the theme, expounded by one of their subordinates, that the eldest Milholland has sold himself to the devil, and is sacrificing his brothers to stave off his own damnation; and, by the end of the tale, we find ourselves half believing he's right!

The sixth story, "Mr. and Mrs. Blackburn at home", seemed to this reviewer the weakest in the book. In it, for example, the devil converses in French for some seven pages, which seems a little unfair for American readers. Even with the French pretty well translated, the story did not have the neatness, the solidity, the handsome character of the others.

It is the second story, entitled "Ellen Terhune", which dips into fantasy all the way. The narrator, going to visit a neighbor in the County, discovers that in each trip he has been travelling

backward in time, seeing her at thirty, at fourteen, then meeting her mother just before her birth, then just before marriage. Exactly whether this is time travel, ghost visitation, or thought projection is never resolved, but at each visit the narrator is pressed to make a decision that would avert Ellen's later tragedy; yet he finds himself unable to alter events.

It is, of course, impossible to say exactly what Mr. Wilson had in mind in presenting these retrogressions; it is not inconceivable that no positive crystallization has taken place in his own mind. In any case, there seemed to this reviewer, looking from the viewpoint of an expert in vicarious time travel, a curious inconsistency in the attitude of the creatures of the apparitions toward the narrator. On the one hand, they seemed on at least one occasion to recognize him as a friend of the family, implying that some sort of substitution in vision, such as that of the two school teachers in Versailles, the supposedly true story related as "An Adventure."

On the other hand, they remarked on the strangeness of his clothing. This in itself would seem to point to some sort of time travel, rather than a mere apparition or dream. Yet we have those decisions repeatedly placed in the hands of the narrator, which seem, linked with an obvious dream, to be projected by the will of the "present-day" Ellen, who is trying to alter her past. It is, of course, something in the final analysis for each reader to decide for himself, and it detracts in no sense from the excellence of the story as a whole.

Mr. Wilson, then, has turned out a highly competent series of short stories. One could hardly claim for him any spark of genius, and, in view of his past record of extremely tough criticism of others, it is inevitable that he should be raked over a few coals in his turn. But, despite any incidental objections, here is a very definite relief for those who occasionally desire more meaty fare than what they find in Amazing and Startling.

* * *

IN GHOSTLY JAPAN, by Lafcadio Hearn. Boston; Little, Brown & Company, 1919. 241 pp.

This book is a collection of tales and essays gathered during the author's residence in Japan. The tales are not original; all are retellings of old Japanese and/or Buddhist stories. The essays cover a wide variety of subjects, from insense-rites to Japanese poetry. All the pieces demonstrate Hearn's art and grace of style and, if slight, prove charming in their very slighness.

One feature occurs very strongly to the reader in persuing this book. It is the question of just how much is really Japanese of all this material? The Japanese, like the ancient Phoenicians, are a notoriously eclectic race, but until the last century the only country in a position to influence them was China. In consequence, most of the traditional culture of Japan bears a Chinese stamp.

Like Japanese landscape painting, the poetry Hearn cites follows faithfully the Chinese model: short, figurative puffs of beauty, relying upon implication rather than statement. The book also contains a section of Japanese Buddhist proverbs, almost all of which can with study be traced to Chinese or, more often, Indian originals. The student is inclined to doubt whether the Japanese ever contributed anything very much to Buddhism, or to any other religion beside their primitive animism.

Some of the tales, too, are almost pure Indian Buddhist, and are lifted almost directly from the Jatakas, the mass of fabliaux which relate the past lives of the Buddha. The first piece in the book, entitled "Fragment", is an Indian Buddhist sermon on reincarnation and eternity, symbolized by the infinite mountain of skulls, relics of one individual's previous incarnations.

Others, of course, can be identified as Japanese with very little trouble. And these are the stories which are the true ghost and horror tales of the collection. "A Passional Karma", one of the longest pieces in the book, tells of a young man whose beloved has died. She comes back as a ghost and tries to persuade him to join her, but he flees in horror and defends himself by all the arts of magic. But finally, through treachery he is betrayed to his erstwhile darling.

Hearn himself, in his end-piece to the tale, criticizes the young man's behavior as both unromantic and unBuddhist. Neither an Occidental lover nor a true Buddhist would fight death in such a case so strenuously. I am inclined to believe that Hearn missed the point: that this was not originally a Buddhist tale at all, but a Shinto one, only adapted in later times to the invading religion. Similar is the tale "Ingwa-banashi", the story of a dying wife's vengeance on her husband's concubine, a terrible story that would be abhorrent to any Buddhist believer.

It would be interesting at some time to attempt an evaluation of comparative civilizations through their current folk-legends and fairy-tales. Without trying to point out a moral, some conclusions might be drawn here.

Leaving the Western Hemisphere out of the picture, as too conglomerate to give any conclusive results, we might turn first to Europe. Certainly in Western Europe folk-tales and children's stories are of a mild sort. True, an occasional monster is employed to put an unruly child to bed, but for the most part the ogres and elves are tolerant, if not actually amused and helpful. In England we should have to look far back to find any really terrifying folk-tales. Even in Chaucer's great omnibus of literature there is only one story which might be called grim -- "The Pardoner's Tale." Before this we come to the Nordic Legends to find real terror.

In the warmer Mediterranean lands even Jack the Giant-Killer is largely displaced by stories of a greater or less religious

character. Only from the wilder areas, islands like Corsica and Sicily, do truly frightening stories stem. In Scandinavia, the work of a man like Andersen, for example, contains no really terrifying pieces. His witches are ugly but benevolent, his monsters refined, and while many of the stories are not overly happy, none attain any note of grimness.

Yet from the neighbor-country of Germany we find fright and terror prevailing in the stories of the brothers Grimm. Where Andersen is merely fantastic, the Grimms prove truly horrifying. Through all their stories brood the evil gloom of the forest, the pervading chill of the mountains, that has to varying degrees laid its icy hand over most German literature, from "Faust" to the "Nibelungenlied", to choose writers from opposite ends of the political seesaw.

Further east, in Russia, the barbaric spirit of the great forests and wide plains brings many supposed fairy tales out of what we would call the children's class altogether. Here are all the implements of terror, played upon masterfully by the folk-mind. In contrast are the pleasant, simple stories of China, so charming and graceful. A Chinese dragon could scarcely frighten an ant.

So we complete the cycle and return to Japan where, under graftings of Chinese and Indian shoots, remains the stark, barbaric spirit of personal vengeance and demonolatry known as Shinto. It is difficult to understand why Hearn, who seems to have found things like Buddhism and poetry the principal attractions of Japan, did not seek nearer the source. Perhaps the answer lies in the way in which, to some individuals, the sentimental appeals more than the emotional, the picturesque more than the beautiful.

* * *

LAST AND FIRST MEN, by Olaf Stapledon. London, 1930. 355pp.

In drama criticism there is something of a tradition that a critic who thinks a play is awful should show his displeasure by walking out in the middle, as ostentatiously as possible. It has been my frequent suspicion that book reviewers, too, indulge in this means of liberating themselves from an unpleasant task. Any admission of this is, of course, tatty; but in this case I am going to make no bones about it: I never finished "Last and First Men"; I couldn't.

Certainly I had every reason to go on with the book. I had only reached page 159, in a chapter entitled "The Martians"; it was only eight o'clock, and until midnight I should be obliged to sit in the Managing Editor's office, wondering if the phone would ring. Newspaper work, like a war, largely consists of rare moments of intense excitement, separated by long hours of tedious boredom. Under the sort of compulsion exercised by my job, I had devoured "Tom Jones" in four days, "Tristram Shandy" in two; read "Ulysses" word for word, and fought through all the most impossible writings

of Lovecraft (the blind Irishman whirling in his grave at this juxtaposition would doubtless make a turbine blush for shame); and actually read all of "The New Adam!" But at Stapledon I was compelled to draw the line. I finally went into the next office, turned on the radio, and was lucky enough to find the Brooklyns had a night game going.

Enough of autobiography. Why couldn't I read the book? For a variety of reasons. Let me explain what it's about. Stapledon's object in this volume was to trace the possible future history of the race, and the races which would succeed us in domination of our System, until such time as the cooling of the sun would snuff out the last vestiges of life on this and our neighbor globes.

Truly a noble inspiration, grandiose though it might be. Mr. H.G. Wells of sainted memory (whether he still lives is a matter of some dispute) took up paper and print to the weight of five pounds simply in outlining the history of our planet up to the present time; this period of time is a negligible fraction of the aeons which Stapledon has essayed to cover. This tremendous expanse of time necessitates a cursory treatment of any given event, so that the reader gains only a skeletal idea of the various wars and readjustments through which modern civilization descends to its annihilation, and new races of men rise to domination and equivalent destruction.

Above all, the absence of any guiding personality, any individual through which the reader may visualize these events tends to weary him. In most fiction, the existence of a central figure or theme by which events may be interpreted is vitally necessary for the unity of the work. This need not be an individual; in "Dos Passos", for example, it is the central theme of social conflict and progress that holds the work together. But Stapledon has no such theme or idea around which to build his book; he is simply wandering aimlessly down a corridor of time of his own choosing.

The introduction of a personality, say a time-traveller, might not have suited Stapledon's purposes; why then should not the narrator himself have intruded more into the story? Such complete objectivity as he employs in his book tends in the long run simply to bore the reader to distraction, and drive him to another book.

Perhaps the reply might be that Stapledon's aim was not to write a novel in the ordinary sense, but rather a philosophical history of the future. Yet, even philosophy falls apart without a basic premise; an historian is a fool who does not try to explain something in recounting his story. Some fundamental theme is necessary to justify an arbitrary history of this sort.

After all, the writer does not exist in a vacuum; if he is simply writing for himself, he had best keep his writings from being forced on the public. The public will take only a little forcing before throwing up its hands and going on to someone more interesting to itself.

Again, Stapledon is not a particularly expert craftsman. Whatever his justifications in ignoring the finer points of style in covering the tremendous ground he had laid out for himself, a tour de force such as he essayed is usually successful only when it has also some real virtues of writing to offer, as well as a clever idea. A dull writer can be successful only when, like Dreiser, he has something important to say. Stapledon, I'm afraid, says nothing in the end. Perhaps a tremendous message is hidden in the latter pages I hadn't the strength to go on to; but is it too much to ask of a writer that he give some slight inkling of this in the first half of his book? As it stands, all I can say to "Last and First Men is, "So what?"

The End

WEINBAUM AS A PROPHET — BY GERRY de la REE

STANLEY G. WEINBAUM died in 1935, but it wasn't until four years later that "The Black Flame", believed by many to be his greatest story, appeared in print for the first time in the initial issue of Startling Stories.

While re-reading "The Black Flame" recently I was struck by a few paragraphs which, in 1939, had entirely escaped making any impression on me. Weinbaum's writing in these paragraphs is similar to the writings of many post-atomic age scientifictionists (those who previously scoffed at science fiction, but now find it a profitable pastime.) But while reading Weinbaum's "Black Flame" one must realize it was written about 13 years ago; that it was printed eight years ago.

And now, in the words of The Black Flame:

"'You of the ancient world had great cities,' she said. 'Today there are might cities, too. N'York had eight millions of people; Urbs, the great metropolis of this age, has thirty millions. But there is now one metropolis, your world had a hundred. A marvelous age, that time of yours, but it ended. Some time in your Twentieth Century, it went out in a blaze of war.'

"'The Twentieth Century!' exclaimed Connor. 'So near my time!'

"'Yes. Your fierce, warlike nations sated their lust for battle at last in one gigantic war that spread like a cloud around the planet. They fought by sea, by land, by air, and beneath the sea and land. They fought with weapons whose secrets are still lost, with strange chemistries, with diseases. Every nation was caught in the struggle; all their vast knowledge went into it, and city after giant city was destroyed by atomic bombs or annihilated by infected water supplies. Famine stalked the world, and after it swept swift pestilence.'"

THE READER SHRIEKS

BY JOE KENNEDY

(An article on letter hacks by one who should know)

"DEAR SGT. SATURN: I am thirteen (13) years old and I would like you to know that this is my first letter to your mag. I have been reading the stories and thought I would give you the ratings on them on the new rating system I just thought up: "The Martian's Revenge." This was just fair. Rates 2 1/2 xeno jugs. "Rocket in the Cradle of the Deep." This was excellent! Terrific!!! A classic!!!! Rates nine xeno jugs!!....."

How often have you read communiques like that in the prozine letter columns? More than once or twice, no doubt. Yes, in the wild and wacky world of the science-fantasy pulps, it has become traditional for the constant reader of stf to write a letter to the editor at least once a year, in order to voice his own opinions on the covers, artwork, features, and -- most important of all -- the stories.

The editors, of course, encourage mail. Not many years ago, TWS ran a blurb regularly urging its readers to write every issue. Strangely enough, however, the science fiction readers don't seem to require much urging. The volume of fan mail that the stf mags receive has long been a source of wonder in professional circles. The western or detective story editor may receive one or two letters of comment per issue -- if he's lucky. The average stf mag editor gets about fifty.

Why this comparatively great difference? Is the science fiction reader more literate than the typical wild-western or love-story fan? Or could it be that there's something about s-f that intrigues the imagination to such an extent that the habitual stf addict finds it necessary to express himself via mail in order to let off steam? Frankly, we don't know for sure. And there are countless others, both fans and professionals, who have long been interested in this phenomenon.

About 1941, if we're not mistaken, Bernard de Voto devoted one of his regular "Easy Chair" columns in the Atlantic Monthly to an attempt to analyze the stf pulps' great appeal. De Voto titled his column "Doom over Jupiter: the Science Fiction Pulps", and while conceding that several scientist friends of his were fascinated by the metaphysical possibilities of stf, he went on to hint that most of the letters in the prozine readers' columns were actually concocted by the editorial offices.

The guess was wrong, of course. With a large circle of letter-hacks and a constant influx of new readers, mags like Startling and Planet undoubtedly have more than sufficient material on which to draw to insure a lively and varied letter section. Only in one or two rare instances that I know of has an editor ever found it necessary to fake a reader's missive. In such cases, the hoax was

perpetrated only for the purposes of stirring up the readers' wrath and putting a little life in the column -- it's an old, if slightly dishonest stunt common to journalists. Remember E.F. Buchanan's infamous letter to "The Vizigraph" in Planet many issues ago?

As Ebey pointed out in an article for Shanrgi L'Affaires last year, the number of letter columns catering to long, rambling, screw-ball letters so dear to the letterhack's heart is rapidly becoming fewer. Planet and the TWS--Startling combine are about the only ones left. And even the Xeno-drinking days of Sgt. Saturn are over, however, for editor Sam Merwin gave the Sarge his virtual discharge in the last issue of TWS.

FFM's letter column is utterly lacking a sense of humor. FFM would seem to cater mainly to the collectors and bibliophiles. Astounding's "Brass Tacks" is a good section of its type, though more than a little dull to anyone not a student of advanced electronics. Weird Tales is completely hopeless, while Amazing and Fantastic Adventures are once again on the decline. As far as volume of mail goes, Richard Shaver claims he receives more letters than any other sf author. We don't doubt it, for there are thousands of occult and pseudo-science devotees to whom Shaver's Lemurian stories appeal.

When some brand new titles appear on the pulp magazine rack, perhaps letter hacking will once again flower as of yesteryear. In any event, we predict that since the urge for ego-expansion is a human trait, the species known as the letter-hack will never be completely extinct.

The End

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AUTHORS ARE STRANGER THAN THEIR OWN FICTION

Richard S. Shaver, author of the controversial Lemurian series in Amazing Stories, in voting in the Beowulf Poll on space flight this past May stated that inter-planetary travel not only will be accomplished, but that it "secretly is now!" Shaver went on to state that the fact would be released "publicly" in 1960.

On the other hand, Raymond A. Palmer, editor of Amazing and supposedly the one who rewrites all of Shaver's material, was the only participant in the poll to state that space flight will never be accomplished.

Mr. Shaver, in answering the question on which planets of the Solar System did he believe life as we know it could exist, stated: "All, in the ancient caverns."

SPACE FLIGHT

THE PRELUDE
TO ACT ONE

MAN'S dream of conquering space appears near at hand. During the past few weeks the Army Air Force of the United States announced to the world that it will send a rocket missile to the moon within eighteen months time. Once this is accomplished, men are sure to follow.

In this article I wish to present a number of excerpts from newspaper and magazine articles dealing directly or indirectly with space travel. Some of these articles date back eight years. During the war years -- 1939 to 1945 -- the cloak of censorship hid from the public eye the progress being made in jet propulsion, atomic power, and rocket propulsion. In the past few months great strides have been forward. Through these following excerpts I present SPACE FLIGHT -- Prelude to Act I.

GERRY de la REE

* * * *

G. EDWARD PENDRAY, former President of the American Rocket Society, in NEW YORK DAILY MIRROR; May, 1938:

"Let's get this straight. Neither you nor I will ever go to the moon or any other planet in any rocket. Nor will our children. Our grandchildren might -- we can't tell now. Any fairy tales you read about rockets hovering in space or being steered in and out of nests of stars is all bilge..."

HOWARD W. BLAKESLEE, Associated Press Science Editor in AP feature story published in BERGEN EVENING RECORD, November 3, 1938:

"Theoretically a space ship could make the flight (to Mars). Rocket ship propulsion would do it -- for a man who had 1,000 years or more to live and fuel which does not now exist...Rocket engineers have produced speeds of 700 miles an hour with small rocket motors, and might predict that speeds of 1,000 m.p.h. are attainable. At that rate, unless the rocket ship traveled many times faster in space, it would take about 1,400 years to fly to Mars when the planet is closest."

ALLAN FINN in an article entitled "10,000 Miles an Hour", published in August, 1938 issue of MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED:

"Armed with these substantial achievements experimentors confidently believe that rocket flights of 25 miles are close at hand, flights of 100 miles around the corner, and flight across the Atlantic a definite possibility within our lifetime. More, they believe there is plenty of theoretical basis and some evidence for the conviction that given enough money, power, and experimental data, they

could shoot their devices to the moon...At present the altitude for a rocket stands at 7,500 feet ($1\frac{1}{4}$ mile). It is credited to Dr. Robert H. Goddard, dean of rocket experimenters. He set it at his laboratory near Roswell, New Mexico, in May, 1935. Dr. Goddard's rocket attained a speed of 700 miles an hour...For the present we'll postpone that moon trip, for it is estimated a rocket capable of getting there would have to be as big as the Empire State Building and would cost a paltry \$1,000,000,000!"

NEW YORK MIRROR, June 6, 1939

Chester L. Eschelman, 22, who took off Monday evening from Camden, N.J. on a projected flight to the planet Mars, in a plane he rented for \$9, was rescued yesterday from the sinking space ship 175 miles off Boston, by the fishing trawler Villanova. The young flier, on vacation from a job as aviation mechanic in Baltimore, fell short of his goal by 45,009,511 miles. "I was headed for Mars all right" said Eschelman, sipping some whisky that Captain Bjartmarz saves for space fliers, "But I can appreciate being alive on this world."

NEW YORK JOURNAL AMERICAN, April 21, 1940

"What men can imagine, they can do. And for several hundred years now, men have been imagining flights to the moon and to other planets in our solar system. An embryonic model of the engine which some day may be developed into the super engine that will drive the first space craft from Earth into interplanetary spaces is now resting under a small shed in the rear of the Aeronautics Building at California Institute of Technology at Pasadena. It is a jet-propelled machine."

Dr. A.E. Lombard, Assistant Professor of the California Institute, stated elsewhere in this article: "Of course before any such interplanetary flights are accomplished, perfected jet-propulsion machines probably will be traveling the stratosphere, taking passengers around the world at speeds exceeding 1,000 miles per hour. Success is not just around the corner in these researches. But we know we are on a track that is leading somewhere. Time will tell how successful we have been."

AUGUST 6, 1945. In all papers:

The Atomic age opens.

PASSAIC HERALD NEWS, August, 1945

Chicago -- R.L. Farnsworth asked the government today to grant him the first civilian permits to put atomic energy to peacetime use. He wants to develop a solar transportation system, providing regular 8-hour flights to the moon...Farnsworth, President of the U.S. Rocket Society, wrote a letter to the Research Council on National Security at Washington, asking for permission to use atomic energy to make a rocket in which Earth dwellers could travel through the universe at a rate of seven miles per second.

NEW YORK TIMES, May 11, 1946

White Sands Proving Ground, Las Cruces, N.M., May 10 -- A fourteen-ton German V-2 rocket, launched by the United States Army, roared into the ionosphere here this afternoon and officially started a U.S. long-range missile program which in time will revolutionize the art of war and may solve the mysteries of the sky...The second V-2 rocket ever to be fired in this country, which many more are to follow, rose high into the air in a pillar of fire and a smoky trail of smoke shortly after 2 P.M. as a large party of leading military and naval men and scientists saw the shape of things to come. Preliminary observations indicated the V-2 had soared almost seventy-five miles into the sky...The backdrop for this test (which in one sense was almost as epochal in the art of war as was the first atomic bomb explosion) was fittingly Wellsian. The broad flat wastes of the desert, obscured here and there by wind-driven flurries of sand, were sharply bounded to the west by the almost inhuman sculpture of the Organ Mountains torched and weathered by time...The V-2 is what is called a preset missile; that is, men on the ground have very little control of it once it is launched. After the fuel is cut off the rocket proceeds through space like an ordinary projectile -- but at the incredible speed of 2,400 to 3,800 m.p.h., more than five times faster than sound.

NEW YORK SUN, May 11, 1946

White Sands, N.M., May 11 (AP) -- The Army had a volunteer who wanted to ride the reassembled German V-2 rocket tested yesterday at the White Sands proving grounds. Mark E. Ridge of Dorchester, Mass. who said he had done pre-war scientific work on pressure and cold resisting suits for stratosphere exploration, wrote he would be pleased to make the trip either on or in the rocket.

NEW YORK TIMES, June 5, 1946

Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, June 4 -- The Army Air Forces revealed today that, in pursuit of its goal to produce piloted military aircraft that will fly at speeds far in excess of 1,500 m.p.h., a revolutionary rocket-powered craft, designated as the XS-1, and flown by hand, will be tested soon and is expected to attain a speed faster than sound.

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, June 8, 1946

Washington, D.C., June 7 -- A group of U.S. Ordnance experts have compiled secret data proving that an American-built version of the German V-2 can be fired with a 1,000 pound war-head from this country and hit Bikini Atoll -- the atom bomb target 5,625 miles away.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, June 9, 1946

Washington, D.C., June 8 -- Disclosures made today concerning one of the Navy's most closely guarded wartime secret developments, the Bumblebee, revealed that this "test-vehicle", forerunner of future guided missiles, was "flown" successfully nearly a year ago at Island Beech, N.J. and attained a velocity "exceeding 1,400 m.p.h.", or roughly twice the speed of sound. The power plant was a simple, but revolutionary ram-jet engine, weighing only 70 pounds and developing one horsepower for each half ounce of its structural weight as compared to the one-pound-per-horsepower performance of the best modern conventional aircraft engines.

NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE, June 17, 1946

During the war the Nazis fired several test V-rockets over Sweden from the Danish island of Bornholm. Now they're coming again. It's impossible to tell who, where, or why, but someone in Europe is firing long-range secret rockets patterned on Nazi vengeance weapons. The facts: In the last few weeks several have been observed passing over Sweden. Last week one burst into three parts over the Swedish province of Dalecarlia near Kopparberg. Swedish military patrols are looking for wrecks, but it is a tough job in the thick forests of the area and so far none has been found. Swedish observers say the winged projectiles traveled at a fantastic speed horizontally. The direction of flight suggested they came from southeast or south.

NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM, June 18, 1946

Fort Miles, Del., June 18 (UP)-- Possible use of the Navy's 1,500-mile-an-hour ram-jet to shoot mail across the continent in two hours was foreseen here today following the first public demonstration of the engine. The device soon will be equipped with wings and tail assembly and flown as a remotely controlled pilotless aircraft.

NEW YORK TIMES, June 19, 1946

Washington, June 18 -- The inventor of the jet-propelled engine, Air Commodore Frank Whittle of the Royal Air Force, who was bored by the "crawling pace" of the Liberator which flew him across the Atlantic, predicted today that in five years air lines would fly passengers in jet-propelled planes at 500 to 600 miles an hour.

NEW YORK TIMES, June 21, 1946

Army experts believe that effective inter-continental rockets will not be developed for ten to fifteen years, Maj. Gen. Robert W. Hasbrouck, Deputy Chief of Staff for the Army Ground Forces, said last night. Although the Germans drew workable plans for a rocket with more than 3,000 miles range, he said, its inaccuracy makes it impossible as a weapon against cities.

NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE, June 24, 1946

After considerable searching, the Army has decided on an unnamed civilian test pilot to make the hazardous first flight of the sensational XS-1 supersonic rocket plane, which some engineers believe capable of a speed of 1,000 m.p.h. He will be paid \$50,000 for the job. The pilot's personal equipment, details of which are military secrets, will give him the appearance of a comic-strip rocket pilot and provide protection against the physical strains of supersonic flight. A major hazard cannot be obviated, however -- the possibility of a sudden drop from supersonic speed, which might prove fatal.

NEW YORK DAILY MIRROR, June 23, 1946

Pasadena, Cal., June 22 -(AP) -- The curtain has been lifted on another of the Government's ultra hush-hush testing laboratories, and the Earth shook in the process. While newspaper and magazine writers held their ears, scientists demonstrated the power of jet-propulsion. It was a roaring, quaking affair. The motor of a "WAC Corporal", this Country's answer to the German's V-2, was trained on a hollowed-out hillside and ignited. A sheet of searing flame, dwarfing anything the war may have seen in the way of flame throwers, blasted the cliff and shook the observation room. Since it was a static test, no missile was launched. The rocket is one of several projects developed at California Institute of Technology's jet-propulsion laboratory, hidden in the hills behind Pasadena.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, June 23, 1946

Washington, June 22 (AP) -- The Army is talking of the possibility of an atomic missile which, fired from the United States, can hit any part of the world within an hour. Colonel S. B. Ritchie, acting chief of the Research and Development Service said: "We must expect other nations will develop missiles capable of crossing oceans. Counter-measure missiles are therefore included in our over-all-program." He said the Army has a contract with the General Electric Company which is making the "Buk Rogers myth a reality." He was speaking here of rockets, "long range, ground-to-ground controlled missiles", he said. These giant rockets will travel more than five times faster than sound (sound travels about 1,000 feet a second in air), capable of streaking into space and then, controlled by complicated robot 'brains', dive with uncanny accuracy on a target thousands of miles away."

Major Alexander P. de Seversky in the "This Week" section of the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, June 23, 1946:

"The drawings on these pages show my version -- as an aeronautical engineer, practical flyer and test pilot -- of what an earth-to-moon space ship of the future might look like. Here are some quick facts about it. It will be driven by some new source of power, such as atomic energy. It will take off on its journey with slow

ease and comfort -- not with a jolting rush. It will be able to hover -- remain motionless -- in space, either far away or close to the surface of the earth or some other planet. Out in space it will travel sideways, not head on. Far beyond the reach of the earth's gravity, it will have an artificial gravity to keep passengers and furniture and water and everything else comfortably in place. The pilot will have complete control over the ship at all times. There will be no uncontrolled 'coasting.' It will make the trip to the moon in three and a half hours, with a top speed of more than 139,000 miles an hour. The ship itself will be no larger than an average airplane. All but one element for such a flight are already at hand. That one element, the missing link in the chain, is a fuel light enough, powerful enough, compact enough to contain in extremely small packages the immense energy required for interplanetary travel. Given such a fuel, I would gladly undertake to design and build a serviceable space ship."

NEW YORK DAILY MIRROR, July 1, 1946

Longview, Wash. (INS) -- A man who should know forecast that men would shoot pilotless aircraft to the moon for investigation purposes "within my lifetime." The speaker, Cmdr. Moulton B. Taylor, USNR, should live another 35 or 40 years. Cmdr. Taylor aided in developing the Navy's highly secret pilotless aircraft during the war, and this research should advance flight to the moon by years.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, July 10, 1946

White Sands, N.M., July 9 (AP) -- A German V-2 rocket was fired to an altitude of 83.5 miles for a new record today at White Sands proving ground. The huge rocket, laden with data-gathering instruments, was in the air 400.5 seconds and came to earth sixty-three miles due north of the launching site.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, July 10, 1946

Washington, July 9 -- Guided missiles with an ultimate range of 20,000 miles, capable of circling the globe -- are already the subject of long-range planning by ordnance scientists, the War Department disclosed today. Major General Everett S. Hughes, Chief of the Army Ordnance Department, made the disclosure in announcing that a joint Army-Navy commission is searching the United States, Caribbean and Pacific Areas for a range where it will be possible to test contemplated rockets over a distance of 2,000 miles.

NEW YORK TIMES, July 23, 1946

Washington, July 22 -- A research program to ascertain how atomic energy can be used for airplanes is being worked out by the Army Air Forces and aircraft companies, the War Department announced tonight...It was said at the Pentagon that enough progress has been made to show that the project is "not impractical."

(Continued on Page 26)
(18)

WHAT DOES FANDOM THINK?

THE majority of science fiction fandom believes that space flight will be accomplished within the next 15 years. In a Beowulf poll conducted by this fanzine three months ago, 67 out of 68 fans, authors, and editors replying stated that they believed it would be accomplished. Raymond Palmer cast the lone negative vote.

Below we are reprinting from "Space Flight -- When?" the list of dates chosen for the first successful flight to the moon or another planet; also, whether or not the participant would be willing to go along on the first attempt at reaching the moon, given only 50% chance of returning.

* * * *

YEAR -- Would you go? YEAR -- Would you go?

1948.....Joseph H. Wrzos.....YES
 1949.....Gus Dallas.....
 1950.....John Randolph.....YES
 1950.....John Campbell, Jr.....YES
 1950.....Forrest Ackerman...NO
 1950.....Bob Tucker.....YES
 1950.....Richard Alnutt.....NO
 1951.....Benson Perry.....YES
 al1951.....Rick Sneary.....
 1952.....Sam Moskowitz.....NO
 1953.....Lloyd Alpaugh.....YES
 al1953.....E.E. Greenleaf.....YES
 1954.....Doris Currier.....YES
 1955.....Andy Lyon.....YES
 1955.....Jack Speer.....NO
 1955.....George Fox.....YES
 1955.....Henry Elsner.....YES
 1955.....Charles Beling.....
 1955.....Paul D. Cox.....
 al1955.....Harold Cheney.....YES
 1956.....Virginia Lelake.....YES
 1956.....Ralph Milne Farley...NO
 1957.....Gerry de la Ree.....YES
 al1957.....Theodore Sturgeon...YES
 1960.....Willy Ley.....YES
 1960.....Richard S. Shaver...YES
 1960.....Thomas Gardner.....
 1960.....Rickey Slavin.....YES
 1960.....William H. Evans.....YES
 1960.....Millard Grimes.....YES
 1960.....Art Widner.....YES
 1960.....Dr. C.L. Barrett...NO
 1960.....Walt Dunkelberger...YES
 1960.....John B. Cornell.....YES

1960.....Alex Saunders.....
 1960.....Van Splawn.....NO
 1960.....Fred Rowland.....YES
 1960.....Richard Frank.....NO
 1960.....Walter Coslet.....YES
 1960.....Robert Peterson...YES
 1963.....Lionel Inman.....YES
 1963.....Ronald ChristensenYES
 1965.....D.B. Thompson.....NO
 1969.....Ronald Maddox.....YES
 1970.....James BreckenridgeNO
 1970.....Harry Warner, Jr..NO
 1972.....Hugo Gernsback...NO
 1975.....L. Sprague deCamp..NO
 1975.....Otto Binder.....NO
 1975.....Manly W. Wellman...YES
 1975.....Henry Kolbe.....YES
 1975.....Phillip Schaumann..NO
 1976.....Alfred Africano...YES
 1976.....Francis T. Laney...NO
 al1977.....David M. Speaker...YES
 1980.....John Wasso.....YES
 1980.....Joe Kennedy.....YES
 al1985.....Clifford Hall.....NO
 1986.....Harley Sachs.....YES
 1990.....Charles Lucas.....YES
 1995.....Martin Carlson...NO
 2000.....Langley Searles...NO
 2000.....R.D. Swisher.....NO
 2000.....Kent Bone.....YES
 2010.....Steve Hanrahan...YES
 2100.....Alex Osheroff.....NO
 2145.....Darrell RichardsonNO
 a--Denotes date is average one.

WHAT DOES FARNSWORTH THINK?

Reproduced below is a letter from R. L. Farnsworth, President of the United States Rocket Society, commenting on the results of the "space flight" Beowulf poll of science fiction fandom:

Dear Mr. de la Ree:

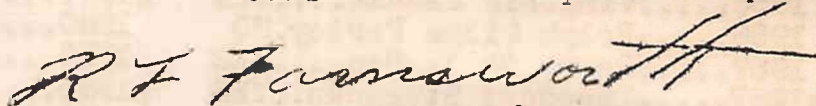
The science fiction "fans" and Authors are lamentably behind the times. For the last four years I have been prophesying rockets on the Moon within a very short time, granted atomic power. Last week, on "Headline Edition", I said a rocket could be put on the Moon in two years. A few nites later the Army came on the air with the same announcement. The only question that has been involved for some time now has been that of money. The Army has the money, and -- the atom.

I do not like to be cynical but I am afraid that none of the rocket idealists and dreamers are going to be among the ones to first step upon the alien ash of the Moon. It will no doubt be an Army officer or university professor, who, up until today, has hooted down in derision any mention of the possibilities of interplanetary travel.

As a suggestion I would recommend that you get out a letter to all of these seers and tell them to stop guessing and write to their Senator and Congressman and ask that a civilian committee be named to work with the Army on the Moon rocket project. We who have been laughed at for years for dreaming and working towards the Moon, deserve to be laughed at still more uproariously if we sit back and let our detractors reach the Moon ahead of us.

As the largest amateur society in the world, with over 1,000 members, (some of whom are in your list) we have done more to popularize the idea of space penetration than any other body of people in the world.

Yours for the Conquest of Space!



R. L. Farnsworth

* * *

(As something of a postscript we would like to quote a paragraph from a form letter sent out by the U.S.R.S.):

"Nothing is as certain as the FUTURE! Heading no one it speeds toward us all. Somewhere in that future a man is stepping from a spaceship onto the alien ash of the MOON! Just who that man is; and how soon he will achieve the grand objective, is up to you and others of us who have the courage and the vision to challenge the infinite frontier, the UNIVERSE!!!"

"DAWN OF FLAME"

The Bibliographical History
Of A Rare Book --
By SAM MOSKOWITZ

DAWN OF FLAME AND OTHER STORIES by Stanley Grauman Weinbaum. 313 pages, 1936 (distributed 1937), Sponsored by the Milwaukee Fictioneers & Milwaukee Chapter American Fiction Guild; Printer by Ruppert Printing Service, Jamaica, N.Y.

WOULD you trade a duplicate copy of "The Outsider" by H.P. Lovecraft for a copy of "Dawn of Flame" by S.G. Weinbaum? Stifle that throat-forming "No!", and listen to facts.

When Stanley G. Weinbaum died on December 14, 1935, he left behind a group of sincere acolytes, fully as enthusiastic and capable as those of the late H.P. Lovecraft. Among these were Raymond A. Palmer, then a well-known science fiction writer and columnist for the leading semi-pro fan journal, Fantasy Magazine; Conrad H. Ruppert, capable printer who was responsible for the reproduction of The Time Traveller, Fantasy Magazine, Cosmos, the ARRA booklets and many other publications; Julius Schwartz, editor of Fantasy Magazine and leading literary agent; Mort Weisinger, who shortly ascended to editorship of Thrilling Wonder Stories; and the Milwaukee Fictioneers, a group of professional authors including Robert Bloch, fantasy writer, and Lawrence Keating, well-known western story writer and President of the organization. These men felt toward Stan Weinbaum as Derleth and Wandrei felt towards Lovecraft. They would produce a memorial volume of his works to stand as a monument to his greatness.

Hugo Gernsback, then owner of Wonder Stories, willingly released permission for use of copyrighted Weinbaum stories, as did F. Orlin Tremaine, editor of Astounding. Tremaine gave the volume advance notice in the pages of his magazine, and Leo Margulies and Mort Weisinger printed a review by Hohn D. Clark, Ph. D. of the book after Standard Publications had purchased Wonder Stories from Gernsback.

Ray Palmer did the editorial work; Ruppert the printing. The book was printed one page at a time in 10 point Linotype Oldstyle, on the small press of Ruppert, and was a long, drawn out, laborious project born of love.

The original introduction was written by Ray Palmer, but when Margeret Weinbaum, Stan's widow, read the proofs she protested that the tone of the introduction was too personal, and all but five copies of that original introduction were destroyed and a new one by Keating substituted. Copies of "Dawn of Flame" containing the Palmer piece are owned by Ruppert, Schwartz, Palmer, Keating, and Marge Weinbaum. And since these individuals have such a great personal fondness towards the memory of Weinbaum, they would scarcely ever part with their copies. Thus, this rare edition is not to be worried about and can be consigned to the category of the unattainable.

The first 250 copies of an entire printing of 500 were regarded as first editions and are so labeled. (Right here it might be well to note that there were 1,227 copies of "The Outsider" printed). The book was bound by a binder who specialized in binding bibles, and is in appearance just like one, bound in semi-flexible black leather, with no lettering on the spine, but the front of the book carries the title "Dawn of Flame and Other Stories" by Stanley Weinbaum, stamped in gold.

Rumors are rampant that only 250 copies of the book were ever bound. Ruppert says if more than that number were sold, Palmer, who was in charge of sales, owes him a percentage on the books. Of the second 250, it is not known for certainty whether they were ever bound, and if they were, whether or not they are imprinted as first editions. As late as 1941 copies could be purchased at the original price of \$2.50 or slightly above. Erle Korschak of Chicago, and Leslie Johnson of England were the principal agents. Since that date, to the best of my knowledge, no copy has EVEN BEEN OFFERED FOR SALE AT ANY PRICE! A maximum number of 505 copies exist; a possible minimum of 250 may be closer to the actual truth. Virtually all copies are owned by died-in-the-wool fantasy fans who would have to be dynamited away from the book. It simply does not circulate.

The contents of the book are: 1. "Dawn of Flame" (The original version, containing four to five thousand more words than the only other printing in Thrilling Wonder, June 1939. This story may be obtained complete in only one other form, the original manuscript owned by Forrest J. Ackerman, who made the highest bid at the Nycon.),

"The Mad Moon", "A Martian Odyssey", "The Worlds of If", "The Adaptive Ultimate", "The Lotus Eaters", and "The Red Peri".

The quality is impeccable. Some of the greatest Weinbaum stories are present and the selection is representative. The quality of the writing may be ascertained from a typical quote from "Dawn of Flame":

"But Black Margot rode north from Selui through the night. In the sky before her were thin shadows leading phantom armies, Alexander the Great, Attila, Gengiz Khan, Tamurlane, Napoleon, and clearer than all, the battle queen Semiramis. All the mighty conquerors of the past, and where ~~were they~~, where were ~~their~~ empires, and where, even, were their bones? Far in the south were the graves of men who had loved her, all except Old Einar, who tottered like a feeble grey ghost across the world to find his... And at her side Joaquin Smith turned as if to speak, stared, and remained silent. He was not accustomed to the sight of tears in the eyes and on the cheeks of Black Margot."

What monetary value has "Dawn of Flame"? We have no concrete evidence since no dealer in the last five years has had a copy to quote. I have had three offers ranging from 15 to 25 dollars for my copy. This is an honest value based on true scarcity and demand, and nowhere artificially fostered.

LET 'EM RAVE

Simply a few excerpts from letters
written by our more ambitious
readers

JACK SPEER says:

Breckenridge seems to be a pretty intelligent guy, even if he does work for the New York News. With reference to "The Communication of Horror", I think someone should start from scratch and analyze the emotion of horror and related ones; there's so much mist surrounding the terms that discussion of them can only be pursued so far. A couple of things that we might note in connection with JDB's two articles is that not all horror is supernatural horror, and that supernatural literature may legitimately strive for other effects than horror. Further on horror as an emotion, I think commentators have erred in not distinguishing between extreme disgust (as in "Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar") and the clean, cold chill that drives down your spine in the better parts of "Fear", or the painful but admiring feeling that comes at the end of "It." That man's antipathy toward insects comes from a consciousness of inferiority seems an absurd theory. It's a good example of the lengths to which Freudianism is carried. I'd say the bases of the antipathy are rather these: many insects, though small, can deliver painful and even dangerous stings. And they work by stealth, breaking into hoarded grain to eat it up while the outside continues to look sound; and when what seems but an innocent tickling on the back of one's neck, which he brushes at idly as he would brush off a leaf, turns out to be one of the small enemies with its potency of pain, the unpleasant inversion of our feelings multiplies the revulsion. Turning to the review of "Twilight Bar", I see Breckenridge endorses Koestler's "today we know that happiness is Man's one and only duty on this Earth." The raising up of happiness as the summum bonum always presents the question of survival; for the demands of survival often run counter to happiness. Moreover, mere happiness does not seem to me a sufficient reason for being here, and I think most people would agree that the supreme condition of man would not consist of beings sitting around in robot-tended cubicles smoking a super hashish which gave them all-pleasant dreams.

* * *

HARRY WARNER writes:

I enjoyed practically everything in this issue -- nice to see "Graph" again, and Breckenridge is interesting if not altogether satisfactory. No dogmatic statement that this or that weird effect is valueless will hold water; too much depends on the psychological make-up of the reader. Some people, probably with the same general background and education and intelligence as Breckenridge, find the climax of "Oh Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad" to be one of the most gruesome things in all literature. My own pet nomination for ineffectiveness in the weird story is the other James' "Turn of the Screw", but apparently it has something on the ball, to have scared so many thousands of readers to death down through the decades. The whole thing is gone into very thoroughly in a recent Rosenblum publication for the FAPA, which you may have seen.

PHIL SCHUMANN pens:

Sun Spots I find to be a tremendous improvement over the magazine I remember of '41 and '42. Good mimeographing, fair art, and thought provocative articles -- fine...Weinbaum's story seemed not as complete as his better known efforts, but nevertheless had an interesting twist. No explanation was offered though..."Communication of Horror" -- Discussion of the movies was interesting. It seems to me that the motion picture is capable of producing some very real horror sensations that books have thus far been incapable of duplicating. Remember "She" and "Lost Horizon"? In each of these was found the same type of horror, one peculiar to the cinema, and giving rise to the idea that motion pictures have not been successful in mature horror films mainly because they have not realised all of their possibilities. They have been largely been reproducing the same effects found in books and have failed because, as Breckenridge, says the camera gives all details and leaves little to imagination. That points directly to the suggestion that the movies' best possibilities lie in the psychological use of horror, in using one thing to suggest another, and not an extension of the same thing. In each of the two films I have mentioned we find a definite sensation of horror that remains unspoiled by the precision of the camera. A young, pretty woman suddenly ages hideously and impossibly. What does it suggest beyond the mere picture? We get the impression of tremendous age, and the seeing of it strikes revulsion deeply. We are definitely informed that it is not a young girl grown suddenly old, but that she was old already, and merely assumed her true appearance. We are unwilling to believe and yet the suggestion of such monstrous, tremendous age is very vivid, and almost impossible to reproduce with a printed word. The only evidence I have seen of that is in a short, not too good poem at the beginning of a story called "Hell is Forever" published some years ago (Summer, 1941, I think) in Unknown. A man is drinking with the devil, and after some dialogue, suggests that the time is growing late. The devil scoffs and says that time means nothing to him, who has all time to deal with. The man acquires suddenly realization and the poem ends with the line, "He was old -- old!" It carries quite an impact of age that is rather horrifying, but I don't suppose you will know what I mean unless you read the entire poem, which I don't remember off hand. Horror seems to be portrayed well not from belief, but from unwillingness to believe something that appears to be true. The horror is in the impossibility of something that is. The movies also are improving in their use of surrealism, which has its own peculiar horror. A whole field lies open here to exploitation. Again, the best surrealism is psychological. The movies, to sustain horror, are going to have to use a different media than that of the printed page, for the same reason that an aeroplane is not very useful on the ground. The methods must be different because the means of transmission are different.

* * *

FRANCIS T. LANEY comes up with:

"Graph" is an example of a rather uncommon form of fiction, science fiction which is not fantastic...Your new man, Breckenridge, is pretty good, and hope you can keep him as a regular contributor.

I differ with several of his critical judgements, notably his curt dismissal of "Oh Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad" and the H.P.L. dream fantasies. While it is possible the reader's reaction may be largely determined by what one is looking for (Breckenridge evidently being sent only by relatively mundane horror tales). I believe that much of H.P.L.'s best work may be found in his dream stuff, which comes much nearer to being respectable prose than his longer stories and as for a complete abstraction being unable to arouse my emotion, how about some of Clark Ashton Smith's stuff, very little of which I place in any mundane frame of reference?...In connection with Goya, have you ever seen his fantastic, satyric paintings dealing with flight? Spain reproduced three or four of them on a series of air mail stamps which they brought out some 12 to 15 years ago. They'd definitely classify as scientificfictional art...Both book reviews were excellent, with de la Ree doing slightly the better job. Better keep him as a regular contributor(!)...Best and most useful part of the mag is the tabulation of the past six polls.

* * *

STEVE HANRAHAN adds in with:

I'm glad to find somebody else who thinks "The World of A" stinks. As a matter of fact me thinks maybe the whole mag (Astounding) is deteriorating into a mess of mental geniuses playing hopscotch with man hole covers and pogo sticks. I'd give every one of my 45-46 Astounding's for one good issue from the 1939-43 period. Maybe Heinlein, Hubbard, and Russell can ressurect Astounding. I'd like to read another of Russell's Jay Score-Explorer yarns.

* * *

LLOYD ALPAUGH asks:

Are you sure that there is such a person as "James Breckenridge?" The name sounds awfully like a pen name. Be that as it may, the fellow has some interesting articles in this issue. "The Communication of Horror" is debatable -- as every article should be -- and I am inclined to argue with some of his statements. "The Outsider" mythos, for instance, is not, to my way of thinking, a complete abstraction, being firmly rooted in everyday things. And "The Infamous Necronomicon of the mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred" is not a joke to everyone: this is proven by the fact that many people believe that the book actually exists. And another thing, if I recall M.R. James' "Oh Whistle etc." correctly, James does not state that the ghost is a sheet; he merely says it has a "face of crumbled linen." There are many things I would rather see than a ghost with a face of mussed-up linen.

* * *

PAUL D. COX complains:

As for book reviews -- That is the ruin of most fanzines now-a-days. Personally I don't give a damn about Joe Whosits book, nor about Joe Whosits. It would be all right occasionally, but many 'zines are devoting several pages every issue to them. Throw 'em out, I say. Substitute a column of hints to collectors..."The Communication of Horror" -- poor, I don't care for a lot of tripe about books and analysis of an author's style..."Art and Horror" -- another batch of drivel.

NEW YORK SUN, July 25, 1946

Chicago, July 25 (AP) -- R.L. Farnsworth, president of the United States Rocket Society, says that Army Air Forces reports on the practicability of atomic energy for powering airplanes should result in rockets reaching the moon within the next two years. "The next and inevitable step," he said, "is the use of the atom to power interplanetary rockets. You should see a rocket on the moon within two years, if not sooner."

NEW YORK MIRROR, July 28, 1946

Washington, July 27 (INS) -- The Army Air Forces revealed today it has concluded rocket contact can be made with the moon. Disclosure that the AAF has performed calculations for an out-of-this-world flight was made by an officer with access to experts' findings on the project. He said "The AAF has been studying the whole problem of reaching the moon and has been making computations. It has arrived at the conclusion that physical contact can be made with the moon." The rocket would travel 35,700 feet per second to span the 240,000 miles to the moon, going relatively slow -- about a mile per second -- until thin atmosphere is reached. Army sources believe it will be easier to reach the moon than most distant spots on earth with rockets. Army plans for the flight to the moon include the expectation that the rocket will return. Ordnance officers emphasized there is no reason other than scientific interest for flight to the moon. They said: "If it became necessary and enough scientists, material and money were made available, we could go to the moon tomorrow."

NEW YORK TIMES, July 29, 1946

Washington, July 28 -- Several score giant rockets, including rockets designed to go substantially higher than the Nazi V-2's, are to be built for the Army Air Forces to find out what it is like in the upper atmosphere, officials disclosed today. They are to serve as pioneers for the long-range guided missiles and "space vehicles" which Maj. Gen. Curtis E. LeMay has predicted as likely developments of the next few years.

NEW YORK TIMES, July 31, 1946

White Sands, N.M., July 30 (AP) -- A new world's altitude record of 104 miles was claimed today by the Army for a German V-2 rocket fired by technicians at the proving grounds here.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, August 11, 1946

Washington, Aug. 10 (UP) -- The rocket-powered Bell XS-1, first aircraft designed for flight faster than sound, will be flown under its own power for the first time this fall, possibly at Luroc Lake, Calif., the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics announced tonight.

NEW YORK TIMES, August 12, 1946

Stockholm, Sweden, Aug. 11 -- A swarm of rocket bombs passed over Stockholm at 10 o'clock tonight. The course, as usual, was from the southeast toward the northwest. (It was reported from Washington that missiles seen over Sweden were thought to have been launched from a former German rocket experiment area at Peenemunde, now in the Soviet zone of Germany.) Reports flowing to the Swedish General Staff stress that the bombs are like fireballs, with long luminous tails, but some observers have seen a cigar-shaped bomb, traveling at an altitude of 1,500 feet rather slowly...The longest flight of any of the missiles, so far as military experts could determine, was about 600 miles, compared with the range of 35 to 45 miles for the first German V-2 rocket bombs.

NEW YORK TIMES, August 12, 1946

Washington, Aug. 11 -- In "immediate prospect" as United States sea weapons are pilotless aircraft capable of carrying atomic bombs, the Navy revealed today...The report, which in its predictions concerning superweapons rivaled those made by the Army Air Forces, also forecast that "a little farther in the future are satellite vehicles, circling the earth hundreds of miles up, like moons....Interplanetary travel, in case someone feels the urge to visit far places, is only a short step from the satellite vehicle," it continued.

BERGEN EVENING RECORD, August 13, 1946

Stockholm, Aug. 13 (AP) -- An eyewitness account published in the Stockholm Aftonbladet yesterday told how a 100-foot "ghost rocket" exploded in a blinding flash over Sweden lending support to previous reports that the mystery missiles are equipped with destruction devices which make it impossible to find traces of them.

NEW YORK SUN, August 14, 1946

Stockholm, Aug. 14 (AP) -- The Aftonbladet said yesterday that a ghost bomb, bursting over a Swedish lake, nearly caused casualties and criticized the military authorities for their failure to explain the nature of the missiles, which have been reported almost daily for the past two months...The Swedish military authorities said yesterday that they had received no tangible proof that the frequent celestial phenomena observed over the country resulted from foreign experiments with aerial missiles....The first "ghost rocket" explosion over Debmark also was reported in Copenhagen. Briand Jensen, a night watchman in Struer, West Jutland, said he saw a speeding rocket, approaching from the Northeast, explode with a roar and illuminate the sky with a blinding flash.

EDITORIAL VIEWPOINTS

(Continued from page 4)

coast at the present time. Its membership currently stands at an even 30 and an attendance of over 20 has been realized at each of the last two meetings. Elections are to be held at the next meeting, September 8. Sam Moskowitz is now Director, Rickey Slavin secretary, and Gerry de la Ree treasurer.

* * *

We recently whipped up a review of "Agharti" (Amazing, June '46) for Henry Elsner fanzine, Scientifictionist. (At Henry's request, incidentally). We have spoken with a number of fans about the novel and found them split in their opinions of it. The majority seem to feel it is pro-Nazi. This we cannot see. We have read the story twice, thinking that perhaps we overlooked something during the first reading. We hadn't. The story is definitely anti-Nazi; we'll stake everything on that opinion. It is pro-German, but that, in this case, is a far cry from being pro-Nazi. Heinrich Hauser, the author of "Agharti" shows signs of being a talented writer. We seriously doubt that "Agharti" was written especially for Amazing, as its quality is far above the type generally found in that magazine. As a guess, we would say that the novel was originally written for publication either in book form or in a slick magazine. It was, doubtless, rejected as being a bit too fantastic. The story also shows signs of having been cut, which to this writer, further implies that it was not originally slated for Amazing. Fans who neglected to read "Agharti" should give it a whirl.

* * *

"Sin's Doorway", by Manly Wade Wellman, which appeared in the January, 1946 issue of Weird Tales, has been selected by Rex Stout to appear in his forthcoming anthology, "Rue Morgue No. 2". Wellman recently completed a detective novel, "Find My Killer", which is to be published in book form. He has also turned out a novel for Startling, in which he hopes to duplicate the success of "Twice in Time."

* * *

We'd like to congratulate Joe Kennedy on his upset victory in this year's Beowulf Poll (see pages 31-33). It was perhaps as much a shock to him as it was to a number of other fans. There was little doubt of Joek's popularity, but few realized that it was as wide spread as the poll proved. It was with regret that we noted the failure of such well-known fans as Laney, Thompson, Schumann, W. Daugherty, Dunkelberger, Liebscher, S.D. Russell, and Koenig to return the ballots mailed them. We would refer the complaints of any fans as to the incompleteness of the poll, to these individuals. Will Sykora returned his ballot on August 20, three days too late to be included in the final results.

* * *

This issue of Sun Spots sort of outgrew original plans. Due to the size of the issue (and the fact we were forced to buy new rollers for the typewriter) it set us back in cash considerably more than we had anticipated. We still refuse to ask subscriptions, but any donations -- to cover the cost of postage -- would be received with thanks. And don't forget to write that letter if you want the next issue!

WHY FANTASY?

BY JAMES D. BRECKENRIDGE

WHEN I was in high school, oh so many years ago, I joined a society known as the Solaroid Club, whose principal purpose in life, other than social, was the purchase and reading of a variety of magazines classed in a group as "science-fiction". These magazines, most of them at least one notch above the bulk of pulp fiction, carried a type of story concerned with the future world of scientific achievement; a type of fiction popularized by H.G. Wells, but with its roots in such diverse spirits as Plato, Samuel Butler, Edgar A. Poe, and Edward Bellamy, to name a few. These stories contemplated the world of the next few centuries, when science should have brought new powers within the grasp of man, powers which would enable him to reach out to touch the stars, or to travel hither and yon within the frame of dimensional time.

I then proceeded to go off to college, where, among other things, I learned of the existence of a curious writer named Lovecraft, and of a great number of his predecessors, Stoker, Machen, LeFanu, Lewis, and many others, for the most part stemming from the Gothic horror stories which were a phase of the romantic movement. The only point of overlapping with the first type of fiction was, curiously enough, in that enigmatic genius, Poe.

Having absorbed a considerable amount of this background, and a modicum of the work now being done in the field, I hastened back to my Solaroid friends to tell them of my discovery, and found -- that this interest had almost entirely displaced science fiction with them! Within the same framework of societies and publications once concerned with science fiction now existed a large fan group only casually interested in stories of tomorrow, and absorbed instead in what we may call fantasy fiction, for the most part consisting of straight horror stories.

Looking back, I can see that this reversal had been in no wise so sudden and unexpected as it at first appeared. Weird Tales has been with us for a long time, and there existed before the paper shortages that magnificent failure, Unknown Worlds. What interests me is the change that has taken place in the very people once most interested in that totally different form, science-fiction.

For during the very last period when the interests of these enthusiasts had swung to this extreme sort of escapism, the science in which they had been so interested had vindicated a great part of their hopes and predictions, once deemed so fantastic. Even before atomic power became a tangible reality, the scientific progress made during the war was indubitably tremendous.

Why, then, did this change take place even while earlier passions were being vindicated? Because, I believe, our part of the

world is entering a culminating phase of a major retreat from reality. The atom bomb served to dramatize beyond dispute a truism obvious to a few men for many years: that technical scientific advances have so far outstripped man's mental equipment that an extreme point of imbalance is about to be reached. Now, when science presents man with the key to all his ills at one stroke, he finds himself unable to use that key for anything but a weapon to destroy himself. The seriousness of the situation cannot be overstated. Man finds himself unequipped mentally and socially to handle this tremendous force; so, instead he seeks to escape them by ignoring them.

This escape takes a wide variety of forms. A religious swing toward irrationality has been gaining momentum recently. In England, as in France, always rather in advance of us in intellectual matters, Catholic conversions became numerous as far back as twenty years ago. We are seeing this in our country at the present time. What Gide discussed a quarter of a century ago is now becoming the concern of a number of English and American writers. Some, indeed, like Huxley and Isherwood, have gone beyond, into their own brands of oriental mysticism. All this cannot be without relation to the lesser changes of attitude. Our shift from Adam Link to John Thunstone is not entirely unlike Huxley's transition from biology to the Vedanta. More and more, the thinking segment of the population is seeking to avoid its problems by resorting to irrational mysticism. With all due respect to Catholicism's promises for the next world, it no longer presents any conclusive solution to our problems in this one. And this world's troubles are many.

Above all, of course, stands this mighty version of Buck Rogers' disintegrator. In the hands of statesmen unable to think in terms of anything but imperialism and power politics, we may never see atomic power used for any useful purpose, until after it has served to destroy the disagreeing half of the world (ours or theirs); then, if there is anyone left intelligent enough to use it, we may yet travel to the moon.

This, of course, has very little to do with fantasy fiction; fantasy fiction is only one slight manifestation of what cannot but be considered a fundamentally unhealthy intellectual trend. Fantasy fiction cannot be condemned for itself; that is not my aim: indeed, I am very much interested in the field. We can scarcely make improvements by trying to alter fantasy fiction itself.

The trouble lies far deeper than that. Only bringing the intellectual level of the western world up to its technical accomplishments can we hope to declare a "moratorium on science"; but we can attempt to advance the other phases of understanding to something comparable to the condition of modern science. Precisely how this is to be effected, I confess I do not know, and indeed it would be presumptuous of me to suggest; I only know it must be done. For if we fail to measure up to this task, but instead continue to seek mere avenues of escape, we have the alternative of heightened conflict, a struggle whose roots we cannot understand, ending almost inevitably in mass destruction on a scale hitherto never conceived. . .

1946 BEOWULF POLL RESULTS --

AUTHORS		Points	PRO-MAGAZINES		Points
1.	ABE MERRITT (14)	323	1.	ASTOUNDING S.F. (46)	316
2.	H. P. Lovecraft (9)	298	2.	F. F. M. (16)	236
3.	A. E. Van Vogt (7)	281	3.	Weird Tales (4)	137
4.	Henry Kuttner-Padgett (3)	225	4.	Startling Stories (4)	121
5.	Robert Heinlein (5)	223	5.	Planet Stories (2)	101
6.	Stanley G. Weinbaum (7)	218	6.	Thrilling Wonder (2)	89
7.	E. E. Smith (4)	159	7.	Amazing Stories	38
8.	John Campbell-Stuart (1)	129	8.	Fantastic Adventures	16
9.	L. Sprague de Camp (3)	111	9.	Unknown	11
10.	John Taine	87	10.	New Worlds	8
11.	C. A. Smith	84	FANZINES		Points
12.	H. G. Wells (2)	81	1.	VAMPIRE (13)	422
13.	Isaac Asimov	79	2.	Fantasy Commentator (14)	295
14.	Edgar Rice Burroughs (1)	78	3.	Shangri L'Affaires (4)	270
15.	Murray Leinster (1)	75	4.	Scientifictionist (5)	234
16.	Robert Bloch (1)	74	5.	The Acolyte (11)	210
17.	Edmond Hamilton (4)	70	6.	Sun Spots (4)	178
18.	Ross Rocklynne (1)	59	7.	Star Rover (1)	176
	Olaf Stapledon (3)	59	8.	Fanews (1)	175
20.	Algernon Blackwood	56	9.	V. O. M. (3)	165
21.	Jack Williamson (1)	51	10.	Le Zombie (4)	156
22.	Theodore Sturgeon	50	11.	Chanticleer (1)	138
23.	Edgar A. Poe (1)	49	12.	Stefnews	118
24.	Ray Bradbury	45	13.	Psycho (2)	68
25.	Manly Wade Wellman	42	14.	Fantasy Advertiser (1)	65
26.	David Keller (1)	40	15.	The Grotesque	61
	C. L. Moore	40	16.	The -- Thing (1)	40
28.	H. R. Haggard	36		Time Binder (1)	40
29.	L. Ron Hubbard	33	18.	Cygni	26
30.	Austin Hall	32	19.	PSFS News (1)	25
31.	John Collier (1)	30	20.	Fan (1)	23
	Clifford Simak	30	21.	Ember	22
33.	Lester Del Ray	29		Fantasy Fiction Field	22
34.	G. O. Smith-Wes Long	28			
	Lord Dunsany (1)	28			
36.	August Derleth	27			
37.	Leigh Brackett	24			
38.	George A. England	23			
ARTISTS		Points	7.	Boris Dolgov (1)	30
1.	VIRGIL FINLAY (41)	291	8.	Orban (2)	24
2.	Lawrence-Stevens (8)	158	9.	Ronald Clyne (1)	23
3.	Frank R. Paul (6)	115		Leydenfrost (2)	23
4.	Hannes Bok (5)	90	11.	Ed Cartier (2)	22
5.	Charles Schneeman (1)	36	12.	H. W. Wesso (1)	21
6.	Hulert Rogers (1)	35	13.	Elliot Dold	20
			14.	Earle Bergey (1)	19

FANS

Points

Points

1. JOE KENNEDY (12).....	285	13. Art Widner (1)	60
2. Forrest J. Ackerman (11)...	278	14. Henry Elsner (1).....	58
3. Bob Tucker (13).....	268	15. Walt Liebscher	57
4. Jack Speer (2)	180	Lloyd Alpaugh	57
5. Francis T. Laney (1)	178	17. Walt Coslet	56
6. Sam Moskowitz (5)	176	18. Harry Warner (1).....	53
7. Gerry de la Ree (2).....	170	19. Walt Daugherty (1).....	51
8. Walt Dunkelberger (5).....	157	John Cockroft	51
9. E. E. Evans (2).....	109	21. Van Splawn	44
10. A. Langley Searles (2).....	82	22. Al Ashley (1).....	43
11. Milton Rothman	66	23. Phil Schumann (1).....	42
12. Charles Burbee (1).....	65	K. Martin Carlson	42
		25. Ron Christensen	40

SHORT STORIES:

Votes

1. A MARTIAN ODYSSEY (Weinbaum).....	39
2. Twilight (Campbell)	19
3. The Outsider (Lovecraft)	16
4. Microcosmic God (Sturgeon)	15
5. Mimsey Were the Borogoves (Kuttner).....	13
6. And He Built A Crooked House (Heinlein)...	12
7. The Wendigo (Blackwood)	10
8. The Colour out of Space (Lovecraft).....	9
9. It (Sturgeon)	8
10. Rats in the Walls (Lovecraft), Environment (Geier), Universe (Heinlein) tied with 6 each; 13. City of Sing- ing Flame 5; 14. Worlds of If (Weinbaum) 4; 15. Fare- Well to the Master and Helen O'Loy tied with 3 each.	

NOVELS:

Votes

1. SLAN (A.E. Van Vogt)	27
2. Dwellers in the Mirage (Merritt)	18
3. The New Adam (Weinbaum)	17
The Moon Pool (Merritt)	17
The Ship of Ishtar (Merritt).....	17
6. Final Blackout (Hubbard)	15
7. Beyond This Horizon (Heinlein)	12
8. The Black Flame (Weinbaum)	11
The Blind Spot (Flint & Hall)	11
10. The Gray Lensman (EE Smith)	8
Odd John (Stapledon)	8
12. Sinister Barrier (Russell)	6
If This Goes On (Heinlein)	6
14. Case of Chas. Dexter Ward (Lovecraft), World of A (Van Vogt), Methuselah's Children (Heinlein), Sec- ond Stage Lensman (EE Smith) tied with 5 each;	
18. Agharti (Hauser), Time Machine (Wells), When Worlds Collide (Balmer & Wylie), Skylark of Space (EE Smith), Lest Darkness Fall (de Camp), Before the Dawn (Taine) tied with 4 each.	

A BRIEF COMMENTARY

JOE KENNEDY, 17-year old Dover, N.J. fan pulled the major upset in the 1946 Beowulf Poll of Science Fiction Fandom, as he walked away with the title of number one fan, while his fanzine Vampire, rolled up the unprecedented total of 422 points in easily winning top honors in that field. All other winners retained their 1945 titles.

The poll was concluded on August 17, with 75 of 110 ballots returned. This was a response of approximately 70%.

Kennedy, sixth in 1945, polled 12 first place votes and a total of 285 points to win. Forrest Ackerman finished second for the third straight time, totaling 278 points. Bob Tucker, who had been on top in all previous Beowulf Polls, slipped to third. Despite the fact he received 13 firsts, Tucker tallied only 268 points. As it was, all three boys were closely bunched, and a few votes one way or the other could have changed the outcome. But for Kennedy it was a satisfying triumph. Only in fandom since '44, Kennedy has always been popular with the younger fan group, mainly through his prolific letter-writing to the pro-mags. This year he proved equally popular with the older fans and thus pulled the major upset of the poll. New faces among the top ten are Sam Moskowitz and Langley Searles.

Vampire's victory was considerably more decisive than its editor's. Vamp totaled 422 points in downing Searles' Fantasy Commentator, which was second with 295. F.C. outscored Vampire 14-13 on firsts, but Kennedy's mag proved to have a greater all-around appeal. F.C., while having material of the highest quality, has a limited appeal. New-comers to the first ten were Vampire, which was 13th last year, Scientifictionist, and Star Rover. Le Zombie, first in '44, dropped to tenth this year. The Acolyte, now defunct, slipped from first to fifth, although rating high with those who did vote for it.

A. Merritt copped the title of top author for the fourth time. Merritt received 323 points in downing second-place H.P. Lovecraft, who had 298. A.E. Van Vogt was third and Henry Kuttner a strong fourth. L. Sprague de Camp and John Taine broke into the top ten.

Astounding again ran away with the pro-mag crown. Astounding garnered 46 firsts and 316 points, as compared to 16 and 236 for second place Famous Fantastic Mysteries. Virgil Finlay also won by a landslide as the favorite artist. Finlay had 41 firsts and 291 points. Lawrence climbed up to second, Paul was third, and Bok fourth.

Stanley Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey" repeated as the favorite short story, being voted for by 39 fans. "Twilight", by John Campbell, was second with 19. A. E. Van Vogt's "Slan" again took the top spot in the novel class with 27 votes.

HOW POLL WAS SCORED: The author, fan, and fanzine classes were scored 10 for first, 9 for second, and so on down to one; pro-magazine and artist classes were scored 5 for first, 4 for second and so on to one. Novels and short stories were rated simply on votes, all mentioned receiving one vote. Numbers in parenthesis denote first place votes received by that individual or magazine.

THOSE WHO VOTED: Nitka, Gaulin, Slavin, Moskowitz, Carr, Sellinger, Dallas, Christensen, Wheaton, Budrys, Wegemer, Lelake, Searles, Elsner, Alpaugh, Gardner, Sloan, Splawn, Fox, McGhee, Boggs, Bone, Deutsch, Warner, Kennedy, Hanrahan, EH Russell, Osheroff, Greenleaf, Widner, Perry, Lopez, Richardson, Cox, Indick, Kolbe, Lyon, Coslet, Sechs, Currier, Carlson, Brazier, Silverberg, Inman, Stein, Baldwin, Sneary, Swisher, EEEvans, Cockroft, V Daugherty, Burbee, Ackerman, WH Evans, Meddox, Wrzos, Rockmore, Wesson, Speer, Willmorth, Streiff, Kuttner, Cheney, Tigrina, Froeder, Tucker, Train, Alnutt, Peterson, Stevenson, Simkowitz, Saunders, Hall, Breckenridge, and de la Ree.

IF A SHONOKIN ANSWERS, HANG UP....

By MANLY WADE WELLMAN

I USED to say I invented the Shonokins, those people -- if you can call them that -- who plague John Thunstone in Weird Tales and don't succeed at it. But now I wonder. So many people know more about them than I do.

Shonokins look like men, but they aren't. They don't belong to Homo Sapiens, and what they do belong to must be decided by science, if and when science accepts the fact of Shonokins. You can tell a Shonokin, if you care to look at one close at hand (not that I advise it) because his third finger is longer than his middle finger, and his pupil is slit-shaped, like a cat's instead of round. The other differences are of the spirit and the viewpoint, and the less said about them the better.

Are these my ideas? Not by a mile, say the people who write letters to John Thunstone and me. Shonokins have made tracks in the solid rock of the Ozarks -- tracks with the fourth toe longer than the middle. They carved on New England cliffs a set of pictures that H. P. Lovecraft would have been interested to see. Maybe he did see them, and credited them to the Cthulhu Cult.

Stuart Boland, the San Francisco librarian and formerly an explorer in Asia Minor, Egypt, and Central America, can and will point out rare old books and rarer, older, folk-sayings that seem to identify the Shonokins in American and elsewhere, by deed, nature and even by name. Mary McFall, of Colorado, thinks she may have Shonokin blood in her (absit omen!). A Jerseyite named Finger, and a Tennessean named Purkitt, know enough about Shonokins to suggest ways they produce young, though nobody has seen a Shonokin female to know here as such.

All these letters I'm glad to get, but the letters I won't receive with any promise of cooperation are those that offer to introduce me to Shonokins.

From what I can find out, they -- the Shonokins -- aren't fond of publicity. They want to know all about us, and don't want us to know anything about them. Wherefore, it might be embarrassing to all concerned if I met them anywhere. They might be inhospitable. I might be inquisitive. We both might be violent. And where, in these enlightened times, does violence get you?

I used to get letters about the Martians I wrote about in years past. Those Martians were no worse than Terrestrials, and no more

curious, for all their flower-faces and bladder-bodies and tentacular arms and legs. As a matter of fact, I liked some of the Martians. But that's as far as I'll go. Martians, yes. Shonokins, no.

I won't even call the New York telephone number sent to me in a letter without a signature or return address. The sender offered to put me in touch with a Shonokin, right there on the wire. I'm even thinking of having my telephone taken out. . .

* * * * *

The John Thunstone Series in Weird Tales:

"The Third Cry to Legba"	-- November, 1943
"The Golden Goblins"	-- January, 1944
"Hoofs"	-- March, 1944
"The Letters of Cold Fire"	-- May, 1944
"John Thunstone's Inheritance"	-- July, 1944
"Sorcery from Thule"	-- September, 1944
*"Dead Man's Hand"	-- November, 1944
"Thorne on the Threshold"	-- January, 1945
*"The Shonokins"	-- March, 1945
*"Blood From A Stone"	-- May, 1945
"The Dei Sword"	-- July, 1945
"Twice Cursed"	-- March, 1946
*"Shonokin Town"	-- July, 1946

*Denotes Shonokin stories.

