

TIGHTBEAM #30 from Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 336, Berkeley, California, 94701, USA. Depending on your source the deadline for this issue is Feb 10/15 for March publication. It's going out as soon as Janie Lamb sends me enough money to publish it. I hope the National Fantasy Fan Federation is still solvent enough then to pay for its letterzine. Crudpub #88.

David S. Bradley, 1300 Arch Street, Berkeley, California, 94708

BARR: A question. If a person does not immediately declare himself as thinking that Edgar Rice Burroughs is the best writer in the world -- do you classify him as an ERB-hater? And do you really think he's a good enough writer to be WORTH a commemorative stamp? Maybe ERB was a story-teller -- but is that good? Admittedly he had a style of his own, that no one can imitate or should bother to try to. And by the way, as a worshipper of the Great God Edgar, do you think that the books Werper is writing are "sacrilege"? Or are you more sensible than that? Burroughs was an author. Or he tried to be, at least. I think that he was a fairly good one. But he wasn't the best in the field, by any means. Although I did believe that when I was twelve...I am now fourteen.

Sincerely, David S. Bradley

Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Avenue, North Hollywood, California, 91606

I see by Science Fiction Times that Analog is going back to small size and cheap paper and printing. It seems that the experiment to make the advertisers pay for the copies, as in big-circulation slick magazines, has been a flop. Now it goes back to making the readers pay for the mags. In other words, Pay-SF. Well, that's all right with me.

Studying the figures in small print indicates that most of the circulation of stf magazines is newsstand circulation (see footnote); that there are few subscribers, though they continually plug cheap sub rates; and that there is a shocking amount of waste in returned copies. Where there is widespread distribution, there are many returns. Such a situation, with no financial help from the advertisers, means that copies must be cheaply made. It does not mean that contents should be cheap, but the individual copies must cost less, because half of them are surplus. Therefore the cheap paper, poor printing, etc. I don't mind this, since it seems a shame to waste fine printing and paper on returns, money that could be used to pay authors...but the package should not be so sloppy that the customer will not like its looks. This is very important, since the only paying customer, it seems, is the newsstand browser.

The cover should arouse his curiosity enough at least to pick up and open the mag. I think the covers on the old-time stf mags did this, because they posed a question: what was going on inside? A straight space or science picture poses no question, but may attract browsers because of the expected contents. Hooked by the cover, the customer-to-be flips through the pages. This is where some present-day mags fall down. There should be interesting illustrations, interesting titles, and yes, interesting blurbs. Then, maybe the browser will read the first paragraph of one of the stories, which is supposed to hook him. The trouble is, the author doesn't have a chance to use the narrative hook if the customer is turned off before he gets to that point. One possible solution: some slick mag or other printed the first few paragraphs in very large type. Interior illos should say something about the story, so that the customer will want to read it to find out about it, and hasn't time to read it at the newsstand, so must buy a copy.... Victory. Otherwise, Defeat. See the statistics.

Burroughs was not the only fantasy writer to be considered for a commemorative stamp. France has had an issue honoring Jule Verne (so did Monaco) and there is a US stamp for Edgar Allan Poe, as well as others less known for fantasy, such as Clemens, Irving and Shakespeare. No doubt there are more, but I am behind on my philateliac.

Ed Wood: More useful than an index to the "wasteland" would be reprints of some of the better items, so as to make these rarities available to the average fan who does want stf stuff. What good is an index if the material isn't easily available?

Footnote: (average 12 months sales)

	<u>Analog</u>	<u>Galaxy</u>	<u>F&SF</u>	<u>Amazing</u>	<u>If</u>	<u>NoT</u>	<u>Ftc</u>	<u>MoH</u>
newsstands:	61,238	66,736	36,281	33,597	62,340	1	26,038	
subs:	20,170	6,800	17,007	1,874	2,160		1,077	
returns:	60,946	38,414	57,462	45,918	37,637		40,659	

This is a fair enough sample, even if not complete. No Fantastic because I didn't get my January copy; one of the drawbacks of subs is that you sometimes don't receive a copy and have to write and ask howcum. No Worlds of Tomorrow because I couldn't find the figures in the November, January or March issues, can you?

((There isn't necessarily as much waste in returned copies as might appear at first glance. The incremental cost of printing each copy must be balanced against the revenue obtained from selling it as a back number. And calling them "returns" as you have is not completely accurate. Many magazines deliberately overprint in order to secure more favorable rates, to have a back supply on hand (witness the occasional listings of back issues in ASF -- though I'm not saying Street & Smith made a deliberate practice of overprinting; I just don't know) and so not all of these copies must be considered as returns. ## An interesting experiment (if you have the floor space) is to take out all the sf magazines and arrange them in order of date. You can readily see why ASF sold so well to casual buyers, the covers well done had people in the vast majority of them instead of some scene devoid of humanity and these people were usually in a setting that was clearly of the future or of alien vantage. But I think you're putting too much emphasis on the casual buyer though I'm possibly optimistic in assuming a hardcore of buyers who will buy anything labelled or identifiable as sf. A magazine also develops a reputation for its average contents. And if there were not people who will buy anything vaguely resembling sf then most of the magazines calling themselves sf would be out of business. When is the last time there was a good story which was also sf in F&SF, If, Amazing, Fantastic, Galaxy, Worlds of Tomorrow or The Magazine of Horror? There have been a few, particularly in The Magazine of Horror. But then Lowndes and Campbell are far better editors of sf than Ferman, Lalli or Pohl.)) ((And these circulation figures are a harbinger of hope of better days to come when some of these magazines are dead. Hasten the day.))

Rich Wannan, 541 Sheffield Avenue, Webster Groves 19, Missouri

R. Monroe Sneary: The idea of a Hugo Nominating Committee seems to me to be wrong. When I nominate something for a Hugo, it is because it made a favorable impression on me and I think it deserves some special award. A Committee, however, for all its good judgment and impartiality just might not be reflecting my individual views. I would be forced to abide by the tastes of five (or how-ever-many) gentlemen, all of whose tastes might be totally different. The Hugos as I see them are given to the works which have been favorably received by a majority of fandom. ((It's not so, they're presently decided by a dozen or so people, see the Pacifcon report on Hugo voting. nm)) I think the Hugo should go to those works which appeal to the science fiction fan (a generalization meant to include all fan) and not to some hocus-pocus committee. Stories are written to appeal to the fans, and if the fans cannot have the final say as to what they like and what they don't like, and what they feel deserves an award, then I don't see any point in Hugos at all. The committee's judgment would reflect the preferences of the judges (and as a side note, a few judges might be easily reached by certain means to vote for a selected product; this couldn't

happen when about 1,000-2,000 individuals are involved). I prefer to select for myself what I think is meritable, and do not feel the need to have someone else do it. This is not, however, to refute any ideas toward advertising meritable products. Advertisement is merely an enticement to try all things advertised; a committee would be a restriction to support only pre-selected items. I say foo to committees and bureaucrats.

Phil Holloway: Yes, sf is changing and not just in the way you stated. In the beginning sf had a much wider field of imagination; today scientific discoveries have somewhat restricted certain portions of that imagination. (That is not to say that sf has not improved for the change.) And furthermore, today there seems to be more of an emphasis on things political and religious in sf - world governments, commie takeovers, Abomb destruction and the like. I suppose a lot of this change is the reason for sf's acceptance by "mainstream" literary circles. But as I say, this is just to note a change, not an improvement/decline.

Stan Woolston & Richard Smith: I think the trend to ignore fiction publications by a majority of people is due (somewhat) to the overemphasis today on what is dubiously called "sophistication". Simple escapist fiction is pooh-bahed by too many "authorities" (who probably haven't read sf or the like since the age of ten). Also, today there is much emphasizing of "social consciousness", if you know what I mean. Social problems are emphasized today and while they don't really claim general attention (witness the flop of the horribly boring TV opus East Side/West Side) do get general playup in magazines. Editors today seem to deliberately select things like this over entertaining fiction. There will probably have to be an over-all change in the national outlook before we see a resurgence in the popularity of fiction mags; and, I fear, that change is far from coming. Second thoughts coming: to illustrate this point, take as a case the detective story. In the earlier part of this century, detective and mystery stories were full of adventure, plus good plotting and counter-plotting. Detectives in real life had a great freedom to act; gang wars and fights with police were real headline stuff, so no wonder fiction like that was gobbled up. But today, too many restrictions lie on law enforcement, so who can write a really exciting detective yarn? All the action has to rest on the illegal-outlaw element. Just try to imagine Sherlock Holmes as a present-day detective - it won't work.

((This might be a good place to put in some statistics on just how many people voted the 1964 Hugo-winners into their wins. Out of the 164 ballots received the winners were nominated by the following number of people:

Way Station 16 No Truce With Kings 9 Analog 41 Amra 20, Emsh 39 Ace 55

This is hardly a multitude. As the Pacificon committee termed it, it's APATHY. An examination of the nominations listed in the program booklet will show that many voters wasted their votes by voting in the wrong categories, voting for works which weren't eligible due to not being published in 1963, etc., etc.

While it seems to be true that scientific discoveries have inhibited certain writers it shouldn't be that way. Scientific discoveries should be inspiring authors. But a good many of the present-day authors seem to have "learned" their "science" from science fiction and hence are making negative contributions to sf. And all these types of story topics you cite as being more emphasized today have been with us for years, the A-bomb stories in particular reached a zenith in the 1945-48 period. What slowed them down was Campbell's thumbs-down attitude and the publication in ASF Aug 48 of A. Bertram Chandler's "The Dawn of Nothing". ## Exciting detective stories are still being published but detective stories have changed. There is a greater emphasis on pseudo-literary tales (just as there has been in sf) and less attention paid to creating memorable and literate tales of detection. The same goes for sf. But it is also interesting to note that the vast majority of the all-fiction magazines left on the stands today are either sf or detective/mystery. There must be something significant in the fact. The other fiction magazines call themselves true fact/adventure magazines and put just enough facts (or pseudo facts) into their stories to deceive the casual reader (or the ignorant one).

Ronald R. Eberle, 100 Elmhurst Avenue, Syracuse, New York, 13207

Edward Wood: Where does one acquire the Fanzine Index you mentioned?

R. S. Coulson, Route 3, Wabash, Indiana, 46992

I will agree with the fans which Greg Shaw quote as saying that Cat's Cradle was "twenty years ahead of its time". The trend in all modern writing is towards more and more intricate and obscure symbolism, which carries more meaning to fewer readers and no meaning at all to the majority. Twenty years from now, novelists will be writing for each other (or themselves) while the public ignores them. Science fiction, being pretty cliquish to begin with, seems determined to lead the retreat from humanity. I didn't vote for Cat's Cradle for a Hugo because I thought it stank to high heaven, and twenty years from now I may not be reading new fiction at all.

The "new and original ideas" in Stranger were new to science fiction. They certainly weren't new in the sense that nobody ever thought of them before.

Burroughs is definitely not the only fantasy writer to have been given a commemorative stamp. Monaco issued an entire set commemorating Jules Verne, and France even issued a stamp in honor of the fantasy film pioneer, Georges Melies. Even if Burroughs does get himself a stamp, it will only be a "first" for the United States, not the world. ((Your first and last sentences are factually inaccurate.nm))

I agree with David Bradley; Burroughs was neither the best nor the worst of sf writers (though I'd put him closer to the bottom of the scale than the top). Compared with someone like Austin Hall, Burroughs was a positive genius, even though he doesn't stack up so well against Heinlein or Sturgeon or Poul Anderson.

Can anyone explain why If announces a circulation of 64,000 while Fantastic has less than 28,000 readers? There certainly isn't that much difference in the quality of the stories. (Admitted, Fantastic does insist on running John Jakes' idiotic pseudo-Conan things, but they have John Brunner to make up for it.)

Lewis J. Grant, Jr., 5810 South Harper Street, Chicago 37, Illinois

Stephen Barr

ERB usually didn't mean much to me as a kid. I don't know why. However, he has caused me one nasty bit of frustration. The first sf story I can remember reading outside of some things in Boy's Life and the Open Road For Boys was a wonderful story about hydraulically operated buildings that became their own bomb shelters, and a hundred-year's war. I thought it was by Burroughs, but never knew for sure. Finally I found that it was "Beyond the Farthest Star". I've been trying to get a copy for a couple of years now, but none seem to be available. ((It's now out with a sequel from Ace for 40¢ as Beyond the Farthest Star.nm))

Edward Wood, Apt 2, 6553 Green Way, Greendale, Wisconsin, 53129

I envy the new reader of science fiction. If he only knew the bibliographic material that he has to help him in his collecting. I well remember the 3rd science fiction magazine I ever held in my hands, the Nov 29 issue of Air Wonder Stories which contained the first part of Edmond Hamilton's serial "Cities In the Air" which has this to say about the propulsion of the aircraft used: "Connected as they were to our great horizontal tube-propellers, which were set in the cruiser's walls and which moved it forward by drawing immense volumes of air at vast speed through themselves from ahead, those motors could fling us on at more than a thousand miles an hour." Yes, Mr. Campbell, it's there, science fiction didn't miss the jet engine entirely. This was early 1937 and I read that issue to shreds.

As soon as I'd finish reading it, I'd turn right around and re-read it, scores of times. It took me seven years to get the second and concluding part of Hamilton's serial. I didn't know and didn't find out for years that Air Wonder Stories had lasted only eleven issues. At that stage in my magazine collection, I bought them as they came to second-hand magazine stores and as pennies came into my hands. So I read the last part of six-part serials and read backwards, or the first or fourth parts and would have to wait years to finish them. To this day, I hate serials.

But today the story is different, one can find out what issues to get and what stories to read. I can only say I wish I had them years ago. I want to mention particularly two relatively new bibliographic aids. T. G. L. Cockcroft's exceptionally fine two-part Index to the Weird Fiction Magazines, by title and author at \$2.75 for each part. Both together coming to 100 offset pages and covering Weird Tales, Strange Stories, Strange Tales, The Thrill Book, Oriental Stories later The Magic Carpet Magazine, Strange Tales (British) and Golden Fleece. Mr. Cockcroft also lists series of connected stories which is a great help when you are reading Seabury Quinn's Jules de Grandin stories (and why haven't some of them been reprinted in paperbacks?) or Howard's Solomon Kane stories. In fact any budding anthologist would be a fool not to glom onto this set immediately. Where could you learn that Weird Tales had 94 serials and 2,617 other stories and the amazing number of 575 poems? One has to pay a price for knowledge these days and I am glad to pay the tab for this set. No, I don't have a complete set of Weird Tales but I know people who have. For the information of the other Weird Tales collectors I lack 59 of the 279 issues and they are the rare early issues.

The second item is Walter Cole's A Checklist of Science Fiction Anthologies, 374 pages, hardcovers for \$7.50. Cole has done a very good job in tracking down the original appearances of the contents of 227 anthologies, listing the stories, the authors and the contents of the anthologies. Those with good collections of magazines (meaning merely Astounding, Galaxy and The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction) will be amazed at how many stories they have already of the 2700 plus stories listed. For those who are really expert, there is the fun (and believe me it is vast fun pointing out the errors and mistakes). For example, Cole lists Joel Townsley Rogers' story "Beyond Space and Time" in A Treasury of Great Science Fiction as originally appearing in Super Science Stories in Sep 50 but he didn't look up the magazine version to see that it really appeared in All-American Fiction Sep 38 first. Also there's A. E. van Vogt's "Dear Pen Pal" and "Letter From the Stars" which are the same story but are given two different sources (the Arkham Sampler Win 49, not Aut is the original source). So you can see there's great fun in this. There are plenty of other errors so you can display your own knowledge.

The reason I have taken up space in Tightbeam to write of these two items is that no one else in the field seems to want to write about these in their so-called fan magazines. All the precious space is used up on gossip, trivia, misinformation, letter comments about other inane letter comments. If fans do not support good efforts like these they will not get similar ones in the future. If you collect or study science fiction and/or fantasy magazines you would do well to invest in these items. ((Hold on a minute Ed, there are a few sf fanzines.nm))

John Boston, 816 South First Street, Mayfield, Kentucky, 42066

Ed Wood prefers that fanzines maintain contact with science fiction and/or fantasy. That's all very well, but to say that those which don't are worthless is going a little too far. To whom are they worthless? Ed Wood and those who

agree with him. I think the crux of the matter -- as Bob Coulson observes elsewhere in Tightbeam #29, is that fanzines are published as a general rule for the satisfaction and enjoyment of the editor(s). If Ed Wood or I dislike the nature of a fanzine, it is our privilege to ignore it and to discard any issues that happen to come our ways. The only thing a fanzine "should" devote itself to is those things to which the editor wishes to devote it.

A line between matter pertaining to science fiction and matter not pertaining to science fiction would be extremely hard to draw. The nature of much science fiction would insure this. A book like Stranger In a Strange Land or Starship Troopers or The Man In the High Castle often provokes discussion that might be said to have no connection with science fiction, as witness the discussion of Naziism in the last few issues of Niekas. The discussion was sparked by a review of The Man In the High Castle. Is this or is not "maintaining a contact with science fiction/fantasy"? I wouldn't care to draw the line.

On Schoenherr: I do not like him now any more than I did then. True, he occasionally comes up with what strike me as excellent illustrations, but only occasionally. While it is extremely difficult to conduct a reasonable argument on a topic so entirely subjective, perhaps I can summarize my reasons for disliking his work.

Take the September, Oct and Nov 64 Analog covers. There is a lack of detail about them that does not impress me; the figures look like paintings of wood carvings. Perhaps this is the effect of the large size; on an old digest-size ASF the covers might look much better. The interiors Schoenherr does are usually rather fuzzy and unclear in a manner that detracts from the overall effect rather than adding to it. By contrast, Fraas' covers and interiors are sharp and clear and definite; another good example is the May 63 cover by Feodor Rimsky -- who he? -- for "The Dueling Machine", which I think is one of the best covers to appear on Analog since the institution of the new size.

I would like to apologize to the WBF members for the later appearance of this zine than I'd hoped. I didn't receive until 9 Mar (or so) the address labels to send this zine out. If they'd arrived by my deadline this would have been mailed out around 15 Feb (except that I've been in out of the hospital for the last two months which has complicated life).

Tightbeam #30 from
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Printed Matter Only
Return Requested
May Be Opened For Postal
Inspection If Necessary

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