



future
retro-
spective
no. 11.

W. Gilbreath

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ARTISTS THIS ISSUE

WADE GILBREATH - cover, p. 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 20, 26, 25
CLIFF BIGGERS - p. 32, 33, 34, back cover

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***** HELP!!! *****

Artists are desperately needed to fill up FR with spot illos; this issue we're back to the two standbys again, and Wade Gilbreath has his own fanzine to think of, so he can't continue to supply me with an infinite number of spot illos. Please, any artists out there, send plenty of spots and we'll see that you receive plenty of FRs and plenty of egoboo.

***** LATE NOTE *****

Rich Garrison and Ginger Kaderabek are bidding for this coming year's DeepSouthCon (DSC '78) to be held in Atlanta. Aside from the superb con they'll put on, they have some interesting ideas and a confirmed attendee--Robert A. Heinlein. Guest of Honor will be announced later, but Atlanta is THE bid for 1978. Be sure to support them, be at the Birmingham DSC and vote in the business meeting Sunday morning--and vote Atlanta.



PERSPECTIVES IN RETROSPECT

Perhaps the most important item in this issue of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE, at least for us, is the new address. This move came about so suddenly that we had little time to notify everyone of it personally, so we relied instead on word-of-letter and notices in various fanzines to get the message to most everyone until we could get this FR out. The new address, once again, is 1029 Franklin Road, Apartment 1-C, Marietta, Georgia 30067.

On the convention front, there are a few conventions coming up that definitely deserve notice; taking them in chronological order, we'll begin with *Attention* (c/o Mike Weber, 1870 Dresden Drive, Apt. B-2, Atlanta GA 30319); *Attention* is a small convention being held in Atlanta over the June 3-5 weekend, and the pro guest of honor is Manly Wade Wellman. Fan guests of honor, as mentioned before, are Cliff & Susan Biggers. Write to Mike for more information.

And the big con-event in Southern fandom is the *Bhamacon*, this year's *DeepSouthCon*, held in Birmingham, Alabama. This year's *DSC* promises to be a gala event, with numerous activities, panels, etc. scheduled. The Pro Guest of Honor is *Mike Bishop* (interviewed in the last issue of FR) and the Fan Guests of Honor are *Charlie and Dena Brown*, editors of *LOCUS*. As was mentioned last issue, a special poetry booklet, presenting the little-seen poetry of Michael Bishop in a handsome, hand-printed chapbook, will be given to the first 100 members of the convention. Membership stands at over 80 now, so send your \$5 membership to Penny Frierson (3705 Woodvale Rd., Birmingham AL 35223).

In connection with the *DSC*, I might mention a special item the con is trying out this year: a *Fanzine Display Room*. This room is just for fanzine display, and we'd like to see as many fan editors as possible take part in this. The only thing required for the display is one copy of your fanzine (preferably the latest, but if you have an issue you'd rather display, that's alright), submitted in a plastic cover to prevent fingerprints, smudges, etc. (but if you don't want the copy back, the plastic cover is up to you. All interested editors should submit fanzines, display covers, etc., to me, Cliff Biggers (address above) by the end of July.

CLIFF-BIGGERS

CONTENTS

As you no doubt have already noticed, this issue of FR is a bit of a departure from our standard review format; in addition to another interview, we've included a column by Mike Glycer and a humorous article by Grant Carrington. Both items were requested by us, and we're most pleased with them.

Now, though, we're faced with the question of whether we should do this regularly; there has been no sacrifice of review quantity or quality, since all we've done is add the pages for this material onto the review pages for FR, thus increasing the size of the magazine, so it's not as if those who favor reviews are losing anything. I tend to favor the inclusion of non-review material in FR, but I'd like to get reader opinion. I'm also interested in adding other features to FR--but this will depend on arrangements between myself and those writers and artists I had in mind.

The only regret I do have with this issue of FR is the lack of fanzine review pages; I enjoy the feature, and hated to drop it, but this was facilitated primarily by our move to Marietta, which ended up with me boxing up all the fanzines in about four boxes and promptly forgetting which four they were. If I manage to get enough fanzines between now and FR #12, the reviews will be back.

.....

Rich Garrison writes us that he has given up his job at Blankenship Printing in order to make Heritage Press a full-time venture, since he felt that, at part-time, he wasn't getting enough done. This should mean more material coming from Heritage in the future, and it should also speed up the completion of Thomas Burnett Swann's QUEENS WALK IN THE DUSK and L. Sprague de Camp's poetry volume. For those of you who haven't ordered it yet, the Swann volume is \$16, including postage, and is well worth the price: order from: HERITAGE, POB 721, Forest Park, GA 30050.

Dell sends a notice saying that they are increasing their SF production in the future; and a letter in the newest LOCUS seems to confirm that. Dell's SF output has been all-too-small lately, and an increased interest in the field from any publisher is good news for both authors and readers.

.....

Moving is a disruptive experience; we'd been in our house in Cedartown for almost 4 years, and I was still thinking of it as the new place; now I'm transported into an apartment in Marietta, all too much faanish stuff is still in boxes, and I'm trying to get myself organized. I imagine I'll be trying to get myself organized for months to come, for that matter; I'm not a quick person to readjust to new surroundings, and my inherent tendency to procrastination urges me to leave things in the boxes rather than go to the trouble of unpacking it right now.



The first thing we had to do upon moving here was organize the books and the records; I guess there's a faanish tendency toward neatness as far as books are concerned, no matter how the remainder of the house appears. Once books were in alphabetical order and on the shelves, I felt like this just might be a real home, after all--it's a real feeling of insecurity, not knowing for certain where any given paperback is.

I discovered that new shelves are a must before I can unpack the magazines, though; of course, it doesn't really matter, since they're in boxes by title and year now, and I can pull them out when/if I need them or want to read them.

Of course, the mundane stuff still remains in boxes, except for that we have to use every day (clothes, etc.). Someday I'll get around to unpacking all this, but not until after the vital things: fanzines, electrostencils, etc.

And of course I had to spend a little time learning the backroads of Marietta; I'm a firm believer that one should never travel a four-lane road if there are ten miles of twisting backroad within a city to get you from Point A to Point B. This even goes as far as Atlanta--we finally found a way to get there without getting on an expressway at all, and I'm happy with that route.

Gregg Press has a hardbound set of Andre Norton's WITCH WORLD volumes due out as you read this; these are to be clothbound editions, without dustcovers, with Norton's signature stamped on the front. The set is \$50, or each of the seven volumes will be \$7.95. I haven't seen the books yet, but I have seen some of Gregg's material before, and I can recommend the book on the basis of binding, paper quality, etc.; and of course, the literary quality of the WITCH WORLD books is already known. If you can afford the entire set, it's a good investment.

Some FR contributors are branching out on their own: not only is Wade Gilbreath (1629-B Cripple Creek Dr., Birmingham, AL 35209) doing his own fanzine, TRAVERTINE, but Barry Hunter has put out an issue of his new fanzine, BARYON. I haven't seen TRAVERTINE yet, although it's due out very soon, but I can assure you that with the perfectionist tendencies of it's editor, it'll be a good magazine. Wade's a double-threat, both as artist and writer, and I look for good things from him. It will be available for trade, so send him the latest issue of your fanzine, why not?

Barry Hunter's BARYON is a departure from his prior format of listing his mail, along with brief commentary; this is basically a reviewzine. The latest BARYON (#1 or #6 depending on whether or not he continues with his old fanzine numbering system) is a rather small 16 pages, and has its flaws, but it gives moderately enjoyable reading.

Probably the biggest problem with BARYON is the fact that it's an on-stencil zine, for the most part; the reviews end up being very superficial and skimpy, and the sentence structure is flawed a great many times. But Barry tells me that the next issue will be drafted first, so that should bring about an increase in text quality. Furthermore, he's taking the time to get more material, and better quality, so the fanzine will be more of a fanzine and less of a general-distribution apazine. I expect eh next BARYON to be a solid fanzine, and recommend that you give it a try.

Which brings to mind a problem I've been noting recently; many faneds (or new faneds, to be more specific) seem to be putting out almost anything as a first issue of a fanzine, and then don't understand why their fanzine has made a poor impression with its readers. The first issue is a crucial one, since it goes a long way in establishing a readership, and I wish more people would take the time to put together a showcase first issue.

I should talk... the first FR was a mere 18 pages... but it was 18 pages of material I was proud of, so I can't really berate it too much... although I'm sure there are others who can...

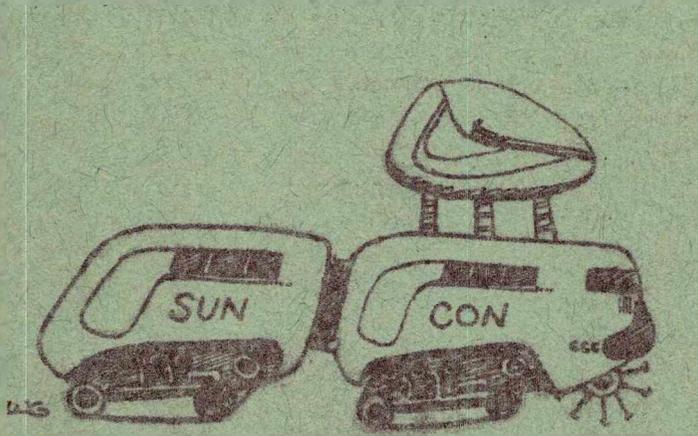
In the past few days, I've received three first-issue fanzines that were very, very weak in quality and presentation, and

that's a real disappointment.

According to LOCUS, Suncon's hotel is definitely in trouble, much along the lines of the problem hinted at in FR #8; I'm very disappointed in this, since I feel sure it'll hurt the con in some way.

At the risk of "I-told-you-so"ing, it should be mentioned that very few people were pleased with the move to Miami, and many predicted problems with a Worldcon switching sites that late in the game. Now, it seems that the problems may be coming about.

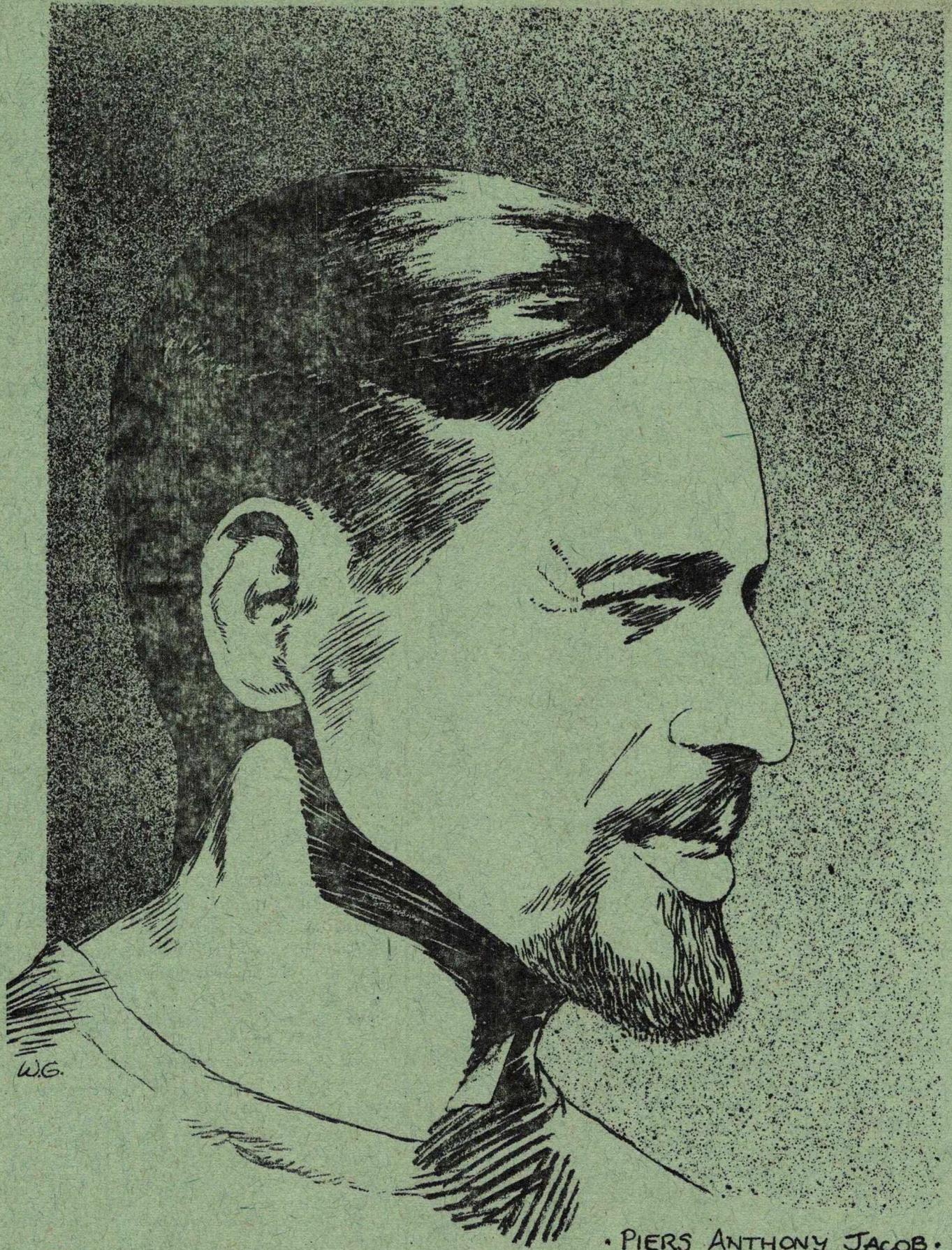
If Suncon is anywhere within 700 miles of here, I'm planning to attend. But as one hotel after another begins to have problems, I'm no longer so certain that it'll be within that radius. Perhaps the hotels have misunderstood and thought the name was Shun-con....



Special thanks go out to Wade Gilbreath, who took the time to supply us with all the spot illos needed for this issue of FR; I do wish that some other artists would send a few things, since we're obviously overworking Wade. Please, any fanartists out there, send us some spot illos; the more we get, the more FR's we'll send you.

As many have surmised, Susan had little time to write for this FR; this accounts for the fewer reviews by her this time, as well as for her total absence on these editorial pages. Susan promises to be back with more material next time, but her new job (which was the reason we moved, incidentally) is taking a bit of time to adjust to, so fanac dropped off for the time being. I'll worm more material out of her next time, for sure.

And now, let's get on with the FR...



W.G.

• PIERS ANTHONY JACOB. •

INTROSPECTIVE: PIERS ANTHONY

Piers Anthony is an author who needs little introduction to science fiction readers of the past fifteen years; Piers has been active in sf, both as a professional and as a fan, and has achieved notoriety in both areas. At the end of March, Piers took some time off in the middle of a current novel and answered the questions for this interview via mail.

FR: You seemed to burst into sf full-force, with two major works--SOS THE ROPE and CHTHON. Do you have any idea why you came to sf to begin with, and how actively involved were you in sf before you became a professional?

PA: The key word is "seemed." I was an avid, completist reader of SF from 1947 on, and developed a considerable collection of magazines. I started serious SF writing in 1954, sold my first story in 1962, and my first novel in 1966. So it was hardly a "burst"; I had worked my way up through the slush pile for many years before my head broke the surface, and by then my talent had solidified. I had no fan activity prior to my first sale, but I was as deeply involved in SF as I could be.

It would be difficult to trace everything, though. I was addressing a class of high school students last month, and a girl asked me why I had taken up writing, and I gave her a direct answer--and was amazed to hear what I said. The real key seems to be not "why SF?" but "why write?" The answer to the first is, that is what I was familiar with, so when I decided to get serious about writing, it had to be SF. That tells you almost nothing, you need to know why I was an SF nut, and why I was motivated to write, instead of being a good, sensible mundane civilian. Actually, the why SF and why write items are linked--well, you asked for it..

My early life was unhappy. I was not mistreated or hungry or anything like that; it was more subtle. I was born in Oxford, England, and lived there about four years. Yes--John Brunner hails from the same time and place. I was happy there, until the time came to leave; then I discovered that my beloved nurse was not my mother, and that I had to go away with two comparative strangers who were my real parents. We went to Spain in 1939, when I was just about turning five; I began to learn Spanish and forget English. My father was head of the AFSC (American Friends Service Committee, the international activity arm of the Quakers) relief program in Spain during the civil war there. He was feeding the starving children, who there, as in many wars, were the real victims of combat. Then General Franco won, and apparently the new quasi-fascist government was suspicious of anyone who was giving out food for nothing, so one day my father disappeared. Nobody knew what had happened, until he managed to smuggle out a note; then my mother faced the authorities with the note, showing that they had lied about not knowing anything about the case, and since had done no wrong, they were in an awkward position. So they covered up by letting him go--provided he left the country. He has

some interesting things to say about his time in that prison; apparently there were no toilets, just a trench in the men's section--so when the women needed to go, they had to come into the men's section to use the trench, and the men stood around and saw whatever they could see while the show was on. And that's just one example..

Anyway, we left Spain in August 1940, and I had my 6th birthday on the ship. They were short of supplies, since WW II was then on in Europe, so my birthday cake was made out of sawdust, iced and candled like any other cake. Today my own children, the age I was then, delight to hear about that wonderful sawdust cake, though I recall being disappointed that I couldn't eat it. I had a harmonica for a birthday present, and played it all over the ship. Lot of fun, right? Well, yes, except for the seasickness; but another thing is, this was my second uprooting, going to a new country with another language, and I suffered. I had a string of psychological problems such as bed wetting, convulsive head and hand motions, and fear of the dark. A single nightmare terrified me for three years. I was small for my age, finishing 9th grade at exactly 100 pounds and 5 feet even, the smallest in my class, male or female (I have considerable sympathy for Harlan Ellison, who is also my age; I may have been smaller than he, until I started to grow, and I kept growing until my third year of college, and now stand at 5'11" or so in the morning, and shrink some during the day). So I got bullied. Also, my parents didn't get along; they were divorced when I was eighteen, but they might as well have done it when I was eight, because the tension was worse than the finality. This represented my third uprooting, really. So I had an untenable emotional situation, and had my life ended there, I would have preferred not to have been born. I've glossed over the details, of course; it was not all bad. But I had to get out of it or lose my mind. And that was where SF came in. When I discovered ASTOUNDING SF magazine at the age of 13, a whole new world opened up for me-- a glorious, adventurous wonderful world, so much better than my own. I supposed today kids in my situation discover hard drugs instead; I guess I could have been a drug addict, but never encountered that, and did encounter science fiction. I was hooked; I lived for SF thereafter. So that's the "why SF?" answer. The "why writing?" ties in; I was nothing and less than nothing--that is, I would have been happier not living--and there seemed to be precious little justification for my existence. When I was 16 my closest cousin, age 15, who had everything to live for, died of cancer; it really seemed unfair, since obviously I was the one who should have gone. It was as though I had to justify my life somehow. And so this compulsion to figure it out, to understand why I did live, and to make that clear to the world--assuming there was a rationale for it. By the time I had figured the things I needed to know, I was a vegetarian--because of my aversion to death, which I suppose may be taken as a positive sign after my prior attitude--and I was able to express complex thoughts pretty well. So--I wrote, And became Someone, instead of No-one. That is the essence of

what I told the girl in class, and listened to myself tell. I am an SF writer today because without SF and writing I would be nothing at all today.

To wrap up the question: I took seven years to struggle through CHTHON, finally got it untangled and completed in 1965. It sold a year later, and was published the year after that. Meanwhile I had written the collaborative novel THE PRETENDER (Borgo Press should publish that in a couple of years) and was working on HASAN. I wrote three novels, OMNIVORE, SOS THE ROPE, and THE RING (collaborative) in 1967, and they all sold, and I've been going at a similar writing pace since. So it was not as sudden as it seemed; it was just that once I cracked the novel publishing barrier, I moved right on ahead. My second novel sale was actually OMNIVORE.

FR: You seem to have run into some problems quite early; I've heard that you had some problems with your dealings with BALLANTINE concerning OMNIVORE. What did happen?

PA: They violated both their contracts with me, on CHTHON and OMNIVORE, and blacklisted me when I protested. I took back both novels and had them republished elsewhere.

I have a tremendous amount of material relating to this matter, and it is too complex to cover entirely here. So I'll summarize as I remember it, and you must bear in mind that the others named would naturally put different interpretations on the matter. I got along fine with Ballantine at first, but then they played it fast and loose with the terms of the contract, and tried to tough it out rather than admit error, and involved other people, and suggested that I was the one at fault--well, you don't do that to me unless you are prepared for a real fight.

One good example: when OMNIVORE was picked up by the book club, they never showed me the contract or told me its terms; they just sent me a note saying my 50% share would be sent along soon. Well, time passed; the book club edition was published, and no money came. So I inquired, gently; how come no money and no author's copies? They ignored this. Then, a month after the book club publication they sent me a statement of account--and did not even list the book club sale. Or the two European sales of CHTHON. That was when I hit the ceiling and sent them a stiff note, demanding to know why such things weren't listed.

As a result, Betty Ballantine blacklisted me there, returning my novel ORN--already editorially marked for the typesetters, or at least partially marked. So I wrote to the SFWA Contracts Committee, that was set up to handle such things, run by Damon Knight. He did not respond directly; instead he passed the letter along to Robert Silverberg, who passed it (or word of it) to Betty Ballantine; then both Silverberg and Ballantine wrote me what I felt were arrogant notes, suggesting I was guilty of libelling the finest publisher in the world, and had harmed my career by my rashness. As it happened, my wife was pregnant at the time, and she had lost three babies before and had had surgery in an effort to hold this one; she began to get hysterical, and

and I don't mean with laughter. SFWA and Gordon Dickson, then Pretident of SFWA, offered to arbitrate, and we all chose arbiters, and after a long passage of time, it was obvious that someone was stalling and nothing was going to come of it, so I quit SFWA (and never have rejoined) and handled it myself. I ended up getting \$800 and after that it went pretty much my way. I never did get my book club author's copies, incidentally. And of course the word was spread all over about what an unreasonable person Piers Anthony was; I got feedbacks from that from more than one direction and had trouble selling my books, and my income decreased while my unsold backlog increased. But I survived it without compromising my principles.

FR: Why is it that you're now back with Ballantine, after all these problems? Is it changing editors, changing policies, or what?

PA: Both, in fact. The administration changed at Ballantine, and the del Reys took over there. I've always gotten along fine with both del Reys. I admired Lester's editing way back in the early 50's, and met him personally in 1966 and told him he was the sort of editor I could write for, and I meant it, and I was right. I've had experience with good and bad editors: he's a good one. So I'm doing fantasy for him now, and enjoying it.

FR: And then there was MACROSCOPE, undoubtedly one of the most controversial non-Hugo winners in SF. Did you have trouble selling the book?

PA: Yes. Five American publishers bounced it, and finally Avon took it. It has paid back a lot of money since then; I expect the total to pass \$20,000 this year. But the most important thing is that it got me a good publisher; Avon has treated me in a way that no other publisher did. Almost all my best work is at Avon now.

FR: What about Hugoes in general; how do you feel about SF awards, whether from fans or pros?

PA: I've gotten rather cynical about those awards, for a number of reasons. I'm not sure I would accept either a fan or a pro award today. Some of my earlier novels were contenders for awards; CHTHON placed third in both Hugo and Nebula. MACROSCOPE was distributed late, so the people who were waiting to read it and perhaps nominate it for the Nebula could not do so, and they refused to allow write-ins, so it was frozen out without a hearing. It was on the Hugo ballot--but I had received the word privately that a lot of fans didn't like my arrogance, and refused to read it. I feel both the fan and the pro attitude were wrong, and I also feel that MACROSCOPE was a better novel than the one that won. That was LeGuin's LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS--which was a very fine novel, but which won by default. You see, that was the year, 1969, that Disch's CAMP CONCENTRATION was published; I never found that on sale so have never been able to read it, but I understand from all accounts, including LeGuin's own, that it was the best novel of that year. There was also Spinrad's BUG JACK BARRON, tremendously controversial--but

FOR THE REASONS... BUT... THE...

what a number of people seemed to overlook was the fact that under all that provocative language was an excellent novel. With people voting for or against Spinrad's novel for the wrong reasons, and with both mine and Disch's excluded from the ballot (for different reasons)--well, LeGuin's might have won fairly, in the Nebula, but did not. The Nebula win carries a lot of impact with the fans, and I think in recent years the winner of the Nebula has often won the Hugo automatically, regardless of its merit. So I feel both awards have been debased by error and politics, and that isn't the sort of thing I care to participate in. It is possible that I might have a more optimistic attitude had one of my prior novels won, of course; but I try not to be a hypocrite, and feel I have legitimate objections to these awards. So I rather expect to pass them up, not because I feel my work is unworthy, but because the awards are unworthy. The fans who did not like my arrogance before will now have more ammunition--but there is no arrogance on Earth like that of an ignorant fan.

FR: When Ted White first took over AMAZING and FANTASTIC, he ran a stunning fantasy novel of yours, Hasan, which remained unsold in book form for seven years. More recently, you've been noticeably absent in AMAZING and FANTASTIC; is this due to financial aspects or other reasons?

PA: Both the fantasy HASAN (which was sold in book form, but written off without publication by Berkley, and now will be published by Borgo) and the SF novel ORN were serialized in Ted White's magazines. I have no quarrel with White in this connection. But his publisher is a rogue who reneges on agreements and cheats authors, so I decline to do business. I did compromise by showing Ted a collaborative novel, DEAD MORN; he has had it for over three years now without a report or response to my queries, and I presume this means he will not publish it. I'd like to get it back, in fact. I would have shown Ted OX had his publisher behaved, but he did not so I did not.

About Ted, though--and this relates to an earlier question--let me say this. When all the mess with Ballantine broke, and it seemed that my career as a writer could be finished because of the blacklist, and I felt SFWA had betrayed me, I needed good advice. So I turned to what I felt was the best source for advice relating to this sort of problem; Ted White, who has had a similar problem. And he answered with a long, fine, sensible analysis: what threats were real, what were bluffs, what I could expect to gain or lose following what courses. It put the whole thing into tactical perspective and enabled me to carry it through to its eventual more-or-less successful conclusion. I have always been grateful to Ted White for this, and that is why I am so careful to say that my quarrels with AMAZING have been with his publisher, not him. I never forget how he helped me when I needed it.

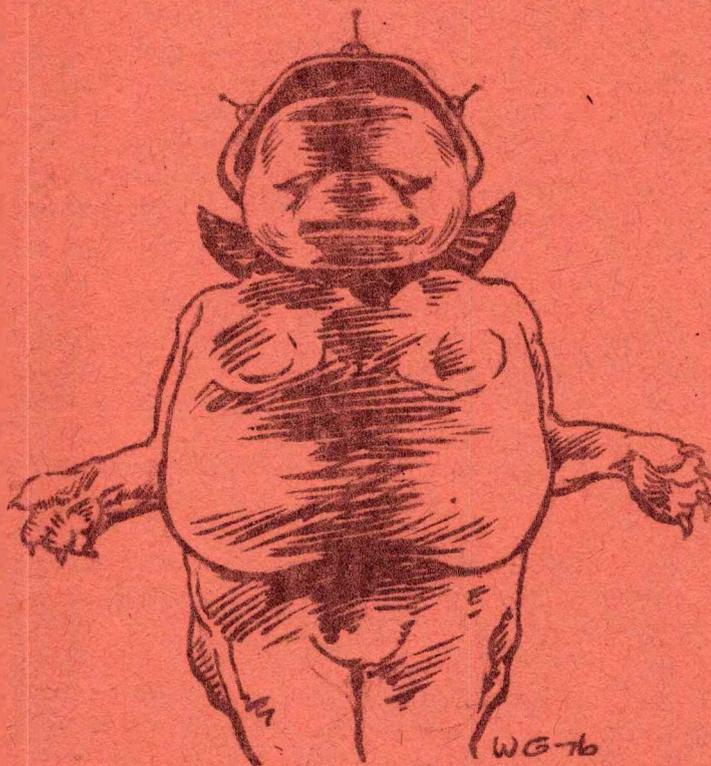
FR: Why did you have so much trouble getting HASAN sold?
In fact, you still have numerous manuscripts unsold--an amazing thing for a professional of your caliber. Do you have any ideas why?

PA: Well, I did have trouble with that blacklist; one publisher bounced HASAN for that reason, and others may have without admitting it. But I think it is mainly that editors have particular tastes and not too much competence, and often don't know a successful manuscript from a dud. A number said that HASAN fell between categories, and thus would not sell well. Make of that what you will.

FR: Another rather amazing fact is the absence of a Piers Anthony short story collection from your published works. Why?

PA: I don't know how writers get short story collections published; no publisher has ever been interested in anything of the sort from me. Maybe if I had a more aggressive agent who thought in those terms--but by and large, story collections are not in demand. Since only one in four of my stories ever sold anyway, I don't have a big list of published stories to draw from; maybe twenty or so.

But I did try one innovation: I collected almost all of my unsold stories into one 100,000 word volume entitled ANTHOLOGY, which I thought was a clever title. I felt that many of those stories should have been published, and would have been, had my name been Clarke or Heinlein or Asimov. However, many of them were not good stories, too. So I put them all together with my commentary, telling where they had been marketed and what sort of editorial responses I had gotten and why I thought they had failed. The volume thus became a kind of new-writer's text: here is this story, here is what the



editor said about it, here is what was wrong with it. I think it made good reading of a unique kind. The reader could read a story, enjoy it, then guess what was going to happen to it, and maybe get some pointers on how to avoid a similar failure himself. But--the volume itself could find no publisher. I think this was for several reasons: one reason was that the editors knew these were rejected stories, so felt they must be bad, and read with a prejudiced mind. Another was that it was a collection by a not-well-known writer, a sure drug on the market. But mainly, it called a spade a spade when it came to editing. I quoted editor's comments on given pieces--well, from memory, here's an example: I did a story called "Balook" about the animation of the largest mammal ever known, Baluchitherium, eighteen feet tall at the shoulders, twice the size of an elephant. But people found it strange, so they were mean to it, taking pot shots, throwing firecrackers, and so on, so the experiment failed not because of the animal but because of the people in our society. I thought this was a very important concept to get across, and a good SF story, too. But one editor rejected it because he couldn't believe people would be that cruel, and John Campbell rejected it because he said he already knew people were that mean; he even gave an example of such cruelty, where someone had fed a can of lye to a zoo hippopotamus and killed it. So there you have two opposite reasons for rejection--and this tends to show up editors more than the story.

PROSTHO PLUS I submitted on my own; then, a couple of months later I had obtained an agent, and he submitted ANTHONOLOGY. I got a report on ANTHONOLOGY, rejecting it, before I got one on PROSTHO PLUS. Finally, when something like six months had passed, I got a copy of the British edition of PROSTHO PLUS and gave it to my agent to remarket, since I could not get any response from that publisher on my own. Immediately he got an offer for it from the same publisher. For \$500 than they said they might have paid me, too.

But how to get past the barrier on that book--I don't know. I sent it to Richard Delap to review, the way he had for HASAN, that resulted in the first sale of HASAN. He said he was going to review it--but a number of years have passed with no further word. So I'm out the top copy, and one day I'll query Delap to learn what happened. It seems to be another jinxed manuscript. But there's why I have no short story collection in print.

FR: You're not a convention goer at all; you mentioned once that you'd probably not go to a Worldcon that was only a few hours away from you. Why is that?

PA: When they set up a worldcon in Orlando, I decided to go; that's only a hundred miles or so. When they moved it to Miami, I decided not to go; that's too far away. I don't like travelling anyway; my family is important to me, and so is my writing. We can't all go because we have animals to care for and my wife has a job and my kids have school, and I don't like going alone. I did make a trip to Vermont last summer, but I've never been to an sf convention.

FR: You dislike traveling, yet you mentioned a trip to Vermont--what was that about?

PA: I think that was the first trip I'd taken out of the state in a decade. I visited Andy Offutt in Kentucky back in 1964, and attended the Milford session in Pennsylvania in 1966. Those trips were worthwhile, but fandom simply isn't that important to me. But the Vermont trip--my college professor asked me to come for a Science Fiction & Future sort of program, and because I did have my degree in writing from there and had had good instruction, I felt the college had a call on me. I have a long memory for who I owe what, be it a favor or a curse. So I went, taking my daughter Penny along. It was just twenty years after my graduation, and now they have co-ed dorms and such--when I had been suspended for being in a girls' lounge with five other people at 10:40 PM, just talking. Times change, and I reminded them of that. Ed Meskys, one of the editors of NIEKAS, attended, but overall their program was a disaster. Hardly any students bothered to attend; it was the first nice day in some time, and they were all outside enjoying the sun. We had confirmed reservations going home--and the airplane would not let us aboard. I had planned to meet an editor in New York, and everything was fouled up. Anyway, I had several days good conversation with SF writer Katherine McLean, and my daughter enjoyed it, so I don't regret it. I adapted the experience to my novel GOD OF TAROT; I adapt everything I can to my writing, as a matter of policy. This May I'll take my younger daughter to Pennsylvania, to my 25th high school class reunion, because the 25th is the only one I'm willing to make the effort for, and we have a high concentration of family there to visit, and we try to be fair with our children: one daughter had her turn, now the other must have hers. That's the way we operate.

FR: It's quite obvious that your daughters are extremely important to you; how much of a change in your life came about when Penny and Chery were born?

PA: I regard the birth of my first child as the most significant change in my life, ever. You see, we'd been married for eleven years, and lost three children, and not been certain if we could ever have a child of our own, and of course the adoption agencies would not have accepted a vegetarian who wrote science fiction as a good parent. So when we finally got one we could keep, it was a complete transformation. My wife returned to work, and I took care of Penny. She was my little girl; I diapered her, I fed her, I held her at night, because she was colicky and had to be held or she could not sleep; I got very little sleep in those days! There was not a moment of my day or night when she was not somewhere in my mind; I had to know what she was doing, where she was, that she was all right. My writing efficiency was cut in half. Thus this birth made more difference to me than marriage itself. Chery, born 2 1/2 years later, was her mother's girl, and did not affect my life so much. As my mother-in-law put it: one child already takes up 100% of your time. So the second can't make as much difference. I'm making notes for a book, now, to be entitled TANGLEHAIR TALES (a borrowing from Hawthorne's TANGLEWOOD TALES) about the experience of raising two cute, bright

little girls. (The school tested Chery's IQ at 150, and she's doing 2nd grade work in the 1st grade. As I said: bright.) Penny is hyperactive and learning-disabled--both terms referring to rather complicated syndromes; I did a whole article on that subject and sold it to the local newspaper. So we've had a lot of experience, good and bad--but I'd never trade it for the alternative. A number of fans have objected to my talking about my children; sorry, my children are more important to me than the fans.

FR: You have very few dealings with fanzines nowadays; is this because of your heavy writing schedule, or are there other reasons?

PA: I really entered fandom and prodom simultaneously, late in 1962, getting in touch with NFFF while my first sale was being made. I did not tell the fans I had made a sale, and they regarded me as a "neo" despite my fifteen years of SF addiction, and I never cared to go beyond that status. Someone discovered I was a pro and printed my address, and I was deluged with fanzines begging a response. I wrote to each explaining that I preferred not to participate, and some of them would run my note and maybe ridicule it, though I had not intended it for print, so finally I lumped three fanzines together and gave them a multipage letter putting it all on the line. One of them printed excerpts--negative ones, not positive ones, of course, and that started a major fan feud. If I say "this is good and this is bad," and a fanzine

prints only the latter and objects to my being negative--well, I had a bellyfull of that sort of thing, and now I simply don't answer fanzines without a special reason. I used to write to half a dozen fanzines, good ones like SFR and DOUBLE: BILL and NIEKAS, and refused to write to any others after that. FR is an exception, mainly because I do have an interest in SF reviewing. You may remember that our first contact was when you invited me to attend an unpretentious con in Georgia ((Halfacon '74 - Susan)), and I declined, and then you printed your fanzine and did not lambast me. That showed the difference between you and a number of other fans. I'm still in touch with Joanne Burger and hope to see her this year, so I don't eschew all fans, but I certainly don't go out of my way to interact with them. It is true I'd rather write than waste time at cons, and if I ever do attend a con I'll probably do it anonymously, because I don't like class distinctions. As I said: I have a reputation for arrogance, and well-earned--but there are a number of fans--and pros--who deserve much more of that reputation than I do, and I'm damned if I'll cater to them.

FR: Several people in fandom seem to see you as a hot-tempered, feuding sort; yet you're not that kind of person at all. Your VERTEX feud, for instance, was a case of your offering moral support to a new author who'd gotten a bad deal--have any of these other feuds been on more personal levels, and do you still get feedback on them? I know you've told me that "I never had a feud with an honest person; I hate dishonesty and hypocrisy, and my definitions are stricter than the norm." Do you care to elaborate?

PA: Something you have to realize: there is no person in this world who is not reasonable by his own lights. Harlan Ellison has quite a reputation for feuding, yet he can be the most considerate, nicest person you'd want to meet. As I've shown here, Ted White can be most accomodating. So most of these feuds are really misunderstandings. So I must qualify my statement: I do hate dishonesty and hypocrisy, and try to live a moral life myself--but what I call dishonest, another person may call practical. Don Pfeil of VERTEX treated me perfectly well, and he was merely running his business as he saw fit; I took off on him because my standards differ. I'm sensitive to contract violations and blacklisting and setting stories in type without contracts, but he obviously felt that some of these practices were proper. He made the tactical mistake of challenging me, so he paid the penalty; I do know how to fight, as I think even my fannish enemies will concede. I don't think I've ever lost a battle in fandom, though my positions have been misrepresented many times. I've also had run-ins of small or great extent with agents Scott Meredith and Jay Garon, and with pros Ted White, Harlan Ellison, Harry Harrison, Dean Koontz, Wilson Tucker, Lin Carter and others I've forgotten. There are a number of people who don't like me--but the root of it has generally been my objection to their standards, rather than the other way around. If you ever encounter someone who seriously believes I have acted with dishonesty, tell me; I'd say the chances are ten to one he'll be corrected informally or in court. I don't say "to know me is to like me;" I say that when the dust settles down, most people will have to admit the bastard is right, and many of the rest will show themselves about the way Dean Koontz did. Dean



won't understand what I mean, of course. Yet I do have very close and good relationships with those who meet my criteria, and some who don't; for example I differ extremely from Roberto Fuentes, but we've collaborated on six novels and sold five, and we're good friends. I don't take the credit for that; it's just that Roberto can get along with anybody, for all that he doesn't have to, being a third degree black belt in judo. Anyway, a number of people are like this; they apply talent and drive and courage to whatever they do (Harlan Ellison being an obvious example), including combat, so they achieve more and make more enemies than other people do. I am of this type, apt to be more generous in both friendship and adversity than the average person. So don't be too free about saying I'm not a hot-tempered feuding sort; had you challenged my competence or ethics in print, you might have encountered quite another facet of my character. Yet if I were not this way, I would not have made it this far as a writer.

FR: You received poor treatment as a writer at Laser; Elwood had your book rewritten by Robert Coulson, and then listed it as a collaboration. What were your feelings on this? Did this lead to financial problems concerning royalties? Do you feel that the manuscript needed sufficient rewriting to reclassify it as a collaboration?

PA: This is another question that requires a complex answer. My feelings were and are strongly negative; it seems Elwood deceived both me and Coulson, telling me that there were only minor changes so he was having Coulson retype it rather than bothering me with the details, while he told Coulson that I had agreed to such major revision as to require collaboration. Had Elwood not been fired because of the lack of success of the Laser line, I believe I could have gotten him fired because of the ethical and contractual violations he perpetrated in this case. I feel that no revision at all was necessary, and that my original novel was superior to the mess that saw print. There were no financial problems, because I had already been paid; Coulson was paid a pittance by the company and promised a 50% share of future proceeds. Since there was no contractual authority for that, it was an empty promise; the "collaboration" was illegal. The manuscript did suffer sufficient rewriting to qualify as collaboration; the problem is that it did not need that rewriting, and was not improved by it. I now have the publisher's apology and the reversion of rights to my original text; Elwood is gone and the Laser line is finished. I think that suffices. It was Elwood, and not the publisher, who did it; Elwood deceived his own publisher, too.

FR: You take environmentalism quite seriously; how did your interest in this come about? Are you satisfied that the American public is giving environmentalism the attention it deserves, or do you think it's being glossed over?

PA: This ties in with my profession and my family. Professionally I am constantly looking to the future, trying to read the trends and extrapolate from them for my fiction. Personally, I want a halfway decent world for my children to go out into. What I perceive is disquieting. We are not headed for any utopia. It isn't just a matter of corruption and money-

grubbing; there has always been that, and though I don't approve, the world will no doubt survive it. It is that we cannot maintain our present trends without destroying the world as we know it. Food, energy, environment--we're running out of them all. Our grandchildren may starve and shiver and cough, with no recourse. No need to go into a long discussion here; there is plenty of documentation elsewhere. I have been active in Common Cause, trying to correct the political roots of misgovernment--but it will take more than that. I don't know how to make people who are stupid or willfully blind do what is necessary; merely economizing myself doesn't solve the problem when others are wasting precious resources. So I am doing what little I can; I am removing my family from it. I use bicycles to take my children to and from school--tandem bikes with extra seats, so I can take one or two children at once. I've been doing that for six years, and amassed about 7000 miles on four bikes--which represents a fair amount of gasoline saved. We use solar water heating, and open windows in lieu of air conditioning and wood in the fireplace in lieu of electric or oil heating. So we are living cheaply. We're now building a house on several acres of forest land next to a state forest, where we can continue and extend these things and grow a better garden. If civilization collapses, maybe we'll be able to survive. More important, maybe we'll show people it can be done, so that others will cut down on wastage and pollution, and the damage will lessen. And of course it shows in my writing; I had many of these things in my Laser novel, before the editors interfered. But I don't think the American public is taking these things seriously enough--and I fear we all may die of it.

FR: What other non-sf activities are you involved in?

PA: I've mentioned most of them already, actually. One other is judo. I got into that because of my collaborator, Roberto Fuentes, and the martial arts novels we were doing. I'll probably leave it this summer, after three years, because I am moving and I don't think there is a judo club where I'm going. But it has been good while it lasted. I'm a green belt, now, which is no high rank--it might be reckoned as getting a story published in a fanzine, while the black belt level of judo is pro, if that analogy helps. But if I'm ever mugged on a street, I could probably dispatch the mugger; judo is self-defense, and some of those techniques are devastating. Apart from that, it has kept me exercising vigorously, and that is good for my health, especially at my age. I do about 13 chins each morning, and three times a week assorted other exercises that give my system a good workout. I don't kill myself, but I'm probably in better physical shape than 95% of men my age. So you might say physical health is one of my activities, and that includes healthy eating--no free sugar, smoking, coffee, etc. I hope to measure out a half-mile track around our forest property and run a couple of laps regularly; I think running is the best exercise there is.

FR: Your Jason Striker series of kung-fu books did a nice job of combining this interest with semi-fantasy themes. Why was the series cancelled after five books?

PA: Ouch: not kung fu, Judo. Important difference! It was cancelled because of a change of editors at Berkley. The

old editors told us the series was doing well, and they wanted more, so we worked up a 6th novel--but in the interim, George Ernsberger, who was editor at Avon when I started there with *MACROSCOPE*, and who moved to Berkley and bought many more novels there--he left, and the new editors said the series was not doing well and bounced the next novel. I don't know what went on there; one fan reviewer, David Hartwell I believe, did a bad review of my juvenile novel *RACE A-GAINST TIME*, implying I was a racist, and he went to Berkley as an editor, and that could account for our loss of favor. I don't know; no doubt Hartwell will deny it--but he did show a bad attitude about a novel that was not racist. The sales figures show that the martial arts novels were doing about as well there as *PROSTHO PLUS*, which is science fiction--but that hasn't done that well, either. The fact is, the editor, more than the particular book, determines what publishers buy my work; when Ernsberger left Berkley, I was out too, and when Lester del Rey came to Ballantine, I was in again. (And on this matter of racism: my best friend, one of the few bright spots of my childhood, was a Negro. I believe in the integration of races, and my major novels feature integrated casts: *MACROSCOPE*, *GHOST*, *GOD OF TAROT*, and others; my Laser book had a black character--who was expurgated to white by someone.)

FR: I know that you've been most proud of your upcoming *CLUSTER/GOD OF TAROT* series of novels; what are these novels, and how important are they to you as a writer?

PA: Crucially important. I regard the three Cluster novels (*CLUSTER*, *CHAINING THE LADY* and *KIRLIAN QUEST*) as the best sf adventure I have done; together they amount to 349,000 words and range the full galactic cluster. I think the readers will like them best of all my works. *GOD OF TAROT* is linked, but of a different type; I hope it will be my best serious novel. (I'm working on it now, and it is difficult, so I can't say it is my best--just that I'm trying.) If I succeed, *GOD OF TAROT* will eclipse *MACROSCOPE* as the novel I am known by. The fans may not like it, because it isn't what they expect from me, but I'm aiming for a larger audience. Those who didn't like the astrology in *MACROSCOPE* will be apoplectic at the tarot theme of this one, not to mention the serious religion. But I refuse to shy away from serious material; for example, I'm doing a nonfiction book on kidney disease--

FR: How did you come to do a book on kidney disease?

PA: That's another long story. I'm getting tired, so let's see if I can condense it into a short answer. Back in 1962 I was fired from my good job at an electronics company and my wife lost her third baby, and a doctor told me the constant fatigue I felt was all in my mind--on the same day. Because of the employment problem I tried my first full year as a writer, and my wife, having no baby to care for, went to work to support us, and my insurance ridered me for all mental disease because of the fatigue, which never left me. I carried on. In 1972 I was a professional writer, and my wife had carried two babies, and I had found insurance that didn't think I was crazy--but my fatigue remained. Finally

I had a competent physical exam; it cost \$169--and they discovered I had diabetes. This was the source of my fatigue. The doctor, who supervised about 250 kidney dialysis treatments a week and handles all the kidney business for this area, said he had this notion for a book, and--and so we collaborated. He is the doctor, I am the writer; we bring our respective skills to it. We had one collaborative article published in a newspaper, and now at last have placed our book, *DEATH OR DIALYSIS*, with a small local publisher. It covers kidney disease, and dialysis, and transplantation of kidneys, and has fascinating episodes, like the time the tubing burst in the middle of a treatment, shooting a geyser of blood up to the ceiling, or when they took a kidney from the mother of a patient for transplant and discovered it was cancerous, so that her act of generosity literally saved her life. I'm sorry no big New York publisher wanted this book. I did it because I believe it will save lives, and I want to do more than merely entertain people.

FR: You've collaborated a great deal; do you prefer collaborating? Have you ever had any problems with collaborations?

PA: Endless problems! Collaboration is as much work as individual novel writing--for each party, yet each only gets half the money. I collaborate because I refuse to be limited by my own limitations. I knew nothing about martial arts, so I collaborated with a judo black belt; I know nothing about medicine, so I collaborated with a doctor. It is hard work--but I'm not in writing for money or ease. I did a whole fanzine article on collaborating for *OUTWORLDS*, so I'll leave it at that.

FR: You also mentioned once that you were contemplating a massive historical work; how did you get motivated to this, and what will it deal with?

PA: Again, I went into this in a fanzine, *BEABOHEMA*, some years back. History is one of my hobbies, but school classes often make it dull; I want to make it bright, and think I can--if I can ever find a willing publisher. My project will cover the entire history of man, told in stories and graphically. I mean, graphically as in graphs, pictures; what did you think I meant? But let me cop out on this; it's too big to go into detail on here...

FR: Before we close--do you claim any influences from other writers?

PA: Everything influences me, even bad examples like Hemingway. But basically I am my own man, emulating nobody. Borgo will do a booklet on me, later in their series, and possibly they will fathom my literary antecedents better than I can. I think this interview shows that I am not quite like other people, even other writers.

This interview has undergone only marginal editing for purposes of space; otherwise, it is presented as written.

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JAPANESE SALES

SOS THE ROPE

HOLLAND SALES

CHTHON / SOS THE ROPE / THE RING / OMNIVORE / VAR THE STICK / RINGS OF ICE

GERMAN SALES

CHTHON / SOS THE ROPE / PROSTHO PLUS / OMNIVORE RING / MACROSCOPE

ITALIAN SALES

ESP WORM / PROSTHO PLUS / SOS THE ROPE / MACROSCOPE / OMNIVORE

FRENCH SALES

OMNIVORE / ORN / MACROSCOPE

Many foreign editions of these books are in multiple editions; also, some foreign editions of MACROSCOPE were rewritten for republication.



THE BEST OF PHILIP K. DICK. Philip K. Dick (Ballantine 25359 - \$1.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

As a writer of modern science fiction, Philip K. Dick has earned a place that cannot be denied him as one of the leaders of the field. Even his failures have tremendous strength, and his successes--THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, FLOW MY TEARS..., DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP, etc.--are superlative works. Unfortunately, Philip K. Dick seems to be less successful in portraying his slightly warped perception of quasi-reality to the reader in short fiction; the result is that while THE BEST OF PHILIP K. DICK is a fine investment of money and reading time, it doesn't really say that much about Dick as an author. It's rather nondescript, only touching fully upon his strength in certain stories.

It's not a bad editing job, mind you; John Brunner did a good job of selection, although he was working against tremendous odds--Philip K. Dick hasn't done that much short fiction recently, and his early fiction offers just a brief glimpse at his full talent, just as Brunner's early fiction lacks the impact of his later work.

The strongest stories in this volume are the ones that Dick has become famous for--"Father-thing," for instance, has a power undiminished after many readings, and is probably the highlight of Dick's short fiction. This strange view of the complexities of personality is a haunting tale.

"Faith of our Fathers" is a story that succeeds in a rather low-key manner, just as did Dick's most recent novel, A SCANNER DARKLY. The mixture of drugs and philosophy and politics is a strange one, and moderately satisfying.

"A Little Something for Us Tempunauts" is a personal favorite, since I'm an avid fan of time-travel stories; Dick did this as an "ultimate" time-travel story, and it is indeed a grabber, carrying the reader along until the climax.

The remainder of the book, though, is merely a nice collection of solid fiction. It's not bad, not at all, but somehow it doesn't seem to be the real best of Philip K. Dick. Perhaps that's because the only way you can have his best is to have his novels--an impossible feat in an anthology-work like this. Nonetheless, THE BEST OF PHILIP K. DICK is one of the highlights of the Ballantine BEST OF... series, and is representative enough that it's well worth acquiring.

WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG. Kate Wilhelm. (Focket Books 80912 -- \$1.75 / Harper & Row - \$7.95). Reviewed by Andy Whitehead.

I am always wary of superlatives, so when I saw that the back cover of this book carried the following quote from LOCUS, I steeled myself:

"The best novel about cloning written to date... destined to be a science fiction classic," it said.

The number of "science fiction classics" thrown out by the Podunk, Ohio Public Library is painfully large.

REVIEWS LETTERS

Inside, this from same:

"Should by rights sweep next year's Hugo and Nebula awards."

To top it off, there are quotations that liberally sprinkle words like "rich", "stunning", "sweeping", and "eloquent." These quotes are from a variety of papers, like the New York Times.

So don't be disappointed when the book doesn't live up to these grandiose mumblings. (Imagine if Shakespeare was a modern writer...) Be glad it doesn't fall flat on its pretty face.

Book itself: there are some loose ends but loose ends aren't always bad. What happens to a pair of characters--one human, one clone--who are banished from the clone community founded after natural disasters sweep the world, is never mentioned. That's a good sign in this case, because I'm curious about what's happened to them and that means the author was able to make me care about them.

Wilhelm's characterization of the clones is weak, however. Perhaps she purposely undercharacterizes them to show that they lack any individual aura. In any case, I neither like or dislike them. They're just shadow figures walking about, cluttering things up.

The whole book is pretty laid back--it's not at all fiery. Indeed, laid back may be something of an understatement. The book is only 207 pages long but it covers a period of circa 75 years. So quite often, whole seasons and years are skipped over to get on with the story. Fine. Wilhelm knows that if nothing happened during the winter, there's no point in our putting on snowshoes to go out and say it.

On the other hand, she sometimes glosses over things. She does a tornado in two or three paragraphs. She may claim nothing happened during the storm but I think there's a definite reason for going into some detail there. It seems to me to be a foreshadowing.

Another good sign is this: the book is a tightly constructed, cohesive unit. To take any one segment out of the book to give a thesis statement, you must explain and qualify, which requires you to explain and qualify even more. That means everything is tightly woven, that Wilhelm's plot construction



COA

Gary Steele has a new address, effective immediately; he's using this opportunity to notify as many people as possible. If you can, please pass this CoA along. It's:

GARY STEELE, 1750-L Terrell Mill Road, Marietta, Georgia 30067

is as tight as possible.

In summation, Wilhelm often touches down on other ideas. Minor lthemes fill the book, flesh it out, but she touches each only long enough to make her point. None of these dominates her major theme, namely, which is more important, the individual of The State?

The State is the entire clone colony, united by a sort of racial conscience. We have long known that identical twins often have a strong psychic bond. Wilhelm extrapolates: when you have five or six groups of six to ten children, all descended from the same genes, it's not surprising that if they become separated they can become severely ill. Physical limitations force the growth of The State but severe strain can, in some cases, sever a clone's connection and make him an individual. An outcast.

I don't know if this book will sweep the Hugos and Nebulas. I doubt it; if it were stronger, had more impact, perhaps, but not as it is. However, Wilhelm has nothing to regret in WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG.

LETTER FROM KARL EDWARD WAGNER (2-6-77)

"...As it turned out, FR 9-10 stirred a: Box 1064
up a hornet's nest here. While I had Chapel Hill NC
seen George H. Smith's SECOND WAR 27514
OF THE WORLDS on the stands, it had
never occurred to me that the book would be borrowing from
the Wellmans' SHERLOCK HOLMES' WAR OF THE WORLDS.
I caught your review in leafing through Manly's copy; Manly,
who was not aware of Smith's book, read the review, bought
a copy of the book, read it, and was furious. The appearance
of Holmes and Watson (as Mr. H and Dr. W) is too much of
a coincidence, as is the proposal that the invaders were not
really Martians, but only used Mars as a base for launching
their attack. The Wellmans had proposed this several years
back, when their series was appearing in F&SF. Don't sup-
pose anything can be done, but it's a damn low trick.

"By the way, it is Manly's sone, Wade Wellman, who wrote the sonnet sequence for APOLLO #7, not Manly--as reported in your review on p. 41 of FR 9-10. Wade teaches at a branch of the University of Wisconsin. He has written a good bit of verse, collected in a hardcover volume entitled NOVEMBER WIND (The Golden Quill Press, Francestown, New Hampshire: 1967). Wade has had contribution to THE HOWARD COLLECTOR and WEIRDBOOK, to name some genre publications that come to mind. The Holmes pastiche is the only collaboration he has with Manly..."

((First off: the reviewer of the Smith book, Gary Steele, was only marginally familiar with Manly's SHERLOCK HOLMES' WAR OF THE WORLDS; after the letter, he read the Wellmans' book and was amazed at the similarity. Personally, I would think something could be done about such semi-plagiarism, but I would hope that at least the publication of this would discourage it in the future. I'll admit that there is the chance that this is merely a coincidence, but it seems

to follow awfully closely down the line if it is. I'd be interested to hear what George H. Smith had to say about the similarities; he could share much more with us than I could ever come up with by idle guesswork, and as has been pointed before, guesswork along the lines of "who wrote what when" can be awfully complex.

As to the sonnet sequence in APOLLO: my mind read "Manly" where the word was absent, so I immediately attributed it to Manly Wade Wellman--oversight on my part, and clumsy oversight at that. The sonnet sequence still remains a highlight of APOLLO #7, no matter which of the two talented Wellmans wrote it, though, and I thank you for the correction.))

THE SHINING. Stephen King. (Doubleday - \$8.95). Reviewed by Barry Hunter.

If any of you have been out of touch with the horror/fantasy field for the past two years and are unfamiliar with Stephen King's name, here's a brief refresher course: he has had two immensely popular books, CARRIE (about a teen-aged girl with the gift of psychokinesis--and her inability to cope with it) and SALEM'S LOT (a modern vampire novel). And his third novel, THE SHINING, promises to be equally popular.

In setting his novel in an old hotel, the Overlook, King has borrowed the idea of a location maintaining emanations of the evil performed in it from Shirley Jackson and Richard Matheson. But in THE SHINING, King has improved on it by using a five year old boy as the only one who can see the evil, because he has "the shining;" that is, he can read minds.

Jack Torrance has taken the job of winter caretaker at the Overlook and has brought his wife, Wendy, and his five year old son, Daniel, to the wintry mountains of Colorado. This is his last hope for a job, due to a situation that resulted in his being fired from a teaching position for beating a student and for an alcohol problem.

Jack is also trying to finish his play and maintain his abstinence from alcohol. He and Wendy don't understand Daniel's gift, and are thus mystified and frightened that he knows what they are thinking. Dick Halloran, the black cook, recognizes Daniel's power, though, and warns him of certain rooms in the hotel and offers him help.

It's hard to say more about the book without raving about the various plot twists and final results that are somewhat expected, but enjoyable nonetheless. From Jack's finding a scrapbook in the cellar that tells of the more lurid moments in Overlook's history to the climax where the hotel is snowbound and Daniel is the only one who can stop what has been put into motion--the book is fast moving and hard to put down.

King's faults with THE SHINING are few--one that does come to mind is the fact that the first 43 pages move too slowly. This could have been tightened up. But King is a leader in creating a highly believable and readable atmosphere. His manner of writing is so vivid it carries the reader on in its spell. King has another bestseller on his hands, and I only hope he continues in this vein.

THE TIME CONNECTION. Thomas F. Monteleone. (Popular Library 445-00417 - \$1.25) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Tom Monteleone's first book, **SEEDS OF CHANGE**, has gained a great deal of notoriety since its release from Laser; in fact, many persons have drawn their entire opinion of Laser from that one give-away novel, and likewise they've drawn a most unfavorable opinion of Tom Monteleone from it. **THE TIME CONNECTION**, while far from a superlative novel, might be just enough to make people realize he has far more writing talent than they'd given him credit.

THE TIME CONNECTION is a familiar story; two Earth-people from our time are transported into the far future, where they work to help the mechanical remnants of Earth to destroy the alien invaders, the Eyertians. It's a very unpretentious story, told in a direct manner, and it's nothing more than simple entertainment fiction.

Perhaps Monteleone's greatest asset is his ability to tell a story well; he has a lean style that is quite readable and direct. Unfortunately, this novel stresses storytelling over characterization and plot; the protagonists are cardboard good guys, the aliens are cardboard meanies, and all too much of the action is reminiscent of bad-pulp-and-movie sf. Even so, Monteleone makes his story interesting via his delivery--and to do that with so weak a plot to work with is indeed notable.

THE TIME CONNECTION is a large step beyond **SEEDS OF CHANGE** (which was, for all its faults, moderately readable--a tribute to Monteleone's storytelling, for the plot was quite empty), but in itself it's not a remarkable--or even particularly notable--novel. Paradoxically, it marks Monteleone as a writer to keep an eye on; if he can ever combine his style with some real meat in terms of plot and characterization, the result will be memorable.

WEIRD HEROES VOL. 5: THE OZ ENCOUNTER. Marv Wolfman (based on a concept by Ted White). (Pyramid A4036 - \$1.50) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Eyron Preiss' **WEIRD HEROES** series for Pyramid has been quite mercurial in quality; even the initial two volumes of short stories, intended to sell us on the concept, contained as many bad and mediocre stories as good ones. Ted White's Doc Phoenix was one of the better heroes from the initial volumes, though, and the promise of a novel utilizing this character was intriguing. Unfortunately, Marv Wolfman's handling of the character is much less intriguing.

Doc Phoenix is a true pulp-hero type; the only unique gimmick he has is an ability to enter the dreams of his clients. Wolfman utilizes this quite well in **THE OZ ENCOUNTER**; where he fails is in the real-life sections of the book, which are dull and uninspired, and all too predictable.

The Oz setting in the dream sequences is quite nicely done, a credit to Wolfman. However, his tendency to fol-

low--almost exactly--the Lester Dent school of plot development makes the book seem repetitive and formulated. Doc enters a dream, his aides are faced with danger, Doc pops back and saves them, then Doc enters a dream, his aides are faced with danger... it grows old quickly.

The book could have been trimmed a good bit, throwing out many of the reality sequences; they seem far less realistic than the dream adventures. Wolfman's use of unneeded action seems to come from his Marvel Comics background; he'd do well to abandon the hackneyed cliffhangers and get down to real plot development.

An interesting feature of the book is the illustrations; Jeff Jones has done an attractive cover for the volume, although the typography detracts from it somewhat, and Stephen Fabian's interior illustrations add significantly to the book. All in all, it's worth the time and money if you're a pulp fan, but this style of writing will get old to even the most dedicated readers very quickly.

LETTER FROM JERRY POURNELLE

(2-7-77)

"Thank you for FR 9-10 and for the kind words about **IN-FERNO**. Although we did indeed follow Dante's geography (the book would have been pointless had we not) I really must disagree that we did so slavishly--Dante never had a place for despoilers of the environment, the administrative section at Dis was entirely original as was the status of the guards at Phlegathon, and the theology was not Dante's at all. Ah, well.

"I like your reviews--those I've seen this, for this is the first I've seen of FR.

"Query: if George Martin and Gale Burnick are as busy as I would assume they are (certainly I know few writers who have copious free time and certainly I'm not one--I just finished a big book with Larry, and there are archeological layers on my desk) why would they bother to write people letters "correcting people who wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Martin, the Martins, or some variation thereof"? As it happens, Mrs. Pournelle doesn't seem particularly unhappy to use her married name, but even if she insisted on keeping her father's I shouldn't think either of us would take much trouble "correcting" people. Where does it end? If there are children in the Burnick-Martin family, will they keep both names? If then they marry, will they retain all four (or three if they marry the unhighlighted) and then the grandchildren will find themselves unable to apply for employment or indeed unemployment either because they will require a week just to identify themselves. I note that Kathleen Skye writes; under her own name and for preference introduces herself as Kathleen Skye Goldin. In our family we rather eagerly await the time (coming soon) when Roberta receives her doctorate and we can send out cards from "Dr. & Dr. Pournelle" and let people try to figure out who has seniority...

"Then there was the famous case of the Webbs, where

Beatrice Webb took her husband's commoner name, but when he became Lord Passfield she would not accept the title and thus they were introduced as Lord Passfield and Mrs. Webb, leading to no end of confusion among butlers...

"While I can admire the intent--truly we do speak as if women were possessions, although women will often use the same possessives in speaking of their husbands, their children, etc.--I wonder if it is all worth the effort that seems implied by George's letter?

"Ah, well. Martin/Burnick do throw good parties."

((Whereas I can see your point, you've carefully planted a few loaded words and implications--the most emotional of which is probably the implication that Gale Burnick is unhappy with the name--and unhappiness with the name might imply many other things. Perhaps I'm reading more into your word choice than you intended, though. The space is open for Gale and George to reply if they wish.))

.....

STARHIKER. Jack Dann. (Harper & Row - \$7.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

An unnamed blurb writer tells us that "STARHIKER is ostensibly a straightforward adventure story;" thankfully that's not really true, for if it were, Jack Dann's new novel would be a total failure. STARHIKER is a rather complex look at an alien race and an alien culture through the eyes of a protagonist who scarcely understands what he experiences himself.

The key word concerning STARHIKER is complex; the book is layered, each layer revealing yet another, and it intermingles dreams and emotions and reality in a strange, kaleidoscopic way that manages to simultaneously confuse and taunt the reader. It is not a straightforward adventure at all, and what little adventure is there seems secondary to Dann's development of the Hrau.

Dann's protagonist, Bo, is the focal point of most of the novel, but he seems only modestly developed in comparison to his friends and companions that appear throughout the book. Bo is a minstrel-vagabond who accidentally kills a Hrau, and spends the rest of the book wandering, hiding and learning of the strange race that controls many solar systems, including Earth's.

Perhaps it's the complexity of STARHIKER that makes it almost faster in mid-stride; the book never firmly touches ground with the reader, it seems, only coming close enough to tempt. One never gets to know Bo, or the Hrau, or any of the characters other than Kezia, a friend/lover of Bo's who aids him in his wanderings. This is a definite weakness in a book that spends so much time inside a character's thought processes--it often leads to a feeling of "lecture" rather than "story."

This isn't to say that STARHIKER is a failure though; it's an enjoyable book for some pleasurable reading, but I somehow think Dann had wanted it to be more than that. He's put a great deal into the novel--perhaps too much for such a brief book--but the complexity of imagination that went in isn't totally accessible to the reader.

Dann does show a powerful writing style with STARHIKER, though. If STARHIKER is a miss at all, it's an near-miss, and it offers enough enjoyment that the reader won't be disappointed. With firmer control of plot, though, Dann can become a superlative author of science fiction, and I look forward to his next effort.

THE SPACE BEYOND. John W. Campbell. (Pyramid M3742 - \$1.75). Reviewed by Frank Love.

Much as I hate to say it, this book is probably of historical interest only. It consists of three stories ranging in length from a little under sixty pages to over one hundred and twenty pages; they're all previously unpublished and date back to Campbell's early period as a writer; i. e., his space opera period.

The first story is "Marooned," which concerns a ship stranded on Jupiter. Not stranded by crash, though--Campbell is more ingenious than that--instead, the ship is stranded "twixt earth and sky" in a region where the pressure is so great the rocket motors can't fire. It's a good dilemma; unfortunately, Campbell's solution is in the best rabbit-out-of-the-hat tradition. While not bad by the standard of the early 30s, it is definitely dated now.

The second story is "All." This one fascinated me, not so much because the story was great, but because it obviously served as a forerunner for Heinlein's "Sixth Column." The basic plot is the same: The United States has lost a war to the Japanese. However, a group of scientists discover the secret of unlimited atomic power just as the U.S. falls, and they use this discovery to set up a new religion, complete with miracles, which serves as a rallying point for the defeated American populace. Although Heinlein may have never actually read "All", it seems certain that Campbell talked the idea over with him. Incidentally, "All" is the best story in the book from the standpoint of pacing and plot development. It's biggest flaw, along with the other two stories, is a total lack of character development, however.

The last story, "The Space Beyond," is at once the longest and most incomplete story in the book. It is virtually novel length, yet it suffers from lack of development in almost every category. The background is fairly complete, but it was used later in Campbell's THE MIGHTIEST MACHINE. The plot is rather similar also: Heroes get shot into another continuum with a monstrous sun and become embroiled in the local interplanetary war. "The Space Beyond" reads like a sequel to another novel. It begins with a just-defeated Duquesne-like villain being thrust into another dimension, where he aids a warring planet in weapons development. The hero follows this

villain into the alternate continuum, sees what has happened and offers his aid to the other warring planet. There follows a weapons race in the grand old star-smashing tradition, each side trying to develop the best and most destructive weapon. All of which is very interesting if you like that sort of thing-- I do--but if you doj like it, the biggest fault is that it was done so much better in THE MIGHTIEST MACHINE.

All in all, this book is primarily for two types of people: Campbell collectors and fans of early thirties sf. If you fit in either category, buy it; if not, you'll definitely be dissatisfied.

CRITICAL THRESHOLD. Brian M. Stableford. (DAW UY1282 - \$1.25). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

After eagerly awaiting the arrival of the second book in the Daedalus series, I pounced upon CRITICAL THRESHOLD with high hopes that it would surpass the first book. I wasn't disappointed until almost the very end of the novel. Slowly but surely, Stableford appears to be eliminating the weaknesses I noticed in THE FLORIANs; the slowly moving plot has been replaced by a story line that, while fast-paced, is not exactly an appropriate adjective, holds the readers' interests and at least seems to move better. The characters are becoming less stiff and stilted as more of their personalities are revealed, and thankfully, their tendencies to slow down the plot even more by delivering long, boring speeches have been all but abolished.

As for plot content, CRITICAL THRESHOLD is basically the same as THE FLORIANs; the Daedalus (a ship specifically designed and staffed for re-establishing contact with Earth's colony worlds) lands on Dendra, a forest world, and its crew quickly become involved with the problem of why only a handful of the original colonists have survived when there was nothing in the preliminary surveys to prohibit the establishment of a colony. The solution, as in THE FLORIANs, is biological; and herein lies my major complaint with the novel--the ending is entirely too rushed. At the end of one chapter the main characters are practically stranded in the middle of Dendra's forest with very limited resources and the pressing necessity to return to the Daedalus with the solution to the colonists' miserable failure. At the beginning of the very next chapter the search party has already made their way back to the Daedalus, all has been taken care of and preparations are underway to leave. It's true that the trek back most probably would have become very boring to read through, yet the transition from mild cliffhanger-ish suspense to "that's all, folks!" was too abrupt, almost as if Stableford started counting words and decided he'd better wrap it up fast before he went over the limit.

Despite this one flaw, I enjoyed CRITICAL THRESHOLD and am looking forward to the Daedalus' third mission, in which I hope to find even fewer points to complain about. For light reading and entertainment in sf-adventure, I definitely recommend CRITICAL THRESHOLD.



HMMPH! HE
EXPECTS ME
TO REVIEW
AND STENCIL...

LETTER FROM MIKE BLAKE

(3-?-77)

"...In regards to this 'counteffeit SFR' controversy, while the similarity of format is obvious, I cannot say that the actual contents are alike. Indeed, I enjoyed FR 9-10 much more than I did the last issue of SFR. This, however, is a very personal and subjective judgment; I simply happen to disagree with the opinions and views of Geis to the point of intense dislike. In addition SFR is a product Geis is trying to sell in order to support himself. Nothing wrong with this, but the tack Geis seems to take much too often for me is publishing mediocre material by "big names" just so he can list their names on the cover.

((Good point about big names, but we both have to admit that the tack works; even uneventful material by big names will attract a curious buying audience, and that sort of audience will continue to buy if the promise of big names can be made for future issues. While I admire SFR greatly, I do sometimes wonder if Geis isn't taking a 'controversy' approach to SFR--that is, couching unfavorable reviews or comments in harsh and vivid terms so as to elicit response from authors and readers, thereby getting a sensationalistic audience. Incidentally, like you, I rarely agree with Geis any more--but I find him a very gifted reviewer nonetheless.))

"While none of the artwork struck me as particularly outstanding, I must confess, none of it was truly awful and much of it quite good. You show promise as a fannish cartoonist yourself, Cliff. Wade Gilbreath's stuff varied widely in quality, from very good to mediocre, and I wondered if this came from turning out too much stuff at once. I have similar feelings towards Barry Kent McKay, who is in my opinion over-extending himself and his work in fanzines as of late. He is

churning out too much too quickly and his overall quality is beginning to suffer. For example he has been almost single-handedly doing all the illos for the large new crop of zines recently descending on us from Canada, from ORCA to STRANGE DYSTOPIAS. He's spreading himself too thin, diluting the quality of his work. A look at his illos in FR 9-10 confirms this to me...

((Overwork of an artist is a problem, to be sure, but I'm not certain that I can agree with you entirely. Wade Gilbreath constantly impresses me both in imagination and in execution--few artists have as strong a finesse as he does--and I have never been unimpressed by any of his work. Barry is a very good artist, too, and I like to use his art--certainly he is experimenting with technique and is having a few unsuccessful attempts at it, but I was fairly impressed by all of the art he did for FR 9-10.))

"I hope this will not be construed as a personal attack upon Barry, who I feel is a very talented artist. It's just that I only now finished going through a stack of 34 fanzines published in the last three months (of which FR was the highlight, I should add) and noticed that suddenly tons of Barry Kent MacKay illos were appearing everywhere. You happen to be the first loc I've written since then and I wanted to get it off my chest.

((I doubt if your remarks, which are merely constructive criticism, will be construed as a 'personal attack' on anyone--I can appreciate your concern, however.))

"The Bishop interview was excellent and the highlight of the issue. This is indeed a refreshing antidote to Geis' asinine comments about Mike and his work in recent SFRs.

"I found his comments at the beginning of the interview about his one-and-only sf club meeting, DASFA, of interest. Although I've never been to a meeting of the club, I have a long association with its apa, D'APA, and have formed a similar opinion through the mails of some of its members.

"News of progress on COLD WAR ORPHANS is encouraging. Don D'Amassa has mentioned this novel as a result of his correspondence with Mike and I look forward to it. On the other hand, news that DAW will retitle AND STRANGE AT ECBATAN THE TREES is discouraging.

"George R. R. Martin's letter with its note on names has a point well-taken. I detect that he is still perturbed by the reference in Jan Howard Finner's THE SPANG BLAH #12 to Mrs. Gale Martin. And rightfully so. I was equally disturbed by the photo page in Dave Truesdale's TANGENT #6, which had a picture of Rick Sternbach and Asenath Hammond--Sternbach captioned simply "Rick Sternbach and wife," not only getting Sternbach's name wrong but denying the woman he is married to any identity of her own. This is the sort of thing people should take especial care to get right before they publish someone's picture, but many don't appear to want to take the time.

"...I've only seen this one issue of FR so I don't know enough about your reviewers' prejudices to make a fair evaluation, but it strikes me that almost all your reviews are unanimously positive. Goulart hackwork, J.O. Jeppson's dull first novel and eminently-forgettable Laser Books all come in for praise in this issue. Certainly there are some negative reviews, but on the whole I felt the reviews suffered from too much vague recommendation and not enough analysis.

"On page 25, Gary Steele refers to 2001 as being responsible for a wave of "The Making of..." books. I can't check it offhand and may be wrong, but didn't THE MAKING OF STAR TREK come out before THE MAKING OF 2001?

((It certainly did. Gary's only response was, "why does this always happen to me?" // As to too many favorable reviews--I'm not certain why, but many of our reviewers refrain from turning in a great many bad reviews--negative reviews, that is. As to your criticism that many things you find dull or hackwork are praised--that's true even among the reviewers. I, for instance, was totally unimpressed with Jeppson's book, while Susan totally enjoyed it. Even though I'm a Goulart fan, I wasn't that impressed with THE GHOST BREAKERS; Gary Steele, a non-fan of Goulart, loved the book. As for Lasers--our general opinion was that everyone felt they were all bad, so we chose to point out the ones we considered good so that casual readers might be on the lookout for them. But your point is well-taken, and we'll try to keep it in mind.))

GATEWAY. Frederik Pohl. (St. Martin's Press - \$8.95).
Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

The only complaint I could have with Fred Pohl's GATEWAY is that he didn't do it much sooner--Pohl's newest novel is a taut, well-done piece of work that will undoubtedly win him award nominations, and possibly the awards themselves--and rightfully so. Pohl has never written quite this well before, and GATEWAY is a real feast of imagination and talent for the reader.

Robinette Broadhead is a "prospector;" that is, he uses the remnant ships of an extinct alien race, the Heechee, to explore the ships' predetermined destinations. A prospector faces danger on every mission, and Bob is no exception to this--in fact, he yearns to be a prospector primarily because of the risk.

The novel is a mystery, as well; throughout the book, we are presented brief glimpses into the culture of the Heechee, and can speculate as to what they might be. Pohl carefully blueprints and alien race for us as the novel progresses; furthermore, he develops the strange culture based on Gateway, the departure point for the missions, so vividly that it seems almost like an alien race in itself. Pohl gives us glimpses into the Gateway culture via ads, official leaflets and notices, etc., which add even more to the feeling of reality that accompanies Pohl's novel.

Pohl's re-emergence as a major writer of science fiction began with MAN PLUS, and GATEWAY only accentuates this triumphant re-entry into the sf-novel field. Pohl has managed to blend all elements of his craft--plot, pacing, characterization and mood--into a well-rounded package that cannot fail to please. The reader who wants adventure sf will be most satisfied with GATEWAY.

The reader who wants more will also be satisfied; mixed in with Pohl's taut story is a series of interesting passages detailing Bob's experiences with his computer psychoanalyst, Sigfrid; each section gives us a little more insight into Bob, yet manages to do so without becoming boring or matter-of-fact.

All in all, GATEWAY is a quality novel, and is certain to be one of the highlights of 1977's sf. Don't pass this one up.

THE WORLD ASUNDER (DAW UW1262 - \$1.50) and THE SIGN OF THE MUTE MEDUSA (Popular Library 03173 - \$1.50). Ian Wallace. Reviewed by Sue Phillips.

Who is Ian Wallace?

He is a writer of some skill, that we know. That he seems to have a fascination for the sciences of the mind, we also know. And, we know that Ian Wallace is a pseudonym, newly revealed as Dr. John Pritchard, a North Carolina doctor.

In these two novels, both set in Wallace's unique universe, we see very different plots. THE WORLD ASUNDER is what he terms "an adventure of minds-in-bodies." It covers the story of Lilith Vogel Glazer in the battle against a personification of evil known as Kali. The fight takes place over a number of different eras but, in a way, everything happens simultaneously.

The main conflict lies in the fact that three men of disparate and identical times are the same man. In other words, two men coming to an emotional crisis in their lives, separately decide to put the unpleasant parts of their personalities aside. These parts coalesce to form Kali.

There is none of the uptiming and dountiming that has characterized CROYD and DR. ORPHEUS. There is time travel, both mental and physical. Basically, what this means is that one of the men, Diedore Horse, is contemporary with the early Rourke Mallory, then wearing another name. Both Horse and Lilith are drawn bodily into the world of the older Mallory.

It is an interesting world with an intriguing concept: RP. RP is the brainchild of Mallory, a floating nation with trading and visiting privileges in every corner of the world. Its men and women are more relaxed and more competent, and thus are admitted to the decision-making governing the fate of the world.

The resolution is satisfactory to the facts, but leaves me slightly dissatisfied. For it leaves you with a moral--or as near to one as is possible without saying so. Other than that, it is an immensely enjoyable book.

THE SIGN OF THE MUTE MEDUSA is one of Wallace's Claudine St. Cyr mysteries, in company with THE PURLOINED PRINCE and DEATHSTAR VOYAGE. It is dedicated to the Environmental Protection Agency, which is appropriate since the book takes place on a polluted-almost-to-saturation world.

Three of Turquoise's leading citizens have disappeared. They have done so in a world where going out of the domed cities requires full body suits. Two of them have done so despite tracers in their skulls. Murder is suspected.

St. Cyr and Lt. Tuli are called in by the locals to help in solving the mystery. They are immediately caught up in the peculiar sexual system on Turquoise. Over the years, the human women have become sterile. To propagate, men were forced to turn to the medusae, frail veil-like creatures native to the planet who are able to bear either human or medusa children. All medusa are female. Thus, all men are "married" twice. His human wife is termed Mistress and performs the social duties. The medusae accept the reduced status for they have become as dependent on the man as he is on them. It is a symbiotic relationship but with gruesome overtones.

Claudine has no problem adjusting but for Tuli, who still is something of a prude, it causes problems in the investigation. And this situation is the key to the solution.

The book is very detailed; every aspect of Turquoise society is well thought out and feasible. The medusae are interesting creatures. Also, here Wallace uses the uptiming and the dountiming not in evidence in THE WORLD ASUNDER. This is a totally enjoyable book, good both technically and in entertainment value.

Ian Wallace is an unusually competent writer; he uses the knowledge of his profession to make complicated, engrossing stories. And, although all of his work so far concerns different aspects of the same subject, same universe, each is a wholly new book. Each adds to the colorful picture of the man and his work. I hope he continues to write for a long time.

STOLEN FACES. Michael Bishop. (Harper & Row - \$7.95). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

With the advent of his third novel, another side of Michael Bishop the writer has been revealed. The writing style of his two previous books depended heavily on mood to carry the plot, whereas in STOLEN FACES the writing is much more direct, letting a clean, crisp delivery carry the impetus of the novel. In fact, the book is harsh almost to the point of being brutal in some places. I rather like this facet of Mike Bishop because it reminds me of some of his earlier works which I en-

joyed so much--"Death and Designation Among the Asadi" and "Cathadonian Odyssey"--and I predict that *STOLEN FACES* will be his most popular book to date among fans and general sf-readers.

The protagonist of *STOLEN FACES* is Lucian Yeardance, the newly appointed kommissar of the compound for muphormosy victims; muphormosy is a disease very similar to leprosy which infected the colonists of Tezcaatl. The plot follows Yeardance's struggles against authority as he refuses to maintain the status quo as set by his predecessors and his attempts to discover the exact nature of muphormosy in order to help its victims. The discovery of the actual cause of the mutilations and deformities of the muphormers is too shocking for Yeardance to bear, and his sanity breaks under its implications.

Yeardance is a recognizable, easily identified-with character due to his compassion for the suffering muphormers, and this is undoubtedly one reason why I consider *STOLEN FACES* to be Michael Bishop's best novel to date. Certainly he struck a responsive chord in my emotions with his descriptions of the hopeless plight of the muphormers, and his driving delivery made the book powerful throughout. Maybe that's what it takes to produce an award-winning novel--striking the right harmonies in the greatest number of people. If so, then *STOLEN FACES* should have no trouble making it to the Hugo and Nebula ballots; more than any other novel by Mike, Bishop, this one deserves it.

LETTER FROM FRANK BELKNAP LONG

(1-21-77)

"There are at least 100 fantasy and sf fanzines now that are impressive in one way or another--some in artwork and general format and others in the perceptiveness of their critics' comments. High on the list I would place *NYCTALOPS*, *FANTASY CROSSROADS*, *WHISPERS*, *AMRA*, *XENOPHILE*, *MYRDDIN* and about six others (I'm listing them at random and not in relation to their impressiveness. I'd probably be a target for spectral bullets if I singled out just two or three as standing at the very apex!). What this all boils down to is simply this: with the arrival of *FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE* #9-10 the list stands revised for me very close to the top--with FR in a peer group of not more than seven at the most.

"The Michael Bishop interview alone would make this issue outstanding. Unlike far too many fans and not a few writers in the genre, Bishop has apparently read and admired books from an early age--by that I mean Swift, Borges, Faulkner, McCullers, Dostoevski, and company. And I can think of no more important single factor in the maturation of a writer.

"I was particularly interested in the divergence of opinion concerning Haldeman. I haven't as yet read *MINDBRIDGE*--the full page advertisement in the *NYTimes* Book Review was certainly extraordinary for a work of science fiction!--but I thought *THE FOREVER WAR* a powerful novel. Like Orwell, Haldeman makes one mistake, I feel, in regard to the fairly

immediate future (I wonder if other readers have noticed this). 1984 is almost here now, separated from the present by only 7 years and the world of 1984, according to Orwell, would be totally unlike the world we've known for close to a century!... a world of gigantic towers, tyrant rulers locked in tumultuous conflict, vast beehives of groaning slave activities, every aspect of human life spied upon and regulated. And it simply hasn't turned out that way, despite tremendous changes in some directions. And Haldeman predicts that earth will be Orwellian in a mere quarter of a century or so. I'll wager that 25 or even 35 years from now you could walk out into the street in any average neighborhood and find most of the familiar surroundings largely unchanged, the old buildings still standing, and the conversation of the average pedestrian brimming over with present-day references. You might even overhear a reference or two to HPL, the "sword and sorcery" school, and -- who knows?--*FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE* #9-10. In many of the circumstances of daily living, the world has not changed very much from 1900, despite 2 World Wars, economic advancement and the H-bomb. So, in a sense, Orwell proved a hum prophet.

"I disagree with you a bit concerning Tom Collins' *APOLLO*. The timing, as you point out, was unfortunate--but the Heinlein material was impressive. I didn't entirely agree with the Panshins' mystical interpretation but the essay was in the highest degree stimulating.

"Oh, and Wade Gilbreath has captured Pan quite amazingly--very much as he must have looked in his last appearance in the ancient world!"

((I'm fascinated by your discussion of the lack of radical change in lifestyle today--as you say, life today is basically the same as it was in 1952, with only the most simple changes--new names to complain about, new cars to spend money on, new homes to mortgage, but all the problems are the very same. And reading through items like your own *DREAMER ON THE NIGHT SIDE* and Warner's and Moskowitz' fan histories make me realize how very little things have changed since the 30s and 40s. Like you, I anticipate very little world change by the year 2000. This very same problem took much of the edge of Bradbury's "Mars Is Heaven!"; reading a story about men on Mars, a story that is set in 1960, has a very disquieting feeling on me. I couldn't enjoy the story as a result. I wonder if this might be the reaction of some to 1984 in ten years, or to *THE FOREVER WAR* in 30 years...))

 A WREATH OF STARS. Bob Shaw. (Doubleday - \$5.95).
 Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

When it comes to straight adventure sf, Bob Shaw is a highly competent author. His truly speculative fiction is of the highest quality, but even his average sf is well-done, making enjoyable reading. *A WREATH OF STARS* is just such a novel--while it lacks the strength of imagination that makes the *Slow*

Glass stories so powerful, it possesses the same craftsmanship and attention to story development that has made Shaw an important writer of science fiction.

A WREATH OF STARS is a story of planets in contact, and the problems inherent in such a contact. Thornton's Planet is a world composed of anti-neutrino matter, and it is only visible with the use of Amplite glasses, normally used in low-light situations to enable men to see. Gil Snook has seen the apparitions himself, and slowly comes to realize that the "ghosts" are part of an anti-neutrino race. Scientific organizations attempt the process of communicating with these newly-discovered creatures, but the attempts fall victim to political maneuvering here on Earth. Snook and others attempt to continue, political pressure notwithstanding, until they can understand the anti-neutrino people and can communicate with them, until it reaches a desperate race between Snook and the political forces.

Shaw's plot begins slowly--this is perhaps the only flaw of the book--but as the action picks up, the reader is carried along by Shaw's imaginative speculation. Snook himself is one of Shaw's most real characters, and he is well-handled throughout the book.

Structurally, one problem Shaw has is in his attempts to scientifically explain the methods that make the people of Thornton's Planet visible to Earthmen. The use of quasi-scientific explanations is always bothersome, and not even Shaw can make it an enjoyable part of the story.

A WREATH OF STARS definitely isn't Bob Shaw's best book, but it's a pleasant novel to while away the time while we wait for another first-class Shaw novel.

KIOGA OF THE WILDERNESS (DAW UW1253 - \$1.50) & ONE AGAINST A WILDERNESS (DAW UW1280 - \$1.50). William L. Chester. Reviewed by Gary Steele.

Reading these books brought back memories of a time almost ten years past when I went on a Burroughs binge and read about three quarters of his work. Because I read so much in a relatively small period of time, I grew rather disgusted with his work, particularly his writing style. Since then I've done my best to avoid obvious Burroughs pastiches--at least up until now. And oddly enough, I don't regret it.

Chester's two books read like Tarzan novels with names, locations and other vital statistics changed; a small boy, son of castaways, is raised by natives of a mysterious land called Nato'wa, which happens to be the "undiscovered homeland of the people who became the North American Indians."

KIOGA OF THE WILDERNESS draws on the Tarzan saga; in this novel, in fact, it relies a great deal on ERB's work. For example, when the novel opens, Kioga, now a young man, has left the Nato'wa and travelled to America. He also has met a young lady, rescued her, and has lost her when he rescues a group of shipwrecked explorers.

The second book, ONE AGAINST A WILDERNESS, deals with the adolescent years of the boy known as Kioga, the Snow Hawk, thus coming chronologically before KIOGA. Six stories chronicle his adventures--each of which I feel fairly sure is a parallel of an ERB Tarzan story. While I have no way of crosschecking, I am confident that a Burroughs collector would have no difficulty establishing exact story-relationships between each of these tales and particular Tarzan stories. However, Chester seems to have handled them better than ERB ever did; in fact, Chester seems to be better at the ERB writing format than ERB himself was.

Not only does Chester do a lot of "borrowing" in plot ideas, but in this book he does an even better job of copying ERB's style. Too good a job, I fear--he carries all the Burroughs' foibles exactly, if the artificially-created cliffhanger ending for each chapter, slowly progressing two or three different plotstrings by cliffhangers until they have all joined together for the climax. This hedge-hopping back and forth gets very annoying and distracting.

But despite the fact that the Kioga books are copies of Tarzan, complete to irritating writing style, it is still possible to get some enjoyment from the books. As I indicated earlier, Chester does a better job at ERB-writing than ERB did. If you're a Burroughs fan, the book makes for pleasant reading and even gets interesting in places. But only an ERB fan or a newcomer to adventure-fiction could enjoy this thoroughly; for anyone else it'll be both repetitive and hackneyed.

I'm not saying the books are bad. They're not. For what they attempt, they're actually quite good. The only problem is, I doubt they'd be interesting to anyone who wasn't interested in Tarzan pastiches. Unless you're really faunching for new ERB material, don't bother with these.

ASTRA AND FLONDRIX. Seamus Cullen. (Pantheon Books - \$3.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

"An erotic Tolkein," they blurb this book. Since I had never been one to speculate about the sex lives of Frodo, Bilbo and Company, I found the idea slightly self-contradictory, almost at odds with its own individual elements. The blurb did its part--it convinced me to read the book.

Unfortunately, the book is quite unsatisfying; a very average, dime-a-dozen fantasy with a few sexual subplots and references thrown in--that's what makes up ASTRA AND FLONDRIX. Had it not been for the added dollops of sexuality, this book wouldn't have received any real notice at all.

This is a post-holocaust world, and the protagonist, Flondrix, is beginning a quest that is vitally important to himself and to his world. The novel details his wanderings and his chance meetings with various dwarves, elves and people. Astra, the daughter of an Elvan princess, becomes the object of his devotion, and together they face Kranz, the Evil Sorcerer (my capitals), for a final battle.

Ho-hum.

It's not really a bad book, mind you; it merely doesn't do anything new, and that's enough to make its 286 pages seem endlessly long. The action progresses slowly, in a very predictable manner, and is only broken by sexual descriptions here and there. The writing is laborious for the most part, primarily because of a tremendous amount of over-description. And in the end, the reader reaction is "who cares?" Cullen fails to make me feel in the least bit interested in the plight of Astra and Flondrix.

If you want good fantasy, there are dozens of better choices; if you want go softcore porn, I'm sure you can find a better book to entice you at your local sleazy newsstand.

CARD FROM JAMES GUNN

(3-?-77)

"Thanks for the copy of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE and the excellent review of ALTERNATE WORLDS. A&W did a fine job of reprinting the Prentice-Hall book, I thought. It might be noted that the only changes are the errata list in the front and the absence of the second color on the otherwise black-and-white pages. They went back to press for an additional 10,000 copies before publication. At last count they had 25 thousand copies in print. I enjoyed the reviews and letters in FR, and the interview with Michael Bishop."

((I have no doubt that ALTERNATE WORLDS will become a standard reference on science fiction in the next few years; it's already popping up in high school libraries in the area where I teach, in fact. I'm pleased, because it is a fairly unbiased look at the genre, and it can save a great deal of background teaching on sf in my science fiction course; I can give a very general overview of the basics, and refer the curious to the well-worn library copy of ALTERNATE WORLDS.))

PILGRIMAGE, Zenna Henderson. (Avon - \$1.25). Reviewed by John DiPrete.

The "People" stories were written in 1952-1961, over a decade and a half ago. They are collected here by the author; each story in this volume depicts the sheltered lives of the People--a group of children and adults who hide in terror from their fellow Earth dwellers. Their special powers include ESP, mental telepathy, telekinesis, and much more. Their crash landing on Earth has abandoned segments of their culture all over the globe.

Due to their parents' fearful conditioning, the majority of the People have forgotten their alien heritage, blotting out their unique powers and Collective Identity. Unknown to them, they still have a secret desire to return home. "Home" is a world thousands of light years away--far beyond the People's reach. Stranded on Earth, lost and uprooted, the People are outcasts.

One little girl, Bethie, is a Sensitive; she can feel and hear others' pain.

Another youngster, Jeremy, can lift and hurl boulders--without any hands.

Another, Miriam, has the ability to heal the sick, as easily as tying her shoelaces.

The People are gentle folks; despite their eeriness, they are very similar to Earthlings. In them, I can see my fellow city residents, people I don't know. Each has individual characteristics that are unforgettable, a joy to behold.

To create flesh-and-blood-fiction characters is never easy, but Zenna Henderson has succeeded admirably in this, her classic work. She has breathed abundant life into the People, and after you have read of their adventures, they will stir inside of you ... alive.

TUNNEL IN THE SKY (Ballantine 26065 - \$1.50) and THE STAR BEAST (Ballantine 26066 - \$1.50). Robert A. Heinlein. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Ballantine has begun a reissue program of the superb Heinlein juvenile adventures as a part of their Del Rey Books line, and it's a program to be applauded. The Ace editions of these books have been marred by very unattractive cover designs, and this is a problem that has been corrected by Del Rey; Darrell Sweet has turned out some very handsome covers for these two books, very much in keeping with the interiors.

TUNNEL IN THE SKY is one of Heinlein's best books, a taut adventure story of trainees stranded during a survival test, stranded in a place they know nothing about, and faced with situations they were unprepared for. It's reminiscent of what he tried later with FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD, thus proving that you should never tamper with a good idea.

THE STAR BEAST is a boy-and-his-dog tale; the only difference is, the dog is Lummox, and he wasn't a dog at all, but a huge beast that resembles a cross between a rhinoceros and a dinosaur. John Thomas, the boy, tries to keep Lummox out of trouble--and runs into even more trouble in the form of interplanetary travelers. It's a remarkably delightful book, and I found it just as impossible to put down this time through as I did when I first read it, numerous years ago.

I have no idea how far Ballantine plans to carry this reissue program, but I hope it encompasses all the Heinlein juveniles eventually; the new editions are sturdy, handsome copies, well suited for any collector's library.

THE SWORD OF SHANNARA. Terry Brooks. (Random House - \$12.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

For the past decade, Tolkein seems to have become the standard by which all fantasy is judged; Tolkein imitators have come into vogue, and Tolkein studies and parodies are constantly being printed. And with the publication of THE SWORD OF SHANNARA, Terry Brooks has proven that successful Tolkein-fantasy can be written still--and Brooks gives several wondrous hours' en-



joyment in the course of proving it.

THE SWORD OF SHANNARA is aptly blurb'd as "an epic fantasy;" this novel is an epic tale of a magical sword, and Shea, the inheritor of the sword and its power, and Allanon, a mighty magician who aids him. It's a tale of elves and strange, mystical kingdoms and magic and good versus evil. It's a powerful fantasy, carefully developed and very reminiscent of the Tolkein trilogy.

This reminiscence might be the only complaint many will have against THE SWORD OF SHANNARA; it is derivative from Tolkein, undoubtedly, and many people will fault the book for this. But Allanon and Shea and Flick and the many other characters have depth and dimension, and that is what makes THE SWORD OF SHANNARA more than a mere pastiche. Brooks is a talented wordsmith, and this talent is obvious in the novel--in its 726 pages, it doesn't drag or ramble.

Those authors who have spent much of their careers doing one pastiche after another should definitely read this novel, if only to understand what they've been doing wrong. All of those who want quality material to read should also definitely read this novel, because it's quite probably the finest fantasy work of the year. If anyone wanted proof of Lester del Rey's ability as a fantasy editor, this book is it--del Rey should be commended for risking so much to bring a talented first-book author to press, just as Brooks should be commended for writing the book.

The only question left is: can Brooks do it again?

IRRATIONAL NUMBERS. George Alec Effinger. (Doubleday - \$5.95). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

George Alec Effinger is a totally unpredictable author; I never know what to suspect when I see his name fronting a story. IRRATIONAL NUMBERS is a fine book to use as an ex-

ample; the stories range from excellent to quite mediocre, and the delivery can range from straightforward to circuitous and confusing.

"Lydectes," for instance, is a strange semi-epistolary story that seemingly deals with the nature of sport; the story is rather confusingly presented, with segments of narrative intermingled with notes from an unidentified "Tom." It's a low-key story, quite forgettable, and if this was the limit of Effinger's output, he'd be quite unknown for the most part.

But seldom does Effinger limit himself, and as a result there is no particular type of story that can be classified as an Effinger story. It's almost hard to believe that the man who wrote the tedious "Lydectes" is the same man who wrote the delicate and beautiful "How it Felt," a story of gods and the ennui that consumes omnipotent beings. It's a tragic story, and is undoubtedly Effinger's finest work in the short fiction field.

But "How It Felt" isn't a typical Effinger story, either; as I stated, there is no typical Effinger story. Effinger's asset is his vibrant imagination; it has its share of failures, as this volume shows, but it also has its share of successes (again, as this volume shows) and Effinger's persistence in presenting his visions to the reader makes each of his books almost akin to a guided tour through his varied imagination.

IRRATIONAL NUMBERS is a very mixed-bag sort of collection, but it's well worth reading; it's to Effinger's credit that I note that everyone will find a story they like in here. Effinger's that sort of writer.

COLD CHILLS. Robert Bloch. (Doubleday - \$5.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

If anyone in the science fiction-fantasy field has really established himself as a master of the surprise-ending story, it's Robert Bloch. His twists almost wrap around themselves, and yet he manages to handle such complicated plots without any sacrifice of characterization or delivery.

COLD CHILLS is a collection of 14 of Bloch's more recent stories, each followed by an afterword that gives us the author's memories and reactions to each story. The stories are uniquely Blochian, and each one is a short-story jewel, sparkling and tempting the reader. Bloch is a smooth author, and his stories reflect an aura of professionalism rarely found in the horror/fantasy field.

If any one story in this volume is a must-read, it's "The Movie People," a remarkable story of a grizzled movie extra who narrates the tale of his lover's death--and her attempts to return. If any one story can be chosen as the highlight of the volume, that's it; but the competition is stiff, including a personal favorite, "Double Whammy," which manages to capture the air of circus life better than any story I've read outside of Bradbur and yet still delivers a powerful horror story about a circus geek. And there's science fiction, as well, and lovely vignettes, and...

the list continues, with each story being a taut blending of story and technique.

COLD CHILLS is undoubtedly one of the finest investments of time and money you can make in the short-story collection field--don't let this one go by unread.

LETTER FROM BEN INDICK

1-31-77

"So you still do 8.5 X 11 zines! ((Ben's referring to a rather annoying--to some--tendency of mine to do most apazines in a 5.5x8.5 format, which makes binding them a real pain, but certainly is easier than working in 2-column format)). Anyway, it is good to see FR 9-10, very neat, very interesting. Funny you mention Gahan Wilson's dilatory work on the 1st Fantasy Con book--because just two days ago I was called on his behalf. "Did I have a copy of Bloch's speech"!! So he's still at it.

George Martin's letter was firm and interesting. Since, in one respect, he says "my wife," why the insistence on different names? Would it bother him to be called Mr. Burnick, as a sort of noblesse oblige? My wife (my own, my chattel, my possession) Janet seems to consider our surname as her own; she is unbothered as a professional artist and has no desire to stick to her maiden name, which her parents stuck on her. A name is only a name and I think we get nonsensical about it all.

"I rather like the way you mix reviews and locs. I never cared for those solid pages of locs in zines. As I read the reviews, I realize how extremely little SF I get to read--and how little I mind (although I may have gotten myself in trouble by agreeing to do a review column for a twice-a-year-zine). Your reviews are quite interesting, as are the rest of your writers. Your fanzine reviews are a bit tougher--hah! I just phoned Tom Collins and read him your review, and I predict you'll be hearing from him. He's really a good guy, but sometimes his sharp in-print tongue makes him seem mean. I rather like APOLLO, admitting he was foolish to wait so long to print material regrettably dated by 1976-7. However, it is a handsome job and artwork is a subjective thing; I thought it all quite interesting.

"I neglected to mention that although I've yet to read Bishop, the interview definitely makes me wish to."

((You aren't the first person to tell us how little SF you read, and how FR reminds you of that--which is good; since one purpose of FR is to help the casual reader decide what to spend his valuable reading time with. Another purpose is to cause ~~more~~ discussions, which happens less often than I'd like.

I wish I had heard from Tom Collins; I'd be glad to give him space to rebut my comments on APOLLO, but I stick by what I said--I still find APOLLO to be a very overpriced ripoff, considering the age of the material. But as you say, all is subjective. It's interesting how different perspectives lead to different conclusions, though--most people tell me my fanzine reviews are too light!))

THE PANCHRONICON PLOT. Ronl Goulart. (DAW UY1283 \$1.25). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Ron Goulart fans will be thrilled by the appearance of another Goulart novel to read; non-Goulart fans who read THE PANCHRONICON PLOT will most likely regard it as just more of the same old stuff. It's sad but true that THE PANCHRONICON PLOT is very similar, plotwise, to a lot of Goulart's other books. However, the reappearance of Jake Conger of the Wild Talent Division--not to mention the members of that select group themselves--make up for any feelings of deja vu one gets reading the book.

Jake Conger, whose own particular Wild Talent is that of invisibility, is a delight to follow as he searches through time for members of President Bisbiglia's cabinet whom the mad President has brainwashed and stranded throughout the past. Geer, the pastry-loving boss of the Wild Talent Division, is one of the funniest characters Goulart has created, and the Hellroarers, a couple of brothers who are ex-rock stars, are hilariously bumbling, enhancing the absurdity of the book.

Goulart's own Wild Talent, that of writing a superb science fiction parody and creating genuinely amusing characters, is abundantly present in THE PANCHRONICON PLOT. This is a book Goulart fans can read and enjoy thoroughly.

FANTASY CLASSICS (1-5): THE TERROR, Arthur Machen; WEREWOLF, Clemence Housman; THE OBSIDIAN APE, Robert Neal Leath; ANCIENT SORCERIES, Algernon Blackwood; THE JEWEL OF SEVEN STARS, Bram Stoker. Available from publisher, Ken Krueger (8863 Milburn St., Spring Valley, CAL 92077). Fantasy House Pubs. \$1.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

The small-press field seems to have proliferated, and as a result, many buyers are wary of unknown items--with good reason, after all the quick-copy ripoffs that have been sold to an unwary public. But Ken Krueger is not a rip-off artist; instead, Ken Krueger is a publisher who seems to rank quality foremost, and offers his material in handsome, well-printed, nicely-illustrated volumes, on heavy stock paper with stiff covers. The price is fair, the quality is superb, and the books really live up to their name--these are fantasy classics, not out-of-copyright stories chosen at random to fill an issue.

It should be pointed out that not all issues contain just the title story; in many cases, the title story is short enough that another classic feature is fitted in near the back. All are presented with new illustrations, and the illustrators--highlighted by the superb John Pound--add a polished look to the magazines.

Machen's THE TERROR is undoubtedly the finest of the bunch; Machen has a talent for horror and suspense, and this story illustrates his remarkable ability to create mood as it presents a WWI-tale of a strange, murderous thing, "the terror," that brings devastation to an English countryside. This one is well worth acquiring, and fills almost the entire issue, with a brief two-page short story completing the package.

THE WEREWOLF is exactly what the title implies: a werewolf story, pure and simple. Krueger praises it as the finest (or most literate) telling of the werewolf theme in the English language--my money rests on DARKER THAN YOU THINK by Williamson, but I'll grant him that it's impressive, although it shows its age in narration. The second feature, "The Diamond Lens," is a worlds-within-worlds story, and is quite enjoyable, although not as impressive as the first feature.

THE OBSIDIAN APE is the poorest of the five selections, being extremely overwritten and melodramatic. It's a lost race novel, similar to A. Merritt's work, but lacking its drive and narrative flow.

ANCIENT SORCERIES is another true classic; it's an Algeron Blackwood tale of strange, supernatural evil in a French town, and it introduced the psychic detective John Silence. Silence is a character who endures long past the end of the story, and "Ancient Sorceries" is well worth reading. The backup, "Vanguard of Venus," is typical AMAZING sf of the late-20s vintage, and as such is quite poor--but it's of historical interest in that its only prior publication was in a giveaway to encourage subscriptions.

Bram Stoker has always been a favorite of mine, so THE JEWEL OF THE SEVEN STARS had an eager audience from the start. It's a gripping horror-that-survives-the-cons story of an Egyptian queen who survives to threaten the lives of Victorian Englishmen; while the plot is typical horror-movie fare, the condensed version presented here is cleaned of excessive verbiage and moves well. This issue lacks the strength of some of its fellow FANTASY CLASSICS, but it's definitely a better story than Leath's OBSIDIAN APE.

It's a shame Fantasy House has let this series go dormant; it offers interesting reading in a beautiful format, and the \$1.95 price tag makes it well worth the money.

THE NESFA INDEX: SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES AND ORIGINAL ANTHOLOGIES 1975. NESFA Press - \$4. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Not being an avid indexer myself, I questioned the value of this sort of thing at one time; as the number of anthologies and sf magazines reaches a number far too large for one reader to keep up with, though, I find some sort of an index a handy way to find items of interest, and the NESFA INDEX: 1975 is a continuation of their most useful index series.

In this index, material is listed three ways: by author, by title, and by magazine/anthology. This information is compiled into the three separate sections, printed 8.5x11 and stapled into a hefty, handy index. This year's index has the bonus of a John Schoenherr cover, but that's icing on the cake; as an index, it serves its purpose well. It's a shame NESFA has let the past few year's indexes lapse out of print--hopefully they will reissue them soon. If they do, I recommend that you buy them--for the collector, it's a worthwhile investment. (Box G, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, MA 02139)

THE DEVIL IN IRON. Robert E. Howard; illustrations by Dan Green. (Don Grant - \$15). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

After the very poor Marcus Boas illustrative work for the previous Conan volume from Don Grant, I was wary of THE DEVIL IN IRON; I'm not familiar with Dan Green, knowing little more than that he roomed with Jeff Jones for a while (and, from the look of his art, the two influenced one another), and I was unsure what to expect.

Surprisingly, THE DEVIL IN IRON is second only to the George Barr RED NAILS in artistic quality in this series; Dan Green has a strong eye for color, and his delicate shadings add a moodiness most reminiscent of Jeff Jones. Unfortunately, Green does very few interior black and white drawings, and this leaves the reader feeling vaguely dissatisfied.

This volume contains "Shadows in Zamboula" and "The Devil in Iron," two less-impressive Howard Conan stories. Oh, to be sure, these are some of REH's most enjoyable fiction, but not up to the quality of "The People of the Black Circle" or "Red Nails." Nonetheless, it's a handsome book, well produced and bound, and for the fine-book collector or the REH enthusiast, it's a worthwhile investment.

THE BOOK OF VIRGIL FINLAY. Edited by Gerry de la Ree. (Flare - \$4.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

If you have to buy any one art book this year in the sf/fantasy field, this should be it. It's that simple.

Finlay is a superb illustrator, as his work shows, and this book offers an excellent chronological perspective of his black and white work spanning most of his career. The book is 127 pages, illustration after illustration, presented in 8.5x11 format, and the printing quality is superb. This paperbound edition is a quality reprint of a now-OP de la Ree hardcover, and the availability plus the price make this a must-have item.

ARSLAN. M.J. Engh. (Warner Books #6-104 - \$1.25). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

ARSLAN is a novel that never really succeeds; it's not a horrid book, and M.J. Engh isn't a failure as an author, but he never manages to put things together in ARSLAN to make it a successful book. It's a shame, too, because ARSLAN might have made a better-than-average novel in more competent hands.

ARSLAN is a brilliant-leader-taking-over-the-world story, with the world dictator being a middle-Eastern genius who sets out on a dictatorial path that brings him to Kraftsville, Illinois, the microcosm where much of the story takes place.

Engh has trouble with characterization; one can never believe his characters are people, and thus the situation never comes alive. And because of this, ARSLAN is an unmemorable failure, a book to be passed up.

LETTER FROM GRANT CARRINGTON

(2-12-77)

"FR is a good magazine, of course, but you know that already. It didn't remind me of THE ALIEN CRITIC, but then I haven't read that or SFR in years. (I've always wanted to put out a series of insect fanzines; the first one would be THE ALIEN CRICKET, followed by LOCUST, then I don't know what). But your taste and Susan's in direct contrast to mine, in the few books that I've read that you have reviewed; to nominate DEUS IRAE for a Hugo is inconceivable to me. As far as I'm concerned, it combines the worst of both authors...

"I read DEATHBIRD STORIES after reading LOVE AIN'T NOTHING BUT SEX MISSPELLED (a very misleading title, that!) and, while quite good, it doesn't have anywhere near the power of his mainstream work. I have preferred Ellison's mainstream collections to his sf collections. They show one of the weaknesses of sf. To quote from my own review of said books (NEW LOOK, Dec. 1, 1976), "the two collections show the difference between fine mainstream writing and fine sf writing... and science fiction comes up lacking. These stories miss the punch and impact, the tearing at the jugular, that the best of Ellison's non-science fiction contains..."

((Grant did a very interesting comparison of opinions on several other books that he had read that we both agreed on, as well as some that we were in contrast on. He concluded with the following:))

"In general, I'm surprised to find out I was wrong. I pretty much agreed with you, except for DEUS IRAE. One thing, though. Since you often review books that are several years old, it would be nice to print their original date of publication."

((We've considered something similar to that, probably using a symbol plus a date to indicate a reissue--perhaps we'll initiate the policy next issue. Thanks for the suggestion.))

"A very readable zine, Cliff, but the highlight was easily the interview with Mike."

((We've gathered that to be the case--most people were quite vocal in their appreciation of the interview, and using my own prejudice-scale, I'll admit that I was most pleased with it--and if I was pleased with it, I felt it was quite good, because quite frankly, after the several readings that are done before material is printed in FR, it's easy to get tired of some pieces. I feel doubly lucky that this issue's Piers Anthony interview is also just as interesting now as it was 3 readings ago.))

SCIENCE FICTION IN THE CINEMA. John Baxter (Warner Paperback Library 66420 - \$1.25). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

This is blurb'd as the first in "The International Film Guide Series;" I was suspicious, because any name that sounds that pompous was probably fronting a book that was useless, I felt. Thankfully, I was quite wrong; SCIENCE FICTION IN THE CIN-

EMA is a very straightforward, informative volume on sf films, and its inexpensive price makes it a must-have item for the sf film fan.

Baxter does a good job of presenting vital statistics on many, many films, and he manages to avoid uncalled-for opinion; while he does offer critical views, it is clearly presented as criticism, not mere put-down. In addition, Baxter offers many photos to accompany the text, and the book is enjoyable for casual reading and serious study as a result--each photo seems to bring back memories of the movie in question, as most of the shots are well-chosen so as to be representative of the films.

Perhaps the biggest complaint one could raise against SCIENCE FICTION IN THE CINEMA is its failure to include many fantasy/horror/sf films because of the fantasy or horror element; FRANKENSTEIN is slighted, for instance, presumably because of the horror element in the film--yet it's also a very strong horror/science fiction film, and deserves some discussion.

Another complaint; the original printing of this book was done on heavy stock; the latest edition is done on standard paperback book paper, and the thin paper and fibrous quality make the photo reproduction less sharp and thus less impressive. This makes this edition undesirable for those buying it just for the photos; but if you want an above-average volume on sf films, the reading material makes this book well worth the small cost.

NEW VOICES IN SCIENCE FICTION. George R. R. Martin, ed. (Macmillan - \$8.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

There are a great many award-winner anthologies around; George Martin has managed to put together an award-nominee anthology that serves to introduce the tremendous talent of each of the six contributors without resorting to reprints of works we all read years ago, and that makes NEW VOICES IN SCIENCE FICTION quite memorable all by itself. The fact that every story is exceptionally good is even more memorable.

NEW VOICES IN SCIENCE FICTION is an anthology that presents short fiction by each of the six nominees for the 1973 John W. Campbell Award. But the JWC Award is a connecting thread, not the sole reason for the book's existence; the real reason for the book's existence is the superb fiction that each writer has put into it.

Lisa Tuttle's "The Family Monkey" leads the book off, and it's a wise choice; Tuttle's story of alienation and loneliness as it affects human and alien is a moving, powerful story, and one not easily forgotten. Tuttle has done a good job of grasping the biases of the rural lower-class, and applying this racial bias to the speculative crash-landing of an alien on Earth. At the same time, it's a story of love and need and desperation--and should be recognized as the finest story Tuttle has written thus far.

Robert Thurston's "The Kingmaker" has a more traditional feel to it, but it, too, has a poignancy that underlies the plot and leaves the reader in a contemplative mood. Thurston relates a story of a man who is to become a powerful, influential political figure, and of the time traveller who comes to study him and get to know him, unaware that the learning experience is a dual process. Thurston's politician-to-be is a complex, moody figure, and his time traveler is an aloof, academic observer--but neither quite fits the role each other had assumed for them.

George R.R. Martin himself contributes a good story (though not one of his best), "The Stone City;" this story deals with Michael Holt, who wants a berth on a spaceship so that he can travel in space once again, free himself from the dreariness of his life. Michael Holt not only gets his berth, he gets much more than he ever dreamed. Martin does a good job of development, but the story remains more low-key than much of his writing is, and this detracts somewhat from the impact it might have had otherwise.

"To Ceremark" is Ruth Berman's contribution to that genre (or actually, sub-sub-genre) of stories about authors who find themselves in their own fictional worlds. It's a delightful story, and anywhere else would have been a highlight of almost any collection; here, though, it's like a brief moment of lightness in an otherwise-solid wall of thought-provoking, complex fiction; it lacks the depth of the others, and thus seems too superficial. It's still a well-done, enjoyable story, though.

George Alec Effinger contributes "Mom's Differentials," not one of his best by any means, but modestly enjoyable. It's a story of a quiet fellow who finds that he can no longer cope with the world, and has to take refuge from the complex life of Effinger's fictional future-setting by latching onto certain items for security. His security becomes more and more important to him, until one day he discovers that his quest for a feeling of security has been observed--and disapproved of--by his long-dead mother. Or has it? The question is the reader's to answer, but Effinger never managed to get me involved enough that I really cared. Although it's laudable for what it attempts, it's probably the most flawed story in the volume.

Jerry Pournelle gives an ugly view of the future in "Silent Leges," but the power of the plot is such that even in this ugly view he offers a feeling of hope. Mark Fuller is a sort of "man-without-a-country" in an sf sense; he has had all his citizenship rights revoked after taking part in a riot, and "Silent Leges" details the punishments and experiences Fuller goes through after this. Pournelle tells a solid story, although his delivery is very dry in comparison to his fellow nominees, and "Silent Leges" is an enjoyable novella.

All in all, it would be hard to find a better short-fiction volume in which to invest your time and money than NEW VOICES IN SCIENCE FICTION; George Martin's talents as editor are obvious, and I only hope that Macmillan plans to follow this volume up with companion editions for 1974, 1975 and 1976 nominees. Don't pass this book up.

NOTE FROM MICHAEL BISHOP

(1-13-77)

"...I ought to tell you that I've just excerpted a chapter from COLD WAR ORPHANS, adapted it as a short story with the same title, and sent it off to Virginia Kidd for a waltz through the editorial offices of a few mainstream publications... The only other thing I've completed lately is a 10,000 word horror story entitled "Within the Walls of Tyre," which I believe already has a home--I'd better not count my chickens, however. The story is set in a huge, urban mall, and even though it's a horror story, it contains not a single supernatural element. I feel good about it because I'd been working on the novel for so long that I'd begun to think I might never get back to writing shorter fiction. Variety is good for the soul, and maybe for the pocketbook, too.

"Since we did our interview, by the way, the news has been released that Gardner Dozois has just sold a short-story collection entitled THE VISIBLE MAN AND OTHER STORIES to Berkley. My faith is restored. A good deal of the credit for the sale may be owing to editor David Hartwell at Berkley/Putnam, who has been mighty receptive to some of us younger writers. Still, of course, it's only what Gardner deserves, and I hope his book does well..."

TETRASOMY TWO. Oscar Rossiter. (Bantam T2052 - \$1.50)
Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

I am extremely surprised that this novel hasn't received more recognition than it has. The writing of Oscar Rossiter, the pseudonym of a Seattle, Washington doctor, has a mildly Phil Dick-ish flavor, and this in itself should have been enough to make it popular with a large number of fans. Even more important, is the fact that the book is extremely well-written with next-to-perfect characterization and a plot in which the suspense builds right up until the very last page.

TETRASOMY TWO derives its title from an abnormal chromosome count of Ernest Peckham, the main character of the novel. Peckham, who has been a patient for 8 years at the hospital where Dr. Boyd is an intern, has an extra pair of the number two chromosome. He is thought to be merely a schizophrenic by the other residents at the state hospital, but Dr. Boyd's investigations into his history reveal some unbelievable facts about Mr. Peckham: he is able to communicate telepathically, but only with Dr. Boyd and his messages make no sense--"Hercules Thirty-four" and "Eagle Thirty-six"--and Mr. Peckham can force others to do what he wants without them being aware that they are being controlled. As Dr. Boyd delves deeper into Mr. Peckham's past, one startling discovery piles upon another until the ultimate purpose of Mr. Peckham's life is revealed.

It's hard to tell very much about the plot without giving away the many surprises Rossiter has included in this highly entertaining novel. I very much recommend TETRASOMY TWO to all readers who enjoy a suspenseful, imaginative and amusing book.

CLOSEUP: NEW WORLDS. Ben Bova and Trudy Bell. (St. Martin's - \$15). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

CLOSEUP: NEW WORLDS is science fact and speculation, not science fiction; but it's still one of the most enjoyable and interesting books I've picked up in quite a while, and this is to the credit of Ben Bova and Trudy Bell, whose excellent job of matching author and chapter-subject resulted in a factual book that is filled with information and at the same time highly entertaining.

It is not a totally enjoyable book, mind you; G. Harry Stine's article on "Sol III - The Twin Planet" is an overdrawn and underwritten piece, and is undoubtedly the low point of the volume. But there are so many other pieces, all of them good: Pournell's "The Old and New Mars" is the pinnacle of the volume, for instance, and the photos that accompany it are simply stunning. Hal Clement turns in a fact-filled article on Jupiter, Greg Benford has a very thought-provoking piece on Venus--as you see, the list goes on, and it includes other SF authors (Hoagland, Haldeman, Bova) with very fine articles.

This is a large volume, published in full 8.5x11; every page is interesting to even the most casual armchair astronomer, and as a whole, this book should never be passed up.

THE HORROR AT OAKDEENE & OTHERS. Brian Lumley. (Arkham House - \$7.50). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

I was told recently by an avid horror-fiction fan that Brian Lumley was born 9 months, almost to the day, after the death of H.P. Lovecraft; this is interesting, because if there is any one modern author of horror fiction who could be said to truly represent the modernized HPL style, it's Brian Lumley. His plot development, delivery and use of characterization is very much the same as the gentleman from Providence, and at times I must admit, to my chagrin, that even the flaws are there--the rather unsurprising surprise endings, the rather cliched script-type final paragraphs, the heavy-handed exclamation points. But all this aside, Lumley is a superlative author of horror fiction.

Bearing this in mind, one would expect THE HORROR AT OAKDEENE to be a top-notch collection of horror stories--and anyone who suspected this to be the case would not be disappointed. From the melancholy foreboding of a madhouse in the title story to the strange sense of disincorporation of a driver who suddenly finds himself on roads he doesn't know in "No Way Home" to the chilling horror of a man facing a god whose powers seems to derive themselves from snow and icy winds in "Born of the Winds," Brian Lumley has proven himself as an author who can gently grasp the reader by the throat, and then, so very gently, squeeze, and leave you gasping when the pressure and tension is suddenly released. The book contains seven short stories and a novella, and in its 229 pages is packed enough horror to hold even the most courageous reader's fear for a couple of hours.

Personally, I find the story that brought the most horror to me to be "The Statement of Henry Worthy," about a young boy whose body slowly succumbs to the growth of a strange green slime upon his body. The attempts to prevent the growth, and the discovery of its causes, makes a superlative horror tale, and one that was most effective with me.

The only really flawed story was "The Cleaner Woman," a story of beyond-the-grave vengeance that was most trite and predictable. Mercifully, it's short, and served to lull you before the next story.

THE HORROR AT OAKDEENE is Arkham's best horror publication in the past two years, and is well worth the relatively low cost of the book. It's in the familiar Holliston Black Novalex with gold imprint that is so familiar to the Arkham reader, and the heavy stock and quality printing mark this as a sturdy book, not a shoddy effort. The dustjacket, a blue monochromatic drawing by Steve Fabian (actually blue ink printed from a black-and-white drawing), is most effective, setting a perfect mood for the stories inside. This one is in an edition of 4000, so don't hesitate too long before ordering--Arkham's publications have a strange habit of selling out rather soon, and I suspect this book will be one of the quicker sellers.

CARD FROM MIKE GLICKSOHN

(3-1-77)

"...I did want to comment on the remarks on THE FOREVER WAR, which happens to be one of my favorite books. Everyone's entitled to their preferences in style, of course, but Jessica's comments show the blinkered bigotry she brings to the books she reads, or doesn't read in this case. There is a section of TFW in which heterosexuality is treated as a "dysfunction" which is curable which is about as far from Jessica's inadequate conception of the novel as it's capable of getting. And the society depicted is one that is consistent with the development of the book, and in no way reflects Joe Haldeman's personal beliefs. Jessica should try to (a) read things and (b) open her mind to the world of fiction and the difference between the dictates of a story and the beliefs of the writer who has woven the story. I know Joe; I know him quite well. And I know that neither the society he depicts or the attitudes of the people in it actually reflect his own attitudes. Surely fans are above such simplistic and invalid judgments?...Like the letters!"

((A most interesting letter/card, and one that made a great deal of sense. Sometimes we're all guilty of pre-condemning a book, and it's unfair to both writer and to the reader himself. I'd like to think that we could avoid it, but it slips in there every now and then.))

((I, too, like the lettercol, scattered as it is throughout the issue. This issue is a bit light on letters, primarily because of the jumbled state of our files after the move. Next time, I hope to use a great many more. That is, if everyone writes us about this FR...))

WHEN IN ROME, DO AS . . .

WHAT ARE THOSE ROMANS DOING?

by Casey Virochek

How do I get myself into these things? All I did was mention to Harley Dangerfield that there was going to be a science fiction convention in Rome, Georgia, and the next thing I know here I am at five o'clock in the godawful Saturday morning on fog-shrouded I-75. Harley Dangerfield? He's sleeping on the seat next to me.

Now, don't get me wrong. I love science fiction dearly. But three o'clock in the morning is time to go to bed, not to get up. But that's what time it was when bright-eyed bushy-tailed chipper Harley Dangerfield woke me up and asked if I was ready.

"Ready for what?"

"The Cyrcon?"

"The Sir What?"



The Cyrcon is what the science fiction freaks of Rome, Ga., have named their convention. Harley's never been to an sf convention and so he's curious. He's also eager to meet Keith Lammer, author of several dozen sf books, who's going to be guest of honor.

"You don't want to meet him, Harley," I say. "He eats young science fiction fans for lunch."

"Don't be silly."

Well, I tried.

So we've loaded my sports car with orange juice, yogurt, yeast, banana bread, and other organic goodies to fortify us for our seven-hour drive. I tried to score some speed for the trip back, but it's as scarce as dinosaurs at New Smyrna Beach. I have to settle for two kegs of vitamin C to feed my cold.

"How's your cold?" Harley asks, as I sneeze for the fortieth time just north of Valdosta, Ga.

"My cold's fine," I say. "It thrives on vitamin C." So much for Linus Pauling.

If there's one highway in this country more deadly than the Jersey Turnpike, it's I-75 from Gainesville to Atlanta. It was my idea to leave early in the morning so that we'd get to Rome in time for the action. Sometimes I'm not so bright.

Harley sleeps all the way from Gainesville through Atlanta, thus missing two scenic drives on the gravel shoulder, 17 near-collisions, and an interesting finger contest between me and a truckdriver.

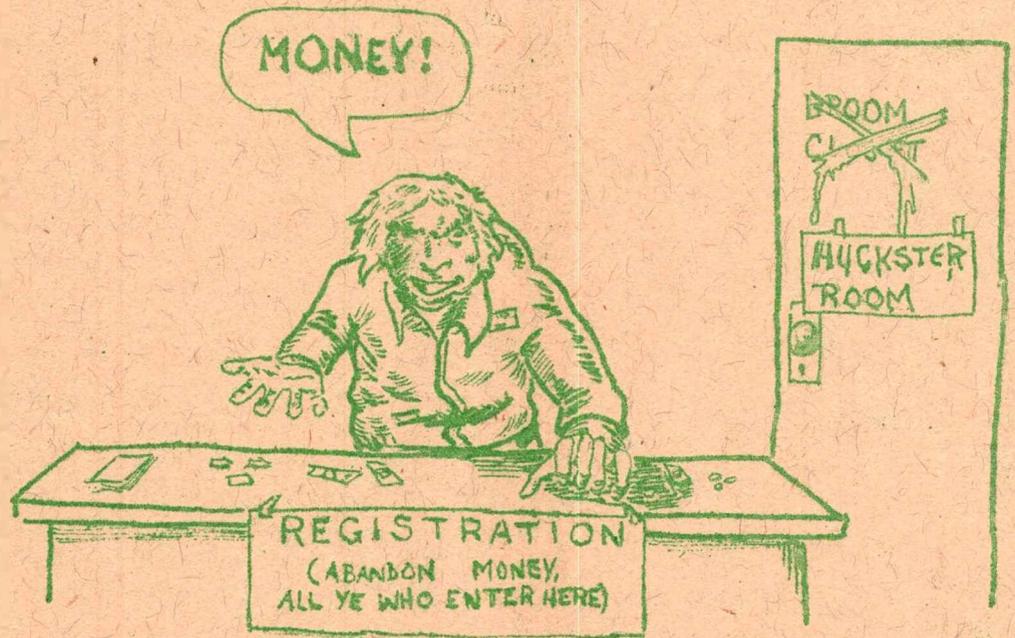
"Your eyes look terrible," he says when we stop for gas north of Atlanta.

"You should see them from this side."

"Why don't you let me drive for a while?"

Fifteen minutes later, we arrive in Rome. When we drive up to the Ramada Inn at 11:45, we see a TV crew from a local station. We figure Rome must be in bad shape, to be covering a minor science fiction convention. There's a group of well-dressed people in the lobby, clustered around a portly man who's answering questions about Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. TV lights are shining down on him and his interviewer. He looks vaguely like someone I'd met at another sf convention--everyone I've met at sf conventions looks vague. Not as vague as I'd sometimes like them to look.

Harley pulls me by the arm and points to the bulletin board. Topping the list is the Quincy Collins Political Fund Raising Luncheon. At the bottom, in small print, is the science fiction convention.



Suppressing an urge to ask Quincy Collins some questions about Robert A. Heinlein and Kurt Vonnegut, I follow Harley Dangerfield into the bowels of the Ramada Inn, where we find the Cyrcon registration table outside a storeroom and a broom closet.

Harley and I wander into a broom closet, now called the "Huckster's Room," where 20-odd people are hanging around a handful of tables containing a few paperbacks and sf magazines, some artwork (most of which is quite well done), and piles and piles of comic books. Harley immediately zeroes in on the comic books, trying to forget his disappointment at failing to meet Keith Laumer, while I sit down in a folding chair next to a wall and start to take notes for this article.

"Is this it?" Harley asks?

No one mistakes me for Hunter Thompson.

"Looks like it," I say, prevented from bolting for the door only by the thought of that dreary seven-hour-long ride back to Hogtown.

After shelling out ridiculous prices for a bunch of ridiculous comic books, Harley comes back and looks over my shoulder.

"Is this what?" the gnome at the registration table asks.

"Hey," he says, "that's not the way it happened. It's not being held in a broom closet and a storeroom."

"The Cyrcon."

"Sure is," he says cheerfully as he stiff us for the \$4.50 registration fee. For the four-fifty, we get a little tag with our names and a vaguely science fictionish illustration, a flimsy program pamphlet, and a flyer about forthcoming Doubleday science fiction books.

"It's in the back of the motel, isn't it?"

"Is Keith Laumer around?" Harley asks.

"Yes, but..."

"No," says the gnome. "He got kicked out of the motel last night."

"Then shut up and let me tell it my way."

Laumer, it seems, is a rather irascible gentleman, who gets extremely upset when things aren't quite perfect. The management of the motel figured they'd had enough when he screamed at a waitress, "I can shit better food than this!"

According to the program, there's supposed to be a panel discussion in the storeroom at 2:00. One of the gnomes mentions that it will be starting at 2:30. In fact, it starts after 3:00.

It's a shame he didn't stay around for the Quincy Collins luncheon.

Meanwhile, we're accosted by a stocky individual in levis and a studded denim jacket who offers to put us on his mailing list. I'm about to decline the honor, but I am dissuaded by the tire chain he's casually swinging about. As we leave, he hands us several pages of a stapled mimeographed fan magazine.

"He wasn't carrying a tire chain," Harley says.

QUESTION 38,416:
WITH WHICH HAND DOES
KEITH LAUMER SHOOT BIRDS
AT HOTEL MANAGERS??!



There's supposed to be two more "famous" sf personalities at the Cyrcon besides Keith Laumer. One of them is Michael Bishop, a personable young writer who's rapidly gaining a reputation in the field. In addition to a large number of stories, Bishop has already published one novel and two more are scheduled for publication.

Bishop proves to be a gentle, quiet, and amiable young man, with a haircut similar to that of the original Beatles. He seems lost on the panel, which is about "weird fiction."

"I don't know anything about weird fiction," Bishop protests. "I write science fiction."

The panel is dominated by blond-bearded Jerry Page, editor of Atlanta's WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY magazine, as the discussion rambles through fantasy, science fiction, and personalities in the field.

It's followed by an interminable trivia quiz that lasts 14 hours, with such vital questions as "What was the name of Isaac Asimov's dog?" and "How many Martians appear in STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND?"

"It didn't last fourteen hours," Harley says. "It didn't even last two."

"Well, it seemed like fourteen hours."

After milling about for an hour or so, the convention adjourns to a restaurant in downtown Rome for dinner. There's not a room in the restaurant big enough to hold the 25-odd diners, so the management shoves about a dozen tables together end-to-end in an alcove. The Arrangement sticks out into the main dining room and still there's not enough room for everybody.

The waitress and clean-up man manage somehow to maintain their cool as orders get changed and confused, and so extra plates appear and disappear. Mike Bishop gets up to help the waitress and is soon joined by Cliff Biggers (the co-organizer of the Cyrcon) and several others.

We then return to the Ramada Inn to mill around in the store-room and broom closet until a slide show is set up, to show slides of other sf conventions. This is followed by a showing of DR. STRANGELOVE, which is to be followed by a showing of an Ernie Kovacs Memorial TV show, but Harley and I leave for the Con Suite, where we pick up a couple of free beers.

In one room, a handful of people are chattering while the TV set blithely rumbles. In the bedroom, a girl is tuning up a guitar. Harley and I look at each other, chug our beer, and return to the car for the long road back to Gainesville.

"That's not how it happened," Harley says. "We went to Alabama to crash with a friend, and..."

"Will you please shut up, Harley? If I told it the way it really happened, everyone would be bored out of their skulls."



WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

a column by the right honorable Mike Geyer

The history of science fiction awards fascinates me: their impact on the market, writer's reactions to their defeats and victories, the evolution of competitive categories, and most of all, the speculative reasons for each winner's ultimate triumph. A book like Franson and Devore's HISTORY OF THE HUGO, NEBULA AND INTERNATIONAL FANTASY AWARDS completely indulges my curiosity. For two dollars Howard Devore will happily sell you your own copy; help Howard clean up his garage by dispatching an order today to 4705 Weddel Street, Dearborn MI.

Perusing this book after purchasing it from Howard at Marcon, I encountered a surprise. Though most of the novels and novellas ever nominated for a Hugo have remained in print, partly because the novella category is only nine years old, the remaining short fiction nominees have not fared nearly so well. The majority do not appear to have been considered important enough to anthologize. Unless a story had the good fortune to be originally published in DANGEROUS VISIONS or AGAIN DANGEROUS VISIONS, or was authored by an important sf talent (Bester, Anderson, Clarke, etc.) and collected in a BEST OF WHATZISNAME volume for Ace, DAW or Pocket Books, you'll have to struggle through a maze of old magazine racks and second-hand bookstores to dig them out.

Speaking only for the short fiction category (known at various times to Hugo voters as novelette, short fiction and short story) there have been 133 works nominated (at least); the first three times HUGOs were given for short fiction none but the winner was publicly announced.

A complete run of F&SF and ASF (Astounding/Analog) will include 72 of those nominees. However, the obscure pulps and a rash of original story anthologies have made a hopeless task of accumulating all but the best known of the rest.

Fortunately a list of awards tells more than just how much good sf you'll never be able to read.

Marcon conventioners kept strolling by as I read the book; overhearing one discussion I was reminded that James Tiptree had been revealed to be the psychologist Alice Sheldon. At one time Tiptree was the exception Ted Sturgeon named upon observing that all the top new sf writers were women.

Jeff Smith, who picked up Tiptree's Hugo at Discon for "The Girl Who was Plugged In," gave a coldly negative acceptance speech indicating Tiptree's apparent disapproval of awards. In the few seconds available Smith did not explain the reason for Tiptree's attitude; nor did Tiptree's opinion deny voters the right to feel that they had awarded the Hugo to the highest



quality novella of 1973. Though I doubt voters took that opinion to heart, it's true that no Tiptree work has received a Hugo nomination since.

The history of Tiptree's awards nominations graphically illustrates the way an important new talent explodes onto the scene, immediately impressing readers and writers alike. The Franson/Devore book lists "The Last Flight of Dr. Ain," a short story by Joe Tiptree, Jr., as a Nebula nominee for 1969. I wish I had that issue of GALAXY to check for a possible typo-- or this may well be the test model of Sheldon's nom de plume. Incidentally, the Nebulas are awarded by publication year-- what is called the 1969 Nebula was voted on in 1970. The 1970 Hugos, however, dealt with the fiction of 1969. Also, it is important to remember that often the Nebula involved two sets of nominees; every story receiving a nominating vote during 1969 was submitted to SFWA members on a single list early in 1970. In all categories the works getting the most votes made it onto a Final Ballot from which the winners were picked. (Since 1975 a jury of SFWAns has picked the finalists.)

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
NEBULA	1-1-0	2-0-0	0-0-0	4-1-0	2-2-1	2-0-0	1-0-0
HUGO	0-0	0-0	0-0	2-0	2-1	0-0	0-0
	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976

All glory is fleeting: so this chart of Tiptree's contention for awards indicates. In every year but 1971 Tiptree published a contender, making the final Nebula ballot in 1972 and 1973, when "Love Is the Plan, The Plan Is Death" won. Ironically her Hugo the same year was for the other Nebula-nominated work, "The Girl Who was Plugged In."

For comparison, Ursula LeGuin's chart looks like this:

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
NEBULA	-2-1	0-0-0	1-1-0	1-1-0	2-0-0	4-2-2	2-1-0
HUGO	2-1	0-0	2-0	1-1	1-1	2-1	1-0
	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976

You can guess my fondness for handicapping horses, no doubt, and the massive amounts of money I save by not attending the races. Perhaps a trivia contest approach would suit you better? In a day when feminist and female-written sf gets as much attention as it does, would you attempt to name the following writers and editors?

1. Who was the first woman to be nominated for a Hugo?
2. Who was the first woman to win a Hugo?

Don't bother. Unless Juanita Coulson reads this, none of you is likely to know the answer. It was Juanita Coulson, coeditor of YANDRO, who got the first nomination in 1959; the category was Best Amateur Magazine. But she wasn't the first winner. However the first winner came about under the same circumstances. Pat Lupoff shared the Best Fanzine Hugo in 1963 for collaborating with her husband Dick on XERO.

Tossing out the fan categories, do you know:

1. Who was the first female pro to get a Hugo nomination?
2. Likewise, to win a Hugo?
3. What Lady author first had a novel nominated for a Hugo?
4. Until 1974 no woman had ever won the short story Hugo; name the woman and the work which ended the drought.
5. Who was the first woman to win both a Hugo and a Nebula?

I doubt that anyone dwelt on it at the time, but of seventy works nominated for the first Nebulas (given in 1966 for the previous year's fiction) only two women were included: Kate Wilhelm as coauthor of CLONE, and Jane Beauclerk for the short story "Lord Moon." The next year five women appeared in the 59 works offered for consideration, but none made it onto the newly instituted Final Ballot. We think of the Nebula as an avante-garde award, as its creators intended, but the first major sf award given to a woman was the Best Novella Hugo in 1968.

- (1) Zenna Henderson got the first fiction nomination: 1959.
- (2) Anne McCaffrey's "Weyr Search" tied for winner: 1968.
- (3) Marion Zimmer Bradley's SWORD OF ALDONES competed for Best Novel in 1963.
- (4) Ursula K. LeGuin for "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas."
- (5) Anne McCaffrey achieved the double by winning the 1968 Nebula for Best Novella ("Dragon Rider. ").

The trouble with "famous firsts" is the rapidity with which they become "forgotten firsts." Anne McCaffrey's groundbreaking achievements have been overshadowed, probably

because her own work had no political implications. She also wrote the first bedroom scene published in ANALOG; a barrier-breaking event passed by as quickly as the readers who originally raised the barrier.

--Mike Glycer, April 1977

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And this pretty much concludes FR #11; there are no fanzine reviews this issue, primarily due to lack of space, but fanzine reviews should be back with FR #12.

Now that we're in the greater Atlanta area, putting out FR should be much easier--all the suppliers of paper, ink, etc. are around here, and that was a real problem when we lived in Cedartown. Therefore, being totally optimistic, I'm saying that the next FR should be out in mid-to-late-July; and furthermore, we're hoping to retain a regular schedule from here on out.

Again, let me urge you to let me know what you think of the non-review content of this issue; I'm very pleased with all three non-review pieces, and I think that Piers, Grant and Mike deserve more than a one-line comment. I'd like to make non-review features a regular part of FR, but I'll have to use reader response to do that.

I'll mention also that Rich Garrison is bidding for DEEPSOUTHCON '78 in Atlanta; confirmed attendees include Robert A. Heinlein. Rich, the editor-publisher of Heritage Press, is a person who can do a superb job on a convention, so I'll use FR to ask you to support the Atlanta DSC bid. New DSC sites are chosen, one year prior, at the previous DSC, so this year, the '78 DSC site will be voted on at the Birmingham DSC. Attend and vote Atlanta!

NEBULA AWARD WINNERS:

- MAN PLUS, Frederik Pohl - Best Novel
- "Houston, Houston..." James Tiptree, Jr. - Best Novella
- "The Bicentennial Man" Isaac Asimov - Best Novelette
- "A Crowd of Shadows" C.L. Grant - Best Short Story

As has been noted elsewhere, Ursula K. LeGuin did withdraw her novelette "The Diary of the Rose" in protest of SFWA's treatment of Stanislaw Lem. This in no way takes away from the quality of the story that did win in that category, but is noted here for the record.

The Nebula information comes to us via ace reporter Michael Bishop, who travels to the end of the Earth (or New York City, which is the same thing) to get a story for FR. I took the liberty of adding categories, and since I had no list (all that is packed away still), I assigned each the category I assumed it was nominated in. Blame me for errors. // Finis til FR #12!

