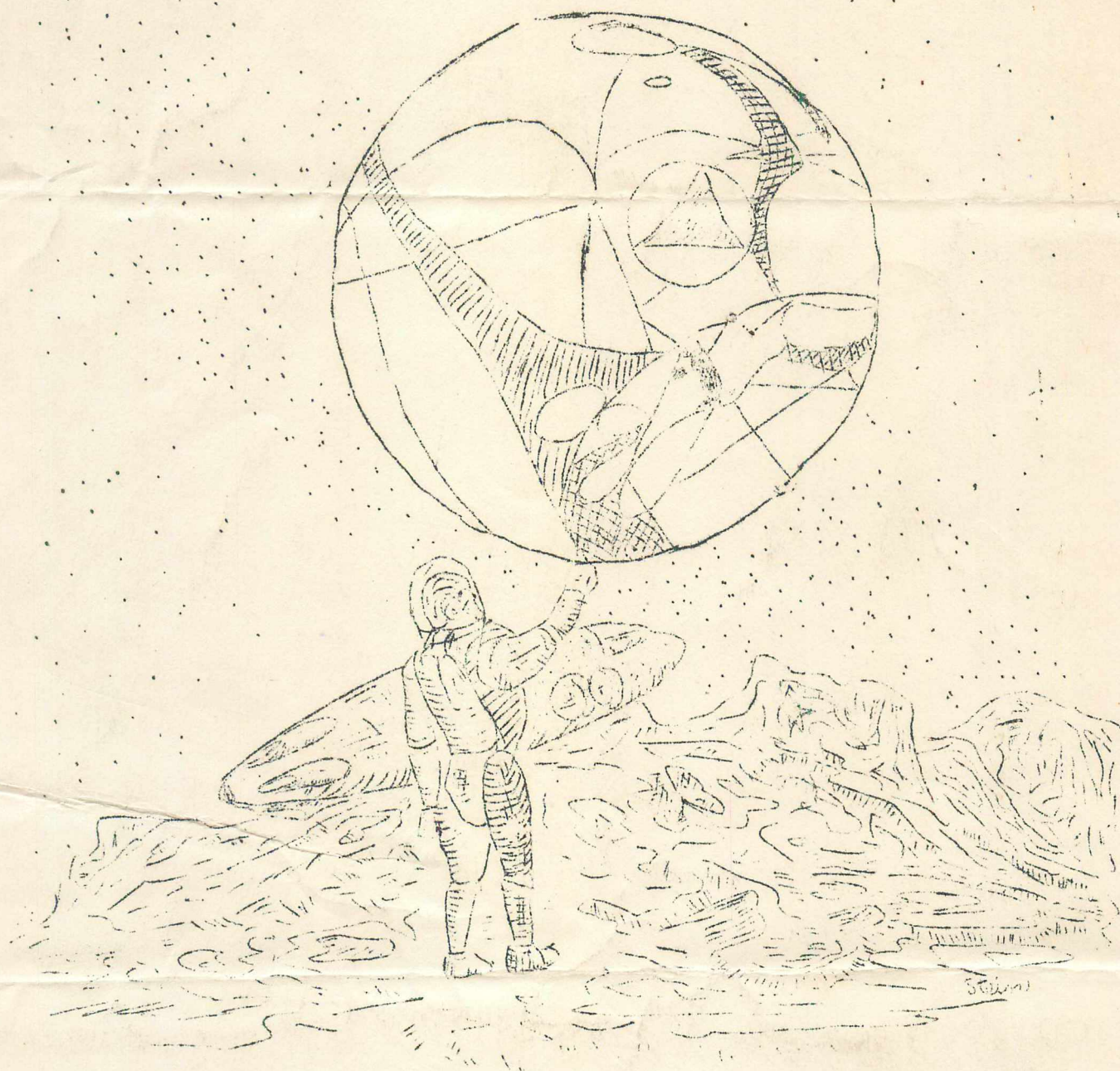


THE SCIENTIFICTIONIST



RELAX, FOLKS, you're not seeing another issue of the ill-fated Scientifictionist; this is number 1 of Elsner's latest brain-child, Thots, which you're looking at. This cover was drawn and stencilled for us before Stfist folded, but was not in our hands until after the mag's demise. Therefore, you see it before you now. Hope you like it.

-- The editor.

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION...

What you're now reading is the successor to the late Scientifictionist. As you can see, Thots is quite a bit different from our previous publication. It's to be an extremely individualistic venture. We're putting this out to satisfy ourselves, and to heck with what you say about the format and content. We like it. This is strictly an informal affair, so anyone's free to say whatever they like whenever they want to. And if you don't want to say anything, that suits us too. To start this thing off, we'll have some Thots on the Prozines:-

Newest in the field, Wollheim's Fantasy Reader has produced a second issue which leaves us cold. It appears that DAW is concentrating on the fantasy field rather than the scientifictional, but even so, we feel that he could have made far better choices than he did for the three sf stories included in this 2nd issue. A good all-reprint sfzine is something we certainly would like to see, but unfortunately FR doesn't seem to be able to fill the bill. Why a man with a background like Don's should pick, out of the hundreds of fine tales available, 3 with such openly anti-scientific themes, is totally beyond our comprehension. The first one, Keller's Stenographer's Hands is a stupid thing that need not be discussed here. Manning and Pratt's City of the Living Dead is perhaps the most interesting and well-written of the three, tho the basic premise is indeed overworked in sf. Inclusion of S. Fowler Wright is inexcusable, and that worthy will be dealt with later on.

Lest from the above you might draw the conclusion that I have no use at all for Fantasy Reader, I must in all fairness say that perhaps the inclusion of these 3 stories in the same issue was a coincidence; and I did enjoy the first issue. Number 3 should be out sometime this month, and from what we've heard, some pretty fine feature yarns are scheduled. The format is definitely the best in the field, tho of course it's a little expensive.

George O. Smith comes up with a pretty interesting novel in the July Starling Stories. The plot is vaguely familiar: hero saves solar system from invading aliens and picks up a heroine in the process who has to be rescued several times. But Smith makes it sound interesting and quite convincing. In the story, hero James Carroll is the only one who recognizes the menace of the aliens, everyone else thinking his thoughts and actions are the rationalizations of a crazed mind. While the author is definitely prejudiced and wants us to believe that the guy wasn't nuts, he gives no definite evidence to support this thruout the entire story. For instance on page 55 this bit of conversation takes place: (Carroll speaking) "He shot at me with some sort of energy weapon. This is a burn, not a bullet-hole!" Majors shook his head: "Not a chance. Admitting that what you sent out was an energy-beam, it is still impossible to believe that a hand-sized energy weapon is practical." "Granted" said Carroll. "But then there's this evidence. Explain this, will you? I don't mind getting my arm burned badly if it will only make you believe." Doctor Pollard shook his head with a smile. "Stigmata", he said. "The 'Bleeding Madonna' who exhibits wounds and bleeding from hands, feet, sides and forehead on Good Friday. A sheer mental phenomenon -- psychosomatica. This is the same. You are so convinced as to the positiveness of these aliens that your mind produced this burn as evidence!" "Brother, this ain't no mental mirage," snapped Carroll. "No one said it was. But the power of the human mind is such that the cellular structure of the body will exhibit burn-trauma when the mind believes it so. So one of them creased your arm and you reacted as though it were the burn your mind believed it to be." # #

There is even some evidence that the hero is really imagining it all, as for instance one place in the story Carroll goes to where Kingallis' house was, and it has disappeared. He then states that all the aliens have skipped out. Later on, however, Kingallis and his bunch appear on the scene to try to foul up Carroll's plan to save the solar system.

I didn't read the Hall of Fame, Keller's "Life Detour" or the shorts. Will someone inform me if I missed anything worthwhile??

From the latest crop of stories it seems that speculation has shifted from the horrors of atomic war and destruction of "civilization", a la ASF, to the field of what effect radiation unleashed by such a war would have on life, not only humanity but other forms as well. Kuttner's Atomic! (August TWS) falls in this class. Imagination really runs riot in this one, but it was enjoyable to me, in spite of my distaste for most fantasy. The idea is that a lake is given life, and this life has the power to control mens minds so that their one motivation becomes to preserve the being in the lake at all costs. Written in first person, Hank makes the tale of a man under the being's power quite realistic. Pix by Finlay do much to help the atmosphere.

Before we go on to other mags, we'd like to say that although SS and TWS have certainly made vast strides in the past year or so, they still have a long way to go before they can hit the top. Excellent off-trail stories, improving interior art work, and Merwin's openmindedness to new ideas all help, but the balance is still

a little too much on the side of the hack stuff. It takes time to educate readers and authors to a change in policy. But even at this stage, we believe that these 2 mags are "musts" on the sf fan's purchasing and reading lists. There's at least one excellent story per issue.

Our apathy towards Amazing Stories almost made us miss a truly interesting (Dislike for that word can't keep us from using it here -- it's the only one that seems appropriate) 60,000 worder by Rog Phillips, So Shall Ye Reap. It is, of course an atom story, but of a different type than anything I've yet read. The theory is that the five A-bombs already set off have released enough "free" neutrons into the atmosphere to start a reaction in the atmosphere itself, which will become increasingly worse, so that by the end of 300 years from now, all life on the surface of the earth will be extinct and the planet will be covered by cloud layers similar to those on Venus. This situation will remain for 2000 years, after which time human life on earth will again become possible. Under these conditions the only way to preserve the race is for part of it to go underground. The problem then arises of who shall be chosen to have their descendants survive. The truth is kept from the public, and people are selected and sent to work on building underground living quarters under the guise of a war-scare. The author seems to be much more aware of present social and economic conditions than most sf authors, and this faculty together with his more or less accurate portrayal of "human nature" gives the story an air of convincing realism. This story would surely be on at least the "near-classic" list but for the same glaring fault which ruined Heinrich Hauser's Titans' Battle: the author goes off half-cocked and then some in the final 20 pages. In the process of completing the underground dwelling-caves, the main character in the story discovers a man from the caves. He tells a story similar in some respects to Shaver's tales; however, even this wouldn't be too bad in itself, when one considers Amz's present selling approach. The damage comes when Lowathy, the underground creature, gives out with page after page of mystic philosophy. The purpose of all this, apparently, is an attempt to rationalize the "cold-blooded" scientific atmosphere previously present into something acceptable to ideas of "justice", "cosmic morality" -- or something. For me this all but ruined the realistic spirit of the story.

However, if you have a couple of evenings to spend reading, and can stand such minor irritations as lousy grammar, glaring capitalized sentences instead of italics, and some queer philosophies, by all means read this thing by Rog Phillips.

Jack Speer is by now probably thinking that if we don't get thru with all this morass of pulp stuff soon and get on to ASF he'll throw this thing in the wastebasket and go back to Spengler. That would be too bad, for we're ready to give Campbell's baby the works right now.

A.E. van Vogt finally comes across with a story that has a definite idea behind it, and in which the continuity is not so mixed up we don't know where we're at. In case you don't already know, we mean Centaurus II in the June ASF. Schneeman contributes an excellent cover, as well as some really masterful interior pix. His absence has indeed been long, and we hope to see more of his work soon. (He also had a pic for Frances Yerxa's Negative Problem in the same Amz as the Phillips tale: August 1947). Foo to the rest of the stories in this issue.

Williamson comes out with his 2nd novelette for ASF since his return, and frankly, we're disappointed. Somehow, it all seems like bum logic to us. "To Serve and Obey, And Guard Men from Harm" is the motivating force behind the Humanoids. But specifically, what is meant by "Guard Men from Harm"? It would seem to mean purely physical harm, and yet the story seems to show that the Humanoids can think, as attested to by their desire to make men "happy"... Now why didn't they see that following the dictum to the nth degree is contradictory? We think that Williamson should have explained the idea more fully.

Anderson's Logic was all right, but we're getting a mite tired of mutants and atom bombs.

The Figure seemed like fan fiction to me -- good for a short-short, but spoiled by the picture giving away the punch-line.

The 3 part serial, Fury, concludes with satisfaction in this July issue. Except for the last installment, the story could have been laid at practically any place at any time, and so was not strictly science-fictional. The essence of it was really a character study. It was, however, excellently done, and although nothing sensational, should be one of the most literate of the year.

It looks like that's about all for the current pros for now. We just re-read the first stencil and discovered that we shifted indiscriminately from the "I" to "we" -- a most grievous sin, for which we now apologize. It might be added, in way of explanation, that this is our first attempt to compose directly on the stencil.

More thots on ASF: A correspondent comes up with this again: "ASF reads more like a physics text book each ish...(it) hasn't had a new author with a fresh slant for centuries." Ever since the appearance of G.O. Smith's earliest stories in ASF, the "physics text" remark has been circulated by those too lazy to do their own thinking, or too dense to understand most of Campbell's stories. Let's settle this thing once

and for all. A quick survey of the past year of Astounding S-F shows that in that period of time a total of 58 stories were published, of which only one, Blind Time by George O. Smith could conceivably be called a "physics text" type of yarn. And there were only three which might be classed as logistic excercises. A very rough classification of the stories indicates that approximately 50 plus percent are sociological in type, and that over half of these are directly related to atomic war and similar subjects. The other 45 or so percent of the stories were mostly interplanetaries, with a sprinkling of time travel tales, and some Unknownish humorous yarns. Also by our reckoning, 14 new names appeared in aSF's pages in the past year. Of these, only 3, however, made repeat sales to date. (Can anyone tell us if William Tenn is a known penname, or if he has appeared before, possibly in Unknown?). Concentration of authors is not as high as some claim. There were 31 different writers during this one-year period (we counted Padgett and O'Donnell separately because C.L. Moore collaborates with her husband under the latter name), while the most stories to appear by any one author was five, attained by van Vogt. R.F. Jones, G.O. Smith, and Lewis Padgett come next with four apiece.

So much for the claim that aSF reads like a physics book. We'd even be willing to wager that in 1944-45, in the heyday of Venus Equilateral and the Plutonian Lens, that there weren't more than a dozen of these brain-ticklers per year. Anybody want to do some more research, or give the other side??

Men and Machines. In reply to our comment on S.F. Wright's story, Atuomata, in the 2nd issue of Fantasy Reader, Joe Schaumburger says: "I agree with you on SF Wright being beyond the pole of humanity. He's a good writer but I can't stand his ideas. In "Brain" in Adv. in Time & Space, he paints one of the most depressing pictures of scientific government that I have ever read. I wouldn't be surprised if he came out against electric lights, or radios, or female suffrage next. He seems to be living in a world of his own where scientists are bogey men and politicians are pleasant, amiable chaps that are in existence only to serve the public. No doubt, if he had a time machine, he'd go back to the Middle Ages, burn the machine, and join the Inquisition in persecuting heretics, especially scientific ones like Galileo."

Now we have nothing personally against Mr. Wright; in fact, from a purely literary standpoint, we think his writing is quite good. We single him out only because his writing is practically all of the type that typifies what we believe is a great fault of many scientifiction writers. One of the main themes of stf seems to be the idea that science and scientists are essentially "evil" and will eventually either destroy the human race or reduce it to "horrors worse than death".

These writers reason somewhat along these lines: Major premise: Machines were designed to lessen men's labors. Minor premise: In the past, machines have increasingly eliminated various types of "jobs". Conclusion: Machines will finally eliminate all work, and the race will degenerate. Another one: Ma. Premise: Science is cold-blooded and inhuman. Mi. Premise: The dictates of science are now being followed more than the ideals of humanitarianism. Conclusion: Nasty ol' scientists will make robots out of everyone, give 'em numbers instead of names, etc. You know how the rest go -- we sometimes wonder if our literature should be called Anti-Science Fiction.

One of the basic faults in this type of reasoning is one-line prediction. This is readily shown in a book of Stuart Chase's, Men and Machines, published in 1924. In it he argued that since bombers were getting bigger, better and faster all the time, the time would come when wars would be over in 30 hours. Bombers of the warring nations would pass by each other en route to each other's nation, and they would unload enough explosives to almost completely destroy both countries. Mr. Chase felt that this was how World War II would be fought.

The fallacy was that he followed only one line of development, overlooking such things as pursuit planes, antiaircraft guns, and detection devices.

The same thing is true in the case of the scientifiction authors we have been discussing. The most noticeable omission in their thinking is the disregard for other sciences than the purely physical. While technology has advanced tremendously in these stories, psychology and the so-called "social sciences" are pictured as remaining where they are today, or are just not taken into account at all. It is extremely improbable that technical progress will continue indefinitely along the same lines as today, to mention another common fallacy. And some things are almost certainly out of the question entirely. Robots, for instance. It will always be cheaper from every approach to make a specialized machine, or at least one in non-human form, to do a task than to build one in imitation of a human being, which is extremely inefficient in performing any given task. To my mind, Isaac Asimov is the only writer who has presented a probable setup to be encountered if humanoid robots were ever invented.

Another aspect is that we seldom read a story in which there is installed a government which has any knowledge of, or control over, science in its relations to the governed populace.

Added to all this is the writer's individual ignorance of, and perhaps antipathy to science and the scientific method, as exemplified in Mr. S.F. Wright.

Now for the Letters. In spite of our promise to publish an "all-letter" fanzine, the response was considerably less than that which we received for "For 'Em and Agin 'Em" in Scientifictionist. Anyway, here's what we got.

[/Correction Please!/]

I'll spare you the usual line of comments on Stfist # 8, as I am rather short on time right now, and other things need doing. However, there is something I wish you would put in the next issue of your letter column -- in the last section of my letter, where I said I didn't like "a", you apparently have misinterpreted me to mean "Null A". This is not what I had meant; I was referring to Agharti, and the "A" was the result of laziness, being too darn lazy to spell out the word in full. I wish you would set this straight; it is likely to result in some derogatory comment being cast in my direction. I will try to be less lazy in the future.

Also, in regard to the cessation of Stfist -- I suppose all good things must end sometime, but it does seem kind of a blow to see the only fanzine devoted to stf go by the board just when it was getting firmly established. Anyway, hope that letter column is issued fast and frequent. May you get dozens of letters.
-- Don Wilson, 495 North Third Street, Banning, California.

[/ "Actifandom is a slightly futile avocation" /]

When I read in your last-page editorial that SCIENTIFUNCTIONIST is dead and buried as of this issue, I was really and truly sorry. Of the countless mimeo'd effusions that've plunked into yours truly's mailbox during the last 4 years, I can honestly say that STFIST was one of the very, very few that could be read from first page to last, leaving the reader with the feeling that the time spent had been well worthwhile.

From your editorial, I get the impression that you too have come to believe that, compared with turbulent problems of the macrocosm -- this "Age of Confusion", if you like -- fandom is an extremely puny drop in an already overcrowded bucket. During the past couple years, I've taken fan activities way too seriously. And I'm finally realizing that, enjoyable and diverting as it may be, actifandom is a slightly futile avocation ... certainly not worth devoting the majority of your spare time to. For it takes a great deal of work, time, and cash to publish an ambitious fanzine -- as you well know! -- and the bitter fact is that, as far as accomplishment is concerned, the fan publisher might just as well be tossing his efforts and energies down the drain.

It just occurred to me that STFIST's passing will leave the field barren indeed. ACOLYTE, LE ZOMBIE, STAR ROVER, VOM, SUN SPOTS gone ... now STFIST and VAMP going. Among the mimeozines this leaves only SHANGRI L'AFFAIRS, FANTASY COMMENTATOR, and ALCHEMIST -- and of these, only the latter bids fair to make the fullest use of the advantages of mimeography for producing a colorful and eye-catching format. Yes, the gala mags of yesteryear on the order of a NOVA or a FANTASITE are rapidly becoming legend. It would seem that fandom has arrived at the completion of a cycle. I'm taking bets that within two years there will be no more than 4 or 5 outstanding fanzines being published -- and of these the field will probably be led by a couple of ambitious printed publications on the order of VORTEX and Britain's FANTASY REVIEW. Most of the efforts of straggling mimeographers will be confined to the amateur press associations. By 1950 actifanning should reach a rather low ebb, but will probably be saved by another terrific renaissance -- unless any unforeseen economic or political factors interfere.

Casting these gloomy reflections aside, leave us consider the 8th and final STFIST. The material is well up to par, in my opinion, tho the 8 1/2 pages of letters, comprising fully half of the contents, kinda unbalance the issue. Speer's "It's Up to Us" is outstanding -- and it's about time somebody squelched the defeatist "let the atom bomb clean the slate!" propaganda currently predominate.

Tom Gardner's commentary on "Agharti" proved of interest; however, I can't remark either pro or con on the stories under discussion, having read neither "Agharti" nor Hauser's book, The German Talks Back. Seems to me, tho, that de la Ree's article has been somewhat misinterpreted, since Gerry dealt with "Agharti" purely from a standpoint of literature and entertainment, as I recall. Gardner himself admits he dislikes the propaganda elements in the Vierick-Eldridge "My First Two Thousand Years" trilogy; tho he considers them readable and enjoyable fantasy!

The joke about the communist who created chaos was chucklesome. Stop me if you've heard this...

Stalin was sitting in the Kremlin one day when he hears a big ruckus outside. He goes to the door, and sees two guards dragging an old peasant. He stops 'em, and inquires what the peasant has done. The guards say he's disturbing the peace. Then the old man pipes up: "Please, sir, I want to ask you one question -- is it true you have a little black box with which you can speak to all the countries and peoples of the world at once?" Stalin puffs reflectively on his pipe a moment, "Yes," he says, "I have such a box." "Well, then", replies the peasant, "since you are so good and kind to the common people -- do me one favor. Please let me talk

Have you ever heard of Technocracy? Yes ☐ No ☐ If so, when? _____

From what source? _____

What is your impression of what Technocracy is? _____

What is your chief criticism of Technocracy? _____
(Please be specific; use other side if necessary)

Please sign your name here _____ Thank you. If you have already
filled our one of these blanks, do not use this one.

through this box just once! Just one word! That's all I want to say!" Stalin, just to keep his reputation of being a sympathizer of the common man, agrees. The old peasant is taken to the private broadcasting studio. They place him in front of the microphone. "All right, my good man," says Stalin, "here you are. All the world is listening now. Go ahead. What is the one word you want to say?" The peasant steps up to the mike, and in a loud and ringing voice screams: "HELLLLLLLP!"

Aww right, aww right. But I thought it was funny!

I betcha Weaver Wright's idea of Utopia would be a gala plush-and-chrome bedroom, with an endless procession of femmes de la nuit...

I liked Mr. Langan's review of "Titans' Battle" (gosh, Hauser is sure getting plenty of plugs this issue. Hope you sent him a copy!), tho it didn't seem too inspiredly written.

HYAW HYAW! So you got a free copy of FORGOTTEN MYSTERIES too! So'd I. So'd Christensen. So'd a lot more, no doubt. Wonder if Cloud Inc. just went down the lists of STARTLING STORIES' fanzine review, sending review copies to all that caught their fancy. I wrote a wacky filler for the 9th VAMP gleeing over this practice, and speculating what would happen if all fantasy publishers did the same.

And so ends a superlative fanzine. The good die young.
-- Joe Kennedy, 84 Baker Avenue, Dover, New Jersey.

[/Speer a Topnotch Writer/]

Cover: Ugh! "It's Up to Us" -- while I am not in accord with many of Speer's ideas and beliefs, I invariably find myself admiring his writings. He is a topnotch article writer. Here, I find myself on his side of the fence, so there's no argument here. Ditto for "...Another Man's Meat -- Poison", I mean. I obtained the Amazing containing "Agharti" and read the thing, or more accurately, part of it. I sold the mag back to the second-hand dealer whence it came, and as far as I'm concerned the episode is closed.

Good book review, Henry. I must obtain "Forgotten Mysteries", if only to find evidence for a firmer anti-Lemurian stand. Ackerman's book review of "The adventure of the Blue Room" is typical of his work. He never penetrates very deeply into the author's themes and intent, but always by some method entices one to read the book -- or not to read it, if it's that sort of book (and granting that it's possible to "entice" one not to read a book).

Langan's article is fair stuff. It strikes me that he is not on solid ground when he criticizes Hauser for being "non compos mentis" with regard to Technocracy. It is apparent that Mr. Langan is "non compos mentis" when it comes to science fiction and the matter of Heinrich Hauser's life and character.

Wow, what a letter column! Stevenson's letter was good, as was Wilson's -- aw, heck, they were all good. But where is Part II of the Astonishing review? Stifist, R.I.P. -- Redd Boggs, 2215 Benjamin St., N.E., Minneapolis 13, Minn.

[/Reply to Speer/]

As far as Jack Speer's letter in number 6 of the Scientifictionist is concerned, it is hardly wise to enter the ring against such a smart operator. He knows all about human nature. He knows all about the 'problem of reform.' He knows that 'economy of abundance' refers only to the necessities of life. He knows that Technocracy's Energy Certificate is only 'word magic'. He knows that the Technate of North America will be a dictatorship of 'the lives of men'. He knows that Technocracy belongs in a class with the Shaver Mystery and General Semantics. He knows that Technocracy 'trumpets a special jargon,' 'blares nonsequiturs,' 'paints unworkable pictures of the future,' etc. In his very last sentence he practically admits that he knows too much about Technocracy to be 'moved to enter a Study Course.'

What a paragon of wisdom and insight this man is. What kind of meat doth he feed on? It would be folly to enter the lists against such an opponent. He is too strongly armed and equipped. In fact, he is invulnerable. He knows all the wrong answers by heart. King Canute failed miserably when he tried to sweep back the sea. Who are we to try to better Canute's effort. Jack Speer seems to be in possession of a limitless ocean of false assumptions and foregone conclusions. The poor little weapons of fact that we have are utterly futile against such power.

There is only one weak point in his entire armor. That is where he states that the collapse 'if it comes, will be accompanied by a destruction of most of the capital equipment and a good fraction of the population...' He is definitely afraid of this possibility. How this item of horse sense crept in among all the false assumptions and foregone conclusions is a mystery. It proves that there is some social intelligence still flickering within that forest of wrong answers.

However, we'd like to have Mr. Speer quote chapter and verse where Technocracy states that the collapse of the Price System will convince people that Technocracy is inevitable. Also, we'd like chapter and verse on all the following wrong answers. Where does Technocracy state that changing environment will change 'human nature'? While he's finding that one, let him also dig up the difference between 'human nature' and human behaviour. If he can find the right answer to that he might

tell us whether Technocracy refers to nature or behaviour.

Where does Technocracy state that 'abundance' is delimited to the necessities of life, i-e, food, clothing and shelter? Also, since Mr. Speer poses as a semanticist let him tell us just wherein the concept of the Energy Certificate is not an operational concept that can be directly related to things and events in the physical world. Since he knows all about the Technate let him explain the schematic diagram of Continental operations and show us just where the dictatorship factor comes in? Since he admits that 'Technocracy has had many hours of my time' the 'special jargon' out to be easy. That's pie for a semanticist. Finally, for dessert he can point out the nonsequiturs and expose the unworkability of Technocracy.

If Mr. Speer can accomplish this assignment he will go down on history's pages as an outstanding Saint of the ancient and lousy status woe. Even the Technocrats will bless him forevermore. They can all tear up their cards and relax, secure in the proof that God's in his Heaven and the world's all right.

If Mr. Speer can not do this job then maybe he'd better pull in his horns a little. Somebody might come along and pick up one of his foregone conclusions and knock him for a row of non-sequiturs with it. For is it not written that: 'He who steals my purse steals trash ... But, he who steals my good name steals that without which I am poor indeed.' -- Robert B. Langan, %Gt. Lakes Technocrat, 843 Belmont Avenue, Chicago 14, Illinois.

[/Those Self-Conscious Fans!/]

About STF #8 -- It was really well done on the whole, with Gardner and Langan taking top honors. Speer made several good points in his article, in particular the business of depleted natural resources. Perhaps however, if our civilization were wiped out, a new one might develop the use of sunpower and water and tidal power to a much greater extent than we have.

Gardner and Langan get the nod because they have done a good job in really analyzing critically two of Mr. Hauser's stories, which I felt were poor myself but didn't have time to do the job on that they did. I will be particularly interested in seeing whether C.B. Stevenson thought that "Titans' Battle" was also a classic! Personally, I've never waded through such a mess in all my reading days! And if that's the type of classic Hauser can put out, I'll stick with H.S. Sherman -- at least his story was much more readable. It also seems to me that de la Ree and Stevenson didn't get much support in their contention that Hauser is good. To set the record straight (though I don't think anyone but Stevenson was confused), I was referring to Astound Stories in my last letter when I made the lazy error of abbreviating it as Ast. As to this business of referring to Astounding Stories as "Astounding" -- if anything is childish, it is quibbling about something like this! Besides, if I'm not mistaken, someone has already dealt with this subject in an article, bringing up the point of the "Sat. Eve Post", "PM" (N.Y. newspaper), and other examples. I really don't see why fans should become so self conscious all of a sudden. In my 17 years of reading stf mags I can't seem to recall one instance where I was ever worried over the fact that someone might see me with a magazine labelled 'Amazing', 'Astounding', or 'Weird' or any other darn title. I read as I please and what pleases me, convention be damned. I guess that's enough of that tirade!

Your review of "Forgotten Mysteries" has inspired me to send for a copy; it really sounds as if it will be interesting.

Wright's review (?) on the "World of 1990" was good, but not quite as complete as I would have liked. But perhaps it'll make me get a copy of the book and I'll enjoy it more. You don't have to go to the world of 1990 though to get that special room service that he mentions!!

The letters this issue were much better than in previous issues; more material for differences in opinion, and I guess there were plenty of those!

I was really sorry to read "The Curtain Falls", and I sincerely hope that somehow you will find the time to continue this fine fanzine you have been putting out. Besides, who will publish my letters if you don't?!

-- Al Lopez, Pooh Corner, Bingham, Maine.

[/Everything and Anything/]

I wish I knew. What will happen in the USA, that is. If we don't have a pretty sharp depression between now and the elections, things look very black indeed; the reactionaries will stay in power, and in a few more years it will be too late. If a slump does bring a majority of the voters to their senses, there are still difficulties. Wallace and Truman seem to be irreconcilable, and I'm afraid that Truman will be the Democratic nominee and Wallace will pull away and split the vote, letting the Republicans win again. If, in some by-elections such as the one up here last week that went against us, the Democratic Party could be firmly restored to the liberal position, we might win with a ticket headed by either Truman or Wallace. Or if the economic crash is stunning, the Wallace wing might pick up enuf support to run the Democratic Party. But neither of those eventualities seems over .50 probability. It may sound odd to talk entirely in terms of which political party wins, but that seems to

me to be the crucial question. We may or may not get international control of atomic energy; if we don't get it, under a progressive government we can still keep the peace; under a Red-fearing government, the controls will avail little. And the middle seems to be excluded, because the only government midway between progressive and fascist would be a conservative Democratic administration, and I don't think Wallace would let that happen.

I wonder if anyone will jump on me for using without acknowledgment that line "nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of Earth." I thot it came from Lincoln, but half an hour in the library looking thru Lincoln indexes and collections didn't turn it up. Louis Adamic said something from a New Jersey pulpit last January that seems to run right along the line I was hitting at, though he may have been thinking more of psychological ruin than physical: "Whether or not we can avoid World War III, I don't know; but I do know that if we don't try to avoid it, nothing else is worth trying or doing. If we don't at least try to avoid it, everything else is futile and ludicrous, and worse -- devastating. # It is futile to bear and rear children. It is vain to wonder about the kind of curtains you'll hang up in the spring. It is futile to write and read books, to go to lectures or to church or school. It is silly to worry about being called a Red or a Communist, or whatever; or about being hauled up before the Committee on Un-American Activities. It is futile to work at your job, whatever it may be. It is worse than futile to worry about keeping on the good side of whoever can take that job away from you."

Gardner is probably right about Agharti; yet I can't go along one hundred percent on some of his implications. He lumps together the good Germans with "the whole gang who attacked their neighbors five times in 80 years." The first two of those five times it was not even geographically all of Germany which was doing the attacking. And it would be a fanatic indeed who believed that within Prussia there were no Germans "good" in the sense that they disapproved the wars. It is one thing to be the type of German who contributes to Germany's being an aggressive nation; it is quite another to support your country when it has gone to war and its survival as an entity is staked on the outcome. And there are all gradations of the former type, from Junker militarists to docile, industrious people who don't feel any responsibility for the acts of their government -- who would be as good citizens as many Americans, had they different leaders.

The anecdote about the lawyer, doctor, architect, and communist was lovely. 1990's solution for the problem of war sounds rather impractical. Once total war has been invented, it is hard to believe that it would voluntarily be renounced, so long as war existed at all as a means of settling disputes. States are not likely to go to war unless they feel their rectitude so strongly that they are not willing to determine the issue by the flip of a coin or a gentlemanly game with professional soldiers.

I would be willing to argue with Langan about the abolition of maneuvering for power, etc, when the scientific method is applied to social problems. His "if this occurs, it is proof that the scientific method is not being used" is a transparent escape device that will impress only the faithful.

Enjoyed your book review.

Dusty Ayres and similar magazines were, I think, mentioned occasionally back in the First Fandom, as in Wollheim's Sun Spots column.

People's tendency to laugh at stef and stuff is irritating and a little puzzling. I suppose you have to figure out what humor is, first. Somebody says its incongruity. Well, all fantasy depends upon incongruity to some extent, or it's not fantasy -- there must be some extraordinary thing and some ordinary things mixed up with it. But why particular incongruities strike people as funny is a mystery. I had an example of that in Wills class recently. You know we fen have been discussing the possible effects of the longevity drug on the social order. Well, in class we were discussing the presumption of death after seven years' unexplained absence. The prof. was saying you have to pick a line somewhere. If not seven years, then what? Fourteen or fifty or a hundred? They've got this new drug now that may make us all live to be older than that. And the class laughed.

Methinks Frankenstein wasn't the only dog that bit the public. Since common people have a deepseated enmity for science, most stefnal movies, and many comics, must show human qualities triumphing over science in the hands of a mad scientist or something. And the advertisement-fostered idea that all scientists are bearded old men has played its part in keeping scientists from being the main heroes.

I doubt that anyone will criticize your decision as expressed in The Curtain Falls. A life with no waste in it is probably impossible, but we have to pull up short if we find an unconscionable amount of waste going on, or a large expenditure of time on one activity when the time could be applied to more productive activity. You may misjudge and think that you can do with less recreation than will turn out to be the case, but that will correct itself if you're cautious about over-reacting.

It's time I went to supper. Will be glad to see a Forum & Aginnum, or anything else from your mill. -- Jack Spear, 4518 16th NE., Seattle 5, Washington.

Our next letter is from Australia. It was originally sent to 4e Ackerman for inclusion in VOM. As that fanzine has folded, Forry kindly forwarded the letter to us, and it is with his permission that we print it here. As to content, we believe this letter speaks for itself.

Recently I read an article in "Fan Slants" on which I'd like to comment. Now, I know how ephemeral fan mags often are, so I send it to you, knowing the permanence of VOM. If "Fan Slants" is still going and prepared to use it, you might pass it on. But I'm sure it would be more widely read in VOM.

The article is Art Sehnert's piece, "Why Organise?" in which I read with amazement and horror this choice expression of democratic feeling.

"The preventing of power cliques pushing through legislation is particularly a hard problem to solve. It's a side of the business that I haven't given much thought to." (Yet he comes out with this brilliant solution to a problem he hasn't bothered to think much about!) "A simple method would be to limit constitutionally the voting power in areas of known radicalism."

Well, that idea is not at all original. It is in use at the present time in various parts of the world, in regard to more universally important matters than organised fans would largely concern themselves with. I imagine, in fact, that the Great American Way Of Life covers up a few of its use. However, I can't tell you how you run your country, whatever ideas I might entertain as to how you ought to run it, so I will mention an instance in my home state.

The state government of South Australia follows the Australian pattern, copied from England, in having a democratically elected "lower" house (Assembly) and an "upper" house (Council) elected on a somewhat restricted franchise. Leaving the latter aside for the moment, consider the things that can be done to a democratic election. There are 39 electorates, 13 in Adelaide and 26 in the country. The snag is, the population in Adelaide is almost exactly twice the population of the rest of the State.

So here we have this position. A vote in the country is worth approximately four in the city. And the country provides the main support, as always, to "conservative" and anti-labor politicians. (Just by the way, I pause to point out that Australian politics is largely Labor v. Capital on party lines. The latter owns all the daily papers, most of the important Metropolitan and Rural press, and the commercial Radio Stations, hence has a big advantage, the more so in the country, and particularly in remote places where they have more money to spend reaching voters and wooing votes. The average Australian, whether he likes it or not, reads and hears on the air one set of political opinions almost exclusively; those of the Liberal and Country parties -- which have substantially the same policies, and in South Australia are actually united in one organisation).

As a matter of fact, a vote in one of half a dozen small back-block seats is worth more than six in at least one industrial City district.

In the last election, Labor got a comfortable majority of votes -- 53% -- but actually won only 17 out of 39 seats. Now that kind of thing is bad enough in politics, without introducing it into fandom. Actually, Sehnert's suggestion is an excellent device to keep a power clique in office unchallenged.

In any case, the problem is not a real one. Fans are too individualistic to be bothered by pressure groups.

Now, to fan matters. Now that my interest in stf is reviving a bit, I start to think of all I've missed in these last few years. The last Weird Tales I saw was about May 1942. The last Famous Fantastic was a couple of months later -- "The Metal Monster", the last Astounding (except reprints and some of Eric Russell's I glimpsed recently) was the one with the cover story, "Waldo." Naturally, I want to catch up on them, but the restrictions on sending money out of the country are still on... Is anybody over there interested in Australian books and magazines? No stf over here, but plenty that might prove interesting, to some. I also welcome any correspondence.

Oh-oh -- I've just noticed a misstatement I'll have to correct. Lynn Bridges states in "Fan Slants" that, I quote, "-- even Hitler went into power with the consent and approval of the majority of his countrymen." Sounds very impressive and thought-provoking, but it isn't true. Also, this gem of profound thought: "Basically there isn't much difference in any of the various forms of government as is generally believed." Now, that's telling us! Where was Bridges brought up?

Something I've often wondered about, now. Let me put it thus: First -- are there, or have there ever been, any coloured fans? Second -- Assuming there were (I expect there are not at present) would the colour line be drawn in Fandom? Fans are a cosmopolitan group, with a world outlook. This would be a real test for their tolerance.

As far as Australia goes, I'm sure of the answer. If an aboriginal fan turned up, he would be accepted on the same footing as a European.

But what about you? I'll put the question as a hypothetical case. A new fan appears in some remote part of the country. He writes to the pros, contacts fans, has a letter in VOM, writes a bit for other fan pubs, even puts out a sheet perhaps,

all in a few months -- it's often happened before just that way -- and somehow never gives a hint of his origin, or sends anyone his photo in the usual egotistical fan style. O.K. Then suddenly he arrives at some convention or other representative gathering and proves to be a negro. How will he be received? Think about it, fans. What would your own reaction be, if you were at that convention? More specifically, let's imagine you are on the welcoming committee, or something like that, and are the first to speak. What will you say?

I note one of Kepner's suggested subjects for discussion, in VOM no. 30, with some amusement. "What are some of the possible uses of radioactivity?" Coming from a fan, in 1944, that's a distinctly good effort.

I recently read in a British Reprint Astounding the story "Nightmare", interesting because it was the first time I had seen indication that anyone in the whole world has thought of the obvious method of using the Atomic Bomb -- smuggle it in beforehand, detonate it when you're ready. Not a suggestion have I seen in print, apart from this, that anybody worked that one out, an idea so obvious it occurred to me in the first few minutes I started to think about possible future uses. Says a lot for the dense pseudo-intelligence of the crowd handling these things, doesn't it?

I also observe Milt's letter in the same issue, Mar. 1944, "I await atomic energy."

The reason I left fandom? Well, fandom was largely non-existent here at the time, anyway, but I would have dropped out even without the limited activity, and disagreement with the course the other fans were taking, on political grounds. I was getting slightly sick of the ideas found all too often in stf and Fandom; not the radical ideas, but the escapist ideas, vague Utopian ideas, and sometimes really harmful and reactionary ideas. Socialism triumphed over stf as my main interest. The radical press replaced fanmages, the Labor Movement replaced Fandom. I felt I was doing something worthwhile, when I first said my piece at a Union meeting and was given a very minor position of responsibility ... I preferred applauding or heckling at Political meetings to discussing Paul or the latest VOM ... next thing, I packed up my collection to take to Adelaide, and never bothered to unpack it.

The reason I came back? Well, let's take the negative part first. Many years ago, the Australian Communist Party made a rule that said in part, and still says, that "Strikebreakers, Degenerates, Drunkards, Advocates of Terrorism as Party Policy..." and a few more classifications, would be expelled from the Party. The trouble is, it isn't carried out enough. There are too many disreputable types associated with the whole thing, and they're not kept under control. That's a small, but noticeable element of the membership. Plenty more are either semi-illiterates, rough-necks, anarchists at heart, or -- in many cases -- honest and sincere, decent and willing to help, but incompetent, and vague about the issues at stake. These, although a minority, have always irritated me with their presence. The majority are O.K. But for the most part, they are extremely single-minded, and unimaginative. Most of them have some idea of what's going on in the world, and can see plenty of immediate developments before the so clever politicians and official economists, but they tend to be misled by optimism, and they don't take into account lots of things outside politics and economics, that are just as important. I met one Party man who was an old stf reader, and he was able to see things more clearly from the cosmic viewpoint. But most of even the cleverest of them, in my opinion, can't approach the clarity with which the fan sees life. They see a limited view of life perfectly, the rest hazily. In spite of my own genuine conviction that Socialism is the logical way ahead for Man, (those wishing elaboration on this point, I refer to Stapledon, particularly "The Star Maker") and that the Party is to a large extent helping the advance, I find that after three years' experience of it that the organisation is patchy and often overlooks details that make a lot of difference ... and I find too that Party people don't interest me as much, as personalities, as fans used to, that apart from the basic interest I have not a great deal in common with the majority. So, although still giving the movement my sympathy and some practical support, I took another look at my former interest, and here's what I found.

Eric Russell, corresponding with me at intervals, since I left fandom the letters being mainly on Politics, Science and Music. There was a personality I could understand, sympathise with.

Dave Evans, a man I never agreed with on any subject, except, approximately, that we both liked Weird Tales and fantasy in general. But it was always interesting and stimulating to argue with him, with his wife now and then getting a word in edgewise. Yes, he was interesting personally, even if I violently disagreed with his ideas, they were interesting.

Vol Molesworth, the man who always did the unexpected in the old Fandom, I discovered when I looked him up had done the most unexpected thing of all, and it took getting used to, Molesworth married ... but Vol had ideas, as always he was thinking beyond the horizon of the ordinary mortal -- and when I talked to him, (his wife now and then getting a word in edgewise, same as at Evans' place) I knew I must keep up the personal contacts, even if I did not return to Fandom.

Then I went home, and read over a lot of my collection. I thought of Cas-

tellari, Veney, Roberts and White, Duncan, Tuck, Roden and the others I knew, every one something more than the Human average -- or, as I prefer to think, a little more like what Man should be, when the undeveloped possibilities of his mind have been realized.

So once again I am interested in our world within a world. Not as keen on stf as before. Most of the pulp stuff is too obviously pulp standard, and if the magazines come out here again I won't bother about getting the lot, as I once did. All I want to see are Astounding, Unknown, Weird, the Famous Fantastic twins if they (or it) is-are still going, maybe Astonishing-SuperS if up to the best they did five years ago. As to the others, I'm indifferent. I think stf is great, but I'd rather read a good "straight" story or do something altogether different, than read cheap sensational pulp stuff because it's stf.

So, Forry, and Fans the world over, wherever VOM penetrates, a big "cheerio" to you all. -- Graham Brice Stone, 153LO3 LAC Stone GB, Care BGStone, 290 New So. Head Rd., Edgecliff, Sydney (NSW) Australia.

Fanzine Stuff: We had planned originally to have here a department of fanzine analysis about the size of the prozine review section, but the increasing lengthiness of this sheet plus our growing apathy to fan activities makes this impossible at present. Maybe next time we'll feel like doing something of this nature. Anyway, thanks to those who have sent me their publications.

We do have an inclination, however, to put in a good word for Redd Boggs' and Bob Stein's newsheet, Tympany. Format is very neat: news is classified into different sections, and mimeographing is well done. Published bi-weekly, issues usually contain about 6 pages. Heretofore, advertising has not been admitted, which in our opinion is an excellent idea, but beginning with the 9th issue, ads will be used. We certainly hope that this mag will not be overtaken by the same fate which took Fanews: excessive length, composed mainly of page after page of ads, and consequent infrequent publication. But we are perfectly aware of the fact that ads make a magazine pay for itself. The address, incidentally, of Tympany is: 514 West Vienna Avenue, Milwaukee 12, Wisconsin. Sub. rates are 5¢ per copy, 6/25¢, 13/50¢.

Guess that about winds up this first issue of Thots, with the exception of one last-minute comment. The 3rd issue of Fantasy Reader has appeared since we wrote our pro reviews. The stf content is a vast improvement over previous issues, the stories being, Merritt's Rhythm of the Spheres, Wells' The Queer Story of Brownlow's Newspaper, C.L. Moore's Black Thirst, and Wollheim's Mimic. Of all of these, Black Thirst was the best, in our opinion. It's one of those Northwest Smith stories we had heard so much about but had never encountered. The plot is similar to most of Planet's stuff, but Moore's writing make the tale memorable. Merritt's contribution was, of course, superbly written, but left us with a "so what?" feeling, as did the other 2 stories. Frankly, we don't think FR contains enough to hold our interest in return for our 35¢. Reasons for this are: (1) Ration of pages of stf to money shelled out is pitifully small, and (2) The short story cannot develop the necessary atmosphere to "put across" a story as well as a longer piece can. Of course there are exceptions to this, but they are far and few between. Doubtless, to anyone who enjoys the more literary aspects of stf and fantasy, this mag is a boon. But we just haven't the interest in fantasy to continue to purchase this magazine.

Thots is published extremely irregularly and infrequently by Henry Elsner Jr., 13618 Cedar Grove, Detroit 5, Michigan. Subscription rates: 10¢ per copy, 3/25¢. No subscriptions larger than 25¢ accepted. No advertisements either. Thots is the successor to Scientifictionist, and those with subscriptions to the latter are receiving this and will continue to receive it, unless they demand their money back. An "X" here indicates your subscription has expired ☐

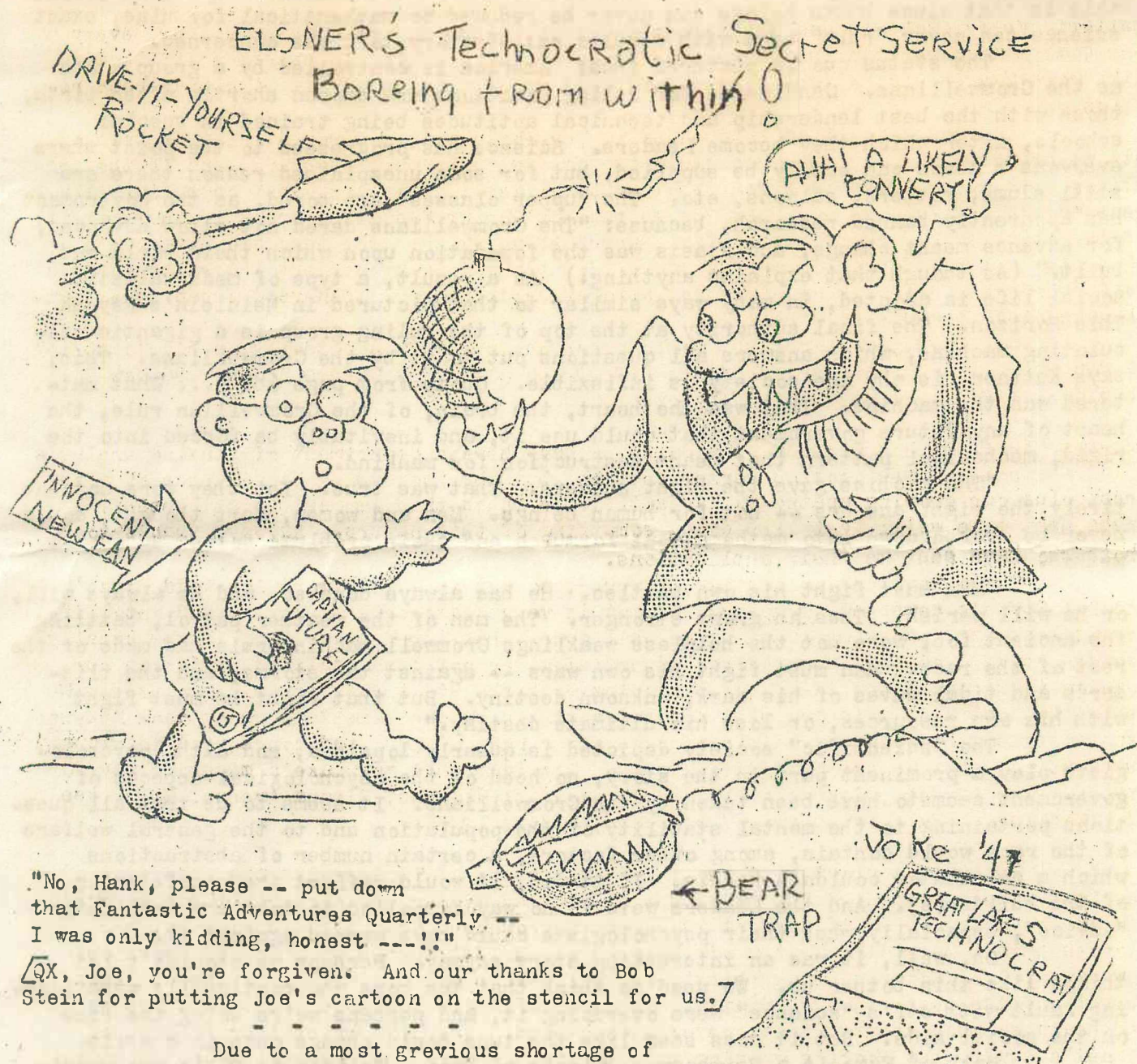
Looks like we still have space to fill, so we'll put in this quotation from Speer's Sustaining Program, Spring '47 page 6: "The heart of the gospel: 'A wise man believes anything until it is disproved. Only a fool refuses to accept anything until it is demonstrated.' -- Amazing Stories."

~~this should be a witty filler but we couldn't think of anything this should be a witty filler but we~~

Ego-boo department: "Nobody likes an individzine -- neither critics nor readers nor editor." Don Wilson, in Dream Quest number one.

Here's our current want list. We have a few 1941 ASF's to swap, or we'll pay cash. FFM: 1940: June, August. 1941: June. Startling: 1940: May. SFQ: #4. Marvel Sci. # 2. Fan. Novels: April 1941. Super Sci.: 1942: Feb, Aug. Argosy: 1943: April, Jul. Marvel Tales: 1939: Dec., 1940: May. Railroad Magazine: March 1940.

On to the next page.



"No, Hank, please -- put down that Fantastic Adventures Quarterly -- I was only kidding, honest ----!!!"

[QX, Joe, you're forgiven. And our thanks to Bob Stein for putting Joe's cartoon on the stencil for us.]

Due to a most greivous shortage of mimeo paper here in Detroit, this issue has been delayed more than a full month. Many of the prozine comments are now somewhat dates, so we'll try to come up to date with the following quickies:-

Someone again donated a copy of Amazing, so we were able to read Ed Hamilton's much-ballyhooed 75,000 worder, The Star Kings. And we were quite disappointed. It's hard to believe that this is the same man who wrote Star of Life for SS a short time ago. Rates average quality s.o., typical of pre-Shaver Z-D fare.

Astounding S-F for August leads off with the new Hubbard serial, which we can't comment on, as serials aren't read in this quarter until all installments are in our possession.

H. Walton's novelette, Insomnia Inc. is well-written and typical ASF entertainment. The theme consists of speculation on the psychological after-effects of a no-sleep drug on the actions of a group of technicians. We don't know just how much is definitely know on this subject, but it seems to us the change in the men's actions was a trifle soon.

R.F. Jones' Person From Porlock is another case wherein a guy is going nuts but thinks he isn't. But in this instance author Jones saves our hero's sanity by having him learn, in the last 4 pages, that all of his weird imaginings are true. We wonder how many more of this type of thing it will take before some fans go off the deep end -- or are ASF's readers more stable than those of another publication??

The latest fancy of G.O. Smith seems to be time-paradoxes -- to the endless confusion of which Rat Race makes an excellent addition. Don't let it bother you.

The best in the issue, and one that should rate high in this years polls, is Leinster's Propagandist. It seems that a dog, unknowingly, makes an excellent ambassador between two alien races, mutually suspicious and ready to loose destruction on the other at the slightest warning. The Aliens, who possess mind-reading powers, are able to gain a truly objective picture of Terrestrial attitudes, tho we are forced to admit that the picture is a slightly rosy one.

Startling Stories presents yet another lead novel by Kuttner, this one

tells how the Rover Boys once again save Civilization from Science. The idea behind this is that since human beings can never be reduced to mathematical formulae, exact science can never "rule" them with results satisfactory to those concerned.

The status quo is pictured thus: America is controlled by a group known as the Cromwellians. Candidates for ruling positions are chosen shortly after birth, those with the best leadership and technical aptitudes being trained in special schools, after which they become Leaders. Science has progressed to the point where everyone's needs can easily be supplied, but for some unexplained reason there are still slums, robbers, saloons, etc. The "upper classes" are bored, as the government has apparently banned research, because: "The Cromwellians dared not allow advances, for advance meant change, and stasis was the foundation upon which their world was built." (As though that explains anything!) As a result, a type of medievalistic social life is adopted, in many ways similar to that pictured in Heinlein's *Beyond This Horizon*. The final authority at the top of the ruling group is a gigantic calculating machine, which answers all questions put to it by the Cromwellians. This, says Kuttner, is why the society is inflexible. Quote from page 68: "... What mattered was the machine. That was the heart, the brain, of the Cromwellian rule, the heart of any future government that could use it, and inevitably be forced into the rigid, mechanical pattern that meant destruction for mankind.

"The machine gave the right answers. That was true. Yet they were not entirely the right answers -- not for human beings. Men and women, Mart thought, could never be broken down into mathematical formulae and their problems solved by such a method.

"Man must fight his own battles. He has always done so, and he always will, or he will perish. Thus he grows stronger. The men of the weather patrol, battling the ancient foe, were not the helpless weaklings Cromwell machine-rule had made of the rest of the race. Man must fight his own wars -- against the storms, and the blizzards and tidal waves of his dark, unknown destiny. But that fight he must fight with his own resources, or lose his ultimate destiny."

The "scientific" society depicted is queerly lopsided, and altho psychologists play a prominent part in the story, no heed of the psychological aspects of government seem to have been taken by the Cromwellians. It seems to us that all questions pertaining to the mental stability of the population and to the general welfare of the race would contain, among other factors, a certain number of abstractions which a calculator couldn't handle. If it did, it would reflect the conditioning of the builder(s). And the Leaders were in no way compelled to take the machine's "advice", especially when their psychologists could have warned against it.

Oh, well, it was an interesting story anyway. Perhaps we shouldn't let things like this bother us. We used to think that the boys who continually were finding fault with stf's "science" were overdoing it, and perhaps we're doing the same on the social side. But it does seem like the tune could change once in a while.

Hall of Fame is a Weinbaum -- Circle of Zero. Written in SGW's own peculiar style which I can't yet decide to like or dislike. Artwork is by Finlay, who also did the pix for Kuttner's *Lords of the Storm*. (Seems like I've neglected to mention that all this is in the Sept. issue of SS).

Thrilling Wonder Stories just about hits the top with its October issue. If the mag continues this way, it may be that it may gain the position of pace-setter of the entire stf field. Plainly, Merwin is still experimenting, and with some very laudable results. Even the cover was good!

James MacCreigh, absent from stf since the demise of Astonishing, leads off with an entertaining and well written novelette of intrigue on Venus. A lot of political ramifications were left undeveloped, tho, that could have made the story longer and with more meat. It's almost pure adventure as it stands.

Robert Heinlein's 2nd postwar appearance in TWS is marked by a novelette, *Jerry is a Man*. Needless to say, it's excellent, and would have taken #1 place in the issue except for a short which we'll mention further on. *Jerry is a Man* is one of those super-sophisticated stf stories, which ASF boasted not so long ago. The atmosphere is really built up by little phrases like "he struck a cigarette" which fill in the background of the setting without any needless explanations. Bob paints a somewhat cynical and slightly wacky future of a future similar to some of L.S. de Camp's stuff. Characterization is good; the characters will remain in your memory for some time to come. Several sequels in the same vein will be awaited with relish.

The "Saint" story by Leslie Charteris, *Darker Drink*, is a well conceived off-trail psychological yarn, in which reality and unreality are mixed until the reader is uncertain as to which is which.

The story which we nominate for the #1 spot in the issue is a mere 8-page short by Manly Wellman, *Tongue Cannot Tell*. It deals with an item often overlooked or conveniently sideswiped in practically all stories, but one which is more apt to be encountered when space flight is a reality than a good many propositions stf authors have given us. This is the impossibility of adequately describing utterly alien life in human terms with earthly referents. Wellman gives the best sense of alienness that I've ever encountered. The story concerns one John Latimer who returned from the moon after successfully landing there for the first time. John has changed subtly until he seems not quite human. He says: "Columbus was wrong -- the world is

flat". Here's how he describes attempting to convey what he encountered: "But you can't question me. Speaking of elephants, remember about the blind men fumbling around and each one getting a different impression of the elephant? I was like that.

"Someone with me might have caught something else. Enough people with me might have done what the blind men did -- gathered a number of details and put them together into something that could suggest a little of the truth. But those things -- well, they didn't even walk."

#

Quotations from here and there. The Detroit News yields this clipping on the front page for August 5th. "CAVES YIELD 9-FOOT MEN IN ZOOT SUITS" "Los Angeles, Aug. 5. --(U.P.) --A band of amateur archeologists announced today that they had discovered a lost civilization of men nine feet tall in California caverns.

"Howard E. Hill, spokesman for the expedition, said the caves contained mummies of men and animals and implements of a culture 80,000 years old, but 'in some respects more advanced than ours.'"

"He said the 32 caves covered a 180-square-mile area in California's Death Valley and Southern Nevada.

"This discovery may be more important than the unveiling of King Tut's tomb," he said.

"Professional archeologists were skeptical of Hill's story. Los Angeles County Museum scientists pointed out that dinosaurs and tigers, which Hill said lay side by side in the caves, appeared on earth 10,000,000 to 15,000,000 years apart.

"Hill said the caves were discovered in 1931 by Dr. F. Bruce Russell, a physician, who literally fell in while sinking a shaft for a mining claim.

"He tried for years to interest people in them," Hill said, "but nobody believed him."

"Russell and several hobbyists incorporated after the war as Amazing Explorations Inc., and started digging.

"Several caverns contained mummified remains of 'a race of men eight to nine feet tall,' Hill said. They apparently wore a prehistoric zoot suit -- a hair garment of medium length jacket and knee-length trousers, he added.

"Another cavern contained their ritual hall with devices and markings similar to those of the Masonic order, he said.

"Some catastrophe" apparently drove the people into the caves, Hill said. All of the implements of their civilization were found, he said, including household utensils and stoves which apparently cooked by radio waves.

"I know," he said, "that you won't believe that."

#

I just happened to notice this one as I leafed thru a copy of the January 1939 ish of Amazing Stories. It's the editor's comment on a letter.

"You may have noted that our readers clamored for elimination of sex from AMAZING STORIES? This, therefore, becomes part of our policy. Now, when we refer to editing and changing a manuscript, it is editing and changing of this type that is done. Sexy passages are eliminated. When very much revision is necessary, we return the manuscript to the author. However, it would be a serious waste of time to return a manuscript simply for a few minor changes, and changes that would not be made correctly since the author doesn't sometimes grasp just how much editing the manuscript needs. No author objects to his work being edited in this manner. In fact, if a scientific error, or a grammatic fault is weeded out, the author is protected from criticism by the reader. You infer that we change the story. Well, sometimes we do, when a climax falls flat, it is pepped up, or if a thread is left unexplained, it is inserted. But we do not change the story for the worse."

#

Enclosed with this magazine is a pool sheet. Please answer it to the best of your ability. Everyone filling out one of these forms will receive credit for a free copy of Thots. (Disregard the last sentence on the sheet.)

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