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Cover art: Hugo Gernsback in his "Isolator"

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Editorial

2026 marks the centennial of *Amazing Stories Magazine*. 100 years of Science Fiction! To celebrate this milestone, this issue features an interview with *Amazing*'s current editor Llyod Penney, as well as an article about editor *emeritus* T. O'Conor Sloane, from non-other than his Great-Great-Grandson Justin T. O'Conor Sloane. I also dug up an editorial from a 1953 issue of *Science Fiction Plus* by *Amazing*'s founder Hugo Gernsback about the future of the SFF industry. It's an interesting view of where he thought the field was going, and in many ways he was correct.

This issue also features a directory of current SFFH magazines. There are so many active print and online magazines that it blows my mind. Any failure to include a venue is my own, either due to my ignorance of the venue, or by merely forgetting. If you know of others please get in touch, so that I can add them.

I'm also working on a larger directory of clubs, resources, and other SFFH goodness. However, it is a very large undertaking and will have to appear in a future issue. If you know of people and things that should be included, please do get in touch.

I'll be running free ads for books by N3F members, so send those in if you have them. ¼ page is ideal for the ads. Likewise, if members have new books coming out, please get in touch about a possible interview. I also encourage all amateur writers in the club to submit to the N3F short story contest. You've got nothing to lose!

As always, letters of comment welcome. I'd love to hear from you.

Jean-Paul L. Garnier
Joshua Tree, CA
January 2026

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Interview with Lloyd Penney, Editor of *Amazing Stories*

JPG - *When and how did you first become aware of* Amazing Stories*?*

LP - I think I became aware of *Amazing Stories* in the 1980s. I was still a new fan, and I began running dealers' rooms at our local conventions. I had seen the odd issue here and there, but saw more of them on dealers' tables and as they were being loaded in and out of the various rooms. I remember the bright colored covers, and I knew its importance as the first major SF magazine, but they were just not my interest at the time.

JPG - *How did you become editor of* Amazing Stories*?*

LP - In 2017, when the most recent volumes of the magazine were being planned, local SF author Ira Nayman had been appointed the editor-in-chief of those issues. He'd been a contributor to the AS website, which had been activated in 2012. Ira was a friend from some of the local conventions, so I sent him an e-mail congratulating him, and then I asked: "Do you need any help?" and Ira said "Yes!" Starting with the second issue, I was their copyeditor/proofreader. When Ira left to return to write more novels, Steve Davidson, the publisher, stepped into the editor's position temporarily, but Kermit Woodall, the managing editor and webmaster, asked me if I wanted to be the next editor-in-chief. Just about knocked me down, but I did say yes, and that was just over three years ago.

JPG - *What are* Amazing Stories' *plans for the centennial?*

LP - We will be relaunching the magazine with what I think will be volume 79, and we are looking for four quarterly issues in 2026, and we'll see how we do, which will determine what 2027 might look like. There will be a large 100th anniversary celebration for Amazing Stories at this year's RoVaCon in Roanoke, Virginia. Where I am, our local SF library, the Merril Collection of Science Fiction, fantasy and Horror, will be hosting a special event on the centennial, with a copy of the first issue on display. Not sure about other events, but I hope to hear about them soon.

JPG - *What's your favorite era of* Amazing*'s history and why?*

LP - My favorite era of *Amazing*'s history was the George Scithers era; for me, my full awareness of the importance of *Amazing*, and

its highest visibility. I got to meet George at two Worldcons…I never dreamed I would have his job one day. *Amazing Stories* was a competitive market at a time when there were a handful of major markets for top quality short stories. And then, I can say that this current time is my favorite era, for everything is new, and it's up to me and the team how we present stories, and plan for something spectacular, and I do think it will be.

JPG - *Obviously, the magazine has a rich history, what are your visions for the future of the magazine?*

LP - My visions for the future of the magazine? I am so busy trying to help with the present and near-future. I'd like to see the magazine continue on, whether it continues with paper magazines, or concentrates on e-versions, or both. I am old enough to prefer paper publications, but as the advances of the technologies continue, other formats may present themselves. I am pleasantly surprised to see how many authors submit their best fiction to AS; they know the history behind the magazine, and for some, it is a point of pride to be published in *Amazing Stories*. There are magazines that pay better, and they still want their fiction on our website, and soon, in our magazine.

JPG - *If you could ask Hugo Gernsback on question, what would it be?*

LP - Only one question? If Uncle Hugo was here, I'd ask him…have you seen what we're doing? Do you like it? Any suggestions for improvement or change? Did you ever think your creation would last 100 years and more? We all have lots to thank you for. Would you like to go out for dinner? We could pick your brain for more ideas… I cannot think that all who see our fiction like all that they see, so if there are ideas for improvement, I am very interested.

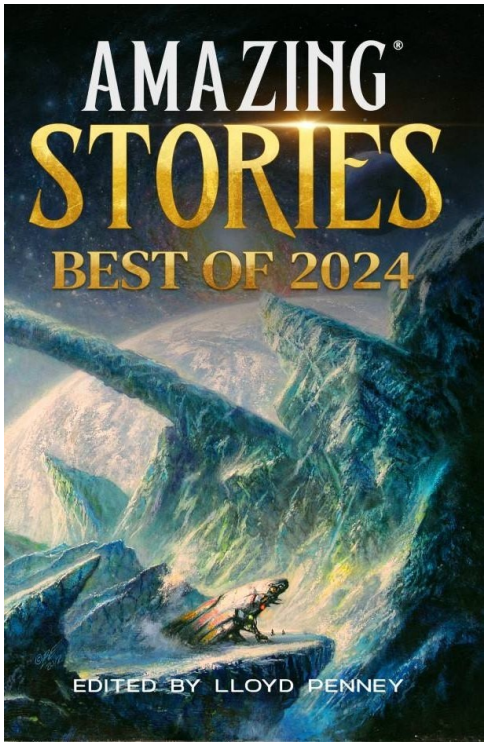
JPG - *Why do you feel that it's important to keep the oldest science fiction magazine alive today?*

LP - Many fans and readers look forward to the future in curiosity and anticipation, with a tinge of fear and apprehension. But, we also look at our past with a combination of pride and preservation. We want to make sure we got it right before going further, and we don't want anyone thinking we're ruining everything. There are still so many who have memories of the magazine in past decades: we honor the magazine and its readers by producing another run of issues. With the

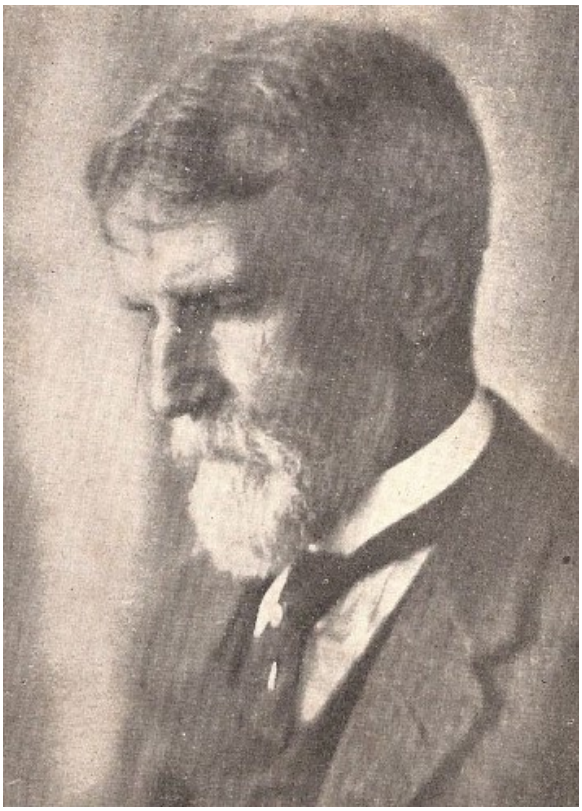
iconic 100th anniversary of this magazine, we couldn't NOT do it.

JPG - *If you had to take a predictive stab, what do you think the next 100 years of science fiction will look like?*

LP - We like to think we've imagined it all, but fresh ideas will continue to issue forth. Future generations will use those fresh ideas to entertain their readers and expand our imaginations a little more. We will read it, or experience it virtually, or live it. Not just space and time, but possibility, probability, and impossibility, micro and macro, and who knows what else? To paraphrase Arthur C. Clarke (or J.B.S. Haldane, or Werner Heisenberg, or a few other candidates), the science fiction of the future will not just be stranger than you imagine, it will be stranger than you CAN imagine. As long as we can do that, science fiction will survive and thrive.



https://amazingstories.com/



T. O'Conor Sloane

The *Amazing* A. Sigmond Mystery

By Justin T. O'Conor Sloane

First, a little background. Hugo Gernsback and T. O'Conor Sloane loved science. Hard science. And especially, electricity—the newest scientific advance that was revolutionizing human civilization. Both were electrical engineers. Gernsback had studied electrical engineering in Germany. And Sloane had earned one of the first doctorates in electrical engineering conferred in the United States. Both were patent-holding inventors. And both believed that science fiction should be informed by hard science, not fantasy. But where Gernsback was a serious businessman; Sloane was a serious academic. Holding two doctorates, he

had taught the natural sciences and higher mathematics at Seton Hall University and had served on the New Jersey State Board of Education and as treasurer of the American Chemical Society. Sloane's career in science had been long and distinguished and his writing, prolific. The many books on science that he had written, like his bestselling electrical dictionary, were designed to bring scientific know-how to people for use in their everyday lives. This array of accomplishments combined with his experience as the editor of *Scientific American* and the numerous scientific articles he had written for a constellation of publications had firmly established his name as a respected man of science in popular culture.

It was Sloane's scientific credibility and name recognition that led to his association with Gernsback when he was hired to be the public face and academic leader of Gernsback's Chemical Institute of New York, overseeing its popular correspondence courses in chemistry and cowriting the curriculum. Readers were nearly guaranteed to see ads featuring Sloane in the magazines and newspapers of the day—so ubiquitous were they—and in Gernsback's various science-oriented publications, readers were guaranteed to see those ads, where they usually occupied a full-page, leveraging Sloane's scientific reputation and credentials to attract students interested in science and technology. It was a brilliant business strategy and a forerunner to the expert/science personality industry that we see today.

Sloane's instructional work at the Chemical Institute of New York soon overlapped with his editorial work at Gernsback's Experimenter Publishing, where he was made an associate editor of *The Experimenter* (formerly, *Practical Electrics*) and *Science and Invention* (formerly, *The Electrical Experimenter*). When Gernsback consolidated his magazine operations and created *Amazing Stories*, the 74-year-old Sloane was brought along to help run the new magazine; the first dedicated entirely to science fiction.

In many respects, Gernsback and Sloane were two peas in a pod. I would imagine that they got along quite famously—and certainly appreciated the capital they generated together. Sloane was among a handful of the major stockholders in the Experimenter Publishing Company, Inc. He had a vested interest in its success. Though he wasn't a science fiction guy, at least not yet (and some critics would say ever), he took the business seriously.

A few years on, Gernsback had run into trouble with *Amazing* and lost the company. The problems seem to have been precipitated primarily by the princely sums that he and his brother (an active figure in all of Gernsback's business operations) lavished upon themselves—and Sloane, though to a much lesser extent—from the company coffer. I once did some math on how much these guys were paying themselves from *Amazing* and the numbers were, well, really quite amazing. A succession of ownership ensued. When B. A. MacKinnon sold Experimenter Publishing to Bernarr Macfadden (quite an interesting character!), he handed Sloane the full

editorial reigns to *Amazing*. Things continued along pretty much as they always had. Sloane had some hits, like the Professor Jameson stories by Neil R. Jones, which became the longest running series in science fiction history, introducing the world to cyborgs, and is still going strong in the pages of *Worlds of IF* under its current editor. He published first work by future luminaries like John W. Campbell and steadfastly furthered Gernsback's prepotency of publishing woman science fiction writers—bravo to that. And so on. But then here's where Sloane threw his set of scientific weights and measures out the window and took an interesting gamble. An experimental one.

The SF pulp mags sported cover art that had an instantly recognizable and established look. During his tenure at *Amazing*, Sloane often employed the talented and I think, under-appreciated, Leo Morey, whose tremendous output of cover art was to be seen month after month on magazine stands everywhere. And Morey's work had the expected look. Then came the shakeup. Enter the mysterious A. Sigmond. His or her name—nobody knows which, because to this day, absolutely nothing is known about this artist!—literally means "a victorious hand." Sloane hired them to create cover art for *Amazing*. In total, seven covers are credited to A. Sigmond, with all appearing in 1933; these being the January through July issues. The art is magnificent—abstract and surreal. These were exceptional covers, done in a style which had not been used before in science fiction and the pulps; they stood out and set *Amazing* apart. But the covers were poorly received by the readership as they did not have the expected look to which readers had become accustomed. SF historian Mike Ashley noted that the covers were revolutionary for their time. I agree. They were covers from the future.

So, here's my read on the mystery. The artist (or possibly, artists) who would become known as A. Sigmond signed a work-made-for-hire contract with *Amazing*, relinquishing copyright and attribution and Sloane came up with a pseudonym that he got a kick out of—and saved money over what a big name would have cost the magazine. I've read some interesting conjecture in the matter as well; that by using the color palette that those covers did, money was saved on printing costs. I also stumbled upon an interesting tidbit from none other than Leo Morey, in which he states that one of the covers created by A. Sigmond was actually a collage of the work done for multiple covers—his own included—by multiple artists. In an interview that appeared in *Science Fiction Digest* (June 1933), Sloane stated that A. Sigmond lived somewhere in Holland. Later, E. F. Bleiler provided compelling reasons as to why he believed this to be a fiction. I agree. Sloane was known for his deadpan humor.

After Sloane's experiment blew up in the lab, he went right back to hiring Leo Morey for cover art with the customary look. The readership was pleased. As for A. Sigmond . . . well, I haven't the foggiest. Have you?

https://starshipsloane.com/

THE SCIENCE-FICTION INDUSTRY

... A new industry in the making . , .

By Hugo Gernsback

From *Science Fiction Plus* May 1953

In 1926, I brought out the first science-fiction magazine. I never dreamed then that some day there might be a full-fledged science-fiction industry. Nevertheless, this came to pass, less than twenty-five years later.

While the extent of the infant industry is still modest, its volume will certainly extend a good deal beyond a turnover of twenty million dollars in 1953, in the U.S.

In the periodical field alone, there are now almost thirty science-fiction magazines. In the book branch, there were nearly a hundred new science-fiction titles this past year. All these activities are on the increase. Besides the hard-cover books, there are scores of specialized publications, such as pocket-books, quiz, and coloring books for the small fry. Such books sell for prices ranging from ten cents up to a dollar.

Next we come to radio and television, a particularly lusty and now booming science-fiction field. Programs of the "Space-Patrol" type are rapidly increasing. Here the young children are becoming thoroughly indoctrinated in the new endeavor. Moreover, these programs are excellent moneymakers for their sponsors. The next generation may therefore be counted upon to bring untold millions of new science-fiction fans into the constantly growing fold.

Add to the above the also increasing number of science-fiction newspaper strips and the Sunday-comics features, and it becomes difficult to see how the young and avid imagination can escape science-fiction conditioning.

Nor let us forget the coming torrent of scientifilms. It would appear that the majority of science-fiction films made so far were successful. Their appetite whetted by good box office, motion picture producers are now entering the field in earnest. As this is written, we know of over ten new scientifilms projected, or in the process of being filmed. We may look for a large and constantly increasing market in this branch.

Above we have considered only what may be termed as the "two dimensional" aspect of science-fiction: the printed word, radio and television, and the film. But in recent years, a new form has been added: the third dimensional world of science-fiction.

This new and wholly unsuspected development, undreamed of ten years ago, may well surpass, in physical volume and money value, the entire two-dimensional field in the near future.

These new three-dimensional forms of science-fiction which are now beginning to swamp our stores consist of toys, games, gadgets, scientific instruments of all kinds, wearing apparel for youngsters, and countless other constantly evolving, ingenious devices.

Space helmets of every description, spacesuits, space guns, space shooting ranges, Space Cadet modelcraft, space viewer picture guns, “Buck Rogers Sonic Ray Gun,” “Official Space Patrol Watch,” “Space Patrol Monorail Train,” “Meteor Express” (imported), dozens of space rockets and space ships — these are only a small part of the large catalog of this type of merchandise now to be found in thousands of stores.

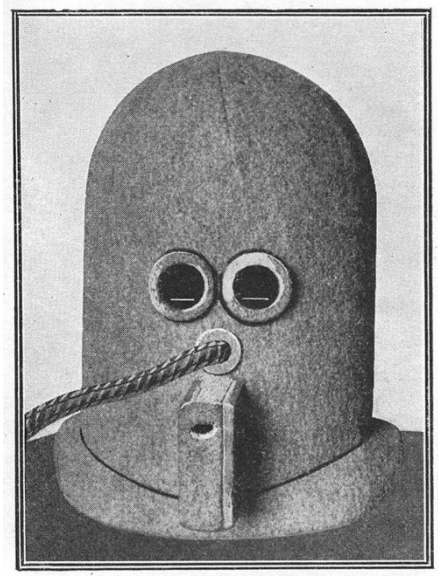
Remember, this is only a modest beginning. Most of the science-fiction merchandise now offered is geared for the small-fry market; consequently the pricing is modest.

So far, little has been produced for the youngsters from ten years upward. This easily may become the most lucrative three-dimensional market. It may be defined as the more serious “Scientific Instruction” branch of the industry. Boys, particularly, of this age are not so much interested in mere toys; they want something better. The early radio amateur and construction boom from 1910 to 1925 amply proves this.

We may therefore soon see a similar boom in all sorts of scientific instruction merchandise. To name but a few: Knockdown astronomical telescopes, mass produced, for easy home assembling. Reasonably priced ($25 and up) scale models (for home assembling) of the solar system, with the planets in actual verisimilitude motion. Space rockets with all the necessary parts for assembling and which actually can ascend (by compressed air). Scale models of space ships, complete with all interior instrumentation, rocket motors, air tanks, navigation machinery, even miniature scale planetariums are coming.

The list is practically endless. Moreover, no parent who can afford it will be likely to refuse to buy such purely educational equipment for his children. He knows it is certain to pay real dividends for them when they grow up.

In our present-day scientific world, the science-fiction industry will certainly play an impressive role in the future. It may well take its place among our larger industries soon.



The above photograph shows a close-up view of the Isolator helmet. The oxygen supply enters the helmet via the tube shown.

SFFH Magazine Directory

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