

fantasy newsletter

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Editorial

I wish I had more room for a regular letters column in this magazine. I receive some awfully good ones commenting on subjects that have been raised in these pages. And some of you ask some really interesting questions:

Dear Mr. Allen:

Thank you very much for sending me FANTASY NEWSLETTER. I enjoyed reading it from cover to cover, but my enjoyment of reading has prevented me from doing any writing for many years; the volume of good material is using all my available time, and even then I can't cope with it.

I am 67 years old and have been a fantasy fan for most of my life. In earlier years, I could not imagine that a time would come when my appetite for fantasy reading would be overwhelmed. Now selectivity is essential, and even this does not solve the problem. I have on hand more than I shall ever live to read.

Have you given serious consideration to this problem?

I wish you every success in achieving the readership you richly deserve, and if you think of any method which is likely to solve my problem, perhaps you will editorialize about it.

Again with thanks,
Chester D. Cuthbert

One thing I can say with certainty, Mr. Cuthbert, is that you are not alone. I'm approximately half your age and already possess more books than I will ever live to read. And I'd guess the only answer to your question is that one must make some decisions and draw some arbitrary boundaries: what will I and won't I collect and read? While at the same time maintaining an awareness of what is generally available in the field. Above all, enjoy what you do have time to read. Fritz Leiber discusses this issue how he selects the books he reads.

It was basically this dilemma that led me to establish *Fantasy Newsletter* and not only that, but the approach I use in my coverage of books. While listings of new and forthcoming books can be helpful, they provide a minimum of information. And I'd hate to tell you how many books I've mistakenly ordered from mail order dealers because of an interesting title. My editorial approach has always been to provide a fairly objective idea of what a particular book is about--even if I'm no more successful than conveying a germ of the plot. Don't think for a minute that I read all of these books. I couldn't. And in many cases, they haven't been published yet. I depend upon whatever information the publisher provides (often meager, sometimes misleading) and

(Continued on page 31.)

fantasy newsletter

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ON FANTASY

by Fritz Leiber



*"Spofforth soars.
Bragi broods and chuckles.
The Satin Woman dreams of the cricket."*

I'm a slow reader by taste and from an only half-disciplined laziness and also a cynical mistrust that the writer will slip something by me and, finally, always a lustful concern that I'll miss something important or merely exciting. (As if the merely exciting weren't what I live for, at least in the first place--the hope of being exquisitely tickled.)

Great language is something I first heard spoken, not read: the plays of Shakespeare and, though not as often, the *King James Bible*, and that's stuff that goes best subvocalized even when reading.

Ideally, I like to read with maps and other references beside me, especially that *Grimoire of Reason*, *Webster's Unabridged*, Second Edition. I like to read deeply.

Oh, I can speed-read and quite often do so, gaze dropping down the middle of the hopefully narrow page and picking up larger and larger phrase-blobs at the edges as I work up velocity. But it's a strain, more so as I grow older. I use it mostly for hunting things I know or hope I'll find and on material I expect to be heavy with cliches, repetitions, padding and unthink (which is most of what's written).

And speed-reading has limits. A civilization once split over whether Christ is the same substance as the Father or only a similar one. Homoousian or Homoiou-sian? How would a speedreader have fared then? *Oy, gevalt!* (There's also Heteroousian--for straights, I presume. Today homoisexual might

prove a useful word.)

My own slow reading, at its most extreme, is of the resonant, savoring, feel-out-the-word-with-your-tongue sort, most akin to the feelings and thoughts, envisionings and observings (and, hopefully, creative writings) of very early morning, when my mind's still on the border of sleep and everything's very fresh and pristine, smooth as Devonshire cream or Queen's jelly, and steady and solid and sure, cause and effect are clearly distinguishable, and it's possible to choose unforced, free will exists, and the day is as yet unjostled, unmarred and unmarked, hasn't yet developed its own individual signature (often a shaky one, alas) for the pages of time.

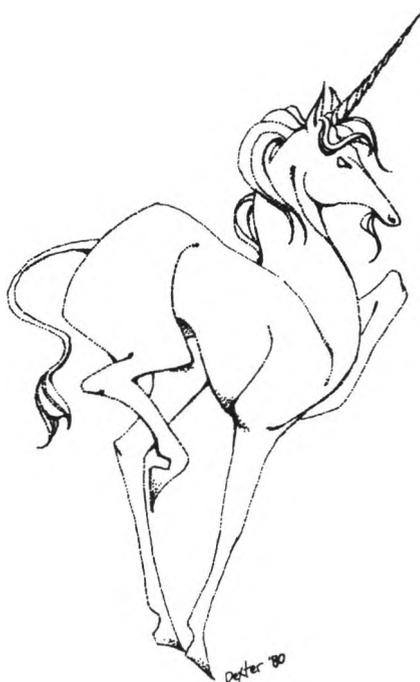
Of course sooner or later, but mostly sooner, this all changes. Vibrations and rockings develop, and all sorts of rhythms and jumps. The day gets its particular tasks,

preoccupations and pleasures, its pet loves and hates, acquires its particular pattern of luck and disaster. It can even go insane. Fatality takes over or appears to. You can't be as sure of things as earlier; you're more at the mercy of others and of the day's illusions--or so it seems to work for me, so much so that I've come to think of my Morning and Evening Minds as being quite different, and the day a microcosm of a lifetime, much as in Eugene O'Neill's play, *A Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

I once was able, somewhat, to recapture the mood of the Morning Mind late in the day with alcohol, and even top that off with barbiturates, which in turn sometimes seemed to steady and intensify the magical drugged mood the next morning. But I've been generally unable to get those effects for twenty-five or thirty years, and not even tried for them the last five or so.

One of the results of my being a fairly slow reader is that it's very shocking how few of the new writers I've read, and some of the good old ones too, even in my own fields of fantasy, terror and science fiction. God knows I don't "keep abreast of the field," but tag along behind, running back and forth whimsically and occasionally making a desperate spurt--until my conscience is partly assuaged and I'm all out of breath.

So how do I pick the books I do read, particularly by new authors in one of my fields? Well, occasionally she/he will make such a splashing of success and keep it up (and people *telling* me about it) that I just *have* to read them. Here also there's the fear they've invented new writing tricks that I should know about and use myself--a potent stimulus. Recent examples are Stephen King, whom I wolfed down all of, in terror fiction and John Varley in the science sort. The latter writes very original,





mind-bending, rich stuff about people who choreograph Kansas thunderstorms and do other exciting things. (But here I'm perversely reminded of Herb Petley, whose lead-novelette in a 1976 or '77 issue of *Galaxy*, "Variations in the Spectrum of an RR Lyrae Cepheid"--or something like that, oh God, long titles!--was every bit as expert and thrilling as the best of Varley.** But Mr. Petley has published only one other novelette--about asteroid miners;*** it reads like the first section of a possible novel--and I have reason to believe that he is very lazy and has also made the unsurprising discovery that there are lots of other exciting things for a bright young man to do besides writing stories. Good luck to him!)

Another writer of the splash-making sort I've recently latched onto is Walter Tevis, but he's a very slow producer (not from laziness or other ambitions in his case), so that when his *Mockingbird* came along just now (Doubleday, 1980, \$10) I knew about him and his first two novels from the films made from them: "The Hustler" with Paul Newman and George C. Scott, already an old favorite on TV reruns, and "The Man Who Fell to Earth," one of the best and certainly most cleverly imaginative SF films I know of--if you use your head and give it some credit for effects it almost brings off along with the ones it does.

Mockingbird is the story of a future where man-woman has lost

** "Variations in the Visible Spectra of Certain Cepheid Stars" *Galaxy*, July 1977

***"And Earth So Far Away" *Galaxy*, August 1977

the abilities to read and write by turning over the running of the world to computers and robots who are not quite clever enough for that job, though the cleverist ones can repair themselves and improvise up to a point. As we all should know, some of the very best science fiction comes from changing one basic in life and then re-examining all human existence--*Gulliver*, etc. All writers at least, I'm sure, are utterly fascinated by novels about reading and writing and the absence thereof, and all readers too, I'd tend to think--and this one is a dilly! What's it like to learn English from computer manuals and one dictionary? *Mockingbird*'s definitely not a re-do of *The Humanoids* or "The Machine Stops" or *Brave New World* or *1984*. Why, there's this prison in it for humans that's run by broken-down robots, and a robot named Spofforth who's capable of dying for a love he can imagine but is not equipped to express, and there's this woman who learned about life from the last beatnik...Oh, go read the book!

Then there are the new novels I come to read because I happen to know the author. Here my motives are double: the pleasant obligations of friendship and collegue-ship and the somewhat scandalous itch to discover more about the inner and private life of an acquaintance by reading his/her books and making all sorts of unwarrantable guesses. (Half my joy in reading new Heinlein, for instance, is now of this sort; and I still waste time wistfully wondering to what extent, if any, Conan Doyle himself experimented with morphine and cocaine as an unemployed young doctor before wishing those habits on Sherlock.)

It's by this route I came to read Glen Cook's *A Shadow of All Night Falling*, first novel of the "Dread Empire" trilogy (Berkley, December 1979, \$1.95). I first met up with this Cook person back in '69 at the original Clarion writing workshop, serving under Captain Robin Scott Wilson, where the grub was starchy, but the ideas wild and free. Cook was a fair-complexioned, sailorly, smiling sea-cunny with a wicked eye, and floods and thunderstorms followed him where he went. (And he'd sailed the Seven Seas for years with our nation's fleet, mind you--this isn't all moonshine.) He already had his seabag stuffed with the sprawling and loose-edged Dread Empire world, which tells much of one Bragi Ragnarson (or Rendel Grimmason) and

his great friends and enemies, who've a way of quick changing places, such as Haroun bin Yousif and Saltimbanco the Mocker and Varthlokur and the Stormkings and their sister Nepanthe, a heart's desire with many neuroses.

Then in 1972 Signet published Cook's *The Heirs of Babylon*, a sea war novel of the latter end of the great German navy in a spent Europe where war is an impoverished people's last religious luxury, and which cries out for reprint.

More recently have come a rash of rollicking, crooked, sardonic short fantasies in diverse places from *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* to *Whispers*.

Now with *Shadow* Cook sets about unpacking his magical seabag and we begin to see more fully, but never with final certainty, the world of Necremnos and the ruins of Ilkazar, of Itaskia and the Silverbind River with its ports of Prost Kamenets and Iwa Skolovda, and the castles of Fangdred over Sendelin Steppe and Ravenkrak in the Kratchnodian Mountains--many places, many lives. It's a world of flawed humorous heroes, of near-gods who descend to buffoonery, of great lovers and vengeance-seekers whose thousand-year lifetimes sometimes seem a metaphor for the thinking man's alienation and accursed clear vision, but who at feeling Death's breath on their necks shrink to shrieking, utterly selfish children. And then soon as they're reprieved, they begin feeling very kindly toward each other again and send out for beer and sandwiches, even as you and I might. Cook's characters are larger than life, but also smaller than Death, definitely.

And they talk a lingo calculated to set a fantasy purist's teeth on edge, full of modern concepts and current idioms and turns of speech. And sometimes they seem to know more about what's going on than their omniscient author. (My advice to him: Listen to their voices more carefully and let's have a couple more women.) But I'm not kicking at that, because I think Cook is seeking a fantasy language in which he can go ahead and say anything he wants when he wants to--and I for one want to hear all he and his characters have to reveal in the next two books of the Dread Empire trilogy. If he *does* succeed in his search, I believe it will be because he genuinely loves his bastards and bitches so much and has been palting around with them companionably in his mind so long.

And sometimes new novels to read just float my way, mysteriously. After writing half this column yesterday, I wandered three blocks west on Geary to Larkin and turned south a half block to the Fantasy, Etc. bookstore, where I chatted for a while with Charles Cockey, its owner, and his chief assistant, Rick McCrea, about the current publishers' fad for heavily illustrated books and "Will some form of adult comics seriously challenge pictureless fiction?" ("No.") and the questionable practice of overprinting text on tinted paper or pastel art. This reminded Charlie he had a novel in stock which did the best job he'd ever seen of legitimately mating text with illustrations.

He returned with a sleek black hardcover twelve inches wide, nine high, and 120 good-quality pages thick. In a corner of the cover, boldly white: *Herr Nightingale and the Satin Woman*. William Kotzwinkle, illustrated by Joe Servello, while the remainder depicted in the same moonlight tones a somber man and a Eurasian beauty gazing thoughtfully west, with a magnified cricket's head between them, while in the middle distance and background there loomed a burly trench-coated detective and the skyline of Istanbul. (Inside it says: Knopf, 1978, \$8.95.)

Charlie opens the book to show us how it takes just about the same time to read a spread of pages as it does to absorb their illustrations, which are old style, no captions or balloons or other "comic" apparatus, thank God, but with each illustration clearly relating to the text on its page. The pages vary between 75 and 250 words, about. Dreamy reading-seeing. My resistance melted and I purchased it.

I know Kotzwinkle's *Dr. Rat*, of course, which, ably touted by Harlan Ellison among others, very deservedly won the novel "Lovecraft" at the Third World Fantasy Convention at Los Angeles in 1977. *Dr. Rat* himself, that *Dr. Strange-love* of the biological laboratories, that peerless champion of man's inhumanity to rodents, is an unforgettable character.

Last night I spent an utterly delightful hour and a half absorbing the tale--through my very pores, you might say, it felt such an intimate and luxurious business.

You know those mysterious haunting lines that T. S. Eliot drops into his poems which sharply etch a scene or situation, and give its feel, without saying in so many words exactly what's going on,

things like: "The silent man in mocha brown sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;" or, "Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians;" or merely, "De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel..." Well, it's as if Kotzwinkle employed similar lines, third person present, to tell, not a morality, but a romantic melodrama.

The result is the quintessence of London fog and the mysterious East, films like "Cassablanca," "Morocco," "Three Faces East;" the Egypt of Dr. FuManchu, Karamaneh, *Brood of the Witch Queen*; Rick's Place, the Blue Parrot, and Major Strasser; golden scorpions and silver spiders; delicate opium dreams and wondrous hashhish visions.

Herr Nightingale and Satin Woman are the ultimate Mystery Man and Girl. Her love affair with the

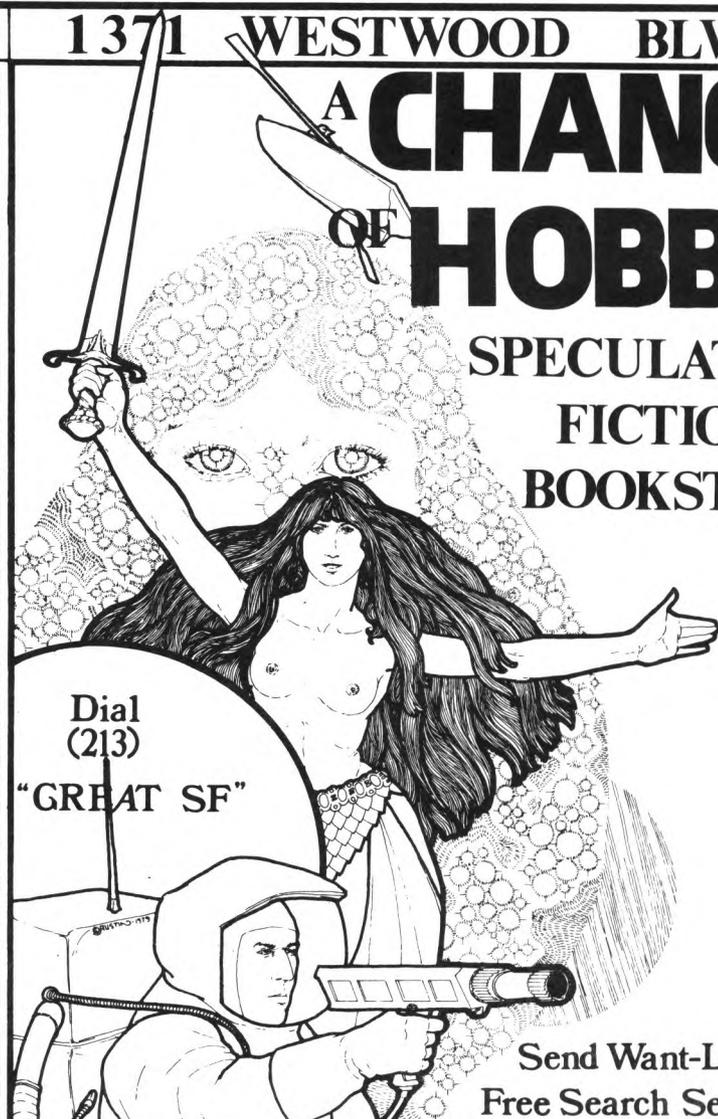
Chinese cricket (who plays the piano, space travels, is a poet) the essence of delicate eroticism: "She mixes a drop of gin with chilled licorice juice and they sit quietly, listening to the play of the fountain...She opens a latticed door, onto a sunken tub filled with rose water...Floating on a rose petal, the cricket keeps her company while she soaks. He floats quite close to her eyes, and his fragile limbs fill her with love and sadness--he's little more than a leaf himself..."

They're a grand crew: Inspector Bagg and the Golden Caterpillar, Rantzau and his Mauser, the Mole, Abdul the Incorruptible, Flo and her ginger baths; they're all in the business (What other?) of smuggling dreams.

-- Fritz Leiber

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OWLSWICK PRESS

Due out very shortly from Owlswick Press is *Teaching Science Fiction: Education for Tomorrow* edited by Jack Williamson. The 261-page volume is a collection of essays on teaching SF and general SF subjects that includes contributions by Ursula K. LeGuin, Isaac Asimov, Leon Stover, Robin Wilson, Thomas D. Clareson, Alexei and Cory Panshin, Susan Wood, Barry B. Longyear, Stanley Schmidt, Kate Wilhelm, Vonda N. McIntyre, James E. Gunn, Neil Barron, and Martin H. Greenberg and Joseph D. Olander, among numerous others. The volume features a preface by Carl Sagan, includes bibliographic material and is indexed. Price is \$15.00.

Scheduled for August availability is another nonfiction volume *The Ragged Edge of Science* by L. Sprague de Camp, illustrated by Don Simpson. The book is a collection of 21 articles by de Camp exploring various pseudo-scientific and mythological subjects ranging from the Kabbalah to King Arthur's round table. Many were originally published in magazines over the past twenty years or so. The 244-page volume includes an index and is priced at \$16.00.

Originally planned for June, but apparently delayed by a few weeks is *Ghosts of the Heavyside Layer and Other Fantasms* by Lord Dunsay, edited by Darrell Schweit-

zer and illustrated by Tim Kirk. Included in the volume are 14 stories, two plays, and 19 essays by Dunsay, never before collected in book form. The stories include "Told Under Oath," "The Field Where the Satyrs Danced," "By Night in the Forest," "A Royal Swan," "How the Lost Causes Were Removed from Valhalla," "Correcting Nature," "Autumn Cricket," "In the Mojave," "The Ghost of the Valley," "The Ghost in the Old Corridor," "Jorkens's Problem," "The Revelation to Mr. Periple," "A Fable for Moderns," and the title story. The 352-page volume features a color dust jacket and 20 interior illustrations by Tim Kirk and is priced at \$20.00.

Still available from Owlswick is a reprint of a 1910 Lord Dunsay collection published last October, *A Dreamer's Tales*. The 160-page book contains 16 stories plus a foreword by Martin Gardner and a color dust jacket, color frontispiece and 16 interior line drawings by Tim Kirk. Price is \$12.75.

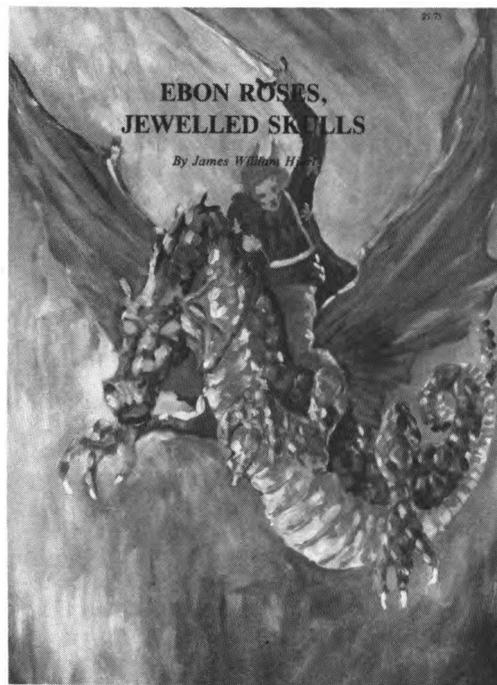
Owlswick Press, Box 8243, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

BLACK LOTUS

Black Lotus recently announced the availability of a new full color, four-plate portfolio by Jeffrey Jones entitled *As A Child*. Limited to 1,500 signed and numbered copies, the portfolio consists of four oil paintings, each measuring 14" by 17", printed on a Strathmore pastel stock. The price is \$20 plus \$2 for shipping. Black Lotus, Drawer J, Colchester, CT 06415.

WEIRDBOOK PRESS

Ebon Roses, Jewelled Skulls has appeared from W. Paul Ganley at Weirdbook Press, a 96-page collection of horror and heroic fantasy stories written and also nicely illustrated by James William Hjort. The ten stories included in the collection are "Dragonride," "Cthulhu's Gold," "Conclusion of the Griffin's



Game," "Dust of the Necromancer," "The Ebon Harp," "Andalous and the Chimera," "The Garden in the Shad-ows," "Dead Yothin's Hand," "Valley of the Dead" and "The Orb of Xom-Orthon." All stories are new.

The 8½" by 11" volume is available in a softcover, perfect bound edition with color covers, limited to 950 copies and priced at \$5.75. A 250-copy hardcover edition is also available, in color dust jacket, at \$16.50. Weirdbook Press, Box 35, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, NY 14226.

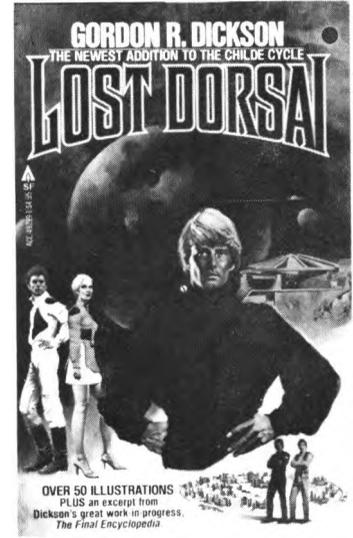
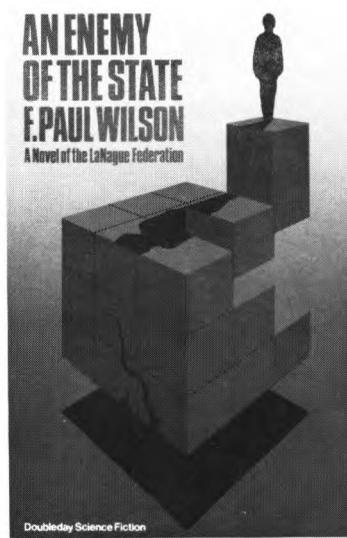
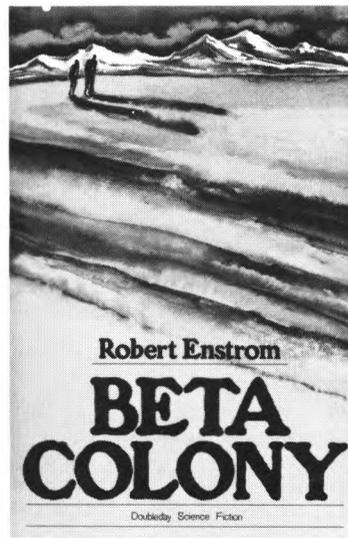
SF BOOK CLUB

The Science Fiction Book Club has offered for its July selections *Changeling* by Roger Zelazny, an Ace trade paperback original for June, and *Time and Tomorrow* by John D. MacDonald. The latter is a special 3-in-1 book club edition that contains three novels: *Wine of the Dreamers*, *The Girl, the Gold Watch & Everything* and *Ballroom of the Skies*. *Changeling* is member priced at \$2.49 (and technically, I suppose, will be the first hardcover edition) and *Time and Tomorrow* is \$4.98.

*

Trade Books

Jacket artists: "The Artificial Kid" by Jim Cherry; "Beta Colony" by Margo Herr; "Enemy of the State" by Roger Zimmerman; "Lost Dorsai" by Enric; "The Visitation" by Manny Paul.



HARPER & ROW

Coming from Harper & Row in July is *Bruce Sterling's* second science fiction novel, *The Artificial Kid*, priced at \$10.95. Set on the utopian planet Reverie, the "kid" of the title is a combat artist who makes video tapes of his legal acts of violence and sells them for a living. When the planet's founder, Moses Moses, returns from an extended sleep, the utopia is thrown into turmoil and the kid, Moses Moses, and "the lovely Saint Anne Twiceborn" flee for their lives into a series of adventures. Harper & Row, 10 East 53rd St., New York, NY 10022.

DOUBLEDAY

Coming from Doubleday in August are two new anthologies/collections. *Universe 10* edited by *Terry Carr* is the tenth (obviously) volume in his series of original anthologies. Among the stories included will be "Saving Face" by *Michael Bishop*, "A Source of Innocent Merriment" by *James Tiptree, Jr.*, and "Bete et Noir" by *Lee Killough*.

In Iron Years is a collection of stories by *Gordon R. Dickson* that includes "Things Which Are Caesar's," "Gifts," "Homecoming," "The Hours Are Good," "A Taste of Tenure," "Zeepsday," and the title story. Both volumes are listed at \$8.95, but may be priced somewhat higher upon publication.

June releases that appeared on schedule (see *FN #25*) are *Beta*

Colony by *Robert Enstrom* (\$8.95) and *An Enemy of the State* by *F. Paul Wilson* (\$10.00). Both are science fiction novels, the former about a convicted criminal who is exiled to Earth (now a barren wilderness), and the latter a new novel of the LaNague Federation (actually a prequel to *Healer* and *Wheels Within Wheels*). Doubleday & Co., Inc., 245 Park Ave., New York, NY 10017.

ACE BOOKS

Ace Books will have two trade paperback releases out in August. *Lost Dorsai* by *Gordon R. Dickson* is his latest addition to the Childe Cycle. Priced at \$4.95, it includes both the title story and a reprint of his earlier Dorsai novelette, "Warriors," along with an afterword by *Sandra Miesel*. Like its predecessor, *The Spirit of Dorsai* (published last September), the book will contain more than 50 line drawings by *Fernando Fernandez*.

The Space Enterprise by *G. Harry Stine* is a nonfiction book further exploring the industrial use of space, priced at \$6.95. The volume is a sequel to *The Third Industrial Revolution* and is illustrated by *Rick Sternbach*.

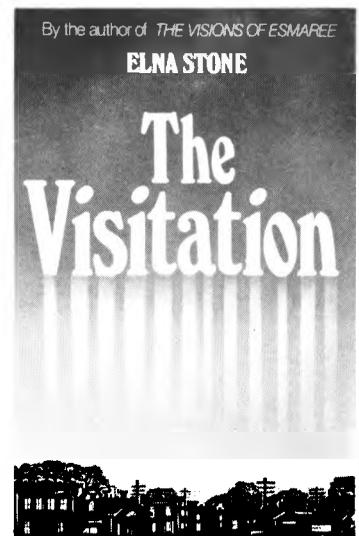
Yet a third trade paperback title for August might be *Science Fiction Studies in Film* by *Frederik Pohl* and *Frederik Pohl IV*, previewed last issue as a July release. According to the latest information in from Ace, this now appears to be scheduled for August.

Take note of a new address for Ace: 51 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10010.

ST. MARTIN'S PRESS

A nonfiction release for June from St. Martin's Press is *Guardians of the Universe* by *Ronald Story*, priced at \$8.95. A sequel of sorts to his earlier *The Space-Gods Revealed*, this is his second volume of critical investigations of the theories (and "proofs") of such "ancient astronauts" promoters as *Erich Von Daniken*, *Robert Charroux*, *Morris Jessup* and *Robert Temple*. The 207-page book includes some 80 drawings, maps and photographs of artifacts.

Scheduled for release in early July (as briefly noted last issue)



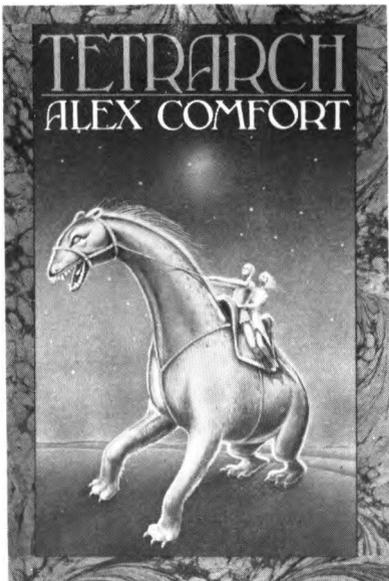
is *The Visitation* by Elna Stone. As if in contrast to the Story volume above, this is a novel about a small southern town in Alabama that is visited by a UFO in 1947. The emphasis, however, is not upon the visitation but on the reactions of individual townspeople--a farmer suddenly can't help telling the truth, a busybody suddenly finds her every suggestion accepted, and a young school teacher gains the power to heal by touch. Price is \$11.95. St. Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010.

SHAMBHALA

Alex Comfort's first fantasy novel, *Tetrarch*, appeared in late May from Shambhala Publications, distributed by Random House and priced at \$12.95. Since this was previewed in *FN* #24 and reviewed last issue by Doug Winter, I won't go into details here. But I thought I'd run the dust jacket illustration here so you'll know what to look for (or avoid, depending upon your tastes...or lack of tastes... or...how did I get on this train of thought?). Shambhala Publications, 1123 Spruce St., Boulder, CO 80302.

THOMAS NELSON

Just out from Thomas Nelson Publishers is a new heroic fantasy novel for young adults entitled *Magician's Bane* by Charles S. Beamer. The novel is about a 13-year-old girl and her 9-year-old brother who are whisked away to a magic filled Land of the King by a magician named Waymond. Their help is needed in rescuing children being held captive by Grandfather Obit, the good magician's bane. On their way, they encounter such strange



(Artist: Fred Marcellino)

(Artist: David K. Stone)



(Artist: Michael Moriarno)



creatures a Murks, Wraths, Slashes and Stenches and they also learn a few things about loyalty, obedience and faith. Price is \$7.95. The volume is illustrated by Don Pallarito. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 407 Seventh Ave. South, Nashville, TN 37203.

ATHENEUM/ARGO BOOKS

Atheneum recently released its spring fantasy and science fiction titles, all of which were previewed in *FN* #23 and #24. Following is a brief recap and update on the young adult (and adult) titles.

Included are five new novels under the Argo Books imprint. *The Nearest Fire* by Cherry Wilder is a sequel to her earlier science fiction novel, *The Luck of Brin's Five*, continuing the story of the Moruia, the people of the planet Torin. Price is \$9.95. *The Castle of Hape* by Shirley Rousseau Murphy (\$8.95) is the third novel in her fantasy series about the Seers of Ere; the first two novels were *The Ring of Fire* and *The Wolf Bell*. *Unicorns in the Rain* by Barbara Cohen (\$8.95)

is a contemporary fantasy retelling in a modern setting of the story of the rains, the ark and how the last unicorns were lost. *Green is for Galanx* by Josephine Rector Stone (\$8.95) is a science fiction novel set in a lost space colony and revolves around a young telepathic child pursued by a killer android whose mind has been patterned after the child's. The last Argo title is another science fiction novel, *Galactic Warlord* by Douglas Hill, about a dying space pilot who seeks vengeance against the Warlord that destroyed his home planet and wants to destroy the entire galaxy. Price is \$7.95.

Four additional titles aimed at ages 8-14 under the Atheneum imprint include *The Hawks of Fellheath* by Paul R. Fisher (\$9.95), a fantasy novel about a group of orphans who set out on a quest to the Other World to find one of their members who died. This is the second volume of a heroic fantasy trilogy that began with *The Ash Staff*. *A Troll in Passing* by Stephen Krensky (\$7.95) is a short fantasy novel about a troll who is different from the rest of the trolls in his colony. *The Giant at the Ford and Other Legends of the Saints* (\$8.95) is a collection of stories about 15 saints, retold by Ursula Sygne and illustrated by Shirley Felts. *The Trouble With Princesses* (\$8.95) is another collection of seven stories about princesses of folk legend, retold by Christie Harris and illustrated by Douglas Tait. Atheneum Publishers, 597 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017.

MAGICIAN'S BANE



(Artist: Don Pallarito)

Book Reviews



(Artist: Richard Powers)

The Number of the Beast by Robert A. Heinlein. Fawcett Columbine, New York, August 1980, 512pp. \$6.95

Disappointing is too simple and, unfortunately, too kind a description for this long-awaited new novel. *The Number of the Beast* is a literary disaster of epic proportions, rendering a premise of moderate potential into one of the most tiresome narratives in recent memory.

The novel begins auspiciously as an apparent tribute to the pulps: characters named Captain Zebediah John Carter and Dejah Thoris Burroughs; a multi-dimensional "time machine" mounted in an aircar, with both controlled via a voice-endowed computer; mysterious baddies from the sixth dimension; off-hand references to pulp magazines, authors and characters. The "time machine" ultimately enables travel to the worlds created by authors of speculative fiction, including Barsoom and Oz; and unnumerable fannish allusions and "in jokes" are forwarded. This may sound like fun, but the resultant storyline is a disconnected series of pointless incidents that lead to an equally pointless denouement. And all hope of enjoyment is banished by the author's uncharacteristically excruciating narrative style. The text is essentially a non-stop four-way conversation that is so blatantly self-conscious and cute that the major characters rapidly become intolerable. As one protagonist ironically proclaims: "I hope that you all are getting both ears and a belly full of what got me disgusted. Yack yack yack, ar-

gue, fuss, and jabber--a cross between a Hyde Park open forum and a high school debating society." If only the author had heeded his character's injunction.

Avoid this book; if you do not, any fond memories of Mr. Heinlein's earlier masterpieces may be irrevocably tainted.

-- Douglas E. Winter

The Wounded Land by Stephen R. Donaldson. Del Rey Books, June 1980, 497pp. \$12.95

One cannot help but wonder what more Stephen Donaldson possibly could do to Thomas Covenant. Having banished Lord Foul from the Land in the closing chapters of *The Power That Preserves*, Covenant was transported back to his world and there, heroically chose to go on living--with himself, his memories, and his leprosy. It was a good ending. I breathed a sigh of relief and wished the poor gent well, hoping that Donaldson would have the good sense not to mar his masterpiece with a sequel. Fortunately, he thought otherwise; as the first of three more volumes in the chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever, *The Wounded Land* is full with promise.

Ten years after the finale of *The Power That Preserves*, Dr. Linden Avery visits Covenant at Haven Farm and finds herself in a waking nightmare--Covenant's ex-wife, Joan, has returned, and she has been possessed by Lord Foul as a means of luring Covenant back to the Land. Her subsequent kidnapping by blood-maddened neighbours (similarly possessed) leads to a sacrificial altar in the woods surrounding Haven Farm, where Covenant offers himself up to be sacrificed in her place. The knife falls, Linden Avery attempts to divert it, the world explodes...and both she and Covenant regain consciousness atop Kevin's Watch in the Land.

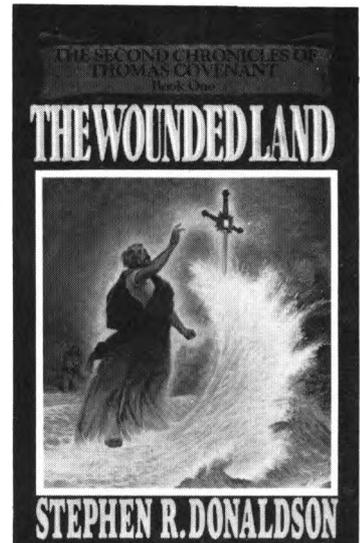
From there, it's all vintage Donaldson. Covenant has lost his sixth sense where the Land is concerned; Linden Avery has acquired it...and though ten years have passed in the 'real' world, more than 3,000 years have gone by in the Land; 3,000 years in which Lord Foul has regained his power, distorted the legendry of the past, and warped the Earth-Law into Sunbane--an erratic cycle of wild growth/death/decay governed by the

colour of the Foul-wrought corona about the sun and upheld by the blood sacrifice of the Clave, the new Lords of the Land. Tormented by doubt, personal guilt, and the despair-inducing effects of Sunbane, Covenant and Linden seek the causes of the Land's 'wrongness,' moving through a superb *Voyage to Arcturus*-like landscape...until Covenant learns the truth of all that has gone before in a climactic wild-magic sequence that'll knock your knickers off.

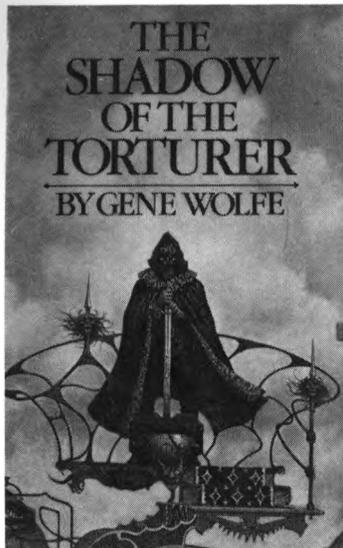
The only marring aspect of *The Wounded Land* is Donaldson's departure from the sledgehammer simplicity of his narrative. For some strange reason, he has employed a variety of obscure adjectives that read as if they had been lifted from Roget in order to sound more literate. Words like hebetude, tabid and *devoir* are unnecessary and at times annoying, even if one knows their meaning without the aid of a dictionary; however, *The Wounded Land* still works because Donaldson cleans it up where it counts and his native understanding of his characters remains constant. Thomas Covenant *is* ten years older and wiser, though hag-ridden by guilt; Linden Avery *is* a thirty year old woman struggling to escape the apathy of her suicidal parents; and Covenant's outrage at the disparity between the Land's noble past and the spiritual poverty of its present is a real and driving force behind their actions.

I'm glad I never offered advice to Stephen Donaldson. *The Wounded Land* is rousingly good...and I'd like to know where I can get me sweaty hands on the last two volumes.

-- Galad Elflandsson



(Artist: Darnell K. Sweet)



(Artist: Don Maithz)

The Shadow of the Torturer by Gene Wolfe. Simon & Schuster, New York, May 1980, 303pp. \$11.95

"Resurrection and Death: It is possible I already had some presentiment of my future. The locked and rusted gate that stood before us, with wisps of river fog threading its spikes like the mountain paths, remains in my mind now as the symbol of my exile."

I open this review with the opening lines of this visionary book by a master craftsman. It recalls to mind some other opening lines: "I Am Born...Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show." Charles Dickens in *David Copperfield*.

I have not been so moved by a piece of prose since my immersion in *Lilith*, *Voyage to Arcturus*, *Jane Eyre*, *Perelandra* and *The Drought* etc., etc. It transports you into the world of the main character and bends you into the headset of the character so thoroughly that you tremble on the brink of becoming the character.

The imagery in this novel belongs to the land of haunted truths and clearly delineated shadows. Gene Wolfe takes an elemental subject, the historic hooded man of the gallows, the torturer who has traversed time wielding justice as a knife and begets a hero who warns us early in the book:

"I caught the name Vodalus in the air, but at that moment it seemed I was the only one who heard it and suddenly I felt Vodalus had been only an eidolon created by my imagination from the fog, and the only man I had slain with his own ox red... It was in this instant of confusion that I realized for the first time that I was in some

degree insane."

But it doesn't matter if our hero is insane--Wolfe succeeds in making us need him, in arousing the desire to know more. *The Shadow of the Torturer* is a superb blend of fantasy, SF and mainstream fiction. Wolfe has begun a series of books about Severian, the Torturer which cannot help but be a work of classic proportions.

The first volume of 'The Book of the New Sun' tells the tale of Severian's forced exile from the ancient Executioner's Guild in a city of vast and mysterious import. It appears to seek 'Terminus Est,' the Line of Division, the term itself the name of Severian's ill-earned executioner's sword. Heady stuff.

I felt after reading this book as if I had bathed in cold water on a hot summer's day, drinking it, too, in quick draughts. I was renewed. And I'm already thirsty for the next draught.

-- Melissa Mia Hall

The Black Flame by Lynn Abbey. Ace Books, New York, May 1980, 376pp. \$6.95 Illustrated by Stephen Fabrian.

In this second volume of the adventures of Rifkind, Asheeran warrior, ritual healer, and daughter of the bright moon, Lynn Abbey takes her from the potential security and love of Chatelgard into the marshes of the Felmargue where she follows the Goddess' path by seeking out The Well of Knowledge and the Black Flame. Her adventures ally her with Jenny, bastard half-sister of Ejord, the man Rifkind thought she might love, and with the raft-people of the Felmargue, who deliberately live a squalid life in expiation of the Hubris of the Fathers, which caused the land to punish them. They await a Leveller--and Rifkind, by killing a supernatural monster, seems to be their savior.

But, as with *Daughter of the Bright Moon*, Rifkind is preeminently the servant of the Goddess, and secondly herself: barbarian, proud, strong, and centered in herself. Her quest is as much a quest for self-knowledge as a quest for the Well, at which she meets and loves Domhnall, the strangely innocent survivor of a cataclysm that reduced all the other Well-sorcerers to evil wraiths. And if she teaches the Felmarquais to defend themselves and helps them withstand supernatural assaults from the witch Krowlowja and the evil god

Hyta-Ysha, she does so as much to protect herself as anything else.

Lynn Abbey has successfully created a character who thinks like a barbarian. Rifkind isn't a 20th century feminist bearing a sword. Nor is her magic the high wizardry and Latin incantations of most fantasy; Abbey's Well and Black Flame begin with fairly traditional sorcerous symbolism and develop from there. Magic in this book, regardless of its user, is dangerous. Even the ritual magic of Rifkind's healing can fail and, to her sorrow, sometimes does. And all the magic's consequences are described unsparingly: *The Black Flame* is both violent and grim. Just as Rifkind is a real barbarian, the blood she sheds is real blood. Lynne Abbey doesn't believe in "prettying up" war.

This intense tough-mindedness makes for difficult reading because it spares the reader nothing. At times I found myself wishing that Rifkind would act like Kurtz' Deryni and do something noble for a change. But there's no point in hoping for that: Rifkind and Abbey's work have their own integrity. My one criticism stems from precisely this integrity. Just as Rifkind does not know her Goddess' purposes, we too are kept in the dark, and it becomes very difficult to read the story of Rifkind's quest as more than a tenuously connected series of human and supernatural encounters. While I like picaresque stories, I suspect that Abbey wants Rifkind to have more purpose to her life than that--and I do, too. I only hope that the next book (and there must be a next book) reveals it.

-- Susan M. Schwartz

A Storm of Wings by M. John Harrison. Doubleday, New York, May 1980, 177pp.

Cellur the Birdmaster was able to produce "a storm of Wings" from his artificial flock in M. John Harrison's 1971 science-fantasy novel, *The Pastel City*. Cellur returns eighty years after the close of the War of the Two Queens, along with much of the cast of the first book in *A Storm of Wings*. In this sequel, that phrase signifies a much more deadly tempest, as giant alien locusts sweep down from the moon to invade the world, threatening the tenacious survival of the Evening Culture.

The upbeat hopes of the epilogue in the first part of the "Viriconium Sequence" are dashed

with the opening of the second. The promise of the Reborn Men has turned hollow. A new threat to the post-holocaust Earth is centered around a bizarre cult, the Sign of the Locust, as mankind wanders aimlessly in the streets of Viriconium, attempting to emulate the planet's new masters. This is the most surreal construct in Harrison's novel.

Tomb the Dwarf, with his exoskeleton, and the others set out to discover the site of the invasion and to defeat it. They are aided by the presence of a long-lost airboat master who dared sail to the moon, many years ago. The coming of the locusts is destroying the physical world. Reality has become fluid, flowing into a new path at every bend in the road. Harrison has mixed the literary conventions of sword and sorcery with a brash stylized approach rooted in new wave fiction. The result is sometimes unsatisfactory. In places, Harrison has a tendency to slip into excessive description that bogs down the storyline. In places, however, *A Storm of Wings* is lyrical, magical, enthralling.

This is a stronger novel than *The Pastel City*, but it would be very difficult to enjoy it without first having sampled the extensive background of the various cultures. The first book is still quite common in used book stores, so this shouldn't be much of a problem for readers new to the sequence.

I'm waiting for the third book. I hope it's even better.

-- Bob Wayne

Freddy's Book by John Gardner. Knopf, New York, April 1980, 246pp. \$10.00 Illustrated by Daniel Biamonte.

This brilliant new novel by best-selling "mainstream" author John Gardner should prove of significant interest to discerning readers of fantasy. Gardner has long worked with fantasy themes, as evidenced by his mythological retellings of *Grendel* and *Jason and Medea*; yet his fiction defies genre typing, and *Freddy's Book* is not an exception.

The novel is structured as a tale within a tale. An introductory Gothic piece describes the means by which its narrator obtained the manuscript of "Freddy's Book" (which comprises the last two-thirds of the novel), and develops several important themes and characterizations that are reechoed in the manuscript. "Freddy's Book" presents

the story of one Lars-Goren, a sixteenth century Swedish knight whose destiny is to kill the Devil. A truly heroic figure in the tradition of Scandinavian sagas, Lars-Goren is a giant, "eight feet high with his shoes off, and...three feet wide at the shoulders;" and he is afraid of nothing in the world--except the Devil.

Because Lars-Goren's place and time is a critical watershed in history, the Devil is a visible, active force, counselling kings, would-be kings, bishops and pawns. Lars-Goren witnesses first-hand Satan's work, as both knight and Devil assist Gustav Vasa's rise to the throne of Sweden. And although Satan's work is never done, neither is that of Lars-Goren, whose fear and self-doubt must be reconciled with his recognition of the profoundly inevitable confrontation with the Devil. With the assistance of a similarly vexed bishop, Lars-Goren pursues the Devil to the mysteries of Lapland for the climactic battle.

Gardner has recently come under fire from Ursula LeGuin for failure to subscribe to her "Elfland to Poughkeepsie" precepts: his *On Moral Fiction* proposed that "truth of place" is less necessary in fabulous than realistic art, while LeGuin considers accuracy and exactness intrinsic to effective works of fantasy. Gardner's view is attributable to an overriding interest in fantasy that bears relevance to its audience and its times: "The writer who creates, who does not merely spin his wheels producing nothing, understands where he is, where the world is ... (and) need not therefore limit himself to realism. Writers of fantasy, science fiction or retold-myths ... have often given expression to the deepest concerns of their time ... Fantasy writing, of course, nearly always comments on the time and place that produced it, from *The Arabian Nights* to *Gulliver's Travels* to the best of contemporary fantasy." The quandary addressed by these differing perspectives is how to describe the indefinable point(s) at which fantasy and realism diverge.

Freddy's Book fulfills both authors' demands of effective fantasy and has received LeGuin's lavish praise. Highly original, thought-provoking and consistently entertaining, it is unequivocally recommended.

-- Douglas E. Winter

Golem 100 by Alfred Bester. Simon and Schuster, New York, April 1980,

384pp. \$11.95

I am troubled by this new novel from the well-respected Mr. Bester. I was also revolted by it, not to mention disappointed. Maybe I was expecting too much from the man who gave us *The Stars My Destination*, *The Demolished Man*, and the lesser known but quite excellent story, "Hell is Forever."

Golem 100 fails because of a story I cannot accept, a cast of characters that are (for the most part) unbelievable, and an overt cuteness that dissolves into a noxious, nightmarish quality unrelieved by grace or even surreal completeness.

I was also offended by the sexist handling of his main female character, a sexism which is revealed in a subversive manner. He tricks us into accepting an emancipated, powerful woman and then turns her into a monster at the end of the book.

This book frightened me because of its playful attitude toward evil. Bester summons demons and then does nothing with them. He gives us visions of hooded darkness with ink blot eyes and then allows them to escape without explaining why they are there. Delight in unformed demons is dangerous; he only escapes that because, for the most part, *Golem 100* is a tasteless mixture of glib dialogue and thin characterization.

Story line: The far future in a decadent America (we're all familiar with that). A group of women gather and play at Satanic rituals and in the process, create a new demon--Golem 100, our collective id. This monster kills at will with a violence objectively depicted. "Three people join forces to track down the monster" reads the dust jacket copy. They include the mistreated woman, Gretchen Nunn, an abnormally gifted gumshoe/adventurer; her ill-fated chemist lover, Blaise Shima (who never escapes a flat, one-dimensional treatment except in the last few pages when he is ruthlessly destroyed), and an odd police inspector called Subador Ind'dni, the most successful character in the entire book.

Enroute to the solution or unveiling of the unpredictable demon, the reader is also treated to a display of graphics which only alleviates momentarily a book that would be almost forgettable if it hadn't been done by a man we expect so much of.

I don't believe in giving away the "ultimate truth" supposedly revealed in a work of literature.

(Continued on page 30, Col. 3.)

WARREN'S NEWS & REVIEWS

film news by Bill Warren

This month, I'll skip the news --there'll be lots of it next month. Instead, because of their importance, I'll devote this column to what are probably the two most significant fantasy films of the year --*The Empire Strikes Back* and *The Shining*. Warning to those who haven't seen them: *I give away endings.*

Lucasfilm Strikes Back

The question most people have about *The Empire Strikes Back* is if this sequel is as good as *Star Wars*. My answer: no, not quite. *Empire* is a very good, well-paced and interesting movie, and broadens the range of approach available to the *Star Wars* storyline, but it lacks the magic that infused the first of this planned series of nine films. (*Star Wars* itself is the fourth in the series.)

A reason the first film is better is that George Lucas, in almost every way, is a better director than Irvin Kershner, who directed *Empire*. Lucas is better at pacing, at overall sense of scale, at hints of wonder and beauty. Nowhere in *Empire* is there something as enchanting as the cantina sequence in *Star Wars*, nor is there a touch of beauty as in the double sunset in the first movie. Lucas also has a better grasp on the entire sweep and magic of his awesome epic.

The performances in *The Empire Strikes Back* are, thanks to Kershner (probably), generally on a higher level than in the first film. Carrie Fisher in particular is much improved, and seems less childish and snappy. Harrison Ford isn't so much better, as that he looks like he *wants* to be in the movie. I thought Mark Hamill was very good in *Star Wars*, and he continues the same level here, enriching the character.

However, Kershner is deficient in his handling of the non-human characters, not helped in this regard by the otherwise good script by Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan. In the first movie, C-3PO (Anthony Daniels) was an amusing, even endearing, fuss-budget, but in *Empire*, he has been reduced to an obnoxious buttinsky, far more



Lando Calrissian (Billy Dee Williams) escorts Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher), Chewbacca (Peter Mayhew), and Han Solo (Harrison Ford) through the corridors of Cloud City.

trouble than he's worth. R2-D2 has less to do in *Empire*, and has little interaction with his robot pal. Chewbacca the Wookiee has more to do in *Empire*, but his personality is far less vivid and appealing. There's nothing he does in the new movie that compares favorably with the scene in *Star Wars* in which Chewie gronks at the scuttling toaster. (After he scared it off,



Yoda, the Jedi Master, who teaches Luke Skywalker the ways of the Force in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

he grinned and shrugged.) It's as if Kershner forgot these *are* characters; he treats them like animated props.

Another problem with *Empire* is that the ending is entirely too downbeat. Luke has screwed up royally--ignored the advice of Yoda and Ben Kenobi, failed to help his friends, got his hand lopped off, and lost the Princess to Han Solo. He left the bog planet to try to rescue his friends, but helps only in that he delivers R2-D2 who fixes the warp drive system aboard the Falcon. I understand the commercial and dramatic reasons in having a cliffhanger ending, but this is so bleak that it *may* have the reverse effect--people may be reluctant to see *Revenge of the Jedi* in hope of avoiding a sad ending.

There are two new characters in *Empire*. One, Yoda, is a triumph dramatically and technically. The other, Lando Calrissian, is flat and uninteresting. In this case, the failing is not due to the script or the direction, but because Billy Dee Williams, Lando, is lacking in personal charm. Whatever the real reason for casting a black actor as Lando, producer Gary Kurtz and Lucas could have found a more appealing performer. Rupert Crosse, Sidney Poitier, Glyn Turman, James Earl Jones (Darth Vader's voice) and Harry Belafonte are not only personally more appealing than Williams, but better actors. The role of Lando as written called for someone with the flair and dash of Clark Gable; the main resemblance Williams has to Gable is a pencil-thin mustache. It's not that he's bad; he's just not a swashbuckler, and that's what the role demands.

I don't think I've seen more than five movies about which I have no complaints, no matter how much I otherwise like the film. I am in love with what George Lucas is trying to do in the *Star Wars* saga, and I want each film to be superb. *The Empire Strikes Back* is "merely" very good.

The pacing is dizzyingly rapid, and for those who haven't seen the first picture, things might be confusing. Events begin at a peak of action, and shortly thereafter the Empire does indeed strike back,

blasting the surface of the snow world Hoth as the embattled Rebel warriors scramble to defend themselves. The battle is exciting, especially with the introduction of the cumbersome but awesome Walkers, huge striding war machines manned by Empire soldiers. They seem remarkably vulnerable, but are impressive.

The Walkers and the Tauntauns are done in stop-motion animation by Jon Berg and Phil Tippet. The Tauntauns are extremely life-like and amusing; and the inclusion of a two-legged Walker tip-toeing around in the background is also witty and fun. Most viewers will recognize the Tauntauns as stop-motion--there's a look to that effect that is unavoidable. But many may assume the Walkers are real machines. They certainly seem gigantic and heavy, the latter a most difficult effect to achieve in stop-motion.

Luke escapes from Hoth and, acting on Ben Kenobi's instructions, heads for the bog planet of Dagobah, in search of the Jedi master, Yoda. Yoda is a Muppet. The people at Lucasfilm are apparently under firm orders never to refer to the character by that term, but by God that's what he is. The voice and manipulator of Miss Piggy and Fozzie Bear, Frank Oz, also manipulates and vocalizes Yoda, and his is an Oscar-worthy performance.

"Muppetry" is a term for a classical mode of puppetry; the famous Punch and Judy shows are done more or less this same way: the hands of the puppet are manipulated by rods from beneath, and the head and face by a human hand. (Yoda is not always a Muppet, as there was a radio-controlled model for some shots, and in others, several more than the usual two or three people were required to run him. But in his most effective scenes, he's a Muppet.)

The difference between Yoda and Kermit is in Yoda's incredibly expressive face. The model was designed and apparently constructed by Stuart Freeborn, one of the great makeup artists (he did the apes in *2001*, for instance); I'm told that he modeled Yoda after his own face, but the result eerily resembles Arthur O'Connell. The interior of Yoda's head is a maze of wires and gadgetry, but the result is wizardly. He is also full of wisdom and charm. The franchisers of *Star Wars* dolls will be able to sell as many Yoda stuffies as they can make.

His voice, which sounds like Miss Piggy doing FuManchu, is also brilliant. It sounds ancient, wise and crabby. The philosophy of



Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) and Darth Vader (David Prowse) battle with lightsabers in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Jedi-ism seems to be derived from samurai teachings and Zen. It's metaphysical and pompous, but has an air of genuine importance and wisdom to it. The children who will love this film could do worse than listen carefully to what he has to say.

Meanwhile back at the cloud city, which is the way the film is energetically constructed, Han Solo and Leia have been tossed into the clutches of Darth Vader, who tortures Han in hope of luring Luke Skywalker. This works, and finally Darth Vader and Luke square off against each other in a stunningly photographed but somewhat weakly choreographed light-sabre duel through and over some of the most impressive sets in the movie. The big surprise--that Darth Vader is Luke's father--fittingly climaxes the fight, which is topped by Luke's apparently suicidal plunge into a handy abyss.

The special effects in *Empire* were under the direction of Brian Johnson and Richard Edlund, and are much more technically accomplished than those in *Star Wars*. They are eye-poppingly impressive at times, such as in the pursuit of the Millennium Falcon, and deserve the cheers they get from audiences. But something about them is less exciting than similar sequences in *Star Wars*, partly because of familiarity, but also because they seem poorly lit (as if Johnson and Edlund have forgotten that light in space near a sun is *more* intense than on a planet) and there's less conflict. The overall look of *Empire* is darker than in *Star Wars*, however, and the exciting if op-

pressive photography by Peter Suschitzky, a fine cameraman, is in keeping with the grim storyline of *Empire*.

The production design by Norman Reynolds is also interesting and imaginative. The cloud city over Bespin resembles art nouveau comic strips of the 1930s, and though the city seems a little cramped, it's a fine piece of work. The music by John Williams is even better than his score for *Star Wars*. That man always seems to top himself.

In *2001*, Stanley Kubrick tried to create a myth for the space age, and probably did so. Black slabs floating in space will probably always be in the minds of space travelers. But George Lucas is after something even larger than a one-element myth. In his effort at discovering the basis of the appeal of Saturday afternoon serials and other thrilling but juvenile entertainment that had entranced him as a kid, and in his hope of recreating that excitement for modern children, he was gradually led down the byways of the source of the myths of the ages. (I'm told that in particular he consulted *Hero With a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell.) Lucas realized that serials had tapped this timeless legend of a hero who rises from obscurity to tragic glory, and has decided to recreate that myth on an astoundingly epic scale for the 20th Century.

In the past, grand myths and legends were created by storytellers working over generations. Robin Hood, King Arthur, Gilgamesh, Siegfried, even Jesus of Nazareth,



Left: Another scene from the climactic lightsaber duel between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader. Right: Rebel soldiers prepare to fire the dish laser gun on the ice planet Hoth.



didn't spring full-blown from the mind of one person, and often had their roots in reality. Lucas is trying to create a legend of similarly timeless proportions and weight, at the same time creating a series of entertaining movies. This is an amazing thing for a soft-spoken and shy young man to do. But on the basis of the broadening story of *Star Wars* as presented in *The Empire Strikes Back*, he may be able to do it. George Lucas may be the most ambitious storyteller in the history of the entire world, and I wish him the greatest possible good luck in the twenty years of *Star Wars* films that are yet to come.

The Shining

Stanley Kubrick is one of the world's great filmmakers, and as far as I am concerned, *2001* is the best movie I've seen. Kubrick's a sardonic man, and tends to make cold movies apparently devoid of emotion. I was afraid that his production of Stephen King's novel *The Shining* could be the most terrifying horror movie of all time, because Kubrick would show his audiences no mercy.

That scary it isn't, and may not frighten some at all. I found it brilliantly frightening and tense, and Jack Nicholson gives one of the best performances I've seen. He's totally immersed in the role of a frightened man going completely insane, and Kubrick has brought out the very best in a fine actor. (At great pains to both of them.)

When horror movies and plans were first produced, the emphasis was on dangerous people and what they might do. Most of the great silent horror movies are about lunatics, not about creatures of the undead. (*Nosferatu* is an exception.) Eventually, however, this idea slipped away to be replaced by

scary things rather than scary people. The climax of this trend is probably *The Exorcist*, a picture that is without a human element.

In *The Shining*, Kubrick puts horror movies back to square one. In King's novel, there were strong fantasy elements. The title itself refers to a complex set of ESP powers possessed by the little boy Danny (Danny Lloyd in the film) and Dick Halloran (Scatman Crothers), a friendly black chef who works at the Overlook Hotel. The hotel seems possessed by evil, and in the novel's confusing ending (until *The Dead Zone*, King had no idea how to end his novels), the evil and the insane husband seemed to perish separately.

In the movie, the fantasy elements have been diminished by Kubrick and his co-writer, Diane Johnson. Danny's ESP is essentially reduced to his talking to his "imaginary playmate" Tony (actually his repressed precognitive, telepathic self), and has little plot function in the film except to provide a few warnings. Danny is terrified of the Overlook and his fantasies provide some of the chilling moments in the movie, including some involving twin girls killed by their father ten years before, when he was the winter caretaker at the hotel.

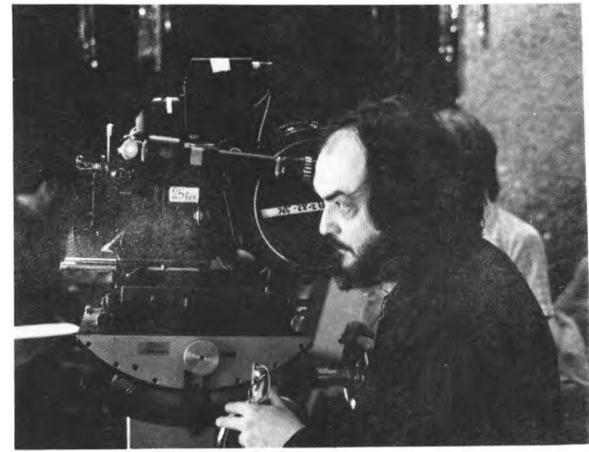
Kubrick and Johnson have placed the film's emphasis on the disintegration of Jack Torrance's mind. In his very first scene, Torrance (Nicholson) is already clearly a disturbed and frightened man, clutching at his sanity and this (perhaps last) job offer. One seems to represent the other. When the unctuous Ullman (Barry Nelson), a character very much like Heywood Floyd in *2001* in his organization-man bland cheerfulness, tells Jack about the previous caretaker, Jack grins too easily and says it won't happen to him.

Which brings up another point: never underestimate Stanley Kubrick's proficiency as an intellectual wise-ass. *All* of his films are laden with ironic humor; *The Shining* is certainly no exception. Near the climax, as Jack hacks his way into the room where his utterly terrified wife Wendy (Shelley Duvall) is cowering, he pokes his face into the crack and cries, "Heeeeere's Johnny!" His face is that of a lunatic clown.

Jack Torrance is a failed teacher and would-be writer who accepts a job as winter caretaker at the Overlook Hotel in the Colorado mountains. For six months, he, Wendy and Danny will be the only people at the hotel. Partly because of his own paranoia and partly because of the supernatural evil infesting the hotel, Jack slowly begins to go mad. He's quite aware of this, and for a while tries to fight it, but finally, gratefully gives in to the seductive powers of the hotel and his own mind. And tries to kill his wife and son.

In some hands, that story could be awful; Kubrick's handling makes it potent. It's slow getting underway, as if Kubrick wants to ease the audiences gradually into the maelstrom of horror he has waiting for them. More than most major directors, Stanley Kubrick not only respects the intelligence of his audience, he *demand*s that intelligence of them. Sometimes, as with *Barry Lyndon*, this may be asking too much; there are those who are going to miss (and have missed) what's really going on in *The Shining*.

The picture is an elegant, graceful and hypnotic production, which are not words ordinarily applied to horror films. Hotels are essentially huge volumes of empty space enclosed by high walls, and Kubrick utilizes this fact to the



Left: A madman as only Jack Nicholson can portray him. Right: Producer/director Stanley Kubrick behind the camera in a scene from Stephen King's *The Shining*.

fullest. There are innumerable tracking shots, as Danny rides his tricycle through the hotel walls, as Jack lurches about mumbling to himself, as Wendy scampers in terror. This hotel set is gigantic and very impressive, but it's Kubrick's ability that makes it seem haunted by evil, sardonic ghosts.

The picture is not all it could have been. A terrifying chase through a snowy hedge maze, with Jack lurching after Danny, builds to a climax of horror that never comes. The tension built up, and there's a lot of it, is not resolved. A final, horrifying shot of Nicholson's frozen corpse is intended as the final crash of horror, but it simply doesn't work.

The movie is probably too long by perhaps twenty minutes, and Jack's conversation with the ghost of the previous caretaker goes on too long. A key sequence in the novel--the woman in the bath--would seem to have been perfectly designed for filming, but Kubrick alters the intent and kills the horror completely. (It's the last time Jack's sanity tries to assert itself; the hotel has become literally seductive, but Jack's tiny spark of sanity makes him see the sexual vision as one of suppurating horror. But the scene fails to scare.)

If the film is not a masterpiece--and I don't think it is--it is still one of the most brilliantly conceived and intelligently executed horror films ever made. There certainly are some sequences of horror, including a couple of inexplicable rotting corpses Wendy sees (Duvall is excellent throughout, but overshadowed by Kubrick and Nicholson), and the shots of the twins are disturbing. The most shocking single scene is when Wendy discovers that Jack's painfully wrought manuscript consists of the phrase, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," repeated through-

out a ream of paper. This proves his mind had snapped soon after his arrival at the Overlook.

But the majority of the terror of *The Shining*, which is so tense near the end that my legs were shaking as I stood when the lights came up, derives from the true basis of all horror: the face of a madman. Kubrick and Nicholson have given other horror films a challenge like none other since *Psycho*--which was also about a madman. Audiences will not respond to *The Shining* as they did to that film, and Kubrick's big gamble may prove to be a financial failure. *Psycho* had the advantage of being a mystery, though the mystery wasn't what we thought it was at the beginning. The final shot in the film seems to owe something to Roman Polanski's fascinating *Repulsion*. But the film is all Kubrick and all slavering, grinning Nicholson--who is scary and funny at the same time, for the same reasons, a great, great idea. (The last time I recall that being done was in Rouben Mamoulian's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the one with Frederic March's delightful performance.)

But not everyone thinks *The Shining* is great. Michael Sragow, in the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, gave the film an absolutely scathing review, in which he complained about obscurities that seemed like crystal clarity to me. Arthur Knight was disturbed by shifts in time--which were simply the first hints that Jack Torrance is being absorbed into the evil past of the hotel. (The last shot proves it happened.)

Sragow's complaint included a query: why does a man who killed himself in 1970 appear in the garb of a butler at a 1921 4th of July party? The character says it him-

self--he has *always* been at the hotel and so, he tells Jack, has Torrance, which is the moment in which Torrance is doomed.

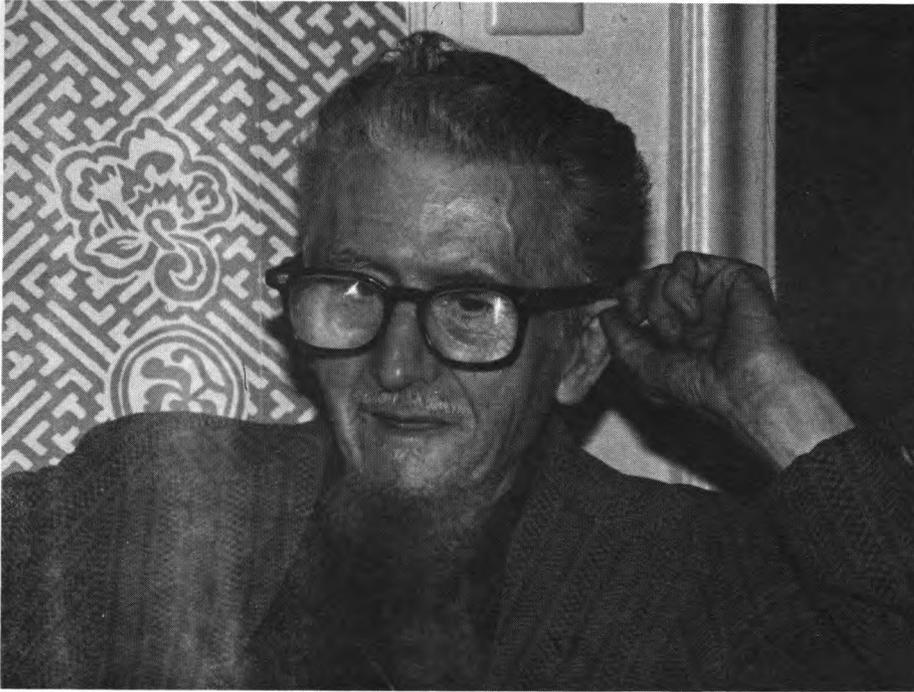
The complaints of the critics --and only Jack Kroll in *Newsweek* seems to have liked it as much as I did--sound a great deal like those made about *2001*, when people found themselves helpless in the face of a new approach to telling stories. But that movie has proved to be the most influential motion picture since *Citizen Kane*. That's not likely to happen with *The Shining*--Kubrick doesn't seem as committed to it--but it is an intelligent, richly-conceived and hypnotic horror. Stanley Kubrick has reshaped another genre.

-- Bill Warren

Bill Warren has written for a number of professional and semi-professional film journals, has worked on Forrest J. Ackerman's "Famous Monsters of Filmland," and was Walt Lee's principal assistant on his "Reference Guide to Fantastic Films." He is occasionally consulted by studios on SF and horror films and has been a frequent guest on KFFK's "Hour 25" radio show ("which is the most entertaining work I've ever had").

In addition to branching out into fiction, he is currently a freelance film researcher and reviewer. At this writing, he is midway through a four-year research project on behalf of the Hollywood Film Archive.

Educated at the University of Oregon and holding a MS in Library Science from UCLA ("though I lasted only one year as an actual librarian"), he and his wife Beverly live in Los Angeles.



(Photo: Jeffrey Elliot)

"The Dark Fantastic"

Frank Belknap Long, one of America's foremost writers of fantasy and science fiction, is the author of more than 300 short stories and two dozen books. In the latter category, he has written such well-known works as *Mars is My Destination*, *The Martian Visitors*, *Space Station #1* (which appeared just as the first earth satellite was launched), *It Was the Day of the Robot*, *So Dark A Heritage*, *Lest Earth Be Conquered*, *Journey Into Darkness*, *Survival World*, and a number of story collections, the most well-known being *The Hounds of Tindalos*.

More than 50 of his short stories have appeared in anthologies edited by Alfred Hitchcock, August Derleth, Groff Conklin, Donald Wollheim, Dashiell Hammett, Sam Moskowitz, Brian Aldiss, Andre Norton, Robert Silverberg, Les Daniels, and many others. His "Guest in the House" has appeared on CBS television, while "A Visitor from Egypt" and several other stories have been dramatized in radio. His

work has been widely reprinted throughout the world.

Long is the recipient of numerous honors, among them the First Fandom Hall of Fame Award from the 35th World Science Fiction Convention in 1977, Life Achievement Award at the 4th World Fantasy Convention in 1978, and Guest of Honor with Stephen King at the 5th World Fantasy Convention in 1979.

A prolific talent, Long's more recent hardcover works include *Rim of the Unknown*, *The Early Long*, *H. P. Lovecraft: Dreamer on the Night Side*, *In Mayan Splendor* (poetry), and *Night Fear*. The latter is an omnibus paperback volume, about which science fiction writer Richard Lupoff has said: "What's astounding about Frank Belknap Long's fiction is its sheer versatility. The 'Horror from the Hills' is a supreme achievement of Lovecraftian terror, executed with a twinkle in the eye and just a suggestion of tongue in cheek. The other stories in this book cover an astounding range of science fiction, fantasy

and horror, culled from more than fifty years of work."

As most fantasy and science fiction fans know, Long was a close personal friend of the late H. P. Lovecraft and contributed to the now famous *Cthulhu Mythos*. Moreover, Long remains an extremely active writer, and is currently much in demand as a lecturer, in part because of the current intense interest in Lovecraft. Long exchanged more than a thousand letters with Lovecraft over a period of fifteen years, and the Long family apartment was always Lovecraft's residence and headquarters during his periodic trips from Providence to New York. Long's widely read *H. P. Lovecraft: Dreamer on the Night Side* contains an abundance of Lovecraft association material not to be found elsewhere.

Elliot: In a recent book, you wrote that you seem to have had a bent for the weird and supernatural as far back as you could remember. What accounts for your childhood fascination with such things?

Long: I'm far from absolutely sure myself what first set my footsteps on that particular path. My ancestral heritage, several of the events and other environmental circumstances of my childhood, and my pre-adolescent reading all played a role, as they do with virtually all writers.

Elliot: Your early work is rich in variety--from psychological realism to mythic flights of fancy, from scientific analyses to elves and elementals. As a young reader, did you have a preference for one genre as opposed to another?

Long: I've always been imaginatively stimulated by a dozen different categories of writing. Perhaps I'm too versatile in my emotional, aesthetic and intellectual interests, but we are what we are, as Andre Gide once pointed out, and there's nothing one can do about it. What moves me most, perhaps, is "pure fantasy"--the realms of enchantment one finds in Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, in Dunsany's *Idle Days on the Yann*, in Poe's "City in the Sea,"

in Eddison's truly great novel, *The Worm Ouroboros*. But I like grim, starkly realistic stories also, and read a great many contemporary American and English novels in that category.

Elliot: Among the earliest influences on your work, that of Verne, Wells, Kipling, Conrad and Poe stand out most vividly. How did each of these writers influence your attitude and approach toward fantasy and science fiction?

Long: Poe, Verne and Wells were indeed among the writers who influenced me most in the science fiction and horror story genres in my early youth, several years before I began to correspond with Lovecraft. Then, for a few years, the Lovecraftian influence became pronounced also. As for Kipling, Conrad and several other writers, the influence was of a different nature. I was just as much interested in sea stories, and adventure stories in general.

Elliot: How did you break in to the fantasy field? What was the "secret" of cracking the pulp market? What role did *Weird Tales* play in launching your career?

Long: I did not actually "crack the pulp market" in the sense that you imply. The sale of my first supernatural horror story to *Weird Tales* in 1924 would not have taken place if Lovecraft had not sold five of his own stories to Edwin Baird, the magazine's first editor, two years previously and praised my work so highly (to both Baird and the publisher, J. C. Henneberger), that an acceptance followed as a matter of course. For two or three years after that, I wrote only for *Weird Tales*. Then I sold two stories to the Gernsback group. All this was far back in the middle 1920s.

Elliot: Can you describe the impact of Lovecraft on your career? How instrumental was he as a motivating force?

Long: In my introduction to *Color Out of Space and Other Stories*, I answer that query this way: "The extent of my own indebtedness to H. P. Lovecraft can only be measured by one of those spectral yardsticks that seem to bear little relationship to any particular time or place. I only know that if I had never met and talked with him at length, exchanged many letters with him and read all of his early stories, my bent for the fantastic and

macabre in literature--and for science fiction as well--would have been considerably less pronounced. I might have written a few short stories in the genre, but never several hundred across the years, along with seven hardback novels, and some twenty-five paperback books. And I'm equally sure that in the short story field my hardback, major publisher anthology inclusions would not have numbered forty-two, from *Tales of the Undead* to *Famous Monster Stories* and *Davy Jones Haunted Locker*. It is a debt no writer could ever hope to repay."

Elliot: To what extent are Lovecraft's interests and concerns reflected in your own writing?

Long: I differed from Lovecraft profoundly in many aspects of my life and thought. I have always been far less capable of summoning philosophic detachment to my aid in moments of emotional strain. Many of his views I shared *only in part*, and two or three of them were, I felt, tragically mistaken and always told him so. Providence (R.I.), at the turn of the century, was an extremely provincial city and Lovecraft, like everyone else, was profoundly influenced by the social mores of his childhood. Those, in general, were of an ultra-conservative nature, although they would not have been viewed in that light by the overwhelming majority of his neighbors, least of all by his family. He changed tremendously across the years, becoming increasingly liberal-minded and in the last few years had a great admiration for Roosevelt and The New Deal. His most outstanding trait was generosity of spirit. He was a man of great kindness. Calculated self-seeking, and a concern for the so-called "main chance" were alien to his nature.

Elliot: Was Lovecraft instrumental in guiding the direction of your writing, either in terms of style or content?

Long: There were passages in most of my early stories that can *only* be thought of as Lovecraftian. However, he never revised my stories, or suggested that I make changes in them. But the tremendous power of the Lovecraftian *Mythos*--his "cosmicism"--could hardly have failed to influence a considerably younger writer who shared his conviction that supernatural horror story writing, in its preoccupation with the strange and the marvelous, was an important branch of literature.

Elliot: Essentially, you're a self-taught writer--that is, very little of what you know about writing was learned in school. Has this approach served you well? Has it brought with it disadvantages as well as advantages?

Long: I've always thought of myself as not so much a self-taught writer as a literature-influenced writer. I've always felt that the best way to become a writer is to read as many of the great books in the field of one's choice--and, of course, in other fields as well--as a well-stocked library can provide in the course of the years. I'm afraid I take a rather dim view of college writing courses in general, unquestionably excellent as a few of them are. Without extensive reading there is no way a writer can acquire a style of his own that is worth a British half-pence. Too much concern with techniques and exactly how a story *should be written* can drop an original writer to his knees, and even cripple him permanently. And for a writer with a naturalistic bent, it is ten times more valuable than anything the academic world can offer. I am not such a writer, except perhaps at sporadic intervals, and in the fantasy realm the sources I draw upon are largely--perhaps too largely--literary.

Elliot: In the process of mastering technique by reading the works of great writers ("osmosis," you call it), what elements concerned you the most? What did you learn from studying other writer's techniques?

Long: Style was always of great importance to me, but not necessarily to the entire exclusion of other equally important aspects of a story. There are a few writers whose style is atrocious, but who possess so miraculous a story-telling gift that you forgive them every shortcoming in that area.

Elliot: What was the state of the pulp market at the time you began writing? How important was versatility when it came to surviving in this field? Did the pulp editors demand great variety in terms of stories?

Long: The magazines I wrote for did not "demand" variety. The variety you mention stemmed largely from the fact that I wrote for a wide range of magazines in the field, and each had *its own* editorial policy, and differed widely in the quality of its contents. As-

tounding Science Fiction (later, of course, *Analog*) under John Campbell's editorship towered above the other pulps in the genre. A great many research scientists on the Oak Ridge level read *Astounding*; and *Unknown Worlds* and earlier *Weird Tales* had a several-level readership. *Weird Tales* featured writers of the stature of Lovecraft, Robert Bloch, Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth, Ray Bradbury, etc. Isaac Asimov, Arthur Clarke, Sprague de Camp, James Blish, Fredric Brown and others all wrote for one or more of the science fiction and fantasy pulps. And since, at the time, I contributed stories to more than thirty science fiction and fantasy pulps, the variation in theme you mention is not in the least surprising--all apart from the fact that I have always been a multiple-theme writer. I've dwelt at length on all of this, because clarification regarding the early and middle-period pulps in relation to the *quality of their content*, is of the *utmost importance*. None of these magazines, being "pulp," could avoid the publication of much trash. But a great many of the stories in *the best of them* were of distinctly literary quality. There was even considerable so-called "new wave" writing, as far back as forty years ago. As early as 1950, many of the stories appearing in *Astounding* and *Galaxy* were referred to as "the new science fiction." Not too many present-day readers are aware of this, particularly the under-thirty age group.

Elliot: What explains the fact that you are best-known and, for that matter, remembered for your early stories in *Weird Tales*, as opposed to your later work?

Long: I question this to some extent. Darrell Schweitzer's interview in *Nyctalops*, reprinted later in *Science Fiction Voices*, is misleading, I feel, in that respect and I wrote him a long, argumentative letter about it some eighteen months ago. When he brought the matter up during the interview I was very tired, at the termination of an event-filled day of convention activities, and I did not dwell on it. Actually, I am known in the field, particularly in the fantasy field, much more--or at the very least, as much--for the *entire body of my writing* across the years. I have tested this out, time and time again, in science fiction and fantasy conventions--conversationally, with a great many fans and writers who have asked me to autograph a dozen or more *different*

books. Not more than a third of them, at most, have discussed the early *Weird Tales* stories. Incidentally, even in *The Hounds of Tindalos* collection, the strongest stories are from *Unknown Worlds*.

Elliot: What explains your tremendous popularity in the pulp era? What was it about your work that made it so distinctive?

Long: My stories were never "tremendously" popular in the pulp era. In the last ten years or so--particularly in the last five years--my work in general has been more extensively reprinted, and discussed than at *any time* in the past. From 1930 to 1950 or so, I was perhaps one of the ten or twelve best-known writers in the pulp era science fiction and fantasy fields. But "tremendous popularity" is spreading it on a little too thick! H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, even Robert E. Howard were less popular with the readers of *Weird Tales* (great as their popularity was, as such yardsticks go), than Seabury Quinn, a distinctly "pulpish" writer, for the most part--to cite just one of many examples.

Elliot: What was the state of fandom, if there was such a thing, at the time you broke into the field?

Long: When I first began to write for *Weird Tales*, there was no "world of fandom" at all as that term is used today. Young readers exchanged views by letter in the magazine's "Eyrie" and older, more sophisticated readers (and the magazine had more than just one level of readership) sometimes wrote back and forth. I did not get to meet a single youthful reader. There were no "fanzines," apart from *Amateur Journalism*, and the numerous A. J. publications scattered across the country, and *Amateur Journalism* was in a different domain, almost entirely.

Elliot: In the past, you've written extensively about August Derleth, to wit that "...if his shining gifts had flowed in other directions my personal loss would have been great..." In what ways would your career have been different without Derleth?

Long: Derleth exercised no influence at all on my work in a purely literary sense. He either liked my early and middle-period stories, or told me, quite frankly in a paragraph or two, that he didn't care for some of them. He never criticized them in detail. The ones he

liked he praised *very highly*--also in a paragraph or two. I am indebted to him for the publication, by Arkham House, of *The Hounds of Tindalos*--my first hardback collection in 1945 (the volume has since been reprinted five times in hardcover and three times in paperback) and for eight or ten anthology inclusions, *Sleep No More*, *Strange Ports of Call*, *Beyond Space and Time*, *Science Fiction Across the Ages*, *When Evil Wakes*, *Far Boundaries*, etc. All of these August Derleth anthologies have appeared in paperback as well. I am indebted to him for about one-fourth of my hardback anthology inclusions; an indebtedness I've shared with several other writers, and one that we can never hope to repay. Indeed, Brian Lumley wrote recently: "I honestly believe that August Derleth was the macabre genre. He was, in post-war America, at any rate, the only publishing house in the field. Look at him more closely. He published *Slan*, he published Ray Bradbury's first book and Bob Bloch's and H. P. Lovecraft's, and on and on and on. The list of authors on the Arkham House list reads like a veritable who's who of the best." I met Derleth only twice in person, during two of his early comparatively brief visits to New York, but must have exchanged close to three hundred letters with him across the years. That he was a man of shining gifts, with a tremendous zest for living is so well-known now that my testimony in that respect would simply be in agreement, in a repetitive way, with what so many others have written about him.

Elliot: On a number of occasions, you've paid tribute to the role that Farnsworth Wright played in your development. What did he teach you about writing? How would you assess his skills as an editor?

Long: I'm afraid I must disappoint you here. Like Derleth, Wright either accepted or rejected my stories, from the first. He accepted some thirty-five in the ten years I wrote for *Weird Tales* and rejected not more than three or four, at the most. When the first editor, Baird, turned my first two stories over to Wright, Farnsworth wrote me a letter containing three or four paragraphs of the most glowing praise I've ever received from an editor, before or since. (There was really no "before," because these were my first professionally published stories.) I'm not sure he liked all of my stories, however. Some, I think, found their way into *Weird Tales*

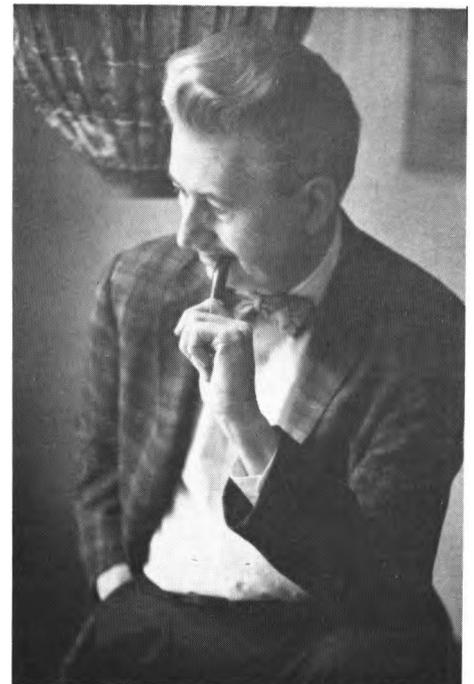
just under the line. But he never came right out and said so. I thought him an extremely able, unusually perceptive editor. Lovecraft did not always agree with me, and became very angry and impatient with Wright at times. But he calmed down later, and, despite what he wrote in two or three of his letters, had a very great liking for the man. Lovecraft never met Wright. I met him on several occasions in the two years preceding his death, when he resided in Jackson Heights, with his wife and young son. He deserves, I've always felt, much more credit than he ever received for turning *Weird Tales* into far more than a run-of-the-mill pulp magazine. He did, after all, make sure that Smith, Lovecraft, and Howard appeared often in its pages.

Elliot: How did John Campbell impress you as an editor? Was he easy to work with?

Long: Campbell, unlike Wright, was both an accomplished writer in the science fiction field (Wright's few stories in the horror story genre were decidedly run-of-the-mill) and an editor so discriminating in several important areas that he exerted a great influence on the science fiction field as it exists today, to such an extent that I can think of no important science fiction writer whose work would be *quite the same* if John Campbell had not provided some guidelines when the need for some new ones could not be ignored, from the days of Heinlein's early stories onward. I did not agree with him about a great many things, and he could be somewhat arbitrary and dogmatic at times. *But*--he was a *great* editor. There can be no question of that. He never altered a line of my stories, incidentally, and that always pleases a writer, particularly a young one.

Elliot: There is little question that your most famous story, at least during this early period, was "The Hounds of Tindalos," which has won praise in numerous circles. What is it about this story, as opposed to others, which makes it so special?

Long: "The Hounds of Tindalos" seems to have been a prophetic story in, I sometimes feel, the most astounding of all possible ways. Purely by accident--certainly not by design--I seem to have stumbled on the great, over-riding preoccupation of the 1960s, the whole "drug culture" approach to Eastern mysti-



Two earlier photos of Frank Belknap Long. At left, an early studio portrait taken at about age 25. The photo at right was taken in the early '60s and used on the jacket to the Arkham House edition *The Horror from the Hills*. (Courtesy of Frank Belknap Long)

cism, etc. That did not even occur to Aldous Huxley at so early a date, not to mention Timothy Leary a decade after Huxley had supposedly been the first to lay the groundwork for the great psychedelic madness of the '60s. Way back in the 1920s, I wrote a 1965-period story, which has never ceased to amaze me and has shaken my belief in the stability of time! The 1960s did not really end until about 1973, a mere seven years ago, as a discerning writer recently stressed in the *The New York Times Book Review*, so there are aspects about the "Hounds" that seem in a general way just as astounding in 1980.

Elliot: "Hounds" has gone on to become a classic in the fantasy field. How did the basic idea originate? Did the story entail much research?

Long: I simply sat down and wrote it straight off, in one six-hour session. I draw upon no specialized knowledge, simply my general reading at the time. There was no need for me to look up any of the historical or scientific references. They were comparatively simple references, all of them inside my cerebral cortex!

Elliot: When asked to explain where you get your ideas, you wrote that most ideas just "leap" into your mind. Would you describe yourself

as having a vivid imagination? Have you ever been at a loss for new story ideas?

Long: The overwhelming majority of fantasy writers possess, I'm quite sure, a "vivid imagination." Abstract thinking hardly encourages the visitations of ghosts, ghouls, or goblins. I've always possessed the kind of visual imagination that can be distinctly self-frightening. I've never been at an actual loss for subject matter--quite the contrary. The rub here is--a subject has to stimulate me in an unusual way, arouse my interest to a very high pitch before I can make use of it as the basic component of a story. And that doesn't happen as often as I could wish.

Elliot: Although many of your stories reflect substantial research, others have, in your words, almost "written themselves." Is there a major difference between the two types of stories?

Long: In general, my best stories in the fantasy field have *not* been labored over. A great deal of creative drive is the most important single factor when I sit down to get all of the components of a story on paper to the best of my abilities. When a *very strong* creative drive is present, everything else seems to have a tendency to fall into place. You may call this "inspira-

tion," if you wish. I believe in it. It's difficult to cite specific examples, because so many of my strongest stories have possessed this kind of spontaneity.

Elliot: To what extent was scientific accuracy important in your early writing? Could a story like "The Flame Midget" have worked without factual information?

Long: The stories I wrote for *Weird Tales* and *Unknown Worlds* were primarily atmospheric, broodingly somber or terrifying with only occasionally a science fiction intrusion which compelled me to undertake a certain amount of technical research. The stories I wrote for the science fiction magazines occasionally entailed considerable research. But not always. "The Flame Midget" would *not* have worked without great detail, but it was not exactly what is often referred to today as a "heavy science" story. Crille's theory (since discredited, incidentally) was known to me at the time, and most of the other scientific details in the story were simply a part of my general reading-acquired knowledge of physics, astronomy, etc. I wrote the story straight off, with no preliminary research checking or even checking as I went along. In that particular story, I was sure of the details. It is, I think, one of my ten or twelve best science fiction short stories.

Elliot: How importantly does myth and legend figure in your work?

Long: The mysteriousness, strangeness and great beauty of the ancient world--"the glories that are past" as a poet once phrased it--have always had an impact on my work. I suppose you could consider that a mythological impact. A good example of what I have in mind, I think, is Frazier's "The Golden Bough." I've never been a "sword-and-sorcery" writer. But who knows? I've always felt I might not do too badly in that realm if I tried my hand at it. (Editors please note!) Many of my stories are not in the least mythological, however, in the sense that you imply here. Contemporary characters and events are of equal importance to me, and there is virtually no aspect of experience, I feel, that cannot be successfully introduced into a supernatural horror story, or even a whimsically humorous fantasy.

Elliot: Your story, "Fisherman's Luck," is a love story--beautifully conceived and executed. Have you



A "fairly recent" photo of the Longs in their New York City home. (Courtesy of Frank Belknap Long)

written many such love stories? How do you treat the theme of love, in general, in your work? What does it take to make the love aspect believable?

Long: I never ask myself, "Will a love interest work here?" etc. It has to grow with the story, be an integral part of the story. I have written quite a few fantasy and science fiction stories in which there is a very pronounced love element.

Elliot: In much of your work, the leading protagonists are men, while women are frequently portrayed as "sex objects." Is this not a chauvinistic treatment of women? Do women often play leading roles in your stories?

Long: I have never been a male chauvinist. But I do believe there are certain psychological differences--just how profound and basic we don't know at the present time--between men and women which would demolish the entire romantic love tradition of the Western World if denied and tossed aside as unrealistic. Poe and Keats felt this way--"the imperishable, undying love of one man and one woman throughout the length and breadth of infinity." I refuse to relinquish this romantic dream, crazy as it may seem to some. It is one of the two or three aspects of human existence that makes living seem better than dying and, at the very least, tolerable. A woman protagonist entirely divorced from such a romantic dream is a distinctly *recent* development in American fiction, not just fantasy or science fiction. It is distinctly a rarity in *all of the classic American writers*. It is hardly

fair to pounce on me for this in stories written before 1950 or so, and the rise of women's lib.

Elliot: You've observed that while you've written several "gruesome" stories, you don't particularly like them yourself. What turns you off about such stories?

Long: To me, mere physical horror--graveyard relics with maggot-filled eye-sockets, etc.--have a very primitive kind of shock value solely. The great stories in the field achieve effectiveness through a far more subtle, psychological approach to horror.

Elliot: Are there any topics that you consider to be taboo in the fantasy or horror field?

Long: No. A quite simple answer, but it completely covers the way I've always felt about so-called "taboos" in the writing field. *Any* theme is permissible, but it must be handled with great perceptiveness at all times, *strictly divorced* from a desire to shock. No aspect of the truth should ever be a taboo subject.

Elliot: Must you be in a particular mood to write fantasy? If so, how do you "psyche" yourself up to write?

Long: One must be in a particular mood to write with convincingness on *any* subject. I've never attempted to "psyche myself up" in the fantasy field. As I stated previously, I'm a firm believer in "inspiration," despite the fact that it is in ill-repute in certain quarters. There is no substitute for a sudden, overwhelming creative drive, the need to get something vital down on paper.

Elliot: In the introduction to "The Dark Beasts," you wrote: "This story is more realistically stark, grim, 'nitty gritty' than a good many of my stories; broodingly atmospheric to some extent perhaps, but more 'down to earth' than I've always felt a horror story should be..." Why shouldn't a horror story be 'down to earth'? How does such realism detract from its effectiveness?

Long: I probably over-emphasized the way I felt about this story--just a little anyway. It was simply a feeling I had after I'd completed it. I thought it might be worth recording that it contains a very pronounced kind of "down-to-earth" realism that is not characteristic

of my work in general in the fantasy genre. But for certain other writers in the genre, it may well be the approach of choice. I've nothing against that kind of realism. It can be tremendously effective artistically if it is handled in just the right way by a writer alert to the mysteriousness and strangeness of small, commonplace, everyday things.

Elliot: In assessing your own work, you observed: "There have always been gulfs, wide and deep, between my best stories and stories that I would not care to see accorded the permanence that only anthology inclusion can insure." What explains the unevenness of your work? Why this huge chasm?

Long: There are similar gulfs between the best and worst work of virtually every professional freelance writer who has written many novels and shorter works of fiction. I was simply dramatizing something here that didn't really need to be stressed. But there are a few otherwise discerning readers who take a writer severely to task when they encounter a story that simply can't reconcile with his best work. So perhaps it does need to be stressed, at least once, when a writer is dwelling on his work in general, if only in self-defense!

Elliot: How would you distinguish what you call, your so-called "terrible work," from work that proved more satisfactory? Are you a harsh critic of your own work? Are you usually pleased with the finished product?

Long: I don't recall ever having referred to some of my early work as "terrible." Just possibly, I may have done so--I take no pride at all in some of my early stories, but I always tried to keep them from falling below a certain level. In several instances, unauthorized editorial changes have been made in my stories, and when that happens to a story you are not too happy about it anyway. "Terrible" may not be so wide of the mark. I think I'm a reasonably harsh critic of my own work. Harsher than some writers, perhaps less harsh than others. I've always tried to avoid brooding over stories that fail to satisfy me. Sometimes the finished product pleases me enormously. In other instances, I feel I have quite definitely failed to achieve what I set out to accomplish.

Elliot: Would you agree with those critics who contend that some of

your early stories exhibit a tendency to "overwrite?" If so, how did you overcome this problem?

Long: Yes, at least half of my early *Weird Tales* stories are overwritten. But not, I feel, the ones that have been anthologized. My best early *Weird Tales* stories are unquestionably "A Visitor from Egypt," "The Black Druid" (originally "The Dead, Black Thing"), "Second Night Out," and "The Hounds of Tindalos." "The Space Eaters" is over-written. I revised this story before it appeared in *The Magazine of Horror*, but unfortunately, the version in *The Early Long* is the original one. "The Black Druid" had to be left out of *The Early Long* because of space limitations. (Incidentally, I made no revisory changes in the several hardback and paperback editions of *The Hounds of Tindalos*. The 1945 Arkham House edition has been reprinted unchanged from 1945 to the present. No changes have been made, in fact, in a single reprinting of any of my Arkham House books including *In Mayan Splendor*.) Avoiding over-writing is largely made possible by the increasing maturity and critical judgment that one acquires with the passing of the years. There is no other way of making sure of it. Never absolutely sure, of course. There are few writers who do not have occasional lapses in that area.

Elliot: Are there stories that you wrote early in your career that you are incapable of writing today--either because you no longer know how or because you have simply outgrown them?

Long: My interest in three or four of the themes that formed the basis for my early work has greatly diminished. But it has far from wholly vanished, and I'm quite sure I could produce new stories in the same general vein. The writing, however, would lack freshness and vigor, I am certain of that. Without the creative drive which intense interest provides, writing degenerates into a mere task.

Elliot: It has been said by many observers, among them Ray Bradbury, that you've played a pivotal role in shaping the direction of the fantasy genre. At the risk of modesty, how would you describe your own contributions to the field?

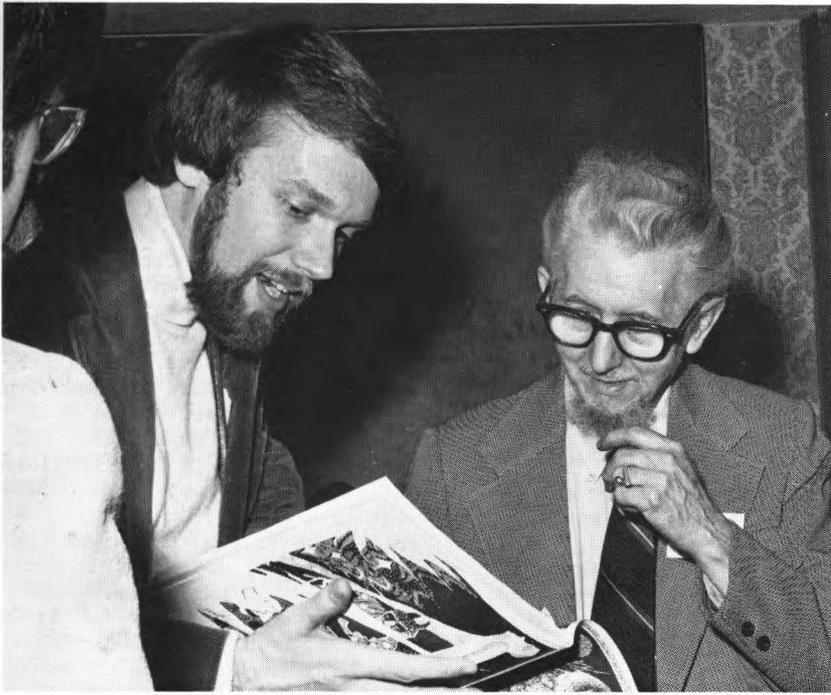
Long: I don't think modesty or the lack of it is really involved here. Just by happenstance, I arrived on the science fiction and fantasy

scene, in the magazine field, a little ahead of not a few of the writers you have in mind. If, in your youth, you devote all of your creative energies to a still largely unplowed field, you'll reshape it to some extent and, occasionally, here and there, if you're very lucky, to a "pivotal" extent.

Elliot: In a story titled, "The Flame Midget," you penned the following passage: "When they (aliens) come they will probably exterminate the entire human race. The little shape does not admire us, and when it returns its observations will reflect no credit on Mankind. It thinks us needlessly irrational and cruel. Our custom of settling disputes by a process of wholesale extermination it regards as akin to the savagery of animals. It thinks that our mechanical achievements are less remarkable than the social life of the ants and bees. It regards us as unnecessary excrescences on the face of a comparatively pleasant little globe in space which should afford limitless opportunities for colonization." Generally, is this how you view the present state of Mankind? If so, why?

Long: The view you quote at length would, I think, be shared by many alien-world visitors, hostile or otherwise, for they would be in a position to look upon Mankind in a wholly detached way. But it is not so different from the views set forth by not a few of the greatest writers--from Swift and Voltaire to the present day. It doesn't have to coincide with what I believe myself! Detachment is impossible for us, because we are all so inextricably involved in the human drama. Our mood in regard to such matters is never constant; it varies from day to day. Every honest writer has dark, despairing, totally cynical thoughts at times. Why pretend otherwise? Such thoughts are at least exciting and stimulating to the young and that is as it should be. (The young are wise in many ways and have a right to question all traditional values.) Unless one can despair at times concerning Man and his destiny under the stars, humanistic concepts are unlikely to develop in a truly genuine way.

Elliot: Your novel, *This Strange Tomorrow*, includes this interesting passage: "Man has always striven for a feeling of wholeness. He has always longed to be in complete harmony with his environment and the men and women who participate with him in the great adventure of



Frank Belknap Long with a fan at the First World Fantasy Convention in Providence, R.I., 1975. (Photo: F. B. Boatner, courtesy of Frank Belknap Long)

life. But that has never been a goal which could be achieved on Earth, perhaps because he got off to a bad start by putting last things first before he discovered how to polish flints or build villages of mud huts. He started warring with his neighbors without really taking time to look around him and realize just how great a challenge and how exciting an adventure the conquest of nature can be." Looking at the world today, is there any evidence that Man has begun to learn this lesson--that he is turning his attention from physical warfare to mastery of the elements? Are you at all hopeful in this regard?

Long: I stand by this quotation today 100 percent. But I'm afraid I have a little *less* confidence today in Man's capacity to survive all of the technological changes of a potentially destructive nature on a worldwide scale than I did when I wrote *This Strange Tomorrow*. There is still reason to be hopeful, of course. But it is becoming increasingly difficult for anyone who is not self-deceiving to feel with certainty that hope is justified.

Elliot: Many critics have argued that your work has been extraordinarily prophetic in a Wellsian sense. Would you concur with this view? If so, what developments come most readily to mind?

Long: Much of science fiction is based on prophetic speculation of one sort or another, and I've sometimes felt that just dwelling on that thought--keeping it firmly in mind--can stimulate the more innovative, future-predictive centers of the human brain. I've been fairly lucky in that kind of "guessing game" across the years. In at least two of my quite early science fiction stories, I've mentioned "Atomic Age Societies, etc.," and in one of them--ten or twelve years before an atom bomb became more than a wild dream in a blueprint stage--I had an atomic explosion spiraling skyward in a mushroom-shaped cloud! I remember the paragraph distinctly, but unfortunately I can no longer recall the title of the story. It appeared, I believe, in *Astounding Science Fiction*.

Elliot: As is true of Lovecraft, you've said that financial remuneration rarely enters your mind when it comes to writing a story. Has this attitude helped or hindered your career--both as a literary artist and a professional writer?

Long: For a writer to wonder how much money he will receive for a story *while he is writing it* is the most artistically crippling factor I can bring to mind. To a *professional* writer, commercialism is a sickly handmaiden he *must court at times* to survive. But she is basically a shrew with destructive im-

pulses. This attitude is naturally a handicap to a writer who would value highly more money in the bank. But I have never regretted it.

Elliot: Recent evidence suggests a tremendous resurgence in the fantasy genre. What accounts for this renewed interest? Will it last for any period of time? How will it affect the field?

Long: There is indeed a tremendous resurgence, and can be ascribed, I feel, to several factors. First, science fiction and fantasy have acquired an academic importance today of a most unusual nature, and more serious critical articles have been written about it than at any time in the past. This has a tendency to encourage a few exceptionally gifted writers to enter the field who might otherwise shun it as something of a "pop art" fraud. Such an attitude is reprehensible in a way, for a writer should be independent in that respect, and enter the field of his choice in total disregard of outside prestige factors. But it is a fact of life which does exert an influence, and has to be accepted as such. Second, there has been an enormous increase in the popular readership, primarily. I think, for two reasons, although I could list several others. The terrible uncertainty of life today makes both the young and old turn to science fiction as a possible means of finding out what the future may hold, for good or ill, in a world of advancing technology that is awesome in the extreme. And for sheer entertainment, although not necessarily on an immature "escape mechanism" plane, science fiction speaks to the needs of a large audience. As for fantasy writing, when the portals of the unknown stand ajar, shining valleys and high mountain peaks come into view, which appeal to a troubled age in other ways. I do not believe either field has reached an apex, so to speak, or that appeal will soon diminish.

Elliot: As you look at the science fiction and fantasy fields today, in what ways have the two genres changed most significantly from the time you started out?

Long: In thinking back over both the science fiction and fantasy fields since about 1935, my memories and impressions do not support the feeling that the changes have been as pronounced as is commonly

(Continued on page 30.)

Events & Awards

A, B, A. CONVENTION

People have described the American Booksellers Assoc. convention as the world's biggest huckster's room. I recently attended the 80th annual ABA convention in Chicago and found it to be more than true. The trade room consisted of hundreds of booths representing book publishers from all over the world and attendance was estimated at more than 25,000, and the place never really seemed over-crowded.

Fantasy and science fiction, scorned by these very people just a few years ago, was much in evidence at the convention. Guests included Judy-Lynn and Lester del Rey, Frank Herbert, Stephen R. Donaldson, and Stephen King. The latter two had autographing sessions.

Ballantine/Del Rey sponsored a screening of *The Empire Strikes Back* and gloated over the fact that the novelization is topping all the bestseller lists. David Prouse, who plays Darth Vader, marched around the con complete with cape and mask.

This was the first time I've met Frank Herbert and I found him to be an extremely friendly and kind man and meeting him was a pleasure.

Stephen Donaldson was also very nice and seemed to actually enjoy the autographing session. Just wait a few years. He'll learn that you're not supposed to have a good time signing your name seven-hundred-fifty-two times. You're also not supposed to be nice to everyone that comes up to you. He should learn from some of the other authors in attendance that writers are supposed to be smug with their fans and should act like they really believe that they're better than everyone.

This may seem like a biased statement, but it really seemed like the SF and fantasy authors were the only people who knew how to be nice to their fans.

Many of the large publishers were pushing their fantasy and SF titles. Something that would have been unthinkable a few years ago. Along with the giant blow-ups of the covers of cookbooks, how-to books, romances, and the latest Judith Krantz abomination, there were books by Ellison, Heinlein, and Herbert, among many others.

One of the things that is inevitable at ABA is that you will

come out with literally several large shopping bags full of promotional items which include books, note pads, buttons, hats, frizbees, balsa wood airplanes, and packets of volcanic ash.

The guest that attracted the most attention was ex-president Ford (you remember him, don't you?) The next most popular guest, however, was fantasy author Stephen King. He was there to promote his book *The Dead Zone* and the new Stanley Kubrick film, *The Shining*, based on another of King's novels. On the film, King mentioned that he liked his version of the script better than Kubrick's. He also said that he would much rather have had Martin Sheen play the lead rather than Jack Nicholson. He is currently working on a film script entitled *Creep Show*. It is an attempt at the ultimate scare and is being patterned after the old EC comics and will consist of five unrelated short stories. When the subject switched to King's past books, he said that he never re-reads *Carrie*. He said that the book has a lot of painful memories associated with it and he can't quite understand why he ever wrote it. He added that he has a "cold spot in my heart" for his favorite book, *'Salem's Lot*.

Savoy Books of England is planning a series of Harlan Ellison trade paperbacks for "some time in 1981." Ace will issue *Blood's A Rover* by Harlan Ellison in October. It is Ellison's classic story, "A Boy and His Dog," expanded to novel length. Houghton Mifflin will publish Ellison's latest collection, *Shatterday*, in hardcover this November. It is billed as "adult fiction," but most of the stories among the twenty in the collection have won many fantasy and SF awards. The book will also mark the first appearance of "Jeffy is Five" in any of Ellison's collections. (See FN #24 for additional details--Ed.)

One of the books on display at the convention that attracted a lot of attention was *Berni Wrightson: A Look Back*. This is unquestionably the most beautiful and well produced fantasy art book I've ever seen. It contains an extremely wide selection of Wrightson's work from various stages of his young career. The man is truly a genius as one learns from leafing through the book, as well as from reading Harlan Ellison's introduction. The

book is 9" by 12", 360 pages, and contains more than 300 illustrations, of which 70 are in full color and dozens more are in mono- and duotone. It costs a hefty \$60 from Christopher Zavis, 14164 W. Outer Drive, Detroit, MI 48239. Further words about this book are beyond me at this time. (See FN #3 and #7--Ed.)

In all, I found the ABA convention to be a hectic but enjoyable one. It will be held in Atlanta in May of 1981, in Dallas in 1982, and in Chicago again in 1986. If you ever have a chance to attend, don't pass it up.

-- James J. J. Wilson

TABA

Winners of The American Book Awards (TABAs), sponsored by the Association of American Publishers, were announced in May. Winners in the Science Fiction category were *Jem* by Frederik Pohl (St. Martin's Press) for hardcover, and *The Book of the Dun Cow* by Walter Wangerin, Jr. (Pocket Books) in paperback. In addition, *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* by Madeline L'Engle (Dell) won in the Children's Books/paperback category. (See FN #25 for a list of the nominees.)

FANTASYCON VI

The British *Fantasycon VI* will be held October 3-5, 1980, at the New Imperial Hotel in Birmingham, England. Guests of Honor at the convention will be horror writer Ramsey Campbell and artist Jim Fitzpatrick. Attending memberships have not been announced, although supporting memberships are £1.00 or \$3.00, deductible from the attending membership. This year's convention will be sponsored jointly by The British Fantasy Society and *Fantasy Media*. For additional information, write: Mike Chinn, 1 Buttery Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B67 7NS, UK.

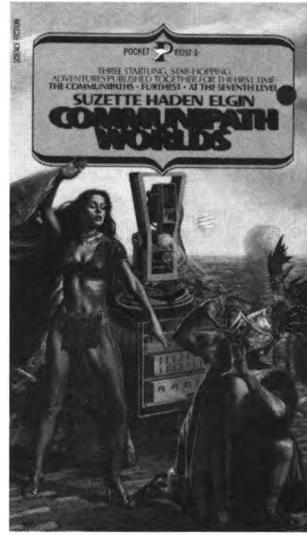
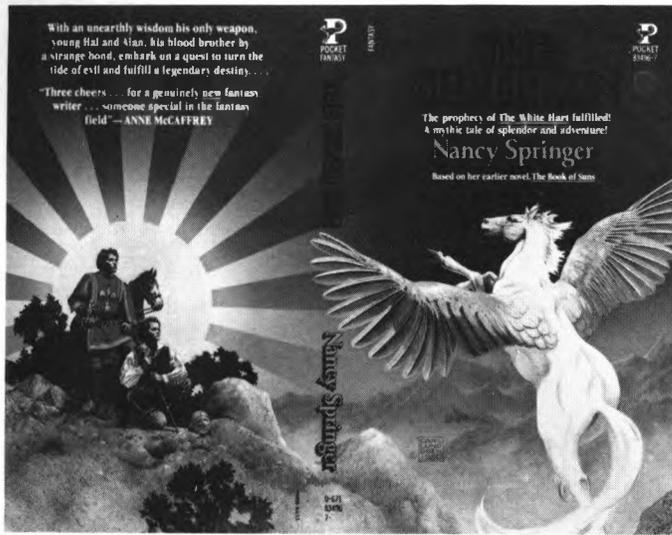
DENVENTION TWO

Denvention Two, the 39th World SF Convention for 1981, has announced its membership rates: \$25 attending and \$15 supporting prior to September 15, 1980. The convention will be held September 3-7, 1981 at the Denver Hilton Hotel. Guests of Honor are C. L. Moore and Clifford D. Simak, Fan GoH is Rusty Havelin, and Toastmaster is Edward Bryant. For additional information, write: Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211.

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Paperbacks

Cover artists: "The Silver Sun" by Carl Lundgren;
"Serpent's Reach" by David B. Mattingly.



POCKET BOOKS

Due out from Pocket Books in August is *The Silver Sun* by Nancy Springer, the second novel in her fantasy trilogy of the "Book of Isle." One might call this a quasi-original--the volume is a substantial revision of her earlier *The Book of Suns* (Pocket Books, 1977). It features a nice wraparound cover by Carl Lundgren and is priced at \$2.50.

CommuniPath Worlds by Suzette Haden Elgin (\$2.50) is a new 3-in-1 volume collecting three previous paperback novels about her star-hopping hero, Coyote Jones: *The CommuniPaths*, *Furthest* and *At the*

Seventh Level.

A collection of Fritz Leiber's short stories that will see its first paperback appearance in August is *Heroes and Horrors*, priced at \$2.25 and originally published by Whispers Press in late 1978. Included are two Fafrd & the Mouser shorts ("Sea Magic" and "The Mer She") and seven horror stories.

Reprints for August are *The Butterfly Kid* by Chester Anderson (\$2.25) and *The Best of Damon Knight* (\$2.50).

DEL REY/BALLANTINE

Due out from Del Rey in August is a new space opera novel by 81-year-old E. Hoffman Price (!) entitled *Operation Misfit*. The novel is about a trouble-maker in the 21st Century who is banished to outer space and stumbles across an asteroid rich in mineral wealth. Price is \$1.95.

Another "Best of the Year" anthology for August is *The Best SF of the Year #9* edited by Terry Carr, priced at \$2.50. Included among its 14 stories are "Galatea Galante" by Alfred Bester, "The Exit Door Leads In" by Philip K. Dick and "Options" by John Varley, in addition to stories by Gregory Benford, Dean Ing, David Lake, Tamith Lee, George R. R. Martin, and Vonda N. McIntyre, among others.

Roadmarks by Roger Zelazny was a Del Rey hardcover release last fall that will see its first paperback publication in August, priced at \$2.25.

Reprints this month are *The*

Edge of Running Water by William Sloane, *Son of Man* by Robert Silverberg, and *The Stray Lamb* by Thorne Smith (the 4th volume in Del Rey's Thorne Smith revival). All are priced at \$2.25.

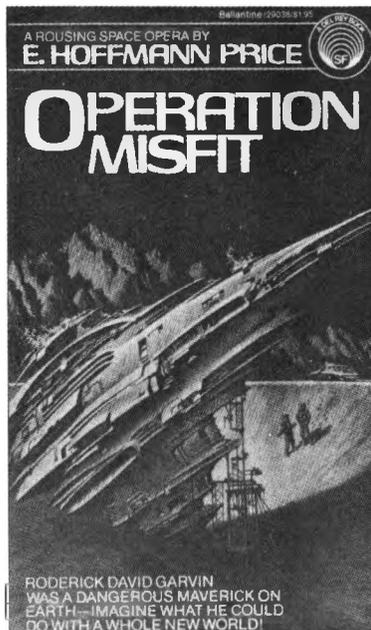
Also worthy of a brief mention is *The Catch Trap* by Marion Zimmer Bradley, priced at \$3.50 under the Ballantine imprint. This is a mainstream novel about gay love and circus life that appeared from Ballantine in hardcover last year.

DAW BOOKS

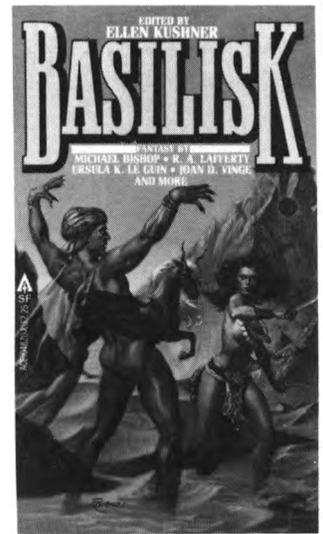
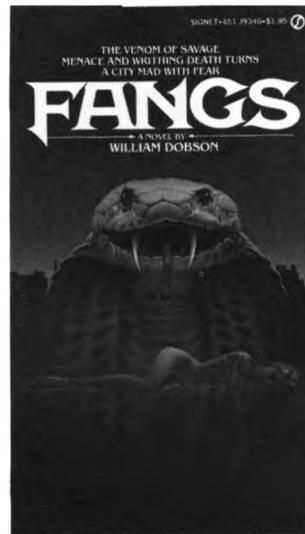
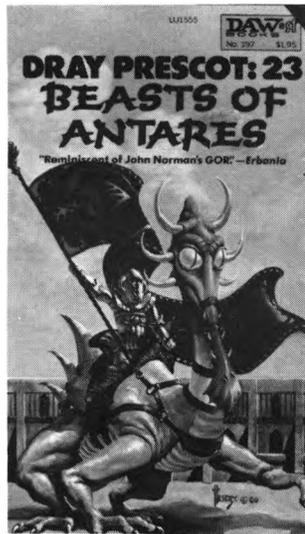
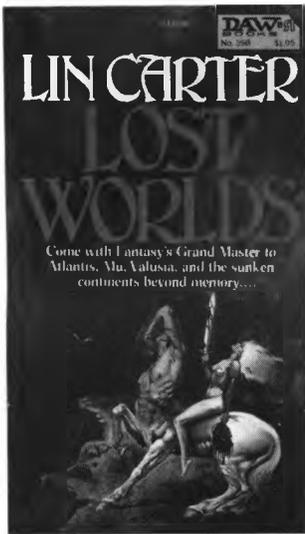
Following right on the heels of her popular "Faded Sun" and "Morgaine" trilogies is C. J. Cherryh's newest SF novel, *Serpent's Reach*, a DAW original for August that was published in hardcover in May by the Science Fiction Book Club. The novel is set in the constellation of Hydri (the Serpent) and concerns a young woman's quest for vengeance among the human colonies that massacred her family. Price is \$2.25.

A new fantasy title for August is *Lost Worlds* by Lin Carter, which appears to be a collection of stories about Atlantis, Mu, Valusia and other fabled empires--DAW is billing it as "an original feast of fantasy fiction" and, beyond that, it's hard to tell what it contains. Another new fantasy title is Dray Prescott: 23, *Beasts of Antares*, in the seemingly never-ending series begun by Alan Burt Akers. Both are priced at \$1.95.

Also scheduled is another wild 'n' wooly SF novel by madcap Ron Goulart entitled *Hail Hibbler*. It's



Cover artists: "Beasts of Antares" by Richard Hescor;
"Basilisk" by Rowena Morrill.



about a mad scientist (Adolph Hibbler) who invented cryogenics during the Third Reich, froze himself, and gets reawakened in the 21st Century. Price is \$1.75. The reprint this month is *Hunter of Worlds* by C. J. Cherryh, at \$2.25.

SIGNET

On tap from Signet for August is the long-awaited paperback edition of *Stephen King's* last novel, *The Dead Zone*, published in hardcover by The Viking Press a year ago. Price will be \$3.50.

For the past year or so, Signet has been menacing us with ants, bats, killer crabs, rattlers and cats (inflicted by various and sundry writers); next comes a giant, deadly king cobra in the form of an original novel by *William Dobson*, entitled *Fangs*. It's a contemporary horror novel that involves a rock superstar, an Arab sheik and "an orgy of sex and drugs." \$1.95.

Reprints for August are *Jack of Shadows* by *Roger Zelazny* at \$1.75 and *Assignment in Eternity* by *Robert A. Heinlein* at \$1.95.

AVON BOOKS

Avon Books will have three original titles out in August. *The Night Boat* by *Robert R. McCammon* (\$2.50) is a contemporary occult thriller about a German submarine that mysteriously rises from the deeps, where it sank 40 years ago, to terrorize the inhabitants of a Caribbean island; an old voodoo master confesses to having placed a

curse on the sub's crew.

Cassilee by *Susan Coon* (\$2.25) is the second novel in her "Living Planet" series (the first was *Rahne* in January). It's an SF novel about the living planet *Cassilee*, doomed for destruction unless its inhabitants can repel an alien invasion.

The third original is a non-fiction title new to the U.S.: *The Erotic World of Faery* by *Maureen Duffy*. As the title implies, the volume explores the erotic nature of fantasy literature from the Middle Ages to contemporary fantasy and SF. Example: "Is the *Little Mermaid* a simple underwater fairytale or an allegory of homosexual castration?" Heavy stuff, folks... Included are eight pages of illustrations. Price is \$3.50.

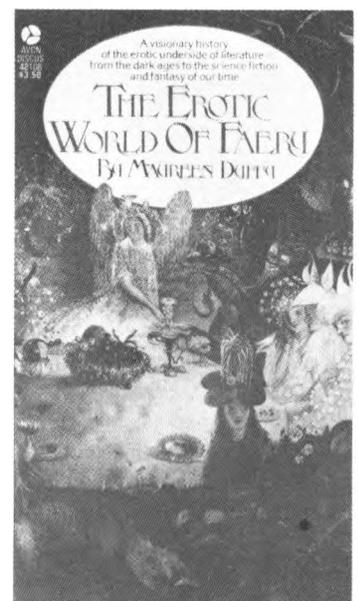
Slated for its first paperback appearance is *100 Great Science Fiction Short Short Stories* edited by *Isaac Asimov*, *Martin Greenberg* and *Joseph D. Olander*, at \$2.50. No way am I going to list the contents here...hardcover publisher was Doubleday.

ACE BOOKS

Leading off Ace's mass market paperback releases in August is *Basilisk*, a new anthology of both new and reprinted fantasy stories, edited by *Ellen Kushner* (a former editorial assistant at Ace who recently resigned as associate editor at Pocket Books to pursue her own writing career). The 320-page anthology, priced at \$2.25, will be illustrated by *Terri Windling* and features the following new stories: "The Hunt of the Unicorn" by *Joan*

D. Vinge, "The Forty-Seventh Island" by *R. A. Lafferty*, "War Wounds" by *Lynn Abbey*, "Dream Poems" by *Gordon Grant*, "The Yukio Mishima Cultural Association of Kudzu Valley, Georgia" by *Michael Bishop*, and "Wizard's Domain" by *Elizabeth A. Lynn*. Reprints are: "The Man Who Sold Magic" by *Nicholas Stuart Gray*, "Peter Kagan and the Wind" by *Gordon Bok*, "The Lamia and Lord Cromis" by *M. John Harrison*, "Feel Free" by *Alan Garner*, and "The Word of Unbinding" by *Ursula K. LeGuin*.

Also scheduled are two titles that were previously Ace trade paperback releases last year: *Tambu* by *Robert Lynn Asprin* and *A Step Farther Out* by *Jerry Pournelle*. The former is an SF novel about an interstellar Genghis Khan (\$1.95)



The Pocket Books F & SF Page

July 1980

We are very happy this month to be featuring John M. Ford's stunning first novel, in the tradition of the early Roger Zelazny & Samuel R. Delaney, and a renaissance of the New Dimensions series in paperback, as well as three reprints of major sf novels to be treasured and reread.--DGH

NEW DIMENSIONS II

Edited by Robert Silverberg & Marta Randall

The exciting series that showcased the short sf and fantasy of the seventies launches the eighties, and Starship says it's "cause to rejoice." Silverberg and Randall, both outstanding authors in their own right, have gathered 18 of the best established authors and noteworthy new writers in this collection. Unicorn Tapestry by Suzy McKee Charnas, A Sunday Visit With Great-Grandfather by Craig Strete, and The Haunting by Mary Pangborn are featured. 83085-6/\$2.50

MECHASM

John Sladek

The Wompler Doll Factory has a special government assignment: creating machines capable of self-reproduction. When the project succeeds, the flaw becomes clear--with no way to stop, the machines reproduce in geometric proportions. The world is being torn apart in their need for raw materials, and the result will be MECHASM!

About Sladek's sf satire, a reviewer for the (London) Sunday Times wrote, "I am going to read this book more than once." 83130-5/\$1.95



WEB OF ANGELS

John M. Ford

The web was the mind of the universe for everyone but the webspinners, extraordinary people like Grailer, with power to manipulate the web, but forever haunted by the black knights of Circe. When Grailer's lover is murdered by Geisthounds--inhuman nightmares that pounce without warning from within the web--he begins a terror-filled quest for its secrets. "An extraordinary book, with a future that brings new surprises with every scene. The tale is built around a marvelously well-worked out idea, peopled with memorable characters, and set against an array of the wonders of the far future. A thoroughly good read." --George H. Scithers, editor of Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine. 82947-5/\$2.25

THE WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER

A.E. Van Vogt

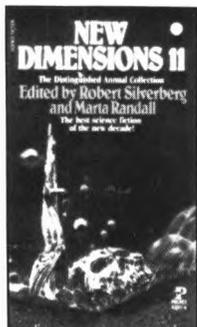
The Imperial Isher dynasty has nearly crushed Earth's rival power, the Weapon Shops, when a time-traveler charged with trillions of time-energy units materializes in a weapon shop. And the struggle begun in The Weapon Makers continues. "There are few science fiction writers alive today who can boast the singular achievements of A. E. van Vogt."--Questar. 83429-0/\$1.95

CHRONOCULES

D.G. Compton

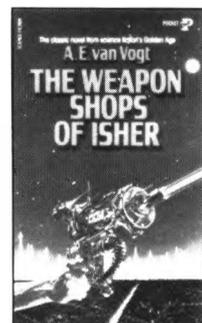
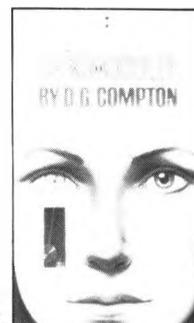
Professor Kravchensky and his brilliant lab assistant, Liza Simmons, struggle to complete time travel experiments that are the last hope for human survival. In the process, Liza becomes involved with one of their subjects, and comes face to face with the effect perfect science has on a less-than-perfect world. "Work of this calibre is what science fiction is for." --James Blish.

D. G. Compton is the author of the classic The Unsleeping Eye. 83079-1/\$1.95

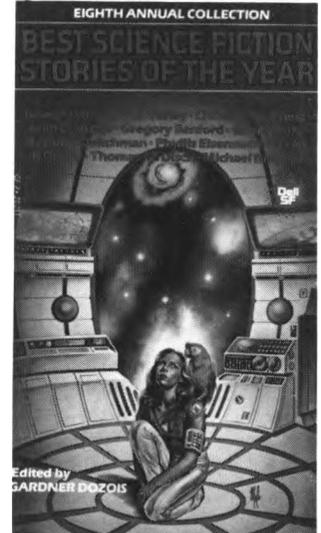
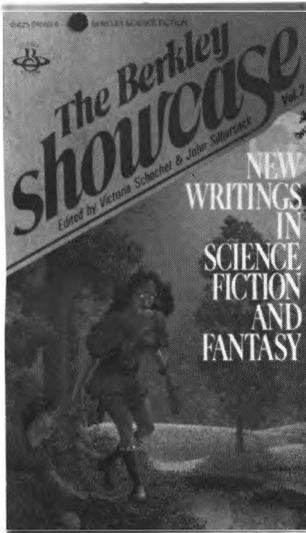


POCKET BOOKS

David G. Hartwell,
Director of Science-Fiction



Cover artists: "The Berkley Showcase" by Roger Courtney; "Leviathan's Deep" by Fernandez; "Ironbrand" by Esteban Maroto.



and the latter a collection of non-fiction articles (\$2.50).

Reprints this month are *Time of the Great Freeze* by Robert Silverberg (\$1.95), *Rocannon's World* by Ursula K. LeGuin (\$1.95) and, under the Tempo imprint, *Favorite Tales of Horror*--an anthology of horror tales selected and illustrated by Gahan Wilson (\$1.75).

Additional reprints are a six volume set of nonfiction titles by Isaac Asimov, priced at \$2.25 each: *Is Anyone There?*, *Of Matters Great and Small*, *Only A Trillion*, *Twentieth Century Discovery*, *Jupiter*, and *Science, Numbers, and I*. The last three titles are revised and updated.

BERKLEY BOOKS

Coming from Berkley in August is volume two in Berkley's original fantasy and SF anthology series, *The Berkley Showcase* edited by Victoria Schochet and John Silbersack. The contents include "Soldier of an Empire Unacquainted with Defeat" by Glen Cook (a 'Dread Empire' story), "Hear Today" by Freff, "Dolls Eyes" by Karl Hansen, "To See" by Edward Bryant, "Song of Mutes" by Ross Appel and additional stories by P. C. Hodgell, Eric Van Lustbader, R. A. Lafferty and Thomas M. Disch. Price is \$2.50.

Two additional originals for August are *Summer Solstice* by Michael T. Hinkemeyer (\$2.50), a contemporary terror novel about evil and pagan ritual in a small farming community, and *Battlestar Galactica #4: The Young Warriors* by Glen A. Larson and Robert Thurston (\$1.95).

In addition to this latest 4th volume, Berkley will be running a special promotion on the first three *Battlestar Galactica* novels.

Also scheduled are the first paperback edition of *The Dancers of Arun*, the second volume in Elizabeth A. Lynn's 'Chronicles of Tornor' trilogy, and a reissue of *The Once and Future King* by T. H. White, the former at \$1.95 and the latter at \$2.95.

PLAYBOY PRESS

Due out from Playboy Press in August is the first paperback publication of *Leviathan's Deep* by Jayge Carr (\$2.25), published by Doubleday a year ago. This one impressed me when it first appeared and is about a somewhat primitive matriarchal society on the planet Delyafam that doesn't get along too well with its terran colonists. Very well written.

A July Playboy Press release that I didn't get a chance to describe last issue is *Ironbrand* by John Morressy (\$2.25). The novel is the first in a new heroic fantasy trilogy about three brothers who must fight a powerful wizard to gain a lost kingdom left them by their father.

DELL BOOKS

The eighth annual collection of the *Best Science Fiction Stories of the Year*, edited by Gardner Dozois, is due out from Dell in August, priced at \$2.25. Included are "Found" by Isaac Asimov, "View from A Height" by Joan D. Vinge,

"Seven American Nights" by Gene Wolfe, "Old Folks at Home" by Michael Bishop, "The Persistence of Vision" by John Varley, and six additional stories by Christopher Priest, Gregory Benford, Bernard Deitchman, Phyllis Eisenstein, James P. Girard, and Thomas M. Disch.

Also scheduled is a reprint of *Dr. Bloodmoney, or, How We Got Along After the Bomb* by Philip K. Dick, featuring a new afterword by the author. Price is \$2.25.

In July, Dell will reprint under the Laurel imprint the five volume 'Prydain Chronicles' for young adults by Lloyd Alexander: *Taran Wanderer*, *The Book of Three*, *The Black Cauldron*, *The Castle of Llyr* and *The High King*. All will be priced at \$1.75.

BANTAM BOOKS

Bantam Books will release the first paperback editions to two science fiction novels in August: *The Centauri Device* by M. John Harrison (\$1.95), published in hardcover by Doubleday, and *On Wings of Song* by Thomas M. Disch (\$2.25), first published by St. Martin's.

A third title that was tentatively scheduled for August according to the last information I had is *The Final Countdown* by Martin Caidin. This will be a Bantam original timed to tie-in with the United Artists movie in which a modern aircraft carrier finds itself at the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Price is \$2.25.

(Continued on page 30, Col. 3.)

The Fan Press

ETERNITY SF

Stephen Gregg has published the second issue of his recently revived *Eternity Science Fiction*--a thick 84-page issue printed on newsprint with color enamel covers. The contents include the following stories: "Tinker" by *Orson Scott Card*, "Answer Came There None" by *Janet Fox*, "In the Garden" by *Ronald Anthony Cross*, "And Speak of Soft Defiance" by *Stephen Leigh*, "Undermuck With Quill Tripstickler" by *John Shirley*, "A Simple Twist of Fate" by *Grant Carrington*, and "Flawless Scale, Perfect Meter" by *Benton McAdams*. Additional features include an interview with *Gregory Benford* and columns by *Andrew J. Offutt*, *Orson Scott Card*, *Roger Zelazny*, *Karl T. Pflock* and *Edward Bryant*. Artists include *Derrel Anderson*, *Derek Parks-Carter*, *Gene Day*, *Michael Gilbert*, *Gary Raham* and *Joe Wehrle, Jr.* \$1.75 per copy or 4 quarterly issues for \$6. *Eternity SF*, P. O. Box 510, Clemson, SC 29631.

WEIRD TALES COLLECTOR

Just out from Robert Weinberg is his 6th issue of *The Weird Tales Collector*. Included in the 36-page digest size issue are a profile of *E. Hoffman Price* by *Thomas Kent Miller* and *Gary von Tersch*, an interview with *Mary Elizabeth Counselman*, "The Case of the Moonlighting Physicians" by *Chet Williamson*, "Reader's Choice" by *Robert A. W. Loundes*, and an index to *Strange Stories*. \$2 per copy; no subscriptions are available. Robert Weinberg, 10606 S. Central Park, Chicago, IL 60655.

KADATH

Now available from Francesco Cova in Italy is the second issue of *Kadath*, featuring a new story by *Adrian Cole*, "Collector's Piece" in both English and Italian. The remainder of the issue's contents, printed in Italian, include "Demoniacal" by *David Sutton*, an article on Lovecraft in *Astounding* by *Robert Weinberg*, "The Sword & Sorcery of Michael Moorcock" by *Paul Allen* (reprinted from *Fantasy Crossroads*), a 5th World Fantasy Con report by *David Sutton*, a news column and a number of book reviews.

Kadath is published approxi-

The Weird Tales

Collector # 6



mately twice a year and is devoted to fantasy and weird fiction. Although published in Italian, each issue features an English language section. *Kadath* #2 is a 60-page issue printed on heavy enamel stock. Planned for the third issue are two new stories by *Brian Lumley* and an interview with him. Single copies are priced at \$4 and four issue subscriptions are \$15. Francesco Cova, Corso Aurelio Saffi 5/9, 16128 Genova, Italy.

THRUST SF

Thrust Science Fiction in Review #15, for summer, features an interesting "SF Retrospective: 1979" by *Gardner Dozois*, an interview with artist *Frank Kelly Freas*, part two of an article on gaming by *David Nalle*, "SF Art" by *Dan Steffan*, and a new column by *George Alec Effinger*, in addition to the magazine's regular columns by *Ted White*, *Michael Bishop* and *Charles Sheffield*. Plus the usual complement of book reviews and letters. The 56-page issue is single copy priced at \$1.95; subscriptions are 6 issues (two years) for \$9. Thrust Publications, 11919 Barrel Cooper Court, Reston, VA 22091.

INFINITY CUBED

Infinity Cubed is a quarterly publication of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers' League of Knoxville, Tennessee. Featured in each issue are a number of columns, book and movie reviews, and letters written by fans...I assume primarily Tennessee fans. The current

(Artist: Derrel Anderson & Artie Romero)



issue #3 runs 70 pages with the emphasis on science fiction. Included are three stories: "The Other Kind of Killer" by *Charlie Williams*, "The Thinking Circle" by *Claudia Peck*, and "Apocalypse (sic) Eventually" written by a group of SF&F Writers League members. Single copies are priced at \$1.75. SF&F Writers' League, Box 8445, UT Post Office, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37916.

FANTASY MEDIA

England's counterpart to *Fantasy Newsletter*--*Fantasy Media*--is now in its seventh issue loaded with news about new British and American books, magazines and fan publications, book reviews and movie reviews. Features this issue include an article on Virgin Books, "SF in West Germany" by *Ronald M. Hahn*, and an interview with *Manly Wade Wellman*. *Fantasy Media* generally runs 28-pages and single copies are priced at \$3.50 via air mail to the U.S. Annual subscriptions via air mail to the U.S. (5 issues) are \$15. If you're one of those who can't get enough British news (even with *FN*'s Mike Ashley), then *Fantasy Media* is undoubtedly what you're looking for. 113A High St., Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1AY, UK.

THE LOOKING GLASS

Although I have yet to figure out just what the Stellar Fantasy Society is, Ben Fulves continues to publish *The Looking Glass* as the society's official organ. Issue #17 runs 12 pages, plus a 6-page

Stellar Fantasy Newsletter, and includes a poem by Andrew Darling-ton, a short story ("The Ephemerid") by Jan Sobolewski, "NASA Notes" by Andy Andruschak, an article on electronic music by Michael Roden, and a variety of fanzine reviews, news and notes. Memberships in the society are \$5 per year, which includes 4 issues of *The Looking Glass* and the newsletter.

Ben Fulves has also announced a short story contest with a first prize award of \$50. Stories must center around a story idea by H. P. Lovecraft: "Castle by pool or river--reflection fixed thro' centuries--castle destroyed--reflection lives to avenge destroyers weirdly." The entry deadline is July 19, 1980 and include an SASE with all entries.

Fulves also announces he is planning a series of fantasy fiction pamphlets under the Unknown Press imprint. He is looking for writers (at 1/2¢ per word) and artists (\$10 to \$20 per page). Ben Fulves, Unknown Press, 25 Parkway, Montclair, NJ 07042.

ELFQUEST/FIRST KINGDOM

Published just within the past month are two new issues of what are probably the two best fantasy comic magazines around these days: *Elfquest* #7 by Richard and Wendy Pini, and *The First Kingdom*, Book 12 by Jack Katz. Both are fantasies of epic proportions: *Elfquest* is a delightful elfworld fantasy while *The First Kingdom* is a science fantasy set on a post-holocaust Earth. Both magazines run 44 pages

in an 8 1/2" by 11" format with full color slick covers.

Elfquest is priced at \$1.25 per copy or 4 issues for \$6 from WaRP Graphics, 2 Reno Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603.

The First Kingdom is priced at \$1.25 plus 50¢ for postage from Bud Plant, P. O. Box 1886, Grass Valley, CA 95945. The first 11 books are available at a set price of \$10.

SF REVIEW

Science Fiction Review #35, which appeared just as *FN* #26 was going to press, features interviews with Fred Saberhagen and Donald A. Wollheim, "The Way It Is" and "Malzberg's Common Book of Prayer" (from a work in progress) by Barry N. Malzberg, "The Curse of Conan" (a poem) by Neal Wilgus, "Noise Level" by John Brunner, "Coming Apart at the Themes" by Bob Shaw, "The Vivisector" (book reviews) by Darrell Schweitzer, and "The Human Hotline" (news) by Elton Elliott. Add to that the usual multitude of letters and reviews, as well as cartoons. \$1.75 per copy or four quarterly issues for \$6. Richard E. Geis, P. O. Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211.

REHUPA

The Robert E. Howard United Press Association (REHUPA) is an amateur press association devoted to the subject of heroic fantasy that has been active since 1972. Currently 27 members strong, each member produces a modest "apazine" every two to four months and mails copies in to an "Official Editor," who binds together the contributions of each member and issues a mailing to the membership every two months. Member contributions generally include fan fiction, poetry, articles, bibliographies, and mailing comments (on earlier mailings), as well as artwork. Dues are \$5 per year to cover postage costs for six mailings.

If you're a writer or artist in need of an audience, or if you've thought of publishing a fanzine at some time, REHUPA might be what you're looking for. A sample "speculation" copy is available free of charge from: Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Road, #207, Detroit, MI 48219.

If you like weird fantasy ---- here's something you ought to know about WEIRDBOOK PRESS.

Twice nominated for a WORLD FANTASY AWARD --- 1978 and 1979.

Also nominated for a British Fantasy Society Award in 1979.

WEIRDBOOK PRESS was founded in 1968 to produce WEIRDBOOK magazine, once or twice a year. The current issue is WEIRDBOOK 14, and here is what SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW reported about that issue:

.... of high professional quality.. these are stories the writers wanted to write---maybe had to write--- and have nowhere else to see print, in realistic terms. But since anthology editors all read WEIRDBOOK, many of these stories will appear in years to come in big-press books and will continue to earn money for the writers for a long time. The point is, this magazine and these stories are worth the money.

WEIRDBOOK 14 is lithoprinted, 64 pp, 8 1/2"x11" in size on heavy 70lb paper!! All contents are original material not previously published in the US.

In WEIRDBOOK 14:--- fiction by Eddy C. Bertin (originally published in Belgium), Grant L. Carrington, Daphne Castell, Adrian Cole (a "Voidal" novelet), Dennis Etchison, C. L. Grant, William Scott Home, Tanith Lee, Richard Lyon & Andrew Offutt, Gerald W. Page, and Darrell Schweitzer. Art by D. Bruce Berry, Chris Pelletiere, J. K. Potter, Gene Day, Victoria Poyser, Bob Conway, and many others.

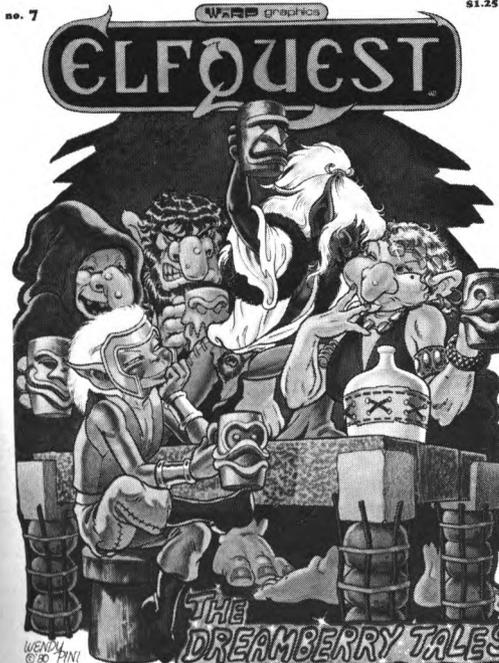
PRICE: \$3.00 + 50¢ toward postage.

SPECIAL OFFER -- \$10 postpaid---the three most recent issues, 12,13,14--cover prices of \$3, \$5, \$3 (issue 13 is 100 pp). Included are novelets by H. Warner Munn, L. Sprague de Camp, Michael Bishop (since reprinted in 2 best-of-the-year anthologies), Eddy C. Bertin, Adrian Cole (another Voidal tale), and Gerald W. Page, plus numerous short fiction (Lumley, Janet Fox, Basil Wells, Saunders, etc) ---plus unpublished poems by ROBERT E. HOWARD, art by Stephen E. Fabian, Day, Potter, many many others.

If you like magazines like WHISPERS and SHAYGL, you owe it to yourself to take a good look at WEIRDBOOK!

WEIRDBOOK, W. Paul Ganley, Box 35, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, NY 14226.

If desired, add 70¢ for SPECIAL HANDLING (U.S. only).



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(Interview: Frank Belknap Long
continued from page 22.)

believed. Much of the earlier work was the crudest kind of popular magazine writing--nothing but *clique* ridden trash. But there were some very fine stories dating back to 1930 and 1940, by a dozen writers still active in the field; the curve of achievement has risen and fallen several times in five-year periods (or eight-year periods), but on the whole it all blends in my mind in very much the way I've suggested here. As I've mentioned before, the term "new" science fiction was coined with considerable validity more than a quarter of a century ago and I can think of no finer stories than some of the *earliest* ones--Clarke, Asimov, Heinlein, Bradbury, Bloch, and at least ten others by writers still extremely active in the field. Science fiction has of course embraced wider horizons in recent years and branched out in some important new directions, and more genius-level (or close to genius-level) writers have entered the field in the last eight or ten years than at any period of similar length in the past. All this, if you wish, is just one writer's opinion, but I've a strong suspicion it is shared by many others.

Elliot: Has your present age in any way slowed you down or impaired your ability to write?

Long: As to the impairments of age, there has so far been no pronounced "slowing down" in that area. But I sometimes fear it could happen almost overnight. There may be something verging on the miraculous, I've often felt, in the long-term endurance (in a track record sense) of science fiction and fantasy writers. I am the same age as Clifford Simak, Manly Wellman and H.

Warner Munn, not more than three or four years older than L. Sprague de Camp, and E. Hoffman Price is three years my senior. But all of these writers are in vigorous health and still actively engaged in turning out new work.

Elliot: When you're not writing, what activities give you the greatest pleasure?

Long: These have varied with the years. I try to read at least ten or twelve new books a month, about a third of them fiction, and the others dealing with the natural sciences, history and biography. I read a great deal of poetry, and in the realm of music, I'm a Bach fanatic. I'm a bird watcher, and keenly enjoy long walks in the country, whenever I'm able to get out of the city. I am far less interested in books as books than in their contents, and have never been a first edition or autograph collector (distinctly heretical on the part of a writer).

Elliot: Finally, what are you working on at the present time? Do you perceive any new directions in your work?

Long: I am planning, in the months ahead, to write quite a few new short stories (a recent one has just been scheduled for *Whispers III* and another for the new *Weird Tales*), and to complete as well a new sci-entifantasy novel which I've been working on since last year. I'm just superstitious enough to prefer to keep the precise theme a secret.

-- Dr. Jeffrey M. Elliot

(Book Reviews

continued from page 11.)

There may be some who could enjoy Bester's latest, but if they do, they will have found another truth than the one that I found. It was a galling, bitter piece destructive of the relations of man and woman, to the concept of unity.

But, if you believe in the ultimate victory of bee over man...

-- Melissa Mia Hall

(Paperbacks

continued from page 27.)

FAWCETT BOOKS

A Popular Library original for August is *The Living One* by Jim Hawkins, which won The Galaxy Award from the Society for the Advancement of SF and Spirituality prior to publication. "The novel depicts a series of adventures which leads the Living One closer to the secrets of the Universe" and I hope that tells you more than it does me... Price is \$1.95. A reprint, also priced at \$1.95, is *Thirteen Tales of Terror* by Jack London, edited by John Perry.

Under the Fawcett Crest imprint, watch for a reprint of *Dread Companion* by Andre Norton, at \$1.95.

LEISURE BOOKS

A new release from Leisure Books for July is *The Space Mavericks* by Michael Kring, an SF novel about two renegade space pilots who discover the secret of regeneration left behind by an advanced civilization on a now desolate planet. Price is \$1.75.

And, a miscellaneous note I've been attempting to squeeze into an issue someday: If you happen to be vacationing in San Francisco this summer, here are a couple of tours you probably won't read about in the AAA guidebook. Now available from fantasy fan Don Herron are a series of two-hour walking tours of San Francisco areas made famous in the fiction of Fritz Leiber and Dashiell Hammett. The tours are very reasonably priced at \$2 per person. For information, write Herron's Literary Walking Tours, 537 Jones St., #9207, San Francisco, CA 94102.

*

Feedback

my own knowledge of the field accumulated over some twenty years of reading and collecting. The result, I hope, helps people to at least make some initial, even tentative planning decisions--well, yes, that looks like one I might enjoy; or, that one doesn't appear to be of interest to me.

The "news" I write is by no means literary criticism. Although I will point out an occasional gem (or dog), I try to remain fairly neutral. That's true even when I'm well familiar with the subject in question, the simply reason being that tastes vary. I don't happen to like the works of Lin Carter, for example. Nearly everything he writes is derivative trash in my opinion. But I do happen to know that hundreds of you "out there" do enjoy reading his work and my personal bias is not going to help you make a buying decision.

For the same reason, you will probably never see a Lin Carter book reviewed in these pages. His work is entirely predictable and the people who enjoy it read it regardless of what a reviewer has to say. There are many other titles far more worthy of reviewing. Is that latest blockbuster fantasy release really all that good?--Or is it merely hype? What about this 'mainstream' release over here?--Could it be a sleeper (i.e., an excellent fantasy hidden behind another label) or is it perhaps not worth investigating? These are some of the questions I ask myself in determining which titles get reviewed here. (Beyond that, it's between the reviewer and you and that's true of all book reviews.) Only new titles get reviewed here, no reprints, and I try to see that the reviews are timely. Insofar as possible, I try to publish the review during the book's actual month of release; no review gets published more than two months following the book's release date. The purpose, after all, is to help you make a decision and once you've bought a book, it's too late. In addition, I try to concentrate on hardcover releases because they represent a bigger "gamble" for the average pocketbook.

I'm always open to suggestions for improving *FN*. Even though I don't have much room for a regular letters column, I am interested in hearing from you. And if you want an answer, please include an SASE--it does help speed things up for me.

-- Paul C. Allen

I'd like to clear up a very unfortunate situation regarding the Phantasia Press edition of Philip Jose Farmer's *The Magic Labyrinth*. Alex Berman of Phantasia purchased the rights to a limited signed first edition of the novel from Berkley/Putnam. It was our mutual intention that the Phantasia Press edition would be published at least one month prior to the Berkley edition. Unfortunately a miscalculation of printing and shipping dates on Berkley's part resulted in the pre-shipment and sale of the Berkley/Putnam edition in some parts of the country a few days before the publication of Phantasia's Collector's volume. *This occurred through no fault of Phantasia Press*. I very much regret that this mishap has inconvenienced Phantasia and the collectors who purchased the limited edition and I want to publicly thank Alex who has been unfailingly gracious during a trying situation. I'm looking forward to working with Phantasia on other projects in the future--especially now that we know where the pitfalls lie.

-- John Silbersack
Senior Editor
Berkley Books

I am writing to ask something of a favor. In your editorial (*FN* #25) you make brief mention of Eric Kimball's "assistance" in the creation of *Lady Ice* and *Lady Fire*.

Nothing could further from the truth. The 'Illuminations' are his creations, I was only brought in to illustrate his writing. The energy, thrust, artistic direction, all of this is shared by Eric and myself on a very unequal basis. Eric, for the most part, is very much the driving force behind this entire series. His reward has been to be overlooked and brushed aside while undue credit has been awarded to me.

Could you possibly make some mention of Eric being the senior partner of sorts in this project? I hate to see him hurt and ignored time and again when it is essentially his energy that keeps the 'Illuminations' (his name, I might add) going. If it weren't for Eric's writing, his vision, there would have never been a *Lady Ice*, nor the planned *Lady Fire*.

-- Thomas Canty

It is both fun and work being a Fantasy Award judge, meanwhile trying to eat regularly while an

incompetent government makes my dollars worth less. This makes the hotel prices of the World Fantasy Con of particular interest. They are shocking.

The Marriott Hunt Valley Inn must be right on the airport runway with all the business it can handle to be so overpriced. A single room is listed at an incredible \$49 plus a swollen ten per cent tax. A half a hundred dollars for a bed and a toilet! A double is \$57--base. Good lord, what insanity; what disregard for fans; what fantasy!

Those room rates will ensure that many, many fans can't be there. One hopes that someone will ascertain the proximity and rates of other hotels there, for us all, and buy not so much as a pack of peabuts at the Hunt Valley Taj Mahal.

I won't support it. Being there, showing off and visiting and signing things--and all the while knowing how many had planned to come but couldn't afford bed and toilet--that would hurt more than I care to hurt. I won't go.

-- Andrew J. Offutt

Perhaps the con committee will consider providing information about other hotels in the area? Write chairman Chuck Miller, 239 N. 4th St., Columbia, PA 17512.

Appreciate the gentle subscription reminder, although it was definitely not necessary. I really enjoy *FN* and think the magazine format is a welcome improvement.

One thing that I think you might add to the newsletter on an irregular basis is a column devoted to some of the longer serial stories in the fantasy/SF realm. I am thinking of items like Moorcock's 'Eternal Champion,' Norton's 'Witch World,' Dickson's 'Dorsai,' etc.

The column could place stories and novels in chronological order, contain capsule descriptions of plots, characters, and list the sources for stories in the series that have not been anthologized. It could, also, with the cooperation of the authors, report on any stories in progress.

As a fan of many of these longer works, I have long felt a need for this kind of information.

-- Marc S. Korashan

Your suggestion closely resembles a column I wrote for the now defunct "Fantasy Crossroads." In fact, I covered two of the series you mention. But I don't have time to write it these days. Are there any qualified takers out there?



"THE VALE of the
EMERALD POPPY"