

# newsletter

## The Bulletin of The Irish Science Fiction Association



What no-body around here seems to realise is that Sturgeon's Law is universal. It applies to everyone and everything, (with the possible exception of the ed!), and is starting to become increasingly true for the ISFA.

We are deteriorating rapidly: membership is down, funds are down, and Stargate hasn't appeared in nine months. Some blame for this can obviously be attached to the committee, we admit it, but a lot of it is also due to the apathetic nature of the organisation as a whole.

This newsletter is a prime example. For the second or third time in succession most of the articles have been supplied by the same few people. Newsletters are late because there is never enough material, and there is never any surplus.

Another example is the attendance at meetings. When only a half-dozen people show up, they seem to be pointless, but no-one wants to see the association going postal only. I appreciate that there are many of you who have difficulty getting up to Dublin on a Sunday night, but a little more effort on the part of those that can make it would give the association a much needed boost.

'Nuff said.

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#### \*\*\*\*\* MEETINGS:

\*\*\*\*\* March 27th: Video - The title is to be a surprise.

\*\*\*\*\* Miss it at your own risk.

#### \*\*\*\*\* FUTURE MEETINGS:

\*\*\*\*\* April 24th, May 29th: For further details, contact the committee

\*\*\*\*\* a bit nearer the date, or show up anyway.

\*\*\*\*\* We guarantee, as always, a good night.

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Editor this issue: David Brown.

Artwork this issue:

Editorial address:

. 18 Beech Drive,  
Dundrum, Dublin 16.

Page 5: Greg Byrne.

Page 8: Hugh Deasy.

JOHN McCARTHY - is looking for people to attend a series of lectures he will give on the writing of SF in Waterford during the Summer. It will be a two week course, but John says he can arrange fairly inexpensive accomodation.

As there are so many people in the Association who like to try and write, I think we should try to avail ourselves of this offer. We can arrange the date to suit ourselves, so if you are interested, please let John or the committee know.

(He says there will be twenty-three girls present. Please stand in the queuc on the left.)

BRENDAN and myself recently spoke to a freelance journalist at length on the various aspects of the association. Several periodicals have expressed an interest in the piece, so scan your locals for news of what is soon to be the most famous Irish Science Fiction Association in the world.

MEMBERSHIP: This is directed at anyone who is reading this but is not yet a member. Fear not! That deplorable situation can be rectified immediately, if not sooner. All you have to do is either show up at one of our meetings in the Pembroke Inn, Pembroke Street, at 7.30, or send a letter to our secretary, Brendan Ryder, at the address at the bottom of page 1. Your worries are almost over.

D+D: We really must get together sometime.

COMMITTEE: Among the many things discussed at recent committee meetings were the following:

- ISFA merchandise - ties, sweat-shirts, stationery etc.
- Methods of increasing membership.
- The date of the A.G.M.
- The possibility of holding an Irish convention.

If you have any views on any or all of the above, why not get in touch with the committee. Constructive suggestions and criticism are always welcome.

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Dungeons And Dragons fans please note: Leprecon 3, a Role Playing games convention, will be held in the G.M.B. of Trinity College on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th April, 1983. For more information contact John Munro, of the Dublin Wargames Group, on 972591 or at 1, St. Kevin's Park, Bally, Dublin 6

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# FICTION

THE ONLY WAY OUT IS UP      by GRAHAM ANDREWS.

"Do you speak English?"

No response.

"Parlez-vous francais?"

No response.

"Panymayoo parruski?"

No response.

"Sprechen Sie Deutsch?"

No response.

"Parlate Italiano?"

No response.

"Habla Espanol?"

No response.

Major Kendrick Bulmer finally ran out of languages - and patience. Normally unflappable, he was Head Security Officer at a top-secret military research establishment 'somewhere in England'. But the present situation was beginning to get him down.

The 'prisoner' - for want of a better word - remained silent, motionless, and strangely out-of-reach. He might as well have been in the next room - or on the far side of the moon.

Major Bulmer turned to his white-coated colleague and asked, morosely: "What do you make of it, Doctor McKeown?"

"'It' is a 'he'," replied the irascible Medical Officer. "And I can't 'make' very much of him - except that he's obviously in a deep state of shock. Something seems to have 'short-circuited' his nervous system. He's literally 'dead to the world'."

"Maybe you're right, doctor, but I want some answers - fast."

For the nth time, Dr McKeown shone a light into the eyes of his mysterious 'patient'.

"It's no use," he declared, looking up at the expectant Major Bulmer. "There's absolutely no reaction. He must have gone through some devastating psychic ordeal. No telling when he might snap out of it. Today, tomorrow - or twenty years from now."

"Well, we've got to find some way to interrogate him," Major Bulmer insisted. "He appeared from nowhere inside our most secure laboratory, without being spotted or setting off any alarms. God help us if the Press ever get win of all this...."

"I appreciate your concern, major, but my interest in this matter is purely medical. I'm not a counter-spy. Don't ask me how 'Mr X' got in here - or why- but he's definitely a sick man. He couldn't hurt a fly in his present condition."

'Mr X' paid no attention whatsoever to this heated exchange. He was a stocky, muscular man in his mid-thirties, with shortish brown hair and limpid hazel eyes. The outfit he was wearing resembled a kind of uniform; gold tunic with a 'boomerang' emblem, dark blue trousers and black boots.

Before him on the mettalic table-top were several strange devices which had been removed from about his person. They may - or may not - have been weapons. It was impossible to tell - for the time being, at any rate.

Major Bulmer slammed his swagger-stick against the table-top. 'Mr X' didn't budge an inch.

"Nevertheless, this is a matter of national security, and I must order you to revive him. Immediately. Use truth serum, or something. Don't worry, doctor - I'll accept full responsibility."

"There's no such thing as a 'truth serum'," said Dr McKeown scornfully. "But I'm willing to risk an injection of adrenalin. Against my better judgement."

Dr McKeown rolled up the left-hand sleeve of 'Mr X's' tunic, and went on to deftly administer the injection: Now all we can do is wait-and-see."

Nothing happened for about two minutes - then everything seemed to happen at once.

All of a sudden, 'Mr X' shifted uneasily in his chair, and intelligence glimmered once more in his hazel eyes. He seemed to take in the situation at a single glance. Then he acted....

Major Bulmer reached for his pistol, but he was a few seconds too late.

'Mr X' elbowed Dr McKeown to one side, then he snatched up a rectangular shaped object from the table-top. He spoke into it, somewhat breathlessly:

"Beam me up, Scotty - right away."

And then - after an eerie flickering - 'Mr X' vanished into who-knows-where....

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## B O O K S

"THE SECOND TRIP" - by Robert Silverberg, Pan Books, 1980. St£1.50

I was given this book to read a long time ago (well, August actually) and I'm only getting onto it now. There are so many new SF books, and regular magazines around, that to keep up with the progress being made today's SF is almost a full time job. Sturgeon's law certainly is true (90% of everything is c--p!), but it's finding the other 10% that's the main problem.

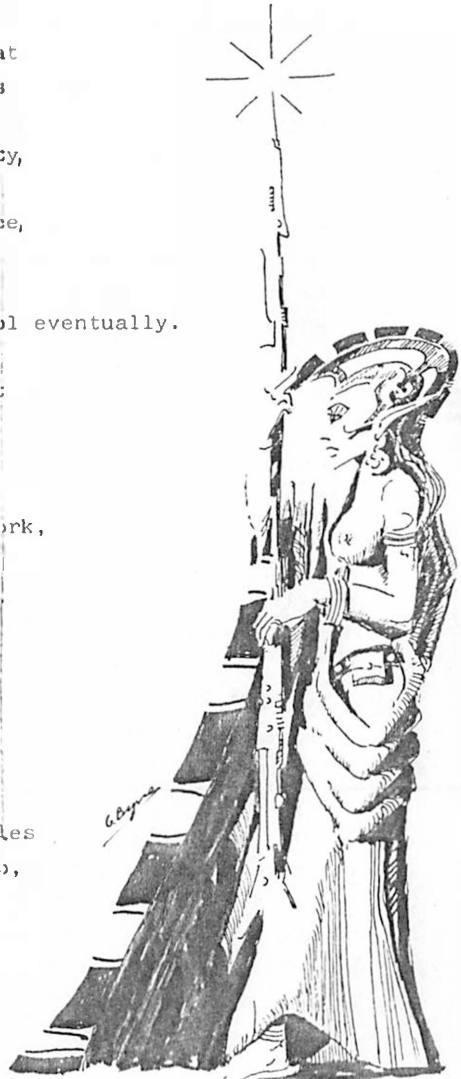
The above book is certainly a member of the latter category. It's a relative oldy, written by Silverberg in 1972, although it has been reprinted

quite a few times. The main plot is this: it is the 21st century. The problem of crime still exists, but there's a new technology available to combat it. For major offences such as murder and rape, the brains of the criminals are wiped clean, all their memories erased, and a new personality, with a false set of memories, put into the newly-vacated brain.

This is just what happens to insane rapist Nat Hamlin, who, before he went crazy was a brilliant sculptor and social celebrity. His new personality is that of Paul Macy, and his new job is that of a newscaster. But, shortly after he starts his new life, an old girlfriend of Hamlin's turns up, and refuses to believe he is now Paul Macy. (I ought to explain that all Rehabs, as the ex-criminals are called, have badges to identify them as such, and people, on seeing the badge, are supposed to treat the criminals as new people, not using old names etc.) But problems start as soon as she starts talking to him, calling him Nat and referring to his previous life.

Paul Macy doesn't know her, but realises what is happening and tries to get away. A series of events follow which lead to the inevitable return of Nat Hamlin's personality, into the same skull as that inhabited by Paul Macy, and a series of battles take place, with Hamlin taking over control of the body in moments of stress for Macy, when his defences are down, but Macy gets back control eventually. That brief description of the plot does not give away too much, as I have purposely left out certain things of importance.

What is interesting about the book is Silverberg's handling of it. All the events in the book take place in the city of New York, in 2011, and he details the changes between now and then very well. Outside of the city, and possible interplanetary travel, are not mentioned, as they are unnecessary. The characterisation in the book is very good, though, and Silverberg gives us an interesting insight into the mind of a criminal, in Nat Hamlin, and an ordinary run-of-the-mill person, in Paul Macy. The psychic battles between the two are fascinating to watch too, with both parties having to find out how to 'tap in' on the various bodily functions to make it difficult for the other who is in control of the body. (There is one scene in particular, where Hamlin causes severe



pains to shoot through Macy's chest, by simply "twanging (his) heart strings!")

The book is fast-paced. So much that I had to read it in two days - I couldn't wait to find out what happened next! (A similar effect to the one I got reading "Millenium", by Ben Bova - also very good!) It was, as I've said, written in 1972, and I wondered why it didn't get the Hugo - because "To Your Scattered Bodies Go" did. It's not as good as the latter, true, but in a year of lower quality it might have won.

Reviewed by: Brendan Ryder

"334" - by Thomas M. Disch, Magnum Paperbacks, 1981. 248 pages, st£1.50

The author is one of the leading writers in the "New Wave" school of British and American SF writers. Having started out as a collaborator with Michael Moorcock on the celebrated avant-garde "New Worlds" SF magazine in 1964, he settled in the U.S.A. during the 1970's, where he has lived ever since.

He made his name as the author of several works of speculative and fantast influenced fiction, by projecting certain current trends in American society, and examining their logical development in the 21st century.

His best known titles to date are "Lamp Concentration", "The Fenocides", "Fun With Your New Head", and "On Wings Of Song".

The present work was originally based on several short stories, published separately in British and U.S. SF magazines. These have now been revised to form a continuous narrative piece, of which the main theme is the city of New York in the early 21st century, when the population are ruled by an authoritarian elitist government, using eugenic and genetic methods of population control and breeding.

It is an extremely disturbing powerful work, and strongly recommended to the adventurous SF enthusiast.

"A WILLIAM BURROUGHS READER" - by William S. Burroughs, Picador, 1982 st£2.50 (Introduction by John Calder)

The author has received the distinction of being placed on the "Banned Books" list of the Irish Censorship of Publications Board on several occasions during the past 20 years.

This is because he has dealt frankly with such controversial issues as drug addiction, homosexuality, sadism, sado-masochism, which are described in his earlier novels, "Junkie", "The Naked Lunch And The Soft Machine", "The Ticket That Exploded".

The present volume presents long extracts from both these and his later SF orientated novels such as "Nova Express", "The Wild Boys" and "The Exterminators", where he speculates on the world being taken over by aliens, drug-addicts and the multi-national corporations. It provides an excellent introduction to Burrough's works and is essential reading for the serious SF fan.

"CITIES OF THE RED NIGHT" - by William S. Burroughs, Picador 1982, stf2.50

This is his most recent work, in which he speculates on a future world dominated by chemical and biological warfare experiments, using his celebrated 'cut-up' technique of jumping characters from one section to another, without apparent logical connections.

Reviewed by: David Lass, M.A., Dip. Lib.

"ICE" - Arnold Federbush, Bantam Books, 1978

"The ultimate disaster" according to the cover blurb. Although I was prepared for a sort of 'Son of Airport' it wasn't quite that bad.

However, the usual disaster attributes are present - cast of millions, thousands of sub-plots, smattering of science. The mix is somewhat better than usual, although the cast are about as frozen as the glacier which eats New York. (Yeah, I know, plagiarism from 'The Blob Which Ate Chicago'.)

It's a good Guinness table book, suitable for those cold evenings when the minister for snow is consoling you, and the pipes are bursting in the background, so you won't have to worry about why everyone - stranded neo-eskimoos, huskies, caribous, et al - all converge on New York. They must heart it. (Sorry, Hugh, I just couldn't decipher the second last word-ed.)

Reviewed by: Hugh Deasy

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## EXTRAS

"ELFQUEST" - by Wendy and Richard Pini, Warp Graphics, 1978-

Elfquest is one of those rare achievements in SF books. One One could compare it to a drug, it's addictive qualities are that good. The more you read it, the more you just can't read enough of it, it's rather like trying to fill up John Mc Carthy's stomach with Guinness.

Anyway, EQ is the story about the quest of an Elfin chief (Cutter) and his tribe (the Wolfriders) for other elves scattered around an imaginary world.

The story begins with Cutter and his tribe being evicted by the cruel and primitive (what else) humans. Tricked by a band of trolls, they are led to a vast expanse of desert (David Brown's brain?), where they meet, after they have crossed it, another tribe of elves called the Sunfolk. There Cutter meets his soul-mate (I'll leave you to work that out) in the form of a delicious creature, Leetah, the tribe's healer.

After more adventures with the evil, scheming humans, Cutter, and his faithful friend, Skywise, converge on 'Blue Mountain'- where they meet Leetah and the rest of the Wolfriders after pursuing solo adventures.

Inside the hollow mountain, the group meet the 'High Ones' - the original ascendants of the elves - and after a considerable number of issues defeat the evil in the mountain, in the form of Winnowill, one of the High

Ones.

This, unfortunately, is where the present issue leaves off, issue 15 will be out around now, courtesy of the Alchemists Head.

In summary, Elfquest's co-creator, Wendy Pini, is one of the best artists currently working in the comics scene. The artwork is incredible, and the script is not too bad either. The story is a simple delight, and don't be taken in by the word 'comic', the story is also aimed at old marrieds like Brendan.

Despite the excellent artwork (far, far better than Stephen Walsh's), you can pick an issue up for around £1.50.

Reviewed by: Derek Gray

P.S. Yes, they ride wolves, but not in that context.

