

# KYBEN II

edited and published by Jeff & Ann Smith/1339 Weldon Avenue/Baltimore MD 21211/(301) 889-1440. Single issue price 35¢, subscriptions 3/\$1. The only back issues still available are 2 & 7. Australian agent: Paul Anderson/21 Mulga Road/Hawthorndene SA 5051. Copyright © 1975 by Jeffrey D. Smith. This is the March 1975 issue, and is Phantasmicom Press Publication #38. Art Credits: Grant Canfield (6,9), S. Randall (17), Bob Smith (2,12,18,20).

## INTRODUCTION

The 1975 KYBEN is here, with perhaps even more changes than usual. This year we had a fairly severe choice--to either publish three forty-page issues or five twenty-four pagers. Originally we'd planned for the first option, but it's taken so long to get this many stencils typed that we're taking the latter course. We have this time 10 or 12 regular columns/features/etc., and naturally there's no way to get more than a fraction of them into a single issue. Think, then, of KYBEN 1975 as one 120-page fanzine mailed out in five installments. That way we don't have to worry so much about whether or not a particular set of twenty-four pages is "balanced." (Where are this issue's editorials, anyway?)

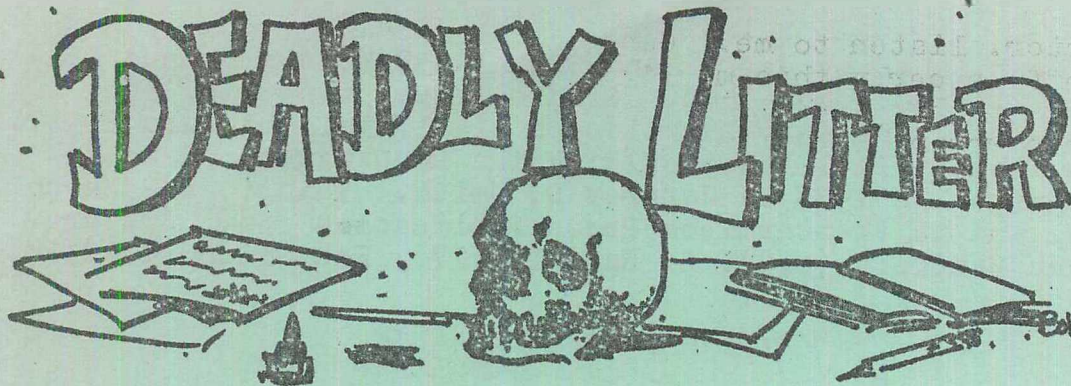
## A FANTASY

I am far from being on the inside of the comics industry--I don't even get any comics newszines, if such do exist. I do have an inside contact in Freff, though, who told me last time he called that Gerry Conway had left Marvel for DC. That doesn't mean much to me--Conway is not one of my favorite writers, although I have been enjoying his work on SPIDER-MAN. In issue 121 (June 1973), entitled "The Night Gwen Stacy Died," Spider-Man's girlfriend was killed during his battle with the Green Goblin. This was a realistically-handled death, presented with editorial assurances that she would not be brought comic-bookishly back to life. ("Life (and Death) simply doesn't work that way. To somehow revive Gwen now would, in our view, be perhaps the single most tasteless act ever committed in comics.")

In #142, Spidey sees Gwen in a busy intersection, can't catch up to her, and dismisses it as an illusion. (Since he's battling a master of illusion, this is a logical conclusion.) By #145, it's obvious that Gwen is alive. But...according to Ned Leeds, one of the other characters:

Peter, listen to me. Gwen arrived at the Daily Bugle office early this morning--hysterical, frightened--in a panic. Naturally, we reacted as you did, thinking she was an imposter. But, Peter--we checked her fingerprints--and God help us all, the fingerprints match the ones taken at Gwen's autopsy! This is the

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## letters of comment on KYBEN 6

PAULA MARMOR 1/30/74  
Mole End

I'm glad you mentioned THE GIRL MOST LIKELY.... I was furious!! According to the article in the TIMES, Joan Rivers came up with the idea for it after being propositioned by one of the people who put her down when she was a fat nobody--he didn't even recognize her. Bullshit. I been there, I know--maybe for dramatic effect they built the beginning up a bit, but nobody is like that in college. Especially the part about approaching Mr. Blond-and-Beautiful Big-Man-on-Campus. Anything like that gets burned out of you at about age 11. Nobody's that dumb. You don't keep running to put your hands on the oven door after the third or fourth set of blisters. You take to sitting in corners and daydreaming and letting people copy off your homework and showing them how to balance an equation and maybe just maybe you find out that if you know a juicy piece of gossip about Paul McCartney before anyone else does even the head cheerleader will come over and listen eagerly....

But as you said, the worst thing was her revenge. What they did, you see, was to negate any truth in the beginning of the film, because she was a mean, selfseeking, vengeful, crummy person who deserved anything they gave her and maybe more.

As I said, I was upset.

MICHAEL K. SMITH 2/17/74  
604 N. Hampton/De Soto TX 75115

Denis Quane, over in Commerce, is a real hard-core science fiction type. I expect you've seen his NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPT.--a good zine. But his sense of the scientifically "possible" evidently nags at his conscience, and so he feels pressed to disprove the notion of parallel worlds. Well, it doesn't matter, because sf writers aren't likely to give up the idea. There have also been numerous attempts to disprove the possibility of time travel, but the writers keep on using it anyway. I have a par-

ticular fondness for time travel stories and I enjoy finding someone with a new twist--THE MAN WHO FOLDED HIMSELF is the best one of late. And consider this: If time travel is possible, then, sometime in the future it will be invented and used. And if that's true, then there may easily be time travelers among us now. It's likely that at least some time travel would be for purposes of historical and scientific research, so why don't sf fans organize an observation team for up-coming important and historical events (those that can be foreseen, of course, like the impeachment, if there is one) to watch for time travelers. It's also been suggested that some of the inexplicable events of the past, like Ezekiel's wheel, might be explained by time travel.

I'm afraid I'm one of those people who is mostly irritated by Christmas. I'm not a Christian, and never was, and all the Madison Avenue hoop-la (beginning in October) disgusts me. And what bugs me even more are my Jewish friends who put up a tree and the whole bit, "for the children." Cop out! And it makes no sense at all to me to go into debt for eleven months to repay an orgy of conspicuous consumption. The Kwakiutl Indians called it "pot-latch." My kids get presents on occasion year round, as the need comes for bicycles or whatever. And, as the money is available. Of course, every December all my friends call me "Scrooge," and I rail at them for their folly, and everybody's happy.

I continue to think your book reports are possibly the best part of KYBEN, perhaps because I'm basically a book-oriented person and I write a lot of book reviews myself (in various places) --I like to compare my opinions of books with other people's. I quite agree with you on TO DIE IN ITALBAR; I usually like Zelazny, but this one read like it was written at odd moments over a dull weekend. I'm not much of a mystery reader, except for Donald Westlake (GOD SAVE THE MARK is still one of my all-time favorites) and the earlier "Rabbi" stories by Kemelman, so I can't venture an intelligent opinion about many of your titles. DYING INSIDE is very good, but a lot of people are saying it's better than UP THE LINE, with which I do not agree. DYING tends to drag at times, while Silverberg explores motivations with a microscope; he overdoes it, as if he was just learning how. (S(I personally feel that DYING INSIDE is Silverberg's best book. UP THE LINE is a very good book, but it is not a serious book. I generally enjoy good fun books more than mediocre serious books, but I like good serious books best of all.)S)

Apropos of nothing at all, I have a question to which I have not been able to find a really satisfactory answer, to wit: Why are there virtually no black sf writers? Is it because black writers are so much aware of their own painful past that they can base their writing only on that condition, on reality, in other words, that is more real to them than to white authors? Ideas?

GEO. ALEC EFFINGER 3/2/74  
4217 Prytania Street 304/New Orleans LA 70115

Thank you for sending me the copy of KYBEN, even though I nearly amputated a finger in the elevator on one of your staples. I genuinely believe that I am the world's single most incompetent

person. It's a shame there isn't a Hugo or Nebula category for that. (Come to think of it, it looks like there is, sometimes, judging by the winners. Ah well, sour grapes...) (S(I nominate myself for that award, too. One of the reasons I publish fanzines is that it's something I've found I can do with a modicum of success.)S)

Thank you, too, for the kind words you had to say about "Lights Out" and "World War II". Most times, particularly since moving down here to the sunny south, I feel like I'm sending these stories out into a great void; they get written, they get sold, they get published, and nobody in the world ever reads them. I hear nothing from anyone. Occassionally the wrong ones get Nebula recommendations (most frequently the ones I don't particularly like, the ones I publish under pseudonyms). So a comment one way or the other in a fanzine is the only proof I have that there is someone out there, after all. Hello? Hello?

Astounding coincidence. ("Astounding"? I had an experience "Analog"ous to--) Like Grant Canfield, I've avoided mysteries; accidentally read an Agatha Christie a long while ago and thought they were all fussy little doily murders. Looking for something to read one afternoon, I went through THE MALTESE FALCON. God. Went through the rest of Hammett the next week, forcing them on everyone who would listen, including my sf class at Tulane. Then Chandler. Chandler is probably one of the finest American writers of the first half of the century. I wouldn't be afraid to rank him up there with anybody. Chandler. I hate to read writers like him. I've tried for a couple of months now to approach what he did; I shouldn't be doing that, I should be trying to do what I'm trying to do. Can't help it. I felt crushed when I read the last Chandler (which, apparently, the critics didn't like as well as his earlier stuff. THE LONG GOODBYE. A tremendous novel) and have been campaigning for him ever since. I was in the middle of writing a collaboration with Gardner Dozois; he'd written 35,000 words of a novel, and I made it into 70,000. I changed the main character from James Bond to Philip Marlowe. I tried to be terse and clever. I got off a good line about a slow leak in a bottle of scotch, but that's not much for 35,000 words. I can't imagine how Chandler could maintain the intensity for so long. God. I feel inadequate enough, already.

After Hammett and Chandler, I felt like a neofan who's just read his first Bradbury stories. Like Grant, I looked around, and there didn't seem to be anywhere to go but down. I've read two Ross Macdonalds, and they seem competent, but nowhere near Chandler's level. Whom do I read now?

Lastly, I'm glad to see someone picking up on Kit Reed's short story collection. I've been campaigning for her for a long time. Maybe you'll like Carol Emshwiller's collection--an event long overdue, to coin a cliché--this spring from Harper & Row.

(S(Don Keller and I have a running shtick: When one of us says, "That's amazing," the other picks up on it with, "It's fantastic! It's the magazine of fantasy and science fiction!" As for mystery recommendations, here's a few for you:)S)

JOE L. HENSLEY 2/8/74  
2315 Blackmore/Madison IN 47250

Thanks for KYBEN 6 and the note therein reviewing DELIVER US TO EVIL. I've done three more since, two of them about Robak, the protagonist in DUTE, and another outside the series, all published, or to be published, by Doubleday.

I'd like to tout you toward a few people. If you've never read Dick Francis do try him. Some of his books of late haven't been so much, but DEAD CERT, FOR KICKS, NERVE and ENQUIRY were very good things. I believe he knows how to build and make real the semi-psychotic villain better than anyone now writing. (S(Thanks. You were one of several people who recommended Francis to me, and I'm very appreciative. He is excellent.)S) Charles Williams is also very tough. Grant Canfield might try John D. MacDonald. Travis McGee may be hard to suspend belief to reach, but once that point has been passed, John D. is a good commentator on the life and coming death of America. Dean Koontz, under the pseudonym of K. R. Dwyer, has done a couple of suspense novels for Random that are quite readable: CHASE and SHATTERED. And I'd imagine you'd like the Nicholas Freeling books if you like the Maj Sjowall etc. books.

If you'll look on the jacket of RINGO I think my brother played on one or two of the songs there. I talked with him around Xmas and he'd done such varied things as that, play a travel gig with Seals and Croft, play for Streisand, play for the soundtrack of JONATHON LIVINGSTON SEAGULL, plus do some arranging and play for Andy Williams on his latest, SCLITAIRE.

LAURINE WHITE 2/19/74  
5408 Leader Avenue/Sacramento CA 95841

When you print the letters up front and don't separate them except by name and address, I get the feeling they are all by the same person. (S(They probably are.)S)

The book reviews are good, but I wish you wouldn't review so many by Sjowall and Wahloo in one issue.

BARRY GILLAM 2/22/74  
4283 Katonah Avenue/Bronx NY 10470

You've probably seen THE LAUGHING POLICEMAN by now. (S(I never did.)S) Although it has all the faults one expects from Rosenberg, I must say I enjoyed it. The "it" being the excellent acting by Matthau, Dern and Gossett, who make you really feel what it's like to work together so closely on such a job. The screenplay, admittedly, has many problems due to the unsuccessful transplanting of the story to San Francisco. Rickman goes half-way American by bringing a lot of spectacle onstage and then leaves the Martin Beck role almost intact--so the movie ends up with two methods of dramaturgy working against each other. As a result, the investigation looks silly and obvious when it should be a series of careful revelations. Rosenberg doesn't help by lingering on the human debris that cling to the corners of his

ashcan city. Luckily for both Rickman and Rosenberg, Beck has to be on almost all the time. And Rickman, despite other faults, understands Beck and plays his new partner off him splendidly. Dern has never been better (and seems to have recovered from the fever known as silent running). He can't tell the difference between the ghetto and the police academy blackboard. Matthau is equally out of touch, but in the way a man gets when he's been staring at something too long. Because of his familiarity with the sordidness of the city, he can't comprehend the little unbending so necessary to his children. Gossett is the streetwise man, trying in little ways to keep things working, passing over the petty, victimless crimes that Dern pounces on. It's not all that much of a movie, but the performances stay in the mind.

ALAN SANDERCOCK 4/6/74  
 1 Michael Street/Lockleys SA 5032  
 Australia

MY FIRST TIME  
 IN A NEW  
 FANZINE!  
 WONDER HOW  
 LONG IT WILL  
 TAKE ME TO SCORE  
 A CHIPPIE!



I managed to see the last half an hour of THE LAUGHING POLICEMAN when I walked into a San Francisco theater to see THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE. I don't know for sure whether it was that film but since it was a cop movie set in SF starring Walter Matthau and Bruce Dern I think it's a good bet. Actually, movies now have an extra dimension for me in that quite often I can recognize locations, etc., if I've been to the city. A couple of weeks after touring Universal Studios in LA, I saw a film called SSSSNAKE or something at my local Adelaide drive-in and I decided that I recognized the backlot of Universal as one of the locations for that film. I think it probably lessens the magic and brings things down to earth when you're too familiar with the behind-the-scenes action. It's like having special effects explained.

## KYBEN 7

MICHAEL G. CONEY 9/18/74  
 1016 Cypress Road, RR 1/Sidney BC  
 Canada

Thank you for KYBEN 7; a very interesting zine. I enjoyed the Natterings and Darrell Schweitzer's fine and poignantly true article. Fortunately I've never collected SF to any extent; my

forte was railway station platform tickets, of which I used to have hundreds. And pictures of sailing ships.

Thank you also for the kind reviews. But don't be fooled by the appearance of facility. I do indeed sweat blood over my novels--particularly MIRROR IMAGE (which was written after SYZYGY) and which got stuck for six months at the half-way stage simply because I didn't know how the hell to end it. I wrote FRIENDS COME IN BOXES during this dreadful period, merely to try to loosen myself up. The only published novel which came easily was THE HERO OF DOWNWAYS--and it is the one I'm least happy about. In those days I sat there tortured by self-doubts, thinking "Will the reader understand this? Will he identify with that man/woman? Is this goddamned book going to overrun its length to the extent that it will be unsaleable? Is that funny? Is that sufficiently horrifying?"

Now I don't bother. Now--five novels later--it does come easily and I don't have to worry about achieving the effect at which I aim quite so much. But occasionally there are doubts; I think there always will be.

It's possible you'll find my next batch of novels less "minor;" the various publishers seem to think so. But I never intend to write the heavy stuff. Not, I hope, because I couldn't--but because I feel that philosophers are a dime a dozen in SF, and that what is wanted is entertainment which is easy to read (and therefore well-written) yet which at the same time gives the reader something to think about. And which, above all, never cheats in any way. I write for fun, not for money. The fun is in tying up the loose ends, in believing my own characters, in regarding each completed work as an honest masterpiece. Disillusionment comes later, of course, but the feeling of achievement is great while it lasts!

Sexist, you say? Sure, if you understand sexism in the way Women's Lib do. In the recent novels, even more so. (I don't think FRIENDS or DOWNWAYS could possibly be called sexist, except by Joanna Russ--herself probably the most overt sexist of all!) I believe that there is a hell of a difference between men and women, and I regard beautiful women as "sex objects" and am very happy to do so--and this comes out in my writing. And I can honestly say that no woman who knows me, dislikes me. And my wife and I have been very happily married for getting on for twenty years, and the mutual attraction is still strong. Sexist? Yes, and a goddamned sight happier than the twittering neurotics who keep asking me why they can't get along with the girls, and who can't understand it when I tell them that the average girl doesn't want to be treated like a guy.... The whole subject has become so riddled with misunderstandings that it's best ignored. Which I do. And there's nothing which annoys an extremist so much as being ignored....

Anyway, that facet of my writing aside, I'm glad you like my stuff. For your info and not from any plug angle, here is the latest situation:

MONITOR FOUND IN ORBIT (short stories) DAW, September  
WINTER'S CHILDREN (novel) Gollancz, about now  
THE JAWS THAT BITE, THE CLAWS THAT CATCH Elmfield Press hc,  
DAW pb early next year

HELLO SUMMER, GOODBYE            DAW, mid-1975  
Untitled collection of "Peninsula" stories            DAW, late 1975  
BRONTOMEK            just completed  
THE ULTIMATE JUNGLE            just completed

Neither of the last two have been sent to my agent yet. BRONTOMEK is a sequel to both MIRROR IMAGE and SYZYGY, and runs to a frightening length. Oh, and I forgot a real oddity of a novel with the greatest heroine you ever read of, called CHARISMA OF AN AUTUMN BUTTERFLY. This is in the hands of my agent for placing right now. I have high hopes of it.

(S(Nobody has to be afraid they'll be accused of trying to "plug" their work in my fanzines. I enjoy hearing what writers have been doing, and am always glad to publish such information.)S)

IRWIN GAINES 9/10/74  
100 Cedar Street, Apt. 36A/Dobbs Ferry NY 10522

At least for the 74 Hugo we should have a more open contest, with no Clarke, Heinlein, Asimov, Silverberg, Zelazny or even Gerold novel. I've been making a list of books (based on reviews or general feelings about the author) to read before deciding on nominees, which so far goes as follows:

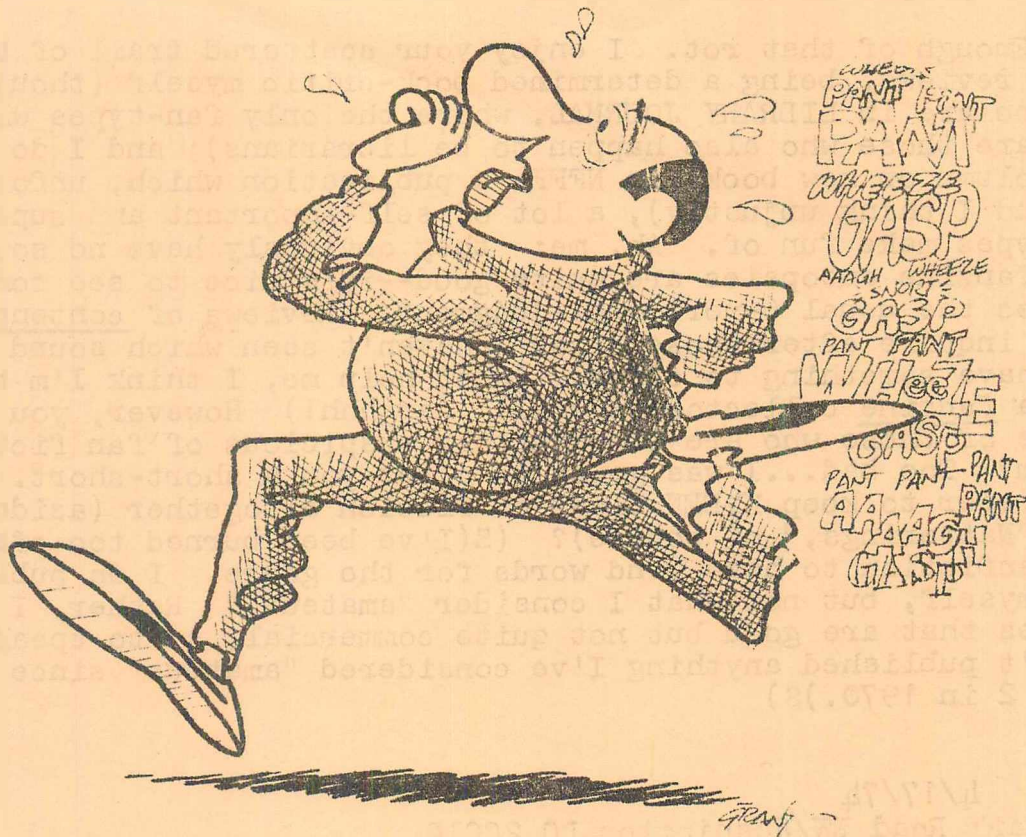
Aldiss -- FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND	Compton -- THE UNSLEEPING EYE
Anderson -- DAY OF THEIR RETURN	Dick -- FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICE-
FIRE TIME	MAN SAID
KNIGHT OF GHOSTS	Disch -- 334
AND SHADOWS	Le Guin -- THE DISPOSSESSED
MIDSUMMER TEMPEST	Malzberg -- DESTRUCTION OF TEMPLE
Bester -- THE INDIAN GIVER	Niven/Pournelle -- MOTE/GOD'S EYE
Boyd -- THE ANDROMEDA GUN	Pangborn -- THE COMPANY OF GLORY
Brunner -- TOTAL ECLIPSE	Vance -- THE DOMAINS OF KORYPHON

I haven't read any of them yet, and am looking forward to a bunch of good reading over the next few months (between magazines, paperbacks and the book club, I figure to have copies of all but the Boyd, Dick and Niven by March, and I'll try to get those one way or another. If even half of these live up to my expectations, 74 was a very good year. Any additions?

MICHAEL K. SMITH 6/27/74

An interesting piece there by Schweitzer on the trials and tribulations of the Collector.... Now, take me, if you've a mind to (as Will Rogers used to say): there are dozens of things--or, rather, categories of things--that I've collected at various times. In the 3rd grade, in Lompoc, Calif. (this was in the pre-Vandenberg AFB days), I had the country's largest collection of pop-bottle caps. I'm sure of it. I kept them in the saddle-bags on the back fender of my bike, and most of them were obtained by emptying the bottle-cap receptacle on the Coke machine at the corner gas station. I've been a serious stamp collector since maybe the 6th grade--a respectable avocation ever since FDR. And, like almost all Army brats, I collected shoulder patches of almost every unit in Europe, plus service stripes, citation patches, and all the rest. The idea was to cover every visible inch of your tank-





driver's jacket with them (it was rather like a flight jacket; everybody owned a tank jacket).

But now, I mostly collect books. Not just sf either. I have all the "Hornblower" books, plus THE HORNBLOWER COMPANION and C. Northcote Parkinson's fictional biography of him. I also have quite a lot of "what if" books, some of them novels and some of them scholarly essays. Did you know Winston Churchill once wrote a short fictional history of the U.S. after a Southern victory? My paperback sf collection now fills 8 shelves 42" wide (plus another shelf and a half of hardbacks), all in alphabetical order (it's compulsive). I used to keep the unread ones separate, but that became too depressing, so I interfiled them all. Actually, I've read perhaps 3/4 of them, because I invariably read 4 to 6 books a week, about half of that science fiction. I have the very useful ability to read an entire page almost in one visual gulp (a great annoyance for anyone trying to read over my shoulder) with a high level of retention and comprehension, so I can read a 200-page sf novel in 2 hours or less--and that is not "speedreading" of the sort people take classes in. I've always been able to do it, and it used to really annoy me as a tad that my teachers always thought I was skimming an assigned reading book, when I wasn't.

My, my, how I ramble. I also have a house full of eccentric art objects, mostly ceramic pieces (but they have to be functional: I don't care for amorphous sculpture) and old steel gravings. And, then, too, I'm an inveterate garage sale and estate auction nut, partly for collecting and partly for resale. I recently picked up a very dirty cloisonne vase for \$15, cleaned it up, researched the mark--and found that what everyone assumed was a modern piece was actually a Chinese trade import of c. 1870, and selling (when you could find them) for around \$200! A deal like that, every year or

two, keeps you going....

Enough of that rot. I enjoy your scattered trail of brief book reviews, being a determined book-critic myself (though most of mine are in LIBRARY JOURNAL, where the only fan-types who read them are those who also happen to be librarians); and I do a regular column on new books in NFFF--a publication which, unfortunately (and I think unjustly), a lot of self-important and superior fan-types make fun of. Ah, me: they obviously have no soul. And your fanzine autopsies are quite good--it's nice to see something besides the usual 6-word mini-judgment. Reviews of content lead me to inquire after those zines I haven't seen which sound like they have something to offer. (Ghod help me, I think I'm turning into a fanzine collector as well! Aarghhh!) However, you seem to be one of those who are inordinately suspicious of fan fiction. Howcum? Too bad...I was going to offer you a short-short. Or do you prefer to keep KYBEN clear of fiction altogether (aside from your "Natterings," of course)? (S(I've been burned too often by bad fanfiction to have kind words for the genre. I do publish some myself, but not what I consider "amateur." Rather, I publish stories that are good but not quite commercial, so to speak. I haven't published anything I've considered "amateur" since PHANTAS-MICOM 2 in 1970.)S)

FREFF 4/17/74  
2035 Park Road NW/Washington DC 20010

There has been a straight version of CASINO ROYALE. Back in the 50's CBS-TV did a production of it. That was why Columbia owned the rights and did a film version instead of the company that did the other Bond flicks. I don't know why the TV version hasn't been re-released, and I don't know who played Bond. My source has told me twice and both times I've managed to forget.

DON AYRES 4/17/74  
2020 W. Manor Parkway/Peoria IL 61604

Interesting, some of the differences in mood I get from the book reviews. After the December reviews, January starts badly (shorter?) so that I nearly quit, but from the MacDonald book on begins to pick up again. I couldn't disagree more on the film version of DON'T LOOK NOW (for a variety of reasons; too much padding and too clumsy at the wrong time more than anything else), but you have me quite interested in several of the other novels, especially JASON. Since I'm blundering in here, I wonder if you'd mind telling me what of John D. MacDonald's works you would especially recommend. (S(Well, let's see: I've only read the first six of the Travis McGee books, so I can't speak for the whole series, but the early ones are definitely good. I think the first, THE DEEP BLUE GOOD-BY, is my favorite. Certainly the fantasy, THE GIRL, THE GOLD WATCH & EVERYTHING should be read. ALL THESE CONDEMNED has a fantastic, virtuoso plot structure: the impressions of eight people, in jumbled order, of the crime--one of the eight the murderer (but which one?). THE END OF THE NIGHT is extremely powerful...brutal, in fact. CRY HARD, CRY FAST strongly appeals to me personally, though it may not be one of his best books. It's about a major car accident, why each car happened to be there at that time (I love it!), and what happened to the survivors (a sor-

did crime story, of course). CANCEL ALL OUR VOWS, a novel about adultery, is very well done. Or am I thinking of THE DECEIVERS? I can't remember. It seems to me the ending of THE DECEIVERS cheats, but I can't remember which of the two I was more impressed with overall. THE DROWNER is a good detective-story type. But by now I've listed almost half the MacDonalds I've read so far, so I'll cut off here.)S)

DON KELLER

c/o Marmor/3920 Laurel Canyon Blvd #3/Studio City CA 91604

I saw DON'T LOOK NOW the other night; it was conveniently playing with CHINATOWN (which I wanted to see again, and Kate hadn't), and you had recommended it. I thought you would be interested in my reaction, because to borrow Harlan's reaction to CHINATOWN, I hated DON'T LOOK NOW, for very complex reasons.

First of all, let me say that it was not a question of type; it is basically an elemental story of terror disguised as an art film, which I think is a mistake, but then I loved Polanski's REPULSION, which is incredibly similar, down to the goddamned straight razor; the problem was the way it was done. Overall, it was excellent; acting, photography, etc. If it had been cut properly, I wouldn't have reacted as I did.

You see, we are led to expect a movie of great subtlety and suggestion by the constant use of symbolism and parallelism; almost every shot has this purpose, some shots being gratuitous. The movie is thus stylistically extremely busy and obsessive (something like a cinematic equivalent of Gardner's style), besides which each shot is held about twice too long so that no mistake on its significance can be made. Or (alternately) the same effect is achieved by quick-cutting to the same shot several times. (Concrete examples later.) What happened was, the movie became a two-hour toothache; so much time was spent on establishing the symbolism and parallels (plus the foreshadowings and brooding mood) that the story barely moved at all. I became restless halfway through, and longed for them to get done with it already.

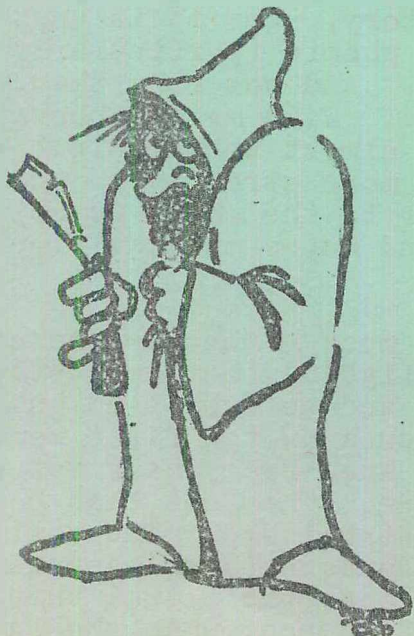
We are thus led to expect a subtle story, but it is anything but. It preys on practically every major phobia (particularly xenophobia) that plagues the human spirit. And not only that, it contrives to bludgeon the viewer with them. With my acrophobia, the scene with him on the scaffolding was almost unbearable. I consider myself lucky that I didn't react more strongly to the drowning motif (because of my brother), or to the whole psychic idea (Kate did; she's somewhat psychic, and hates mediums virulently).

And the problem is that fear, in its most effective and cathartic form, is based on surprise (S(really?)S); but here every major crux is telegraphed far in advance, and we submit to gnawing, grinding terror until it happens. You know the first moment of the movie that the child will drown; I knew from the first shot of the scaffolding what was going to happen. The fact that he survived was irrelevant; his danger was established. The earlier bit, with the statue, worked precisely because nothing happened and our fears were lulled (only on that score; the actual thrust/attention was elsewhere at that point). Suspense, when the end

result is relief, is justifiable; when the end result is terror, it is grossly unfair. It bites too deep.

Relief is what the movie chiefly lacks, comic or otherwise. We cannot relax for an instant in the constant bombardment of images. There are interludes, but they are brief, and subordinated to the overall atmosphere. There is no human feeling to hold on to; no one is happy or normal, everything is alien and uneasy. The one place where it could have worked, the bedroom scene, is drained of feeling by quick-cutting it with them dressing. It's all so abstract and mechanical: I couldn't pull back from it and enjoy it, because it's all surface; the only emotion present is pure fear. (S(I must disagree with you here. Ann and I found it to be a very tender, realistic scene, and integral to the film's character-story.)S)

Which brings me, I think, to the ending. We know at latest halfway through what is going to happen, and sit there cringing waiting for it. But we don't get exactly what we expect. I will never forgive the director holding that last shot of the back of the red-coated figure; you know that the holy grail is going to be something grotesque. When the creature finally turned, it scared me shitless, I was paralyzed with fear; the last time I was scared that badly was when a car bumped into me. (I submit it is not fair to induce a 'fear like unto death' in the viewer.) And the fear was a blast of pure xenophobia; it had nothing to do with Sutherland finally getting his. C.S. Lewis speaks of fears which are not of danger at all--this is one of them. It could not have been more devastating had it been a skull. If it had been anything else (a glinty-eyed, malevolent gangster-type, or--to change things completely--an innocuous old woman indignant at being chased), the blast of fear would have worked. But instead of the dewy-eyed child we expected, the creature is old (strike one), a dwarf (strike two), and a mechanical, smiling killer (strike three and out), for whom 'homicidal maniac' is too human a term. It is on screen for only a few seconds (which is still too long), but the overall impression, from its expression and way of moving, is something far removed from human--an elemental force, not a person, an instrument of Fate (accent on the capital--Wyrd, in fact); in short, practically an allegorical figure. Such pure abstracted symbols of our deepest fear do not exist in the real world of Venice, and to bring the viewer unexpectedly up against what is impossible to deal with (archetypes bite deep) is cruelty. If I live a hundred years, I will surely forget most of this movie; but the moment of that figure's turning will haunt me always.



Enough! There were good things in the movie, like him seeing his wife on the boat, but I suspect most of it is in the Du Maurier story. Basically, though, it disturbed me profoundly, and I will not see it again under any circumstances. You were right to warn

potential viewers, but I didn't dream it would apply to me. Now you know me, and how usually unflappable I am; works of art just don't do this to me. I am very curious to know your reaction to all this.

(S(I discussed this with Don at great expense over the phone, and wouldn't attempt to summarize our talk here. My standpoint is that you should not go to a horror film and come out complaining you were horrified. ## I stand by my original comments on the film --outside of one scene (where Sutherland stops to close a gate behind him while theoretically in mad pursuit of the red-cloaked figure) I have no complaints and would have done the film exactly the same, outside of minor editing. ## Well, I've scratched out a lot of stuff here. Nobody really wants a scene-by-scene analysis, I hope. One final word: One thing I pride myself on is being able to differentiate between works which are truly good and works which are of a lesser quality but which I personally happen to like at least as much. The latter appears to be the case with DON'T LOOK NOW--but I reject that notion. I am utterly convinced that the film is a true minor masterpiece, and no number of dissenting opinions will dissuade me. Youse guys just ain't got no taste.)S)

LAURINE WHITE 5/7/74  
5408 Leader Avenue/Sacramento CA 95841

R.P. Smith's cartooning style is a winner. Surely he has been influenced by Asterix? (S(No, not at all. Bob has been doing his Fuzzy Things for at least ten years now, and they've evolved considerably.)S)

## Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards

I have a couple pages of fanzine reviews written, but I'll hold them off (and hopefully get them in next issue) and use the fanzine spot this time to plug the new fanzine awards. In effect, this will limit KYBEN 11 to 20 pages, but into every life a little rain must fall. I'll be printing the Introduction and Rules as determined by the Ad Hoc Committee (of which I am a member), mostly the work of Moshe Feder and Linda Bushyager. A nomination ballot is on the back of the mailing sheet.

Moshe and Linda explain things pretty well in the Introduction. I'd like to just express my support here, and hope you will express your support by nominating and voting in those categories in which you are eligible. The first two years of this award will be most crucial, as we try to get established, so this is when we really need support. Please don't let the dollar nominating/voting fee put you off: This is an Award, not just a poll, and we need the money for trophies.

Questions about the Awards may be put to me or just about anyone on the Committee; Moshe is your best bet (his address follows) but the rest of us are willing to help.

More information, on the voting, the physical awards them-

selves, their presentation, etc., will be forthcoming.

Before you write blistering attacks accusing us of sour-grapism, of trying to set up something we can win because we can't win Hugos--consider that we've heard it all already. Consider that there are Hugo winners and Hugo nominees on the Committee. Dissatisfaction with the Hugos was a strong catalyst in the origin of the Awards, but strong efforts have been made to insure that these are complementary to the others; that each is equally legitimate. Mostly, though, our object is Informed Voting.

Be an Informed Voter, and join us.

--jds

### INTRODUCTION

During recent years there has been a rising tide of dissatisfaction with the fan Hugos among fanzine fans--dissatisfaction with their tendencies toward popularity-pollism and with their loosely-defined nature. Popularly-voted awards have inherent value, and the Hugos have tradition behind them that makes them indispensable. But the popularly-voted award is not the only kind that exists. People in many varied fields of endeavor value peer-voted awards just as much or more than they do popular ones--for obvious reasons. Science Fiction professionals have such an award--the Nebula. It is time that the actifans of fanzine fandom had one too.

There have been attempts in the past to separate the fan and pro Hugos, or to make the megoboo poll of a single zine the universally-accepted index of achievement. They have failed. In the former case, they probably failed because fans were not willing to give up the Hugos' prestige. In the latter case, they probably failed because few zines survive long enough to give their polls the cachet of permanence. Also, thoughtful fans have always recognized that a poll run through a single zine is acceptable and valuable only to the regular readers of the source-zine (a circumscribed community defined by the editors), and that the results of such a poll are distorted by the fact that the only zine all the readers receive is the source-zine itself. These shortcomings can be avoided by creating an award that is carefully defined, administered by a committee specifically chosen for that purpose, and independent of any single group, coterie, convention committee, or list of subscribers. An award that will belong to all of fannish fanzine fandom and to fannish fanzine fandom alone will give recognition to those persons who make fanzine fandom worthwhile.

The Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards (a nickname may develop spontaneously) have been in the process of formulation since July 1974. They have been the subject of extensive serious discussion by a group of prominent, hard-core, active fanzine fans and have undergone extensive revision and perfection. This process will continue in the future. If you are interested in being a participant in this process or in the administration of the Awards, please contact the Project Coordinator, Moshe Feder, at 442-34 Booth Memorial Avenue, Flushing NY 11355, USA, phone (212) 445-7171. You may also contact him if you have any questions about the rationale behind the Awards or how to interpret the rules.

The Awards will be announced and presented at an appropriate regional convention to be named later. The Awards are international in scope, and it is hoped that eligible fen from every corner of the fannish world will participate in and support them.

In the first year the Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards will be administered by the Ad Hoc Committee which conceived and developed them with the help

other interested fans. This Committee currently consists of: Moshe Feder, Linda Bushyager, Mike Glycer, Bill Bowers, Harry Warner, Jr., Peter Roberts, Donn Brazier, Mike Glicksohn, Sam Long, Jeff Smith, Don D'Ammassa, Darroll Pardoe, James Shull and Tom Digby. In future years the Committee members will be elected volunteers representative of the broad spectrum of fannish fanzine fandom. The Awards will be solely administered by the Committee and are not affiliated with any other body or convention.

The nominating rules and ballott follow. The Committee encourages all eligible fans to participate and fan publishers to copy and distribute the rules, ballot, and introduction.

#### RULES FOR THE 1975 FANZINE ACTIVITY ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

##### PREAMBLE:

The microcosm of Science Fiction fandom has grown so large and diverse that it is no longer possible for one person to know all other members of it, or to read all other members' publications. The type of amateur activity that originally made up the bulk of what was called "fanac" is in danger of being overshadowed by the actions of semi-professionals, fans of more or less related genres, and people generally unaware of and indifferent to the "fannish" customs and traditions. The Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards have therefore been established to give presently-active fanzine fans who continue to publish in the "Grand Old Way" the chance for recognition by their peers--those who are best qualified to judge what such fans have set out to do and how well they have succeeded in doing it. The Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards are not meant to replace already-existing popularly-voted awards and polls, but rather to supplement them.

No criticism is implied to the other subfandoms and fringe fandoms that have grown up in our midst; indeed, we believe that there should be special awards similar to the Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards for each and every one of them. This Award, however, is for fannish fanzine fans only.

For our purposes, a fannish fanzine fan is defined as a devotee of literary Science Fiction who manifests that interest by involvement in publications dealing with literary SF and with the doings of amateur and professional literary SF personalities. Such publications are eligible for these Awards if they are fannish fanzines, i.e., publications which do not pay their contributors and which are published for enjoyment to which any financial profit is incidental.

##### THE AWARDS:

Please note that the Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards have a structure different from that you may be used to--especially in regard to fanzines and fan editors. This structure was specifically designed to put the maximum stress on quality as opposed to quantity of either readership or issues published, to allow apazines and personalzines to have some weight in voter deliberation, and to allow newszines and other special-case publications to compete fairly.

The Best Single Issue of a Fanzine award is intended to go to a really outstanding product which, ideally, should be unsurpassed in every way. This award could go to a great issue of an established zine or to a one-shot or to a truly remarkable first issue. Keep in mind that this is a new

category and should not be thought of as analogous to the Hugos' Best Fanzine category. It is the Best Fan Editor award that fills that role--just as the Best Pro Editor category has replaced "Best Prozine." In making your nominations in this category, be sure to consider not only the best fanzine of a potential nominee, but also anything else he may have published during 1974, including personalzines, apazines or one-shots. Remember that editing is a broad-spectrum skill encompassing magazine design and reproduction, the combination of articles and copy editing, selection of art and its combination with text, lettercol editing, etc.

#### CATEGORIES:

In all of the following definitions, the word "fanzine" means fannish fanzine as defined in the preamble; the word "fan" (or any of its derivatives) means fannish fanzine fan as defined in the preamble. In all categories, the work to be considered is that which appeared in the previous calendar year.

- 1.1 Best Single Issue of a Fanzine
- 1.2 Best Fan Editor: To the editor(s) who showed the most skill in every area of editing in his total fannish publishing output. This may be awarded to either an individual editor, a couple, or a small group working as a team.
- 1.3 Best Fan Writer: To the author of the best fanwriting including articles, essays, editorials, reviews, stories, or mailing comments.
- 1.4 Best Fan Artist (Humorous)
- 1.5 Best Fan Artist (Non-humorous)
- 1.6 Best Loc Writer: To the author of the best published letters of comment (Locs). The nominee must have written at least two letters which were published in different fanzines.
- 1.7 No Award: Because it is hoped that the winners of the Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards will be those persons who are not merely the best in any given year--no matter how thin a year it may have been--but also those who have reached a distinctively high level of achievement as defined in the individual minds of the voters, the "No Award" option shall be available to the voters in every category on the final ballot.

#### NOMINATIONS:

- 2.1 Nominations will be accepted until April 19.
- 2.2 Nominators may not nominate themselves or their own fanzines, but they may nominate persons whose work has appeared in their fanzines. Non-existent or hoax personalities may not be nominators.
- 2.3 Fans may be nominated in as many categories as they are properly eligible. Artists may be nominated in both the Humorous and Non-humorous Artist categories.
- 2.4 Up to four nominations may be given in each category without order of preference.
- 2.5 All nominations must be accompanied by a donation of at least \$1 US or



equivalent local currency and a self-addressed stamped envelope to the appropriate agent. Nominators need pay no further fee for voting. Those who do not nominate may vote by proving their eligibility and paying the \$1 fee.

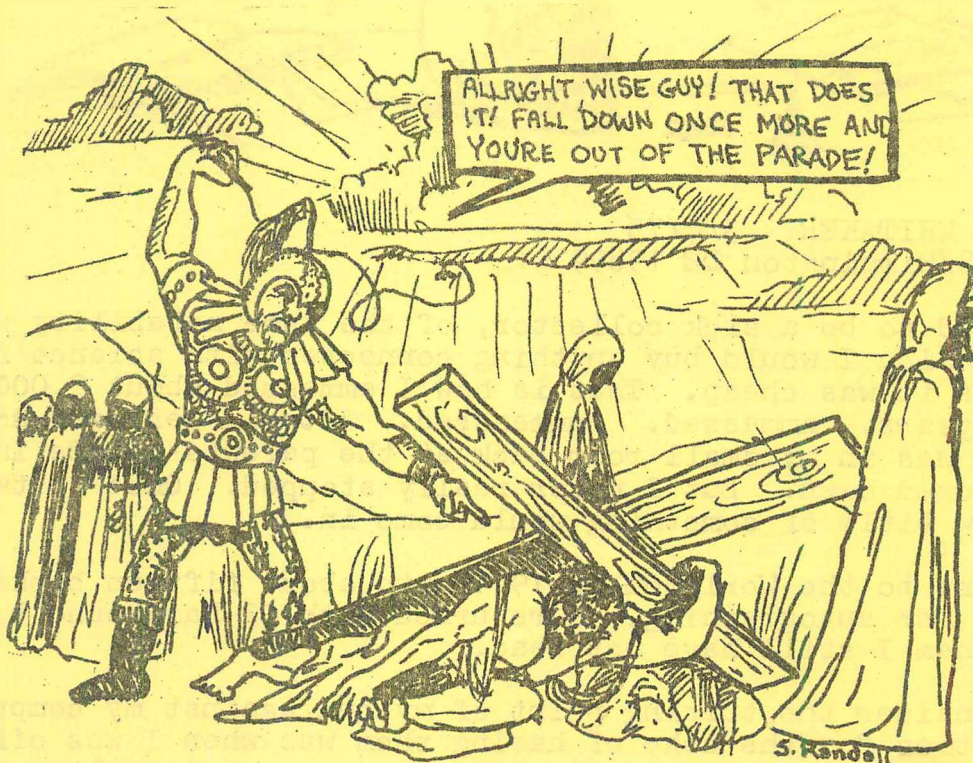
2.6 For peer awards to have any meaning, it must be ensured that the nominators (and voters) are actual peers of those whom they are nominating (and voting for). To enable the Committee to determine eligibility, a space will be provided on the ballots in which participants must cite fanzine appearances which qualify them for each of the categories in which they are nominating (or voting). In the eligibility requirements for nominating listed below, the word "fanzine" means fannish fanzine as defined in the preamble, the word "fan" (or any of its derivatives) means fannish fanzine fan as defined in the preamble, and the qualifying activity must have occurred in the previous calendar year.

2.6.1 Nominations for Best Single Issue of a Fanzine will be accepted from anyone eligible to nominate in any other category.

2.6.2 Nominations for Best Fan Editor will be accepted from anyone who has published a fanzine.

2.6.3 Nominations for Best Fan Writer will be accepted from anyone eligible to nominate in the Best Fan Editor category and anyone who has written one or more published articles, essays, editorials, reviews or stories.

2.6.4 Nominations for both the Best Fan Artist (Humorous) and the Best Fan Artist (Non-humorous) will be accepted from any fan artist who has had work published in either category. He may nominate in either category or both, regardless of in which category his own work is eligible.

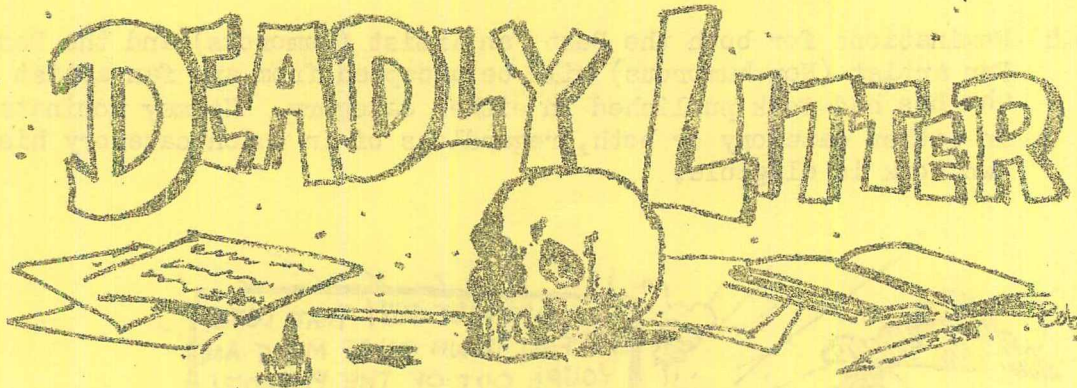


2.6.5 Nominations for Best Loc Writer will be accepted from anyone who has written at least two letters which were published in different fanzines.

THE COMMITTEE:

- 3.1 The Committee has the sole authority for determining nominee, nominator, and voter eligibility. The Committee may move nominees into more appropriate categories if necessary. The Committee reserves the right to disqualify nominees or nominators whose credentials do not meet the requirements of the preamble or which were obtained improperly.
- 3.2 Committee membership will not disqualify a fan from nominating or being nominated. The responsibility for counting ballots will be reserved to those committee members who have not been nominated.
- 3.3 The Committee will publish THE ZINE FAN to facilitate the administration of the awards. Because of financial and practical considerations, THE ZINE FAN will be available only at the Committee's discretion, to those the Committee feels sure will make a contribution. No one will receive THE ZINE FAN who does not respond to at least every other issue.

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ROBERT J. WHITAKER 3/4/75  
POBox 1148/Wilmington DE 19899

I used to be a sick collector, of the same notability as Darrell, in which I would buy anything connected with science fiction, as long as it was cheap. That is how I amassed about 2,000 books in three years. Ammassed. Ammassed. After I realized how crowded I was in my small room back at the parents' abode in Stanton, I slowed down. But I never really stopped. Once or twice a week a new title of something would come in.

I went to the Worldcon in 1971 with about fifteen books. They were for autographing. I returned with 52 hardbound books. Some of them I still have not read.

I consider the turning point of my own against my compulsion to buy titles for the sake of having them was when I was offered Arkham House titles which I was told were rare. A collector's eyes light up when confronted with the word rare. I was informed also that to own a complete Arkham House collection was to be a

noble collector. Something pinged inside of me after watching and talking to Stuart Schiff about his HPL compulsions and his obsession to own a complete Arkham House collection. I think it was when he told me he paid \$400 for a piece of paper with HPL's signature on it that I grew queasy. Another incident was the information that there were collectors who were buying books in the Gnome Press runs, not one, but several copies of the same title. Why? There were color variants in the dust jackets. Not to mention the color variations of the book boards.

I thought about my tiny room with the crammed bookshelves and piles of paper on the floor teetering upwards and tickling the ceiling.

And besides, around that time I discovered girls.

And they are damn hard to collect.

ROBERT J. WHITAKER 3/8/75

Learned recently that the P.O. is attempting to garner another raise in postal rates, eliminating the air mail sub-division of the P.O. and raising the 1st class rate to 13¢. Icky. The inflation that this could bring about is not so funny. Considering that all businesses utilize the P.O. in one form or another, this only means they will have to raise prices, and so forth. Dominoes. I just wonder what would happen to our economy if they lowered the postal rates by two cents for a first class letter? They would increase, perhaps not voluminously, the amount of mail. I often get the feeling from the drunken heads of the P.O. here that they don't want the mail to increase in numbers--they would like it to decrease, to improve efficiency.

The P.O. has machines to sort out letters by zip code. These machines were designed in Germany. The Germans used the machines for a little while and then got rid of them. They were inefficient. Germans went back to hand-sorting the mail and the USPO officials smelled a little publicity.

Oh, the machines work, but the rate of efficiency is 75%. This means 25% of the mail worked on the machines is mis-cased.

Progress is two steps forward, three backward.

A local underground paper has asked me to write an article on "How to Cheat the Mail Service." I guess I could lose my job, the publisher could get five years and an injunction against ever publishing again and about \$10,000 in fines.

What does this lead up to? This: Could fans gather enough strength and raise enough rabble to lower/keep the same P.O. rates through a well-signed petition? Not only here, but in places like NYC, LA and whatnot?

Inflation was so bad this past year that Christmas card mailings were at their lowest in numbers since I started.

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This was floating around school; I don't know where it came from.

Here it is for your enjoyment, presented with the hope that it isn't copyrighted in some obvious place: --jds

# EXAM WEEK PREVIEW

## PUBLIC SPEAKING

2000 riot-crazed aborigines are storming the classroom building. Calm them. You may use any ancient language except Latin or Greek.

## MUSIC 101

Write a piano concerto. Orchestrate and perform it with flute and drum. You will find a piano under your seat.

## ENGINEERING

The disassembled parts of a high-powered rifle have been placed in a box on your desk. You will also find an instruction manual printed in Swahili. In ten minutes a hungry Bengal tiger will be admitted into the room. Take whatever action you feel appropriate. Be prepared to justify your decision.

## BIOLOGY 100

Create life. Estimate the differences in subsequent human culture if this form of life had developed 500 million years earlier with special attention to its probable effect on the English parliamentary system. Prove your thesis.

## ANATOMY 103

You have been provided with a razor blade, a piece of gauze and a bottle of alcohol. Remove your appendix. Do not suture until your work has been inspected. You have fifteen minutes.

## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Describe in detail. Be objective and specific.

## EXTRA CREDIT

Define the universe. Give three examples.



JEFF and ANN SMITH

jds first:

WALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD/Suzy McKee Charnas/Ballantine -- I'm having a difficult time with this review, trying to succinctly

express how much pleasure I got from reading this book. Perhaps I can mention how I physically read it: It took me over a week, not because it's slow or long (214 pages), but because I had no time to read once I started it. There would be a couple days' hiatus between each few chapters and so I was losing the thread of continuity. Finally, on a Sunday morning, I decided to read the second half, to finish *At Last*, and I was planning--not quite to skim, but--to read a little faster than normal. I read slower than normal, relishing every word. ## The story is an after-the-Holocaust one, but done with 214 pages worth of originality and inventiveness. That's the marvel of this book--it is different, really different. The societal background is completely thought-out and fascinating in its detail. (Sure, it's easy to postulate a society completely dominated by Old Men--but how easy is it to show such a society in all its ramifications? Charnas does so here.) The main characters, in all their adversity, are all presented sympathetically enough that for all their faults (and only in *Alldera* do the faults seem grafted on almost as an after-thought--guess whom the author most liked?) I genuinely liked them all. There are no arbitrary actions. Every step is either logical in what we already know of the character (even Bek's climactic scene in *Troi*, which some of the other characters feel is arbitrary) or unobtrusively explained by the author in terms of the other characters. ("Kambl said, '...A man's revenge should never be polluted with spite or cruelty.' He did not sound pompous, like a Boyhouse Teacher launching an exhortation on the Streets of Honor, but rather as if he really believed what he said, never having doubted or examined the truths of Holdfast life. Bek would have preferred some good, healthy bombast. He could not despise this wreck who spoke so simply of virtue.") And, finally, the book does what good science fiction is most importantly supposed to do, and so little of it really does: It makes you think. The Holdfast only resembles us in the most perverted way, but the changes and the attempted changes are fascinating and frustrating. It's a fine, fine book. (And I must add that the philosophy and the characterization and all are well-integrated into a strong story-line, proof again that *It Can Be Done*.)

HOUSE OF CARDS/Stanley Ellin/Ballantine -- The front cover of this edition, while artistically and graphically attractive, tries to mislead the potential buyer into thinking it's a supernatural story. The page one blurb destroys a suspenseful scene three-quarters of the way through the book. Nonetheless, I urge you to run out and buy a copy because Ballantine is performing a true public service by printing Stanley Ellin--I hope they intend to do more than just this one. Despite unceasing critical acclaim, Ellin has not achieved the popular success due him. He is fantastically good, and although *HOUSE OF CARDS* is not my favorite of his I'd be surprised if you didn't like it. The story involves a powerful family saddled with their son's unstable widow, whom they don't care for but who is mother to their only heir, a sickly, overprotected young boy. Our Hero is his new tutor, an ex-boxer totally out of place in his new surroundings, uncomfortably aware that his predecessor had been dredged out of the river. Within (and without) this classic Gothic setting, Ellin paints a marvelously broad canvas for his characters to scramble over. You will be entertained, and not by mindless pap. Read.

RAT RACE/Dick Francis/Harper & Row  
BONECRACK/Dick Francis/Harper & Row -- To continue my paeans of praise, I must tell you how good Dick Francis is again. I read the blurb on RAT RACE and thought, "Why do I want to read about somebody who flies jockeys around? How boring!" But when I started--and quickly finished--it I remembered I once felt the same way about jockey stories, and right about now I have more trouble resisting a Francis novel than one by any other writer. Yep, jockeys' pilots are just as interesting as jockeys, when Francis is the one writing about them. His characters are incredibly realistic, his plots tight and tough (though so smooth as to be practically invisible), his prose clear and eminently readable. RAT RACE concerns mysterious (in several senses) plane sabotage. BONECRACK has a non-racing son running his hospitalized father's stable, and a would-be racing son pushed onto that stable by his father, a powerful gangster who could and would destroy the stable if his son wasn't "allowed" to become a top jockey. The obvious parallels are delicately and tastefully drawn, and the story is smashing. The one flaw in the two books is in RAT RACE, which is almost my favorite Francis. (ODDS AGAINST still holds that position.) The problem involves the first-person narration--one extremely crucial scene (Nancy's decision to leave Matt) of necessity takes place off-stage, and is unconvincing. Here we needed to experience her thought-patterns. But RAT RACE did give me a true thrill of horror, when two-thirds of the way into Chapter Nine I suddenly realized what the Major was going to say, and Ten really drained me emotionally. When you go out to get the Ellin book, pick up a Francis as well.

TAKING GARY FELDMAN/Stanley Cohen/Putnam -- The dust wrapper concludes with "Gary Feldman is a new kind of hero, an immensely winning child, and the end of his kidnapping adventure contains an O. Henry twist that will confound (and reward) the most jaded mystery addict." Knowing in advance that there was a trick ending, I was able to deduce it easily. If I hadn't been warned, I might have been surprised. (Once I was warned and still completely floored: the movie BIG HAND FOR A LITTLE LADY has some kind of ending!) ## The novel, even knowing the end, is nice, a very gentle kidnapping story. High points are the various characterizations, particularly of Gary's high-society parents. Minor, but very neatly done.

DRUG OF CHOICE/John Lange/Bantam -- Yes, I do read books I don't like. This "novel" about blue urine and the perfect resort is one of them. It wasn't a total waste, though--I may have gotten a KHATRU article out of it. We shall see. \$1.25...they've got to be kidding.

THE BEST OF PLANET STORIES #1/edited by Leigh Brackett/Ballantine -- This was a nice idea for a series; the books should be popular. As for whether or not they'll be good...well, this first volume was neither as good as I hoped or as bad as I feared. There is one excellent story, Frederic Brown's warm farce (and how many people could write warm farces?) "The Star-Mouse." Then there are some good stories, like "Return of a Legend" by Raymond Z. Gallun (Earthpeople adapting to live outside the Martian domes), "The Rocketeers Have Shaggy Ears" by Keith Bennett (thirty soldiers making their way across Venus after their rocket crashed) and "The Diversifal" by Ross Rocklynne (a deterministic time travel story about trying to change the future by altering

the past). Neither "Quest of Thig" by Basil Wells nor "Duel on Syrtis" by Poul Anderson was either particularly good or particularly bad. The lead novella, the classic "Lorelei of the Red Mist" by Leigh Brackett and Ray Bradbury, surprised me by doing absolutely nothing for me; I was barely able to slog through it. ## What surprised me about this book--stand by for the admission of guilt--was the care taken by the writers. This is not the hack work I expected. (The only evidence of such comes from the introduction, where Brackett tells of turning her unfinished story over to Bradbury because she "wasn't going to have time to finish it.") This hardly means there was no hackwork in PLANET STORIES, but it does show that there was some good writing. ~~1/w/0/0/0/0/1/1~~ ~~1/0/0/0/0/1/1~~ ## Can anyone enlighten me about "Lorelei of the Red Mist"? Why does Leo Margulies' THREE TIMES INFINITY credit the story to something called TOPS IN SCIENCE FICTION?

REVEREND RANDOLPH AND THE WAGES OF SIN/Charles Merrill Smith/G.P. Putnam's -- There's one major problem with this book (hopefully the start of a series): the characters are so likable they're hard to believe in--"wish-they-were-real" kind of people. There's the football-star-turned-seminarian, the tough/sentimental woman talk-show host, the rising young detective, and Freddie the Sishop, all people you'd like to invite to your next dinner party. The plot isn't terribly realistic, either, but it is clever and fun--I picked up on the killer about ten pages from the end, when suddenly the obvious hit me. ## I'd love to read more of these.

the review section is now to be concluded by the other reviewer:

LOST CONTINENTS: THE ATLANTIS THEME/L. Sprague de Camp/Ballantine -- This is a fairly good book--especially for someone who is interested in an overview of the Atlantis mystique in all its aspects--mystical, scientific and literary. (This may not be a completely fair review. I had an unusually hard time getting through the book, and due to that and some personal upsets I read the book in short spurts. However, it seemed to me to be choppyly written in addition to the choppy way I was reading.) ## The primary fault of the book is that Mr. de Camp attempts to cover far too much ground in his available space. He'd have done better to restrict his subject matter, rather than have to dismiss so much so sketchily. Another problem is that Mr. de Camp has a habit of introducing totally irrelevant subject matter into the discussion, not as a simple digression but as proof of his arguments. Therefore, since the attempt to find the Ten Tribes of Israel among the American Indians was patently silly, then logically (according to Mr. de Camp) all occultist theories on Atlantis must be equally silly. Or, since scholars have such a hard time pinpointing the places mentioned in THE ODYSSEY, scholars cannot clearly pinpoint Atlantis. Granted these may be valid to a point, but not to the point made of them in this book. He so over-enumerated the difficulties in pinning down Homer that I thought I was reading HOMER: FACT OR FICTION? ## The best parts of the book were those dealing with historical research and literary summary. Here he seemed at ease and conversant with his material, which he presented in a more concise and less confused manner than other subjects, such as theosophy.

ICE AND IRON/Wilson Tucker/Doubleday -- I really enjoyed this book, which captures the flavor of a civilized world giving way to unrelenting killing glaciers, and of life in a tiny outpost researching the glacier, involved in a time-displacement with the future world that survived the glaciers. Actually, with the exception of the physical and geological aspects (which were very well handled), the characters and both worlds were sketchily drawn. Still, enough is there not only to focus the whole picture clearly--but more importantly to get the feel of all three societies: the small, isolated recon unit, the world south of the ice, and the post-glacier world full of primitive and non-primitive contrasts. I do wish, however, that one of the character viewpoints was from a member of the civilized society from the post-glacier time, giving a clearer background picture. The other societies in the novel are comprehensible to us, from present or historical experience, but the origins and goals of this southern group are difficult to grasp and could use a little additional clarification. ## Questions have been raised by readers and publishers as to whether the book actually ends or is cut short. I think that while the cultural aspects could be extended, the story of the characters did end and it would be unnecessary to attempt to continue that, as it could only detract from the established mood.

KISSING COVENS/Golin Watson/Berkley -- Don't be put off by the Gothic cover; this is a fine book. It's not a standard Gothic by any means--actually I doubt it's even a Gothic at all. It is a story of witchcraft vs. the local police in a small English town. The author has a fine style and a gloriously dry sense of humor. It's a joy to watch his ordinary, middle-class witches and constables pit themselves against each other.

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A FANTASY, continued from page one:

real Gwen Stacy! And, Peter, it doesn't stop there. We checked Gwen's grave--and her body hasn't been touched. I don't know how--or why--but there are two Gwen Stacys, identical in every way! One is dead--the other one is alive.

Now, when we used to watch DARK SHADOWS, we could always tell when a writer was leaving the show (they seldom lasted more than a couple weeks)--because his last episode would be extremely complex and the characters would be in impossible situations. For the next writer to get them out of.

I'm not suggesting that Conway would do such a thing to Marvel--I know nothing of his character.

But the fantasy of twenty-seven people sitting in Marv Wolfman's apartment tearing out their hair trying to come up with a worthwhile solution to this problem is a delightful one to consider.

Good luck, guys.



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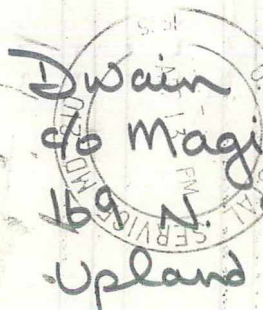
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