



LAN'S LANTERN 20

Is Good Good Enough?

I am delighted to let Mike have my editorial space to air his opinions. I think what he has to say is worth considering....

A guest editorial by Mike Glicksohn

In a gesture which probably encapsulates much of what is superior about fandom, George (that's "Lan" to you, but those of us in the numerical ed biz like to believe our peers have a degree or two of professional decorum) has offered me his own editorial spot in LAN'S LANTERN to tell you why I don't think you should vote LL a Hugo. This reflects a maturity and intelligence which puts a great many fans to shame, and if they start awarding Hugos for the sort of people who make fanzine fandom A Good Place To Be, then George will certainly get my vote.

If you ask a dozen fans in any given year what their favorite fanzine is you'll probably get eight or nine different answers. And if you ask them a second time you'll probably have a few you didn't get in round one! But that isn't what I'm concerned about right now. We all know, and we all accept, that individual subjective criteria determine what sort of fanzines we enjoy the most. I could no more produce a LAN'S LANTERN -- photocopied book reviews and fan chatter and articles about science fiction -- than George could put out a XENIUM -- mimeographed personal journalism and fannish material along with weird obscure paste-ins. Acknowledging that, we both enjoy what the other does (although he never locs my fanzine!) The essence of the matter is: what makes a fanzine worth a Hugo?

I've been a fanzine fan for eighteen years. During that time I've published fanzines, reviewed fanzines, written for other fanzines, and loced several thousand of the ubiquitous buggers. Along the way I won a Hugo for a fanzine I'm still pretty proud of. And I've spent a surprisingly large percentage of that eighteen years trying to make the fan Hugos a little less susceptible to the vagaries of uninformed knee-jerk voting. I care about the fan Hugos. I think they're important. (I wouldn't have mine prominently displayed on the living-room mantelpiece if I didn't.) Which is why I think we need to step back and think about the entire context of the Best Fanzine Hugo.

Viewed superficially, the Best Fanzine category of the Hugos implies a comparative judgment: viz, pick the best of the following bunch. But let us not forget that all the Hugos were established to honor excellence. For those of us who view the Hugo awards as a continuous rather than a discrete

process, the implicit understanding of the categories is Best CATEGORY Which Achieves A Standard Of Excellence. I like to think that the mandatory inclusion of "No Award" on every part of the Hugo ballot (a relatively recent innovation as far as Hugo history is concerned) was largely formulated by people with that very thought in mind. Unfortunately, I think the majority of current Hugo voters have little or no understanding of why No Award appears on the ballot. Faced with five fanzines, the average Hugo voter feels obligated to select one of them and proceeds to ignore the two or three they've never heard of and pick a personal favorite from the two or three they know. I'd like to encourage Hugo voters to think a little before they vote.

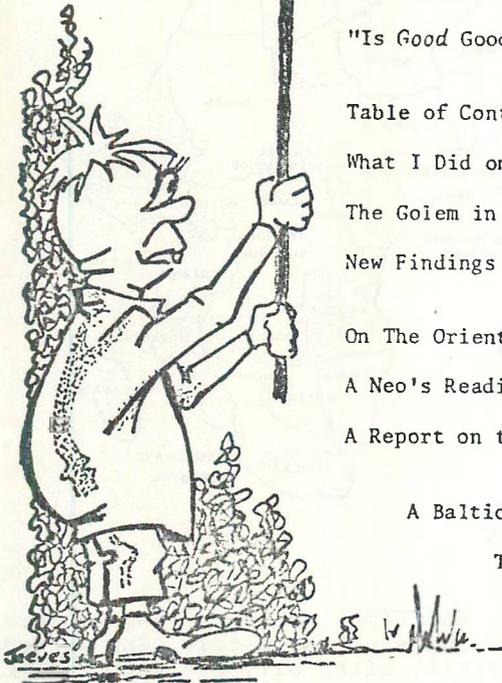
Ideally, if a fanzine is worthy of a Hugo it should be able to stand side by side with the great fanzines of the past. It should be excellent. It should be the sort of fanzine that people will want to read twenty years from now. It should be the sort of fanzine that other fanzines will reprint from. It isn't enough for a fanzine to be better than the other nominees on the ballot: good is not enough. The Hugos are for excellence, and good should never masquerade as excellent. A Hugo-worthy fanzine has to be a lot more than "the best of a mediocre slate." It should be something that fanzine fans can point to with pride and say "This is what we can do when we really put our minds to it!" And that should be true whether or not the fanzine in question is one we'd produce ourselves.

When I look at the fanzines nominated for the Hugo this year I cannot generate that feeling for any of them. Of the fanzines on the ballot I enjoy HOLIER THAN THOU the most but on any sort of objective scale HTT is at best a fair-to-good fanzine. Awarding it a Hugo would demean the honour given to the likes of ZERO, YANDRO and, hell, what the fuck, ENERGUMEN. LAN'S LANTERN is a good fanzine: George probably does a better job at what he sets out to do than does Marty Cantor, but does LAN'S LANTERN stack up against WARHOON or SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW? I may not like sercon fanzines as much as fannish fanzines but eighteen years of near-continuous fanzine reading has helped me

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- Mentioned in Conrepts & Rambling
- Mentioned in Letter column
- This is your last copy unless you do something.

DEDICATION

To Maia, of course,
and to Mike Glicksohn
whose friendship and
help is unparalleled!

LAN'S LANTERN #20 is published and edited by George "Lan" Laskowski who lives at 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013 USA. Phone: (313) 642-5670. LAN'S LANTERN is available for articles, letters of comment, artwork, even money -- \$2.00 postpaid -- and whim of the editor. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors. This is Lantern Publications #5, a division of LanShack Press Unlimited. LAN'S LANTERN #20 is copyright (c) July, 1986 by George J Laskowski Jr. All rights return to the contributors upon publication.

WHAT I DID OF MY WINTER VACATION

AFRICA



by MIKE RESNICK

February 3, 1986:

One of the girls who works for us moon-lites as a limousine chauffeur. I bet her double her fee or nothing on the Super Bowl (as a former Chicagoan, I took the Bears), so we rode to the airport for free in a stretched-out Caddy, complete with bar and television set. The moment we arrived, fog set in and they closed the airport, which sent me into a momentary panic since we had purchased our New York-to-London and London-to-Nairobi fares at huge but absolutely non-refundable/nonchangeable discount rates, and if we were more than a couple hours late getting out of Cincinnati, I was going to have to shell out an extra \$5,000 or so to buy brand-new non-discount tickets on later intercontinental flights. The fog finally lifted and the airport re-opened less than five minutes before we were due to take off, and Carol poured what was left of me into a seat.

Eleanor Wood, my agent, dropped by Kennedy Airport to visit while we were waiting for the London flight to depart, and also delivered some surprisingly substantial Italian and Japanese royalties which had just arrived, which helped put me back on a more even emotional keel. We talked about all the sights we were going to see, and when my enthusiasm got out of hand, as it does whenever I discuss East Africa, she tactfully reminded me that I was also (I think her word was primarily) going there to research Ivory, a long novel I'm scheduled to write during the latter half of 1986. I explained that we had hired a personal guide who had promised to take me to all the places I had to see for the book, and to introduce us to

a number of old-time pioneers and hunters with interesting stories to tell. She looked dubious; writers, after all, are supposed to suffer, not go gallivanting off on luxury safaris.

(Actually, writers are supposed to write, but sometimes they just screw around codifying their vacations for fanzines.)

The movie we saw on the flight to London was a turkey entitled Jagged Edge, a film we were forced to sit through three more times during the next 22 hours before finally escaping from the programming director of British Airways. Therefore, I might as well take this opportunity to get even: Jeff Bridges is guilty guilty GUILTY!!!

February 4:

Actually, I don't remember a hell of a lot about February 4. We landed in London at 8:00 AM, immediately went to an airport hotel, took a nap until our daughter, Laura, who is living in London these days, dropped by to visit in the afternoon, checked out at about 3:30, and climbed aboard the plane to Nairobi at 6:30 PM.

February 5:

We landed at the Nairobi airport, were met by Perry Mason (our guide), and drove to the Norfolk Hotel, an elegant old colonial establishment (and the first hotel in the interior of East Africa, dating back to 1904) where such notables as Teddy Roosevelt, Ernest Hemmingway and Robert Ruark had begun their safaris. The grounds were exquisitely landscaped with lovely gardens, a pair of aviaries, and a number of historical remnants, such as the first tractor, rick-

shaw and automobile in East Africa. We soon discovered that breakfast and lunch on the Safari circuit, without exception, would consist of lavish all-you-can-eat buffets, and had the first of quite a few belt-loosening meals. While Carol unpacked, I paid a visit to the East African Wildlife Society, where I autographed some copies of Adventures and sold an article to Swara, their official publication.

After lunch, we had Perry drive us to the National Museum where we saw what are purported to be the world's largest collections of shells and butterflies, some fascinating native art and costumes, and the stuffed remains of Ahmed, a bull elephant who carried the heaviest ivory of the past quarter-century or so. Just across the street of the museum is the Nairobi Snake and Reptile park, and we spent a few minutes there. A sign within the enclosure housing a pair of 18-foot-long Nile crocodiles stated that anyone tossing food into the area would be forced to retrieve it personally. (Needless to say, the enclosure was spotless.)

Finally, we drove out to Karen Blixen's farmhouse, took a tour of it, and wound up having dinner at the Carnivore, which has supplanted New York's La Caravelle as my favorite restaurant. We had topi, hartebeest, Uganda kob, and a number of other game animals, and were joined by Tessa Gross, a friend of Perry's who had just finished working on Out of Africa, for which she supplied and trained the horses and also taught Meryl Streep to ride.

February 6:

We drove north to Thika, and spent about an hour hunting for, and finally finding, an area called Fourteen Falls, where (obviously) fourteen waterfalls converge. I'd seen a photo of it some years ago, and had written to Perry that I wanted to visit it. He couldn't find it on any maps, but he had been there about 30 years earlier and knew the general area, and since he speaks fluent Swahili he simply began questioning people in the Thika area until he came up with a few who agreed about where it was. (I might add that, once we found it, it was quite lovely and well worth the effort.)

Then we went north past Nyeri into the Aberdare Mountains, and on to the Ark, a game-viewing lodge in the Aberdare National Park where, from no more than 20 yards away, we saw buffalo, giant forest hogs, hyenas, bushbuck, about 200 different species of birds, and the only rhino we were to see on the entire safari. Perry also introduced us to Ian Hardy, a charming gentleman who had been a white hunter back in the 1930s and spent the evening regaling us with stories of the good old days.

February 7:

We left the Ark after breakfast and drove about 20 miles to the Aberdare Country Club, which looks like a clone of Karen Blixen's house. We were given a 5-room cottage for the three of us, left our bags there, and drove into the practically empty park (we

were one of only two cars to enter all day). We drove up to a hidden waterfall Perry knew if at 11,000 feet altitude (well, it wasn't quite hidden; there was a sign warning us that a female tourist had been killed by a lion a month earlier). Anyway, we had lunch, then ascended via 4-wheel-drive to the Queen's Cave waterfall at 13,000 feet. Surprisingly, the altitude didn't affect us at all; at least not while we drove or walked downhill. We did notice that we started panting heavily when we walked up even the slightest incline. We saw some elephants and buffalo, as well as some rare colobus monkeys, and finally returned to our cottage where we ran into Ian Hardy again. I had asked him some questions about John Boyes, a turn-of-the-century Kenya pioneer and general scoundrel whose career I have appropriated, in bits and pieces, in a number of my novels (and about whom I would like, someday, to write a biography) and Ian had evidently spent the entire day hunting up old friends to get my answers.

February 8:

We drove through Nanyuki to Mount Kenya, and checked into the Mount Kenya Safari Club where we were given a private two-bedroom cottage (with oversized sunken showers and tubs, and a pair of fireplaces), that was equal to any suite I've ever stayed in at the Plaza in New York or the Ritz in London -- and the food was better. We were entertained at lunchtime by two dozen Chuka dancers, and we spent most of the afternoon loafing and wandering around the grounds, which include a putting green, a pool, a bowling green, a number of ponds for waterbirds, and an animal orphanage. I also interviewed a couple of Perry's friends who happened to be at the club, and Carol and I began putting together some notions for a new SF novel. (By halfway through the trip, I had filled more than 100 pages of my notebook and had the book, which will be titled Paradise, totally plotted out.)

I ought to say a little something about Perry while I'm thinking about it. He came to Kenya in 1952, at the age of 19, to fight the Mau Mau. He was given a squad of a dozen Samburu and Wanderobo warriors and a gun, driven to the Aberdare Mountains (90% of the Mau Maus were holed up in the Aberdares and at Mount Kenya), and told to proceed with anti-terrorist activities. He knew neither the language nor the geography nor the tactics, but he picked them up pretty quickly, and became, from all written accounts, one of the most feared anti-terrorists around. In 1956, when the Mau Mau were virtually disbanded, he became a white hunter, and spent a number of rainy seasons over the next two decades as one of Jomo Kenyatta's personal bodyguards, which is probably the only reason he wasn't assassinated after Uhuru in 1963. When hunting was outlawed in 1977, he went to his second love, horses, and was the leading steeplechase jockey in Kenya in 1978 and 1979, and when he got too heavy to ride, he was the leading trainer of steeplechase winners in 1980. He also rep-

resented Kenya in the All-Africa pistol-shooting championships on three different occasions. Then, in 1980, he began a photographic safari business, specializing in ushering individuals and couples through rather idiosyncratic, personalized itineraries. (I was his first writer, but he'd been out with two professional photographers, a butterfly collector, and a professor of ornithology within the past year.) We got along famously -- in fact, I'm dedicating a book to him -- and I found that he was far better-read than I expected. All in all, he was an excellent guide and companion (and we've already made a down payment for our next safari, which we'll be taking after the London Worldcon).

February 9:

We drove north through Isiolo to the Northern Frontier District, a harsh, savage semi-desert, and wound up at the Buffalo Springs tented camp. (The tents weren't the ones I remember from my scouting days; while small, the each had two beds with inner-spring mattresses, a dressing area, and bathrooms with hot and cold running water, flush toilets, and showers.) It was hot -- perhaps 105 degrees, and it felt even hotter after three very cool days in the mountains -- and we were at the end of the dry season. We took an afternoon game run, and I was amazed to find a herd of more than 100 oryx grazing off a section of ground that I wouldn't have believed could have fed a single cow. We ran across gerunuk, reticulated giraffe, and some Grevy's zebra, three of the rarest mammals in Africa, and also spent some time observing a huge tribe of baboons and a delightful family of warthogs. It was our first real game run after three days of observing scenery and birds, and we were overwhelmed by the abundance of wildlife. Perry was able to find in what is essentially a desert. When we returned to the camp, we found a half a dozen elephants placidly grazing some fifty yards away.

February 10:

This is the day we met Jumbo who will probably remain my favorite African animal.

Carol woke me at about 5:30 in the morning to say that there was an enormous bull elephant lying on his side about ten yards from the front of our tent. Elephants don't sleep lying down, I explained; it would crush their lungs. See for yourself, she replied---and sure enough, there was this mountain of an elephant on its side right outside our tent flap. Nothing was moving but his tail, and I spent the better part of an hour standing at the front of my tent, video camera trained on him, waiting for him to get up and do something. Perry wandered over from his own tent at about

6:30 and explained that this elephant was undoubtedly dying since elephants never lie down once they're fully grown. We were scheduled to spend another night at the camp, and visions of hyenas and vultures fighting over an increasingly odoriferous carcass flashed through my mind (and nose) as we toddled off to breakfast, being careful not to step on old Jumbo as we went.

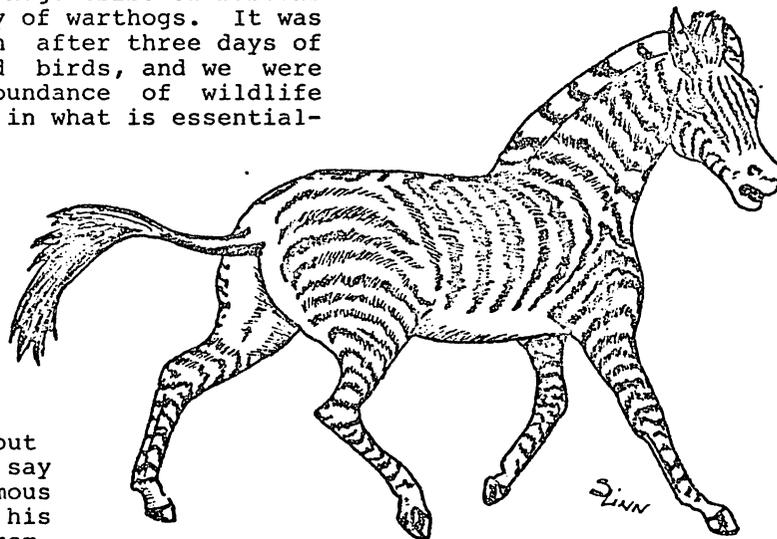
When we returned about a half an hour later he was on his feet, placidly grazing about fifty yards away from our tent and obviously unaware of the fact that he was dying.

While eating breakfast, we queried a number of the other guests about what they had seen. Most were quite negative; except for the half-dozen elephants around the camp, they'd run into a few oryx and a couple of ostrich and that was it. This was the morning we discovered the difference between going out with a social director as opposed to a white hunter who knew the area. We left on our game run, and just as I was about to express the opinion that even Perry wasn't likely to scare up any animals in this barren environment, he pointed out the window and we saw a herd of about 80 elephants not a half a mile away. Perry pulled off the road and began approaching the obliquely, never seeming to be getting any nearer to them, yet within seven or eight minutes we were literally in the middle of them, totally surrounded by some 400 tons of elephant. They paid us scant attention. We got some fabulous footage of the babies playing and nursing -- and I never again doubted Perry's ability to find game where none was supposed

to exist. In fact, we found about 50 other species on the morning run and returned, hot but content for lunch--where we ran into Jumbo again.

He had finished grazing around our tent and had moved his base of operations over to the restaurant ---- which, like all game lodge bars and restaurants, was an open-air affair. It had a roof to protect us from the

sun and rain, but there were no walls, just a two-foot high stone barrier and a row of shrubs and flowers to outline the area. They were very lovely shrubs and flowers, and they must have smelled as good as they looked, because Jumbo suddenly ambled over and began eating them, not ten feet from where a number of guests were eating their own meals.



Now, as friendly as he looked, he was still a large, wild bull elephant, and it was a potentially hazardous situation, so the kitchen staff and waiters decided to drive Jumbo away. They began picking up rocks and hurling them at him from point-blank range. (I have the entire episode on videotape, and you can hear those rocks slamming noisily off his carcass.) Now, Jumbo was no more than eight or ten yards from his tormenters; it would have been no effort for him to take two quick steps and turn them all into jelly. But all he did was eat faster and faster, and finally he ambled off amid a hail of rocks with the very last flower clutched firmly in his trunk. We gave him a standing ovation.

Having thoughtfully elected not to play people-pong, he walked over to the waterhole (almost all lodges are built on or near waterholes, so guests can observe the fauna while both they and the animals are busy drinking), and decided to play a game of chicken with a pair of crocodiles who were sunning themselves. The smart money went on Jumbo, and he won in a walk.

That morning Carol had forgotten the first rule of the African wild and drank some tap water, and became violently sick to her stomach. This necessitated her missing the afternoon game run. (We considered dragging her outside and leaving her for the hyenas, but since there weren't any around, we medicated her instead. She recovered eventually, but she was sick on and off for the next ten days.)

After lunch, while Carol lay in the tent and tried to die, Perry and I drove over to the Samburu River Lodge to fill up the safari car with gas, gas stations not being all that plentiful in the desert. (It's quite luxurious. We had originally been slated to stay there, and I was a little upset at winding up at Buffalo Springs -- but, as always, Perry knew what he was doing. The river that flows by the lodge was totally dry, and all the wildlife was now in the Buffalo Springs area. In fact, one of my great missed photo opportunities centered around a foppish-looking Italian man, dressed in his gold chains and his bikini, standing on the dry riverbed and wondering where the hell he could go for a swim.)

February 11:

We spent about four hours driving from Buffalo Springs to Maralal, which was back at a reasonable altitude --7,000 feet, which meant a temperature in the low 80s-- passing through some beautiful if stark landscape as we did so. Maralal is owned by a friend of Perry's, a former hunter who was an incredibly gracious host and spent some time answering my questions. Maralal is not a national park, but a private lodge, and we were the only guests there. We sat on the deck of the lodge for a few hours, drinking Tusker beers (the only kind you can get in most Kenyan locations) and watching hundreds of impala, zebra, warthogs, elands, and vervet monkeys drinking from an artificial waterhole that I'll swear was no more than

twenty feet away. Then we carted our bags to our private cabin, a beautiful wooden lodge with a fireplace and even a reading loft, unpacked, and followed the owner's ancient gunbearer out to a blind near a tree that he had baited for leopard. There was half a goat hanging down from a platform in the tree, and within twenty minutes a lovely female leopard appeared from nowhere, leaped up to the platform in a single bound, and began eating the goat. We stayed there, taking pictures until the light ran out, and finally returned to the lodge to hear more stories about the days when Kenya was still a frontier, men were men, and good cigars cost a nickel.

February 12:

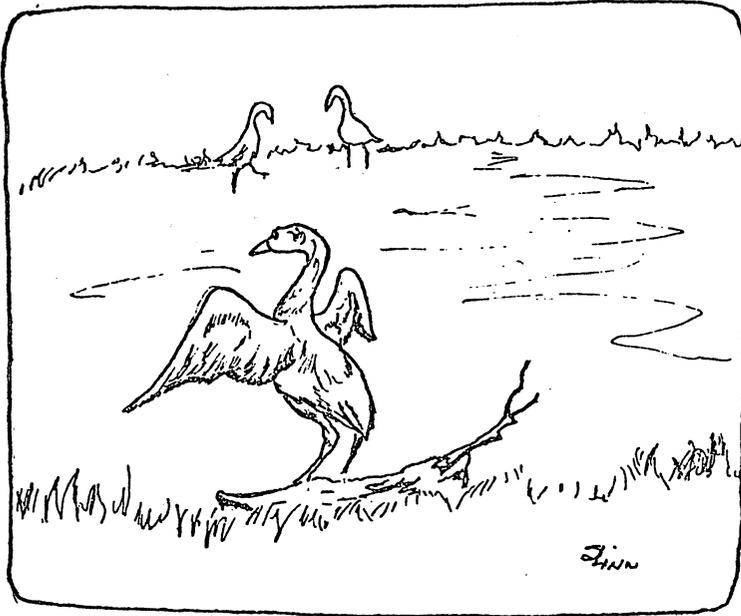
We left Maralal and drove about three hours to the Rift Valley which, in its entirety, extends from Asian Russia to Botswana, but is nowhere more impressive than in Kenya. We stopped at Lake Baringo, hopped a boat, and went off to Island Camp, a tented camp at the southern tip of Baringo's largest island. (Also, I might add, its hilliest island; I don't recall any other portion of the trip, even the mountains, wearing me out as much as simply getting around Island Camp.)

When we reached our tent, I noticed a couple of lizards hanging on the walls and was all set to chase them away when Perry, who was in the next tent, explained that I would be very unhappy if I did so, since they took care of the insects, and that Lake Baringo, with its 100-degree temperatures, dense forests, and high humidity, had more than its share of insects. And, as Perry said, we went the entire day and night without so much as seeing an insect, let alone being bitten. (We were blessed with lizards the next six days, and when we finally came to a lodge that didn't have them -- the luxurious Kilaguni Lodge in Tsavo National Park -- I went right to the management and complained.)

Baringo was a bird-watcher's paradise, and we spent most of the afternoon sitting in the open-air bar with our binoculars and cameras, watching everything from tiny weaver birds to fish eagles. The bar also contained a semi-tame waterbuck who begged for beers and cleaned up most of the birdseed that was placed out for the weavers. Finally, in the late afternoon, Perry and I borrowed a rather flimsy speedboat (Carol opted to remain behind, since she is a devout and dedicated bird-watcher), and we went out searching for hippos and crocodiles. We found them, decided that our boat was even more delicate than it looked, and decided not to approach closer than about 40 yards, where we took a number of pictures and felt somewhat relieved that none of them had been too curious about the boat.

February 13:

We left Baringo and drove about 70 miles south to Lake Nakuru, home of some 3 million flamingos. I hopped out of the safari car and began carefully approaching them with my

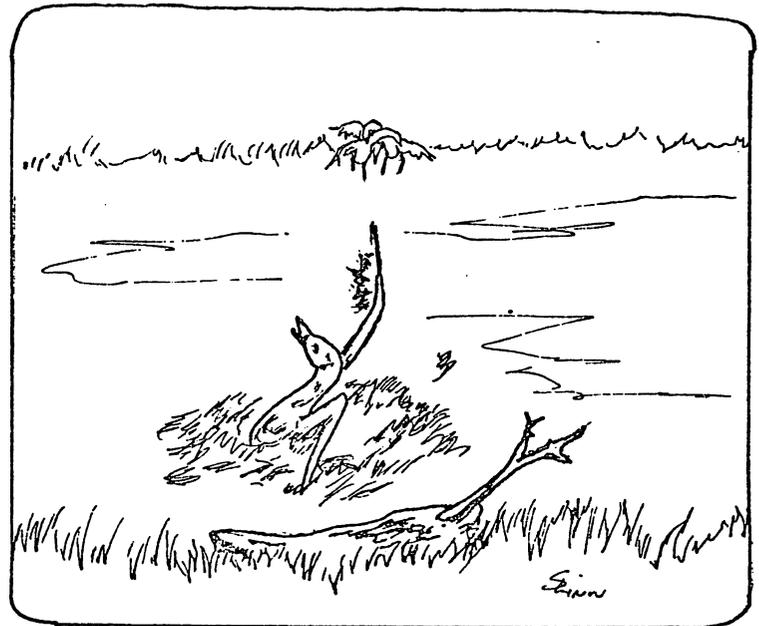


Camera. They began backing away, I followed them, and after a few minutes, I realized that something smelled awful. I finally took the camera away from my eye and found that I was surrounded for perhaps 50 yards in every direction by a six-inch-deep patch of flamingo droppings. Still, I got the footage I wanted---and a few hours later I got the bath I needed.

We spent only an hour or so at Nakuru, and then drove south another 50 miles to Lake Naivasha, the largest and prettiest of the Rift Lakes. There's not that much game at any of the lakes, but the birdlife is phenomenal, with up to 400 species at each lake. It was at Naivasha that I found an animal that rivaled Jumbo for my affections: he was a crested crane (my favorite species of African bird), and we named him Clyde.

Clyde lived on a lovely pond at our lodge together with some Egyptian geese, a black swan, and two lady cranes. Clyde was feeling the mating urge a little earlier

than his ladyfriends were, and he spent most of the afternoon prancing and strutting his stuff for them. (He looked like a Clyde; if he could have worn a fur coat, gold jewelry, and lambchop sideburns, he would have.) Anyway, there was a tortuously-twisted log spanning one segment of the pond, and at one point Clyde hopped onto the log, trilled a couple of times so that his ladies-in-waiting would look at him, and then began fluttering his wings and strutting like a professional wrestler for them---and slipped and fell head-first into the pond. He dragged himself to his feet, turned to make sure no one had seen him, and slipped again---and spent the better part of 40 seconds flopping around until he had finally regained his balance. Then, with more dignity than I could muster under the same circumstances, he shook himself off, gave us a look that said "I meant to do that!", and went right back to his fruitless courting of his ladyfriends. I loved him.



February 14:

We drove a couple of hours to the Masai Mara, which is actually the northern third of the Serengeti Plains. There wasn't much doubt of where we were when we arrived: less than a mile into the park we'd already seen a herd of more than 1,000 wildebeest, about 400 zebra, smaller herds of topi and hartebeest, a group of about 20 bachelor bull elephants -- and the further into the park we went, the more plentiful the game became. It was Hollywood's version of Africa: no matter where you stood, it was a safe bet that you were within 200 yards of at least

50 animals. My own guess is that we passed more than 5,000 Thomson's gazelle and 2,000 larger antelope on the way to our campsite. There was a time, and not so long ago at that, when all of East Africa looked like this; now only the Mara and Serengeti possess game in this quantity. The was lush, green, dotted with thornbush and acacia trees, broken by narrow ribbons of water, and covered by more animals per square foot than anyone who hasn't been there can imagine. (Except rhinos. Poaching has lowered the Mara's rhino population from 5,500 in 1973 to 24 in 1985. There was one baby born this year, but lions got him.)

We stayed at Cottar's Camp, owned and run by a former white hunter named "Bwana" Cottar, who, like all of Perry's friends, had stories galore to tell. It was managed by a young German named Mike Merton, who discovered an American card game named "Oh Shit" (Carol and I knew it as "Oh Hell") and who, once he discovered we had a deck of cards with us, insisted that we join him and his friends for a couple of hours of cards around the campfire every evening. It turned out that he had worked on Sheena, Queen of the Jungle and a couple of other films, and he, too, had a wealth of stories to share with us -- as well as some money. (He was a sweet guy, but a lousy cardplayer.)

The accommodations were most interesting: papyrus structures with concrete floors, kind of a cross between a tent and a cabin. The camp, which is quite small, was filled with interesting people -- the typical tourists stayed at the more famous and luxurious Keekorok Lodge (where we were slated to stay, until Perry found out that Cottar was back in Kenya after a trip abroad). One friend we made was Bryan, another card player who was a gunsmith in Seattle and was making his leisurely way down to Zimbabwe to visit some relatives. He had planned to spend two days at Cottar's Camp and found the company so congenial that he had been there three weeks when we arrived. Bryan had been a Green Beret in Vietnam, and had been operating on a small mountain behind enemy lines when his group was spotted by a squad of Viet Cong. They killed all but one of the Cong, who ducked into a cave, and left Bryan behind to take care of him. Bryan decided that only a crazy man would go into a dark cave after an enemy who was hiding from him, and since he was an explosives expert, he tossed a pound of plastic explosive into the cave, walked about 200 feet away, and hit the detonator --- and blew up the whole darned mountain. Evidently, the cave was a major Viet Cong munitions dump -- experts later estimated that, based on the explosion, it held 150 tons of rockets and other explosives -- and when Bryan woke up, his buddies, assuming he was dead, were divvying up his possessions. He had dislocated every joint in his body, and spent the next couple of years in the hospital.

February 15:

We got up even earlier than usual -- usual was about 6:30 AM--and drove over to Keekorok to take a hot air balloon over the great herds of the Mara. We'd really been looking forward to this, but it was a bit disappointing. The basket was right under the butane pump which fueled the torch that heated the air, which meant that we got to wake up to the warming (read: burning) rays of butane on the back of our necks. Also, while the animals paid no attention to the balloon itself while it was silently drifting, they panicked every time the pilot hit the butane torch, which was every couple of minutes.

Anyway, the balloon stayed aloft about 90 minutes, and then started drifting over to-

ward the Tanzania border, which was bad news since there had been new border problems between the two countries. (For which reason we did not get to spend our planned two days in Tanzania's Ngorongoro Crater after all.) Anyway, we passed the border, and suddenly the Sand River was coming up fast, and if we crossed that we were in big trouble, since the vans that were following us to take us back couldn't get across the river and we could expect a full day's hassle with the Tanzanian border guards -- so our pilot decided to crash land. There were ten of us in the basket, and while no one was hurt it took us a while to get untangled. On the other hand, we made some new friends. The guy who landed on top of me lives in Blue Ash, Ohio, not 5 miles from my house; while the little old lady who landed on Carol lives in Findlay, Ohio, where we've attend some SF conventions.

Once we got untangled, we were treated to an enormous champagne breakfast, and then drove back to Keekorok, during which time we realized just how much we appreciated both Perry and his car. The minibus' ride was terribly bumpy; Carol and I, having been trained by Perry, spotted all kinds of game that the driver missed; and when we came across a pride of lions on the move, we learned that minibus policy was to take a quick vote on whether to stop and photograph them or not, by which time they were gone anyway. As soon as we got back to Keekorok we hunted up Perry, who had elected to take a nap rather than ride the balloon. If I point out a hill where we saw a herd of elephants from the balloon three hours ago, I said, do you think you can find them now? Silly question. Half an hour later we were right in the middle of them, snapping away, while the minibuses were searching fruitlessly for anything larger than gazelle and impala.

We returned to camp for lunch (and the inevitable card game), then went out searching for lion -- and found them. There was a large pride in the area of Cottar's Camp, ruled by a huge black-maned lion affectionately known as Number One. We never did see Number One, but we did find Numbers Two through Twenty-Eight, inclusive. And returned for more beer, stories, and cards around the campfire. There was a newcomer, a computer program salesman who had sold some kind of accounting system to New American Library, the publishing house I recently left in favor of Tor. He told me how stupid I was to leave and what great guys they were at NAL. Ordinarily I went to sleep at 10:00 in Africa; I made an exception for this guy, and took him for \$300 before midnight.

February 16:

Perry decided that we ought to see how the other half lives, so he arranged for us to visit the inside of a Masai boma, an interesting if distasteful experience. The second I entered it (Carol, who is brighter than me, remained outside) I was covered by tsetse flies, just like the Masai. The reason soon became apparent: they bring their

cattle into the boma for safe-keeping every night, and what seemed like a dirt floor wasn't.

That done, we went out looking for Number One again. We still didn't find him, but we got some of the best photographs and footage we were to obtain on the safari. We came across a lioness nursing her cubs, and subtle, devious Perry got us to within ten yards of her without her ever knowing it. Then, perhaps a quarter of a mile away, we came to a lion "nursery": while most of the pride was out hunting, two lionesses had stayed behind with eleven cubs which were from five or six different litters. Again, we managed to get to within about ten yards of the closest of them, and spent a couple of hours watching and photographing them as they played and frolicked.

February 17:

We got up at dawn, couldn't escape yet another card game, and had Mike Merton drive us to the local airstrip a couple of miles away at 9:00. Where is it, I asked as we stopped on a green plain in front of some 200 zebra. You're looking at it, he answered, and about two minutes later a small 5-seater came into view, buzzed the zebra until they dispersed, and then landed and taxied right up to the car. We climbed aboard and the pilot took off and flew us to Governor's Camp on the far side of the Mara, which had a tarmac landing strip that could accommodate a plane large enough to fly to Nairobi.

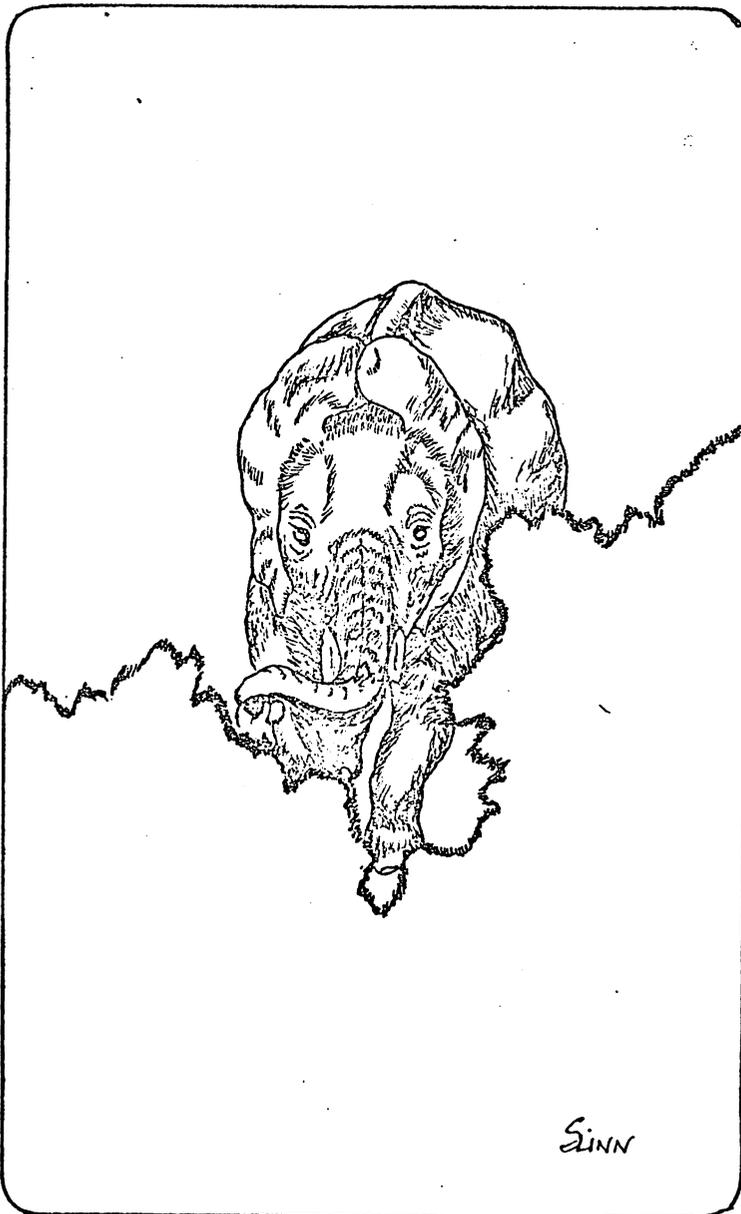
It was a few minutes late -- elephants on the landing strip -- but eventually it landed, and about 30 of us, who had been flown there from all over the Mara, climbed aboard. The stewardess handed out little mimeographed sheets giving the history of the plane: it was a DC-3 that had been commissioned in 1944, had seen action in the Berlin airlift, had never missed a single day of service. None of which made me feel any better as it reached its cruising altitude of 8,500 feet and let the wind play games with it all the way to Nairobi, where, according to Perry (who was there waiting for us) it bounced about 20 feet into the air after first touching the ground before it finally decided to land.

We ate lunch at the Carnivore, where we met yet another of Perry's friends with stories to tell, and then drove down to Amboseli, perhaps the most famous and surely the most frequently-visited of all Kenya's parks. We knew pretty much what to expect, but the reality was even more depressing than we had anticipated. Amboseli is a park that is, quite simply, used up. Not all parks have to be as lush and green as the Mara; Buffalo Springs, for example, was absolutely beautiful in its starkness. But Amboseli is nothing more than a dustbowl. According to Perry, it was always a dustbowlbut it has become even worse since the elephants began destroying their environment. Amboseli is home to about 12,000 elephants, which is about 8,000 more than it should hold. They have destroyed almost all

the trees, most of the bushes and shrubs, and half the grass. We saw zebras literally choking on the dust they raise as they walked from one meager clump of grass to another. There's water, and abundant game (though nowhere near as abundant as in the Mara), but Amboseli nevertheless gives the impression of a doomed ecosystem that's simply running down.

February 18:

We awoke before dawn, since Mt. Kilimanjaro was covered by clouds when we arrived and Perry felt that dawn was the one sure time we'd be able to see and photograph it. He was right, as always. And, since we were up, we decided to take our game run before breakfast in the hope of getting out ahead of the other tourists and avoiding some of the dust their cars and buses raised. Unfortunately, most of them had the same idea, and the dust rising from the dirt roads was almost impenetrable in places.



We spent two hours looking for rhino, since a couple of people at Cottar's Camp, who had come up from Amboseli, told us they had seen some there, but there were none to be found -- at least not in the area we covered. We did see quite a few elephant, some hippo, and a couple of thousand wildebeest. However, once it became apparent we weren't going to turn up any rhino, we decided to eat and hit the road, since we had no desire to spend any more time in Amboseli.

We drove to Tsavo West, and checked into the luxurious Kilaguni Lodge, where we once again ran into Tessa Gross, the girl who had trained horses for Out of Africa. She joined us for a game run and a trip to Mzima Springs, where some 97 million gallons a day of cold, fresh water flow down from Kilimanjaro. The springs, which supply distant Mombasa with all its fresh water, are home to hundreds of hippo and crocs, and we got some lovely footage there.

Then we returned to Kilaguni for dinner. While we were eating (in the usual open-air restaurant overlooking the usual waterhole) an old elephant lumbered out of the hills and came down to slake his thirst just after dusk. Next came a pair of cow elephants and their babies. Then four more cows and three babies. The a half a dozen bachelor males. Then some teenagers. They kept coming, and by 9:00 PM there must have been more than 200 elephants quietly drinking, grazing and socializing (that's not an anthropomorphism; elephants do socialize). It was too dark to photograph them, but since it was our last night on the veldt, we were reluctant to go to bed, and so we sat out on our balcony simply watching them. Just after midnight they began dispersing in utter silence, heading off into the hills in twos and threes and fours. By one o'clock the last of them was gone, and there was not a single sign that they had ever been there at all. It was a memorable and moving experience which we will carry with us forever.

February 19:

We drove to Mombasa, which was about a zillion degrees and a billion percent humidity (in the shade; it was warmer in the sunlight). The drive was so long and hot that when we got to our room at the newly-opened Inter-Continental Hotel (the first air-conditioned quarters we'd seen since the Norfolk), we decided to spend the rest of the day unwinding. We did a little gift-shopping in the afternoon, had a lovely dinner at their outdoor restaurant on the beach (it was our first look at the Indian Ocean), stuck around for the entertainment (an imported singer from England), stopped by their casino for a while, and slept in a delightful penthouse suite that, for a change, didn't require lizards.

February 20:

We got up very early, while the temperature was still below 90, and drove into Mombasa, which has to be the most exotic city I've ever seen. It's 50% black, 20% Indian, 15% Arab, 5% Oriental, and 10% white. The

streets wind and twist back upon themselves, the odors would have wakened the dead, most of the buildings are at least a century old (and some were built prior to 1600), and you truly expect to bump into Sydney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre, or Walter Slezak around the next corner. I had some research to do for Ivory, the novel I'll be working on this summer, and Perry dutifully led us to all the sites I had to visit. We managed to wrap it up in about three hours and got back to the hotel before the thermometer topped 110 degrees.

Carol, who was finally back in good health, decided not to jeopardize it by going out again, but I wanted to go to a couple of gift shops---there was a particular book I was looking for---so Perry and I went back out after lunch to check out the gift shops at some nearby hotels. It proved fruitless: they may well have had the book, but since I don't read German there was no way to tell. In fact, a tour of the local hotels could lead one to conclude that the Third Reich won the war. So overwhelmingly German were the patrons that all the books, signs, menus, everything, were printed only in German.)

We decided that as long as we were out, we might as well drive around a little, and before long we came to a tiny sign pointing the way to the Jumba National Monument. I asked Perry what it was, and he confessed that he had never heard of it, so we decided to follow the sign's directions. We went down an incredibly bumpy dirt road for three miles, past a chicken farm and a couple of flower nurseries, and finally came to a little cottage. We got out, paid a tiny admission fee (something like seven cents a piece), followed a narrow path---and came to a remarkable set of ruins of an Arab village, Jumbo La Mtwana, which dated back to 1350 A.D. There were about 20 buildings, including a couple of large mosques. Many of the walls were intact, and while ruins usually bore me to tears, I found these fascinating.

We spent a couple of hours there, then returned to the hotel. All during dinner I kept telling Carol about the ruins, and all during the buffet dinner we kept fighting off the French guests, who were indulging in a typical French feeding frenzy. By desert we had the plot for another science fiction novel. It is tentatively titled Remains, and the voracious French tourists were every bit as important to it as the Arab ruins. If any of those luxury beach resorts had been frequented by the English or Americans, I'd have found the book I was looking for, we'd have skipped visiting the ruins, and I'd have come home with material for one less novel. Ghod bless the Germans!

February 21:

We left early to beat the heat, and drove the 300 miles back to Nairobi. And, since we left at dawn, and I had been up past midnight the past three nights, I fell asleep in the car--with my left arm hanging out the window the whole way. I'd been in Africa for

more than two weeks and had gotten a Stewart Granger suntan; now, on my last full day there, traveling from one city to another, I managed to get a 2nd degree sunburn on my arm.

We checked in at the Norfolk again, went into town to do a little shopping, took another trip to Karen Blixen's house (we hadn't had our cameras the first time and wanted some pictures), and ate dinner in the famed Ibis Grill, from which Lord Delamere used to pot elephants whenever he was drunk, which was almost every night.

February 22:

We ate breakfast in the Delamere Lounge (from which a drunken Lord Delamere used to shoot elephants when he wasn't doing it down the hall in the Ibis Grill), drove to the airport, and caught the plane to London. Via Cyprus. I was at a loss to understand this, since the flight to Nairobi was non-stop, no one was getting on or off at Cyprus, and Cyprus isn't the safest place to be these days. The co-pilot explained it to me: when we took off from London, we were taking off at sea level, at which point the engines were working at 100% efficiency, and could lift the plane off the ground carrying all the fuel it required to reach Nairobi. But Nairobi is at an altitude of 6,000 feet, and the engines couldn't lift the fully-fueled plane at that altitude. So we landed in Cyprus and were immediately surrounded by a half a dozen tanks and about 500 armed soldiers who refused to allow the plane to go anywhere near the terminal. We sat there for a couple of hours while their military decided whether or not to give us the fuel we needed. (It happens every day, and they give the airplane the necessary fuel every day, but they always take their time about it, which gives the passengers a final adventure to relate when they arrive home.)

By chance, we found ourselves sitting next to a British editor who expressed some interest in my books. I've mailed some off to him, and, who knows, I may have a new English publisher one of these days.

February 23:

There's not a hell of a lot to do in London on a Sunday, so we met my daughter, Laura, at the British Museum and spent the afternoon there. Makes one admire the industry of the Brits, while questioning their morals: if something wasn't nailed down -- a mummy, a small temple, anything -- they plundered it and shipped it back to England. I am convinced the only reason there are no pyramids in the museum is because they couldn't figure out how to send one home. We had dinner at The Last Days of the Raj, which remains our favorite London restaurant.

February 24:

I visited my British agent and a couple of editors, spent the rest of the day with Carol and Laura shopping for books that are unavailable in the States, and went off to

see the highly-lauded musical, Les Miserables. We see perhaps 12 to 15 plays a year in New York and England, and candidly, this was the most boring piece of theater we've attended in well over a decade.

February 25:

Landed in New York after a 7-hour trip, and gave Barry Malzberg a call while we were waiting for the flight to Cincinnati. He told me of the shocking number of deaths that had occurred within the SF community while we were gone --- L. Ron Hubbard, Frank Herbert, Bob Mills, Judy-Lynn del Rey --- which forcefully brought home the fact that there are a lot more dangerous things to do than sneak up on lions and elephants, like just trying to keep your machinery running. We got home at about 10:00 PM, said hello to our various and sundry animals, and fell to work opening a 5-foot stack of mail. The very first letter was from Eleanor Wood, informing me that Santiago had made the Waldenbooks general bestseller list in its first week of release. It almost made me glad to be back.

* * * *

We accumulated some 15 hours of video footage (which I've edited down to a 150-minute travelogue), 500 color photographs, and a burning desire to get back to Africa as soon and as often as we can. We'll be visiting Kenya again and Tanzania after the 1987 Worldcon, and are already planning a 1988 trip to Zimbabwe and Botswana. I can't honestly say that Africa has changed me, but as I sit here looking at my novel outlines and travel plans, I can vouch for the fact that it sure as hell has motivated me like no other experience I've had.





An article by Mark R. Leeper

in Literature

An Introduction

Back when I was ten or eleven years old, I used to get monster movie bubble gum cards. They usually had familiar stills from monster movies. One, however, puzzled me a bit. It looked like a human-shaped furnace with glowing eyes and a disproportionately big fist. It was labeled simply, "The Golem". There was no explanation as to what the Golem was. Since I usually recognized what was on these cards, I filed in the back of my mind that there was something called a "Golem" that I wanted to know more about. It didn't occur to me to look in a dictionary any more than it would to look up "Godzilla." Dictionaries never have the really interesting words!

A month or so later my parents were going to a Yiddish play put on at the Jewish Community Center. It was called "The Golem," and was written by H. Leivik. Now I knew darn well that my mother did not go to plays about monsters that looked like human-shaped furnaces with glowing eyes and disproportionately big fists. She saw Bride of Frankenstein when she was growing up and decided on the spot that any story with a monster was stupid. It had to be just a coincidence of name, right? Well, my parents came back from the play and told me I would have liked the story... "it was weird." It was about a

rabbi who made a man out of clay. At this point I realized that the bubble gum card and the play were somehow related, and even more surprising, this monster was somehow a Jewish monster.

I did some research in Golems and discovered that they are indeed creatures of Jewish folklore that have been the subject of monster movies. (Incidentally, there turned out to be one other traditional Jewish monster, a dybbuk. It is a possessing spirit, not too unlike the one in The Exorcist.)

There are apparently several Golem stories in Jewish folklore, but I have found nothing but fleeting references to any Golem legend other than "The Golem of Prague."

The story is set in Prague in the 16th century. The Jewish community is threatened by blood-libels -- claims that they were murdering Christian children and using their blood to make matzoh. (Actually, Jewish law strictly forbids the consumption of any blood at all.) A Christian who murdered a child and planted it in a Jew's house could report the Jew. The Jew would be executed and his property would be split between the Christian who reported him and the government. Clearly the ghetto needed a very good watchman.

Rabbi Judah Loew used information from the Kabbalah -- the central book of Jewish

mysticism -- to learn the formula by which God first made man out of clay, and with the help of two other pious men built a man out of clay and brought him to life. The final step of this process was to place God's secret name on a parchment and place it in the forehead of the Golem.

Loew's Golem was between 7-1/2 and 9 feet tall and had tremendous strength, but had a very placid and passive disposition when not under orders to act otherwise. He also lacked the one faculty that only God can give, the power of speech. Because this giant was passive and mute, people in the ghetto assumed he was half-witted and the word "golem" has also come to mean "idiot."

One story about the early days of this Golem was probably inspired by "The Sorcerer's Apprentice." The Golem was told to fetch water, but not told how much. The result was a minor flood. This tendency to do what he was told to do, not what he was expected to do, has endeared the Golem story to computer people like Norbert Wiener. It may also be part of the basis of Asimov's robot stories.

At night the Golem guarded the ghetto, catching all would-be libelists red-handed. He single-handedly ended the possibility of successfully blood-libeling the Jewish community. Loew then got the Emperor to end the practice of letting blood-libelers profit from their actions. When the Golem was no longer needed, Loew removed the parchment, returning the Golem to being a statue, and the statue was laid to rest in the attic of the synagogue.

A popular variation on the story has the Golem rebel and become an uncontrolled monster before being stopped and returned to clay. It has been speculated that Mary Shelley patterned Frankenstein on this story.

The Golem has appeared several times on the screen, though only once in an English-language film. The first cinematic appearance was in Der Golem (1914) with Paul Wegener in the title role. The story deals with the modern discovery and re-animation of the Golem. This was apparently a lost film until it was found again in 1958. It still is almost never seen.

Wegener returned to the role in a second German film, also called Der Golem (1920). This film is loosely based on "the Golem of Prague." The Jews are portrayed as being weird magicians who live in a strange expressionistic ghetto. In fact, the early parts of the film seem to presage the anti-Semitism that was soon to engulf Germany. The images of the Jewish community are not all that different looking than those of the propaganda films of the follow years.

One of the most interesting touches of the film is the subplot of Prince Lorian. The beautiful Prince Florian wants to save the rabbi's daughter from the destruction that is to come to the Jews. However, Florian is so unctuous and disgusting that when he is killed by the Golem, the viewer is more relieved than shocked, and perhaps that is just what was intended. In any case, the Golem is able to avert destruction of the

Jewish community. The the Golem's own love for the rabbi's daughter is denied and he becomes a dangerous monster only to be destroyed by a child's hand. The rabbi then praises God for twice saving the Jews of the ghetto.

Wegener may have also made a lesser known German film, The Golem and the Dancer, in 1917. The actual existence of this film has never been established. A French-Czech film called The Golem was made in 1935. Harry Baur starred in the story which was done much in the style of a Universal horror film. The story deals with another tyrannical attempt to destroy Jews. Through much of the film, the rediscovered Golem remains chained in a tyrant's dungeon. Just when things are at their blackest, the Golem comes to life and destroys everything, once again saving the Jews.

A number of Czech comedies have been about the Golem, including The Golem and the Emperor's Baker (1951). In this, the Golem ends up as an oven for the baker.

The only English-speaking Golem film I know of is a British cheapie called It! (1967) with Roddy McDowell. A psychotic museum curator who lives with the corpse of his mother acquires the Golem of Prague and uses it for his own purposes. In the end, the Golem survives a nuclear blast that kills his master and he quietly walks into the sea.

This article will cover all those books about the Golem that I wanted to read for years and never got around to. This article was a good excuse. So here goes.

The Golem

by Gustav Meyrink

(Dover, 1976 (1928), \$4.50*.)

This is not actually a tale of the supernatural, in spite of the title, though at the time the strange things that happen border on the supernatural and the events are all overshadowed by the legend of the golem.

Athanasius Pernath is a Christian living in the Jewish quarter of Prague. He is interested in the golem legends, particularly the Golem of Prague, but as someone comments, everyone seems to be talking about the golem. Pernath's own personality seems to parallel that of the golem -- he seems to have little will of his own other than that of altruism. Much of the book is really just observation of the inhabitants of the Ghetto until Pernath becomes embroiled in a crime that another has committed.

This is not light reading any more than Camus's The Stranger is. It has a plot, but more important is the character's introspection, the truths the character is learning about himself and the characters around him. Time and again Pernath returns to the legend of the golem in his thoughts as his life patterns itself after the golem's. He is

* The Dover edition also includes The Man Who Was Born Again by Paul Busson.

used by many of the characters, some well-meaning but needing help, others selfish, and his wish to set things right is his only reward. In essence he is a human golem.

Meyrink found writing the novel almost as bewildering as it is for the reader to read it or the character to live it. Somewhere towards the middle (Bleiler says in the introduction to the Dover edition), Meyrink lost track of the multiplicity of his characters and needed a friend to graph them out geometrically on a chess board before he could proceed. The result is not one, but many stories intertwined, which not only adds to the difficulty in reading the novel, but also gives a number of views of the Jewish Ghetto in pre-World-War-II Prague. This is not an entertaining novel, but it is worthwhile to read.

The Golem

by H. Leivick

(in The Dybbuk and Other Great Yiddish Plays, Bantam, 1966, \$1.25)

This is one of the most famous plays of Yiddish theatre. H. Leivick (actually Leivick Halper) re-tells once again the story of the Golem of Prague, but in more obscure and symbolic terms. To be frank, the play probably requires a closer reading than I was willing to give it (if not actually seeing a production). It is a long play, written in verse, that requires study and an investment of time rather than the quick reading I gave it, so these comments should be taken as first impressions.

Certain concessions had to be made to dramatic style. The primary concession was that this Golem speaks. A mute character in a stage drama would be little more than a mime, and Leivick wanted to get into the character of the man-made man. That he certainly does, more successfully than any other version of the story I know of. In spite of the Golem's stature, he is troubled and fearful. In following the rabbi's orders, he is usually as fearful as any normal human would be. He is reluctant to go into dark caves at the rabbi's bidding. He is stigmatized and lonely.

Much of what is happening in the play is going on on a symbolic and metaphysical plane. Dark figures, never explained, appear and carry on abstract conversations. I think that the style of the play can be exemplified by stage directions like "the brightness of invisibility begins to glow around him." Even the stage directions are obscure! I will leave this play for others to interpret it.

The Golem of Prague

by Gershon Winkler

(Judaica Press, 1980, \$9.95.)

Winkler's book is in two parts: an introduction and the story itself. The story does not start until page 75 so the introduction is a major part of the book and deserves a

separate comment. Part of the reason is not what the introduction says about Golems, but because of what it says about Winkler.

In Winkler's description of his occupation, he says that he "teach[es] Torah weekly on Long Island, primarily to young Jewish adults with minimal Jewish knowledge and identity, and he has also been helping young Jews return from 'Hebrew-Christian' and Far Eastern movements.

He begins his introduction with an attack on what he calls "sciencism," which is apparently a belief, fostered by scientific reasoning, that leads one to be skeptical of the existence of God and miracles. As an example, he says:

"For more than fifty years, the museum's exhibit of a stooped, ape-like man helped many people in their culture to overcome their guilt over the rejection of G-d and the idea of Creation... In 1958, the Congress of Zoology in London declared that the 'Neanderthal Man' was really nothing more than the remains of a modern-type man, affected by age and arthritis... Nevertheless, these scientific errors were never expressed to the subsequent generations of school children. Such a public revelation would have been outright 'heretical'. It would have destroyed the absolute authority of science and left humanity with no alternative explanation for the phenomenon of the existence of G-d."

Winkler has a section on "Making Golems" in his introduction. He rambles for 16 pages on a few Golem legends and references to the ineffable name of God. On the actual subject of the section, he has only the following helpful words to say:

"It is not within the scope of this overview to discuss the mystical mechanics of The Book of Formation and how to use it to make Golems. Readers are advised to study day-to-day Judaism first, before investigating its profound mystical dimensions. After many years of having mastered the down-to-earth aspects of the Torah, on both the practical and intellectual level, one can then examine books like Derech HaShem...which discusses the interactive relationships of the natural and supernatural, and the role of the Divine Names."

If that was all he had to say on the subject, it is not clear why he tried to tantalize the reader by having an extensive section promising to tell more.

The introduction also includes a picture labeled "Monument to the Maharal's [Loew's] Golem standing at the entrance of the old Jewish sector of Prague." No further explanation is given. This would be an impressive sight if it were not obviously a picture of a knight in Teutonic armor. Anyone who recognizes German armor would not be taken in

by this fraud perpetrated by a man trying to convince us of the superiority of his religious views.

In short, I am less than impressed with the introduction.

As Winkler gets into the main text of the story, he editorialized less but there is still a strong undercurrent of didactic lecturing in his writing. The story of the Golem of Prague is broken into short stories extolling the values of a good Jewish education and traditional Jewish values. The real common thread of these stories is Rabbi Judah Loewy (a.k.a. Loew). In many of the stories the Golem itself is the most minor of characters. The stories are really about the mystical wisdom and power of the rabbi.

In these stories we see no end of evils caused by not giving a Jew a proper Jewish education or by a young Jewish woman marrying a Christian. The vehemence with which the Christians want to convert Jews verges on the incredible. In one story, the Duke wants so much to win one Jewish woman over to Christianity that he is willing to marry his only son to her. The two indeed fall in love, but the bride-to-be decides she cannot betray her family. Eventually the two marry, but only after the Duke's son converts to Judaism.

In this version of the story, the Golem is much less monstrous and apparently indistinguishable from a flesh-and-blood human. Yet as the story requires, he seems to have strange magical powers. In one story he can see a soul hovering over a grave; in another he has an amulet of invisibility. The stories start to lose interest as the Golem has too many powers, all bestowed on him by Rabbi Loewy.

Oddly enough, the only character of real interest is the arch-villain Father Thaddeus. From "the green church," as it is called, he hatches plot after plot against the Jews. By turns he is charming and then vicious and ruthless -- whatever is called for in his anti-semitic plots. The depth of his hatred is never fully gauged by the reader until he cold-bloodedly murders a young (Christian) child in order to frame the Jews for ritual murder. After Thaddeus dies, the stories have a marked drop in quality. Rabbi Loewy himself is the paragon of Jewish learning and knowledge. In investigating crimes, his first question is always one that leads to the solution. Paragons make very dull characters, and since his thought processes are arrived at only through religious knowledge far beyond that of the reader, he never becomes a comprehensible character.

Winkler clearly loses steam in his story-telling in the second half of his tale, but the first half is worth reading far more than the introduction or the second half.

The Sword of the Golem
by Abraham Rothberg
(Bantam, 1970, \$1.25.)

Of the various re-tellings of the story of the Golem of Prague, this is certainly

the most readable and the most enjoyable, though perhaps not the most faithful to its source material.

The Golem in this version is, for the first time, a believable three-dimensional character. He doesn't just walk, he talks, he feels, he loves, he hates, and if pushed far enough, he kills. Instead of being broken into short stories of threats against individuals in the Jewish community, this novel is one continual threat and eventually a riot against the Jews. The Golem in all this is not a protective angel sent by Rabbi Low (the spelling in this version) who is just an extension of the Rabbi. The Golem sympathizes with the Jewish community and considers himself to be Jewish, but he has free will and his own reasons for doing what he does.

Another reason this is the most enjoyable version is that for once even the anti-Jewish Christians are portrayed as more than just thugs. There is more than one debate between Rabbi Low and Brother Thaddeus, the chief instigator of the anti-Semitism. Of course, to the reader it is clear that Thaddeus loses the debate, but his reasons for what Thaddeus does come through much clearer than any other version. One could almost stretch it to the point that Thaddeus is a sympathetic character. He at least believes that his hatred of the Jews is well-founded in Catholic doctrine and his arguments for anti-Semitism do come out of a twisted idealism, rather than just selfishness as other versions of the story indicate.

This 1970 novel is dedicated "most of all to the great Leivick, who breathed new life into the Golem's clay." I feel I can recommend the book more highly than the play. In fact, this (which was the last major Golem work I read) is the most satisfying and the only one I can recommend as a novel.

The Tribe
by Bari Wood
(Signet, 1984, \$2.95.)

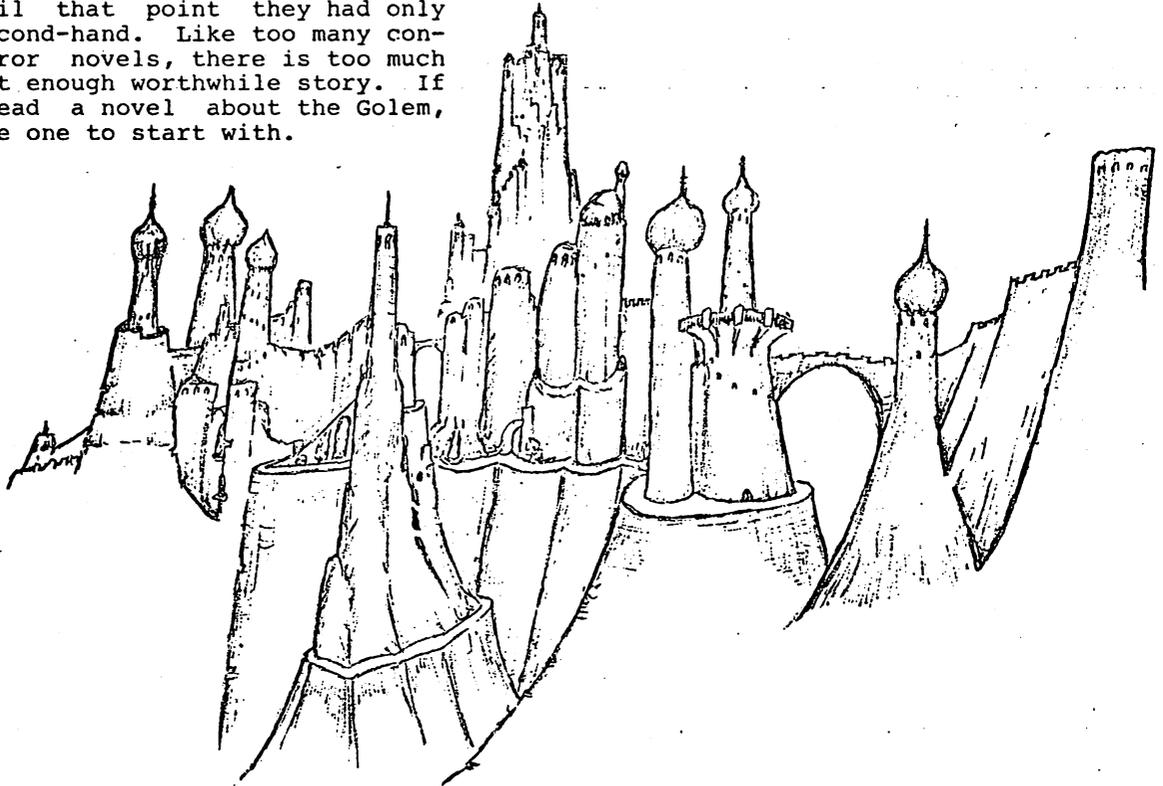
This was the first that I read of the works reviewed here. It gave me the idea for this article. When I was growing up, I wanted to write a horror novel about a golem. I had a whole story plotted out, but it was never written. Now, unfortunately, Bari Wood has beaten me to the punch with The Tribe. Sadly, it turns out to be more a murder story than the real pull-out-all-the-stops horror story I had envisioned.

The story starts with the mystery of why one barracks of Jews at the Belzec concentration camp is given very special treatment. They were not only left alive, but in addition the SS gave them the best food available. They were eating canned sausage while the SS were eating garbage.

Flash forward to the present time when five blacks who mug and murder the son of one of the survivors of that barracks are themselves brutally murdered. The story then tells in boring detail about the affair between the murdered Jew's widow and the black police inspector who was a close friend of

her husband's father.

Any given paragraph by Wood is clearly written, but this story seems to jump back and forth in time with disconcerting rapidity. The legends that this story was built around have a much greater potential than this story would indicate. The whole story is preparation for the final few pages, when the characters finally get to confront the evil that until that point they had only heard about second-hand. Like too many contemporary horror novels, there is too much writing without enough worthwhile story. If you want to read a novel about the Golem, this is not the one to start with.



New Findings Confound Old Science!

An article by Keith Allan Hunter

Have you ever been on a diet, found yourself eating a piece of Boston Creme Pie, and wondered why?

Have you ever come home from work, sat down in front of the TV, and suddenly started telling your spouse what the anchorman and anchorwoman really do during the commercial?

Have you ever said to yourself, "I don't know what came over me!"

Questions such as these have plagued mankind throughout the ages. But now, in the wake of the religious revival sweeping the nation, the answers to those timeless questions, "How could I have done such a thing? Whatever was I thinking of?", and to the pangs of the subsequent remorse, have been revealed.

Where the Humanistic Technocrats of Modern Science have failed dismally, the enlightened Scholars of the F.T.E.S. --- the Famous Television Evangelists' School Institute --- have distilled the simple answer from a synthesis of Traditional Wisdom.

Now you know why, when you went out to spend a quiet Saturday evening at the reading room, you woke in the honeymoon suite of the Reno Hilton beside your 78-year-old landlady. It was simply MDP.

And when your friends ask you why you suddenly have a tattoo of Liberace on your biceps, you can answer them with every confidence, MDP.

Yes, thanks to the work of the men of the F.T.E.S. Institute, the historical, traditional, and pre-ordained answer to those many mortifying moments that have afflicted all of us is quite simply Momentary Demonic Possession, or MDP as it is more commonly known.

MDP, at long last we know the true reason behind all those sudden lapses in etiquette, decorum, and morals.

Next month, the Institute plans to announce new findings which will help identify that various specific forms of MDP. One already tentatively identified is the Hit and Run Incubus or Succubus.

ON THE ORIENTAL SIDE

Reviews of books and films
from the Far East

by Mark R. Leeper

MISHIMA

CAPSULE REVIEW: Stylistically, Mishima is a very good film that is challenging on many levels. It is intellectually stimulating; at the same time it is entertaining. Its great downfall is in its failure to allow the viewer to see more than just a superficial view of Mishima's philosophy.

On November 25, 1970, Yukio Mishima, a general in the Japanese army, made a speech to the soldiers on the general's military base, then committed ritual suicide. Even Mishima's greatest detractors have to admit the man's accomplishments were impressive. He was a novelist, a philosopher, and a man who had built his own army. It was as if Lyndon LaRouche, John Updike, Eric Hoffer, and John Wayne were combined in one man. Paul Schrader has brought to the screen a portrait of the man in Mishima.

The film takes the form of a series of reminiscences of Mishima on the day of his death. We see a little of Mishima's life and the influences that forged his philosophy that Japan should be restored to its military greatness through the code of Bushido. Mishima works out his personal problems and builds his philosophy through his novel writing. Three of his novels are presented as stylized plays inter-edited with scenes from Mishima's past and scenes of the day of his suicide. The three elements are easily distinguished, however, since the scenes in his memory are in black and white, and the scenes from the novels are done in so stylized a manner that there is no confusing them with the scenes of reality.

In each of the novels we see Mishima's philosophy work itself out as characters are honor-bound to carry out strange or even insane-seeming courses of action -- even as Mishima himself felt compelled toward the actions of the day he died. Schrader and Mishima himself, however, make the same mistake in assuming that because Mishima could win followers, his philosophy is easily conveyed and self-evident. To the film's audience, as well as the audience who listened to Mishima's final speech, little more is conveyed than the macho and nostalgic philosophy that things were better in Japan's great feudal past and that Japan must be returned to her former glory with all men living by the warrior virtues of the past. This has to be a very superficial treatment of the philosophy and the treatment makes Mishima seem a romantic but tragic fool.

Mishima is a strikingly beautiful film. The stories within the main story use color vibrantly and the set design for these plays is ingenious. Philip Glass' score for the film is really the first piece of his music I have heard that has not driven me crazy after three minutes. I suppose the music is just minimalist that his usual fare. I give Mishima a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale, but it would have been more if I really felt that I understood the character better when I left the theatre than when I came in.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF YUKIO MISHIMA

by Henry Scott Stokes
Ballantine, 1985, \$3.95

A book review by Mark R. Leeper

As with a number of non-Western cultures, I have been interested for some time in the Japanese feudal period and the age of the samurai. For a while I have been aware of Japan's great novelist who wished Japan to return to the virtues and greatness of the feudal period. His name was Yukio Mishima, and he is best known in the West for his 1970 suicide after a vain (in both senses) attempt to convince the Japanese army to revolt and to return to the virtues of old, including returning Japan to its former greatness. I suspected that Mishima was a classical tragic figure and I wanted to know more about his philosophy.

What brought matters to a head was the release of Paul Schroeder's film Mishima and its very positive reviews. I saw the film in some ways as a very beautiful film, but what I got out of it was that Mishima was acting out a role not unlike a character in one of his novels. If you understand his novels, you probably understand his life. Many of Mishima's novels are about men who face emotional turmoil taking violent action, though rarely does the action seem to be connected with the cause of the turmoil in any obvious way. There is just a feel that a violent act cleanses all.

Because I wanted to understand Mishima's philosophy, I read The life and death of Yukio Mishima by Henry Scott Stokes. I still do not feel I understand Mishima, but at the same time I am developing a profound dislike for the man. That is probably not the author's fault, but I found myself distrusting the man's beliefs more and more as I read

the book. Consider Stokes' summary of Mishima's story "The Room with the Locked Door":

An Okurasho official has a love affair with a married woman, who dies in bed; he leaves the room, locking the door behind him, and outside in the passage meets the nine-year-old daughter of the woman. The two play together for a while, and the man dreams of ripping the frail body of the little girl to shreds, to make himself a "free inhabitant of this disorderly world."

Now I realize I am reading only one author's precis of another's story and that some of the meaning was lost. On the other hand, I really cannot imagine how, even by reading the original of this story, it could be considered fine literature. Another story that comes to mind is Temple of the Golden Pavilion, in which a stuttering monk, obsessed with his own physical imperfection, burns down a temple. Until recently Mishima's best known story in the West (because it was the subject of an English language film) was The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea. As I remember, this is the story of a group of young children who kill a cat and, emboldened by this, kill their leader's mother and her lover.

Much of what we get of Mishima's writing is like the following:

Kashiwagi then introduces the Zen koan (riddle), "One day a beautiful kitten is found in the neighborhood of two temples. The monks of the two temples dispute among themselves as to who should look after it. Nansen ends the dispute by asking them to tell him why he should not kill the kitten, and when they cannot reply, he kills it. When his disciple, Joshu, who has been out, returns to the temple, Nansen tells him what has happened. Thereupon Joshu takes off his muddy shoes and places them on his head. 'If only you had been here,' Nansen says, 'then the kitten could have been saved!'

"You see," continued Kashiwagi, "that's what beauty is like. To have killed the kitten seemed just like having extracted a painful tooth, like having gouged out beauty. Yet it was uncertain whether or not this had really been a final solution. The root of beauty had not been severed, and even though the kitten was dead, the kitten's beauty might very well still be alive. And so, you see, it was in order to satirize the glibness of the solution that Joshu put those shoes on his head. He knew, so to speak, that there was no possible solution other than enduring the pain of the decayed tooth."

Initially, it is easy to sympathize with

Mishima's wish to see Japan return to being a great military power. After all, it seems that he feels his country has lost its honor. As the book continues, I start asking myself, do I really want to put a sword in the hands of a man who thinks that it is a great symbolic act to rip a little girl to shreds?

Mishima's military views also smack just a bit of hypocrisy. Until he formed his own small private army, the Shield Society, he never served in the military. During World War II, he was deferred from military service for medical conditions that he exaggerated to avoid the draft. Never having paid the dues of serving in the military, he presumed to tell the military that it was not bold enough, not mean enough--it should have revolted against the government and set the emperor up again as the supreme leader.

Mishima, after some reading, strikes me as nothing so much as a little boy in a man's intellect. He wants to be big and powerful and mean, and he shows it by stomping caterpillars and using magnifying glasses to burn ants. He goes around trying to ape a romantic role he saw in a movie once and tells himself, "That's what I'm like." I won't say this completely explains Mishima's character; it is just the best explanation I know of. I should probably be more careful of whom I am impressed with.

THE SUSHI HANDBOOK

by Kenji Kumusai
Heian International, 1983, \$?.

A book review by Mark R. Leeper

The Sushi Handbook is much like a piece of sushi itself. It is small--about 90 pages--it is carefully put together with attention to detail, and it is often surprising to an American. The reader comes away with a better feel for the simplicity and requirement for perfection in that simplicity that is an entirely different approach to making food than we have in this country.

If we had that philosophy, every time you went to McDonald's you would be served your hamburger at the table. It would come with the top bun off. You would spend the first minutes admiring the top bun. It would be a network of golden-brown points on a white background. There would be no points darker than golden-brown. The ketchup and mustard would be on the patty in perfectly circular patterns. The pickle would have the cucumber peel removed by hand. It too would be symmetrically placed dead center on the patty. The patty itself would be hand-formed but would be of absolutely uniform thickness to within a quarter inch of the edge. The edge would be rounded in a curve that is pleasing to the eye. Placing the top bun on the burger, you would note that it was a perfectly rounded dome without a sign of a bend or crease and certainly no cracks in

the crust. The fries would lie next to the hamburger, each cut from the potato to an identical length. There would be potato skin at each end so that the eater would know that there were not just hacked to the proper length, but were that length in the original potato. They would be a uniform color and straight as arrows. There would be exactly eight of them; more would be garish. They would be stacked in a four-wide, two-high matrix. The price of the platter would be \$17.95.

A Westerner tends to feel that the Japanese are into simple art. They like bamboo paintings that are done with a few sparse brush-strokes. It is easy for a Westerner to confuse the Japanese philosophy with a love of simplicity. In fact, they seem to have a love of complexity in even simple things. Difference in sushi that a Westerner is oblivious to could make a great deal of difference to a *tsu*--a real sushi expert. Supposedly one characteristic of a perfect piece of sushi -- the impossible dream -- is that all the rice grains line up parallel to each other. The argument that it all gets mixed up in your stomach anyway is clearly an American argument and would not impress a *tsu*.

The Sushi Handbook gives the reader a quick introduction to some very, very picayune details to look for as well as some not so picayune. It gives the reader a way to impress your friends and the waitress, and the vocabulary to describe sushi using the Japanese terms. It is the most complete source I have seen on the subject.

KAGAMUSHA

CAPSULE REVIEW: Kurosawa's final film tells the story of King Lear in 16th century Japan. This is as well as King Lear can be done but Kagamusha is still the better film.

Akira Kurosawa is a director with an international reputation for making very fine films. Of these the best known are historical dramas from feudal Japan. His films are memorable enough that the plots or characters are often borrowed for films in the West. His Rashomon was made into a Western, The Outrage. The Seven Samurai was remade as The Magnificent Seven, Battle Beyond the Stars, and Seven Magnificent Gladiators. It is rumored that Star Wars borrowed from many films but the basic plot came from Kurosawa's Hidden Fortress. Kurosawa's Yojimbo with its hero, the grubby but invincible samurai Sanjuro, was remade as A Fistful of Dollars and Sanjuro became "The Man with No Name," on whom Clint Eastwood built a career.

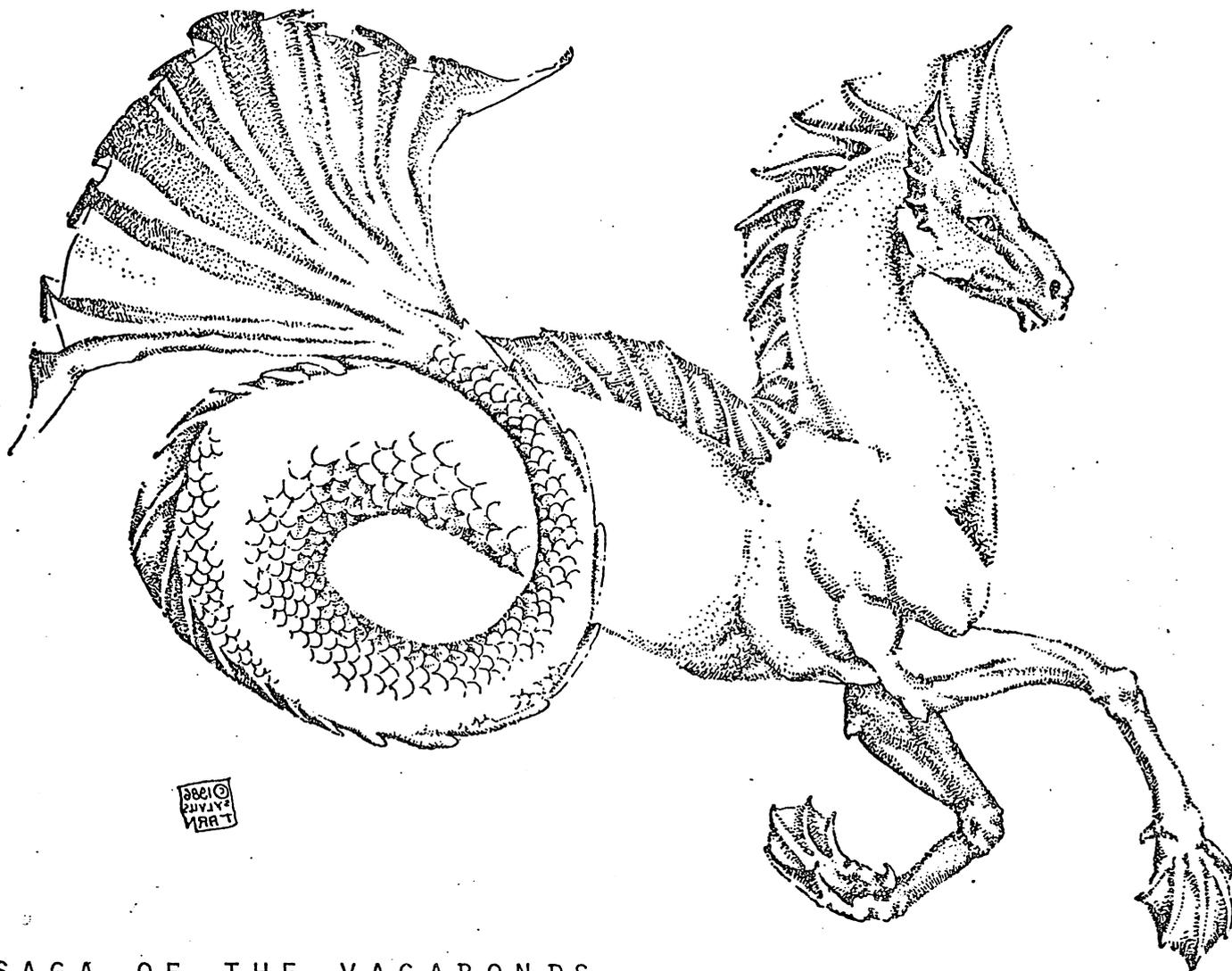
Kurosawa has also been known to borrow from the West, but only from Shakespeare. His Throne of Blood is set in feudal Japan

but the plot is from MacBeth. Now Kurosawa has announced his retirement, and his final film and his crowning achievement is to be Ran. Again feudal Japan is the setting, but the story is very much borrowed from King Lear. At least that was what was said at first. Now I hear that it is based on a traditional Japanese story and only during production were the parallels to King Lear pointed out. I am a little sorry to hear Kurosawa make that claim because the plot is too similar to King Lear, incident for incident and right down to having characters like the wise fool. I respect Kurosawa as a filmmaker, but I simply think he is lying here. In addition, of Shakespeare's best known plays, I like King Lear the least. Lear goes through such histrionics that even the greatest actors are forced to give a performance that has the bouquet of overripe ham.

If you know the story of King Lear, you already know most of the story of Ran. Lord Ichimonji Hidetora wishes to divide his kingdom among his three sons (not daughters as in Lear). This leads to tragic chaos ("*ran*" is Japanese for "chaos"). As Hidetora realizes his mistakes he looks paler and greyer. He sits in a field with a trance-like stare as his fool (played by Peter, a famous Japanese transvestite) tries to coax him into action. Tatsuya Nakadai's histrionics as the Japanese Lear rival those of Albert Finney's Sir in The Dresser.

The film has two beautifully staged battle scenes with incredible color. One is a bloody massacre done silently to music in a manner reminiscent of the film Royal Hunt of the Sun. Each is staged in exquisite detail. Also of interest is a subplot involving a manipulative woman. The most enjoyable scene of the film involves her and a speech about foxes. (Those who have seen the film will know which scene this is; those who haven't can rest assured I have not just spoiled the scene for you.) The film is a delight as long as Lord Hidetora is not on the screen. I think my natural prejudice for Kurosawa and against King Lear balance out and I would give Ran a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

Now for a little piece of heresy. For me, Kurosawa's crowning achievement will not be Ran but his previous film, Kagemusha. Ran lacks the historical scope and the enthralling story of its direct predecessor. It is hard to appreciate a film seen on video as much as one seen on a really wide screen, and in spite of that, Kagemusha still strikes me as the more stunning film. If I am disappointed in Ran, it may be because I was hoping for another Kagemusha. If you are given the choice of renting Kagemusha or seeing Ran on the wide screen, well, you know what I'd recommend.



SAGA OF THE VAGABONDS

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

CAPSULE REVIEW: Below average for Samurai films but still an above-average film. This is a re-telling of the story of bandits joining together to fight tyranny. Toshiro Mifune stars and the screenplay was co-written by the great Kurosawa.

The story of bandits teaming up to fight political oppression and defend the peasants is almost archetypal. It is, I suppose, natural for peasants who do not like their government to look (at least in fiction) for heroes among the outlaws. Outlaws, after all, appear to have some power outside the consent of their government. Examples in Western culture include Robon Hoos, Zorro, Russell Thorndyke's Dr. Syn, and Green Hornet. One of the four great classic Chinese novels, The Water Margin, is similarly about 108 outlaws who band together against poli-

tical oppression. In 1959, Toho Films made another re-telling of the classic tale, The Saga of the Vagabonds (Sengoku Gunto-den).

The screenplay was co-authored by Akira Kurosawa (who directed The Seven Samurai, Yojimbo, Sanjuro, Kagemusha, and Ran). In the story, Taro, the son of a great lord, is taking gold from his father to the governor when it is stolen by bandits. The rumor is that Taro stole the gold and his father and younger brother disown him rather than risk the governor's displeasure. Taro finds a closer friend in the bandit who stole the gold than in his own family, and he and the bandit organize the Red Band, a gang of bandits who feed the poor and right political wrongs.

The Saga of the Vagabonds lacks both the serious intent and the violence of a Seven Samurai. It seems more intended for a family audience. It is, nonetheless, an enjoyable film and is worth watching for in better video stores. Rate it +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

KOJIRO
and
RED LION

Above I reviewed The Saga of the Vagabonds (Sengoku Gunto-den), a Japanese samurai film that was one of a series released to video by Action Video. My local store had four in this series, and since then I have rented two more of these.

Kojiro (Sasaki Kojiro, 1967, directed by Hiroshi Inagaki) is a long (152 minutes) film about a young swordsman who sacrifices all his relationships to his great ambition to be the best swordsman in Nippon. Time and again his friends and family are set against each other as a result of his ambition. For two and a half hours the film builds to a final confrontation with the man who is his only possible equal with a sword.

Red Lion (Akage, 1969, directed by Kinachi Okamoto) has Toshiro Mifune playing (the inadvertently aptly-named Gonzo). Gonzo is a soldier sent on a mission to his own home town. Gonzo's greatest wish is that he wear a red lion---a flowing red headdress that looks like a lion's mane, and is a mark of rank in the army.

As with The Saga of the Vagabonds, these films are a good cut below Kurosawa's samurai films. These are entertainment films of about the same quality and for the corresponding market of a good Western film in this country. They are being packaged as if they were martial arts films which, in a sense, I guess they are. But they are a little short on action for most martial arts fans. A typical fight will have two swordsmen holding up their swords and walking around each other, each cautiously sizing up his opponent. Then there will be one quick attack in which you cannot really see what is happening. After two seconds of action they will back off from each other and stare at each other for about 10 seconds. Then one will fall over dead. Bruce Lee fans would be bored, no doubt, but these films are much better as historical dramas than your average martial arts film.

Action Video's releases do have some problems. Their subtitles are done in a light blue which makes them all too often fade into the background. The combination of that, the general sparsity of subtitles, and the often enigmatic translations make the stories incomprehensible for stretches during the film. For Kojiro the print looked like it had been through a vegematic. Still, for samurai films a little inconvenience is worth going through. Rate each film a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

A NEO'S
READING LIST

An article by David Shea

Recently a friend of mine who is rather new to serious reading in the genre asked me to recommend some books for her. Naturally, I was delighted at the chance to show off my "expertise". It got a little more complicated when I was presented with a list of ground rules. It worked out to presenting her with a list of twenty-five books, no two by the same author, no trilogies or extended series (although single books in a universe in which other, not directly sequential books, have been written, was all right). In alphabetical order by author, here is what I came up with and why. It would be interesting to see some other people's versions of a similar list.

I, Robot, Isaac Asimov. The best of the early robot stories, plus grounding in a set of rules which have become the standard for the field. Every serious reader should be familiar with the classics.

The Martian Chronicles, Ray Bradbury. Similar reasons to the above. Plus, Bradbury was the best wordsmith in the field until Harlan Ellison appeared. Although dated in places, still a marvelous book with special memories for me.

The Heritage of Hastur, Marion Zimmer Bradley. Darkover is fantasy in the superficial guise of science fiction, but a major series of the period. Heritage is probably the clearest explication of the world for the new reader.

Rissa Kerguelen, F. M. Busby. My favorite book by one of my favorite authors. Space opera as it ought to be done. Busby is not a great prose stylist, but his storytelling and characterizations are tremendous.

Gate of Ivrel, C. J. Cherryh. Almost cheating; the first of three volumes, but it can stand on its own. One of the best first novels ever. If I were to pick another single novel by this writer it might be Brothers of Earth.

Mission of Gravity, Hal Clement. The master work by the master of high tech. Berlenan is one of the all time top human characters. Another possibility might have been Needle.

Babel 17, Samuel R. Delany Jr. No one who professes to know the field dares be ignorant of Delany. This early classic is tough sledding for the new reader but a good introduction to his work.

The Compleat Enchanter, L. Sprague deCamp & Fletcher Pratt. One of the great classics of humorous fantasy. Naturally I was not influenced by the hero's name being

"Shea" or that Belphebe is a stone fox. Naturally not.

Ellison Wonderland, Harlan Ellison. A tough choice. I picked this one because I felt it had more good stories overall, despite the fact that it doesn't contain my two favorite Ellison stories, "A Boy and His Dog" and "Maggie Moneyeyes".

Nor Crystal Tears, Alan Dean Foster. Of all the books I like by this crack adventure writer, this one was chosen because I thought my friend would enjoy the alien viewpoint. A fine "first contact" novel.

Tunnel in the Sky, Robert A. Heinlein. One of my two favorite of the early "juveniles"; this one is less militant and less preachy. If I were choosing one of his later "adult" works it would have been The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.

Robots Have No Tails, Henry Kuttner. One of the better collections of "fun" stories by a writer now, alas, largely forgotten. Excellent parody of the "mad scientist" genre.

The Left Hand of Darkness, Ursula K. LeGuin. Hard to choose between this and The Lathe of Heaven. This finally won because it is more alien, more "science fiction-y", and gave me all sorts of new insights about the male-female schism.

Swords Against Death, Fritz Leiber. Probably the most definitive, varied and possibly even the most entertaining of the classic Fafhrd and Grey Mouser series. I loved these books before I realized that I don't much like fantasy.

House of Zeor, Jacqueline Lichtenberg. The first novel of the Sime/Gem universe, almost certainly not the best, but probably the most accessible to the reader beginning to explore one of the best-conceived subjects in the modern genre.

Decision at Doona, Anne McCaffrey. Though I've enjoyed virtually everything she has written, the Dragonrider books work best if you've read them all, and The Ship Who Sang is beginning to seem a little dated to me. Good "first contact" book.

Dreamsnake, Vonda McIntyre. A deep, emotionally intense and stylishly written book by an under-regarded writer. I wish she'd stop wasting her time on Trek and do more like this.

The Time Swept City, Thomas F. Monteleone. Possibly Tom's best work, a sometimes chilling study of the next fifteen thousand years in Chicago. Harlan Ellison liked it too.

Ice Crown, Andre Norton. It could easily have been any of dozens of books by the field's premier pure storyteller. I picked this one because I thought my

friend would relate to the female protagonist and the densely layered style.

The Witches of Karres, James H. Schmitz. One of the most consistently funny books ever produced. Anyone who doesn't like this is dead. Alas that Schmitz died before writing the sequel it so obviously called for.

Mastodonia, Clifford Simak. Again it was hard to select among the old master's many fine books. I just flat liked this one best. What would you do if your dog started bringing home fresh dinosaur bones?

The Hobbit, J. R. R. Tolkien. Do I need to say more?

The Persistence of Vision, John Varley. Obviously the best single-author collection to come out of the seventies. The title story gives me chills every time I read it. The rest are merely very good to excellent.

The Day of the Triffids, John Wyndham. Another half-forgotten classic, though I've heard BBC-TV did a miniseries of it. It's been described as a B-movie plot. If so, it's a terrific one. Best "end of the world" novel after On the Beach.

So there we have it. Anyone who's been paying attention will by now have a pretty good idea of my taste: There are only six collections (Ellison, Varley, Kuttner, Bradbury, Asimov, Leiber) and only four fantasies (Bradley, Tolkien, de Camp/Pratt, and Leiber again). The rest are solidly science fiction novels, and pretty mainstream at that. For the most part these are books that have stood the test of time and established themselves as classics, or perhaps will do so in the future. A few were plain personal favorites. I hope my friend enjoys them. With these as a background, she can't go too far wrong.

What's that you say? Oh, hell. You caught me. Yes, there are only twenty-four, and I said there would be twenty-five. Well I'm sorry. There are so many more good ones I couldn't choose among them. It could have been David Palmer's Emergence. Or one of Zenna Henderson's books, probably Pilgrimage. Or any of several by Roger Zelazny, such as Doorways in the Sand. Or Don Kingsbury's Courtship Rite. Or Chris Rowley's The War for Eternity. Or Poul Anderson's The People of the Wind. Or Lizzy Lynn's The Sardonox Net. Or Slan, or The First Men in the Moon, or Stardance, or Dying Inside, or Wave Rider.

Oh my God, I've forgotten Dune.

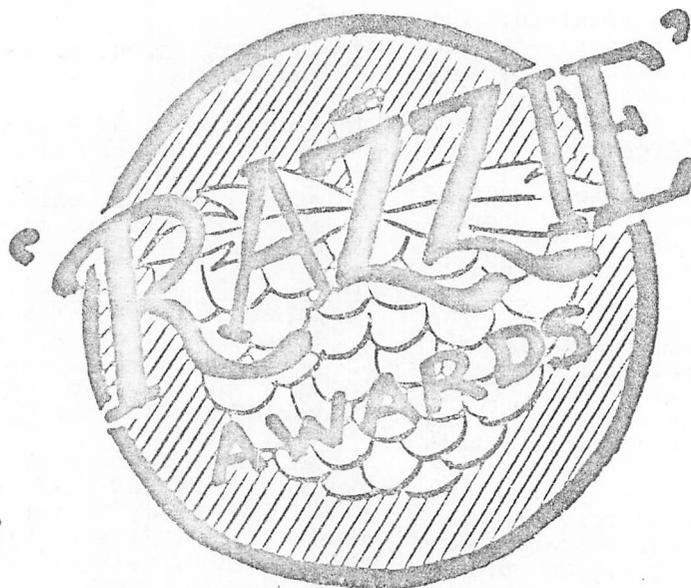
Well, you get the picture. I hope my friend has a good time catching up with the best of the last sixty years or so. This should keep her busy for a few weeks. Tell her when she finishes these to check back with me. By then I'll have come up with a few more.

Happy reading, Debi.

The Golden Raspberry Award Foundation

PRESENTS

THE 6th ANNUAL



*For Worst Achievements in Film,
1985*

A report by Kris Gilpin

The Golden Raspberry Award Foundation had purposely oversold tickets to insure a full house on the night of Sunday, March 23rd, 1986 for their sixth annual Razzie Awards, for "Worst Achievements in Film, 1985". Traditionally held the night before the Academy Awards, I had previously attended the 4th annual Razzies, and found it to be a funny show which helps to put the overblown Oscars in their place in recent years.

The walls of the Morgan-Wikson Theatre on Pico Boulevard in west Los Angeles (where this year's proceedings were taking place) were adorned with posters of the previous winners/losers in the Foundation's Worst Film of the Year category: 1980 heralded

Can't Stop the Music, that Village People exercise, into the dim spotlight, while the Worst award in 1981 was copped by Mommie Dearest. 1982 saw the bloated Inchon! as that year's worst, while Lonely Lady (starring that constant butt of Razzie jokes, Pia Zadora) was named the epitome of Bad Film in '83. And if it isn't Pia, it's usually Bo and John Derek who get the Raspberry, as is evidenced by 1984's notorious Bo Lero. (The Razzie Awards are chosen by the approximately 180 members of the Golden Raspberry Award Foundation.) Lists of past Razzie winners tacked to the wall also showed the 3rd annual special Hall of Shame awards as going to Airports '75, '77, and Concorde: Airport '79.

The Razzie Awards

Kris Gilpin

Inside the Morgan-Wikson, which usually offers stage productions, were spotlights and video cameras set up to tape the evening's festivities. The show started at 8:15, as 4 girls in sparkling costumes performed a purposely sloppy dance number; their awkward choreography was accompanied by pre-recorded singers, as the girls mouthed the Razzie lyrics to the tune of "One" from A Chorus Line:

ONE
Reason for the Razzies
Is to honor films that stink...

ONE
Reason for the Razzies
Is to say what we think...

We're here to do something nobody else
dares do --
We're giving Hollywood's turkeys the
Big P. U. ...

Razzie Foundation founder John Wilson then took the podium, which stood on stage beneath a large hanging raspberry, to act as the show's M.C. After his opening remarks, Wilson presented the presenter for the show's first award. The presenters were all actors and/or actresses dressed as specific Hollywood-related celebrities or characters.

Wilson introduced "Glenda, the Good Witch" from The Wizard of Oz, as a woman with a funny, sweet voice took the microphone and named this year's nominees for Worst New Star (one past Razzie Worst New Star recipient was Klinton Legend of the Lone Ranger Spilsbury, whose entire dialogue had to be dubbed in by James Keach): they included Julie Nixon for Rambo 2, Godzilla for his cinematic return in 1985, Brigitte Nielsen Stallone for Rocky 4 and Red Sonja, lovely model Ariane for the big studio bloodbath Year of the Dragon, and Olympic gymnast Kurt Thomas for Gymkata. The winning /losing envelope was brought on stage by "the Wicked Witch," who walked out holding her broom "and your little dog, too!" The winner was: Brigitte Nielsen Stallone, Rocky's real-life wife. As "Glenda" left the stage, Judy Garland/Dorothy's voice was heard over the speaker system: "My, people come and go so quickly here!"

Next came the presentation of the first nominee for Worst Song: "All You Can Eat" from Krush Groove. The rap song was recited by "James Earl Groans", who danced a bit of the Charleston with John Wilson upon leaving the podium, and the song played off in the background.

Now came nominees for the Worst Supporting Actor; other winners of this Razzie award include Lawrence Olivier as the Old Jewish father of Neil Diamond in The Jazz Singer, and Brooke Shields for Sahara, in which she masqueraded as a moustachioed young man. Presented by "Fay Wray", who took a wad of chewing gum out of her mouth and stuck it in her hair/wig, the nominees included Raymond Burr for Godzilla '85, Herbert Lom for King Solomon's Mines, Rob Lowe

for St. Elmo's Fire, Robert Urich for "Toik" (Turk) 182, and the ever-greasy Burt Young for Rocky 4. "The envelope, please," Fay said. A grunt was heard and a huge Godzilla hand came out from behind a curtain, handing her the winner's name: it was Rob Lowe, one of the brats from the cinematic Brat Pack. Accepting the award for Lowe was "Ally Sheedy", who took the raspberry-shaped prize giggling and chewing at her hair. "Rob was real deep to work with," she extolled, "and it didn't bother me that he's prettier than I am." (The one who was to accept the award for Brigitte Stallone was a cute little boy in costume who, after getting up out of his seat, shook his head and chickened out when the spotlight hit him, turned around and headed back to his mother.)

The Razzie for Worst Score was presented by "Mae West". "I never had a score so bad I didn't enjoy it," the padded "Mae" told the audience, "at least a little." As snippets of music from King Solomon's Mines were played, Mae commented, "Sounds like they had a little help from John Williams," due to its Raiders-like quality. About the music for Revolution she said, "It does sound kinda revoltin' at that!" A "bellboy" then jumped up from the audience, handing her the winning name of Rocky 4 for the Worst Score of last year. (The others nominated were the awful Fever Pitch (awful film, that is, more than its score) and Turk 182.)

Next came the first clip from the Worst Film category: Revolution. John Wilson described its camerawork as being "grainy enough to give Helen Keller a headache. In it Al Pacino stars as a New York Italian Scotsman; with a budget of \$25 million it has made \$247,000 to date!" A video monitor on the right hand edge of the stage then showed a clip of Siskel and Ebert from At the Movies ripping the film apart and, after following that with a scene involving some nearly incomprehensible dialogue, Wilson added, "Revolution is in English, by the way."

The next song for the Worst of last year was then played. It was "The Last Dragon", from the flick (which was actually a fun film) of the same name. One actor recited the banal lyrics as one actress in a black leotard "interpreted" the words by making appropriately stupid, spastic ballet movements; she was very funny in her deadpan expressions.

This was followed by the Worst Supporting Actress nominations, as "Brooke Shields" talked about Lynn-Holly Johnson from Where the Boys Are '84 and Diana Scarwid from Mommie Dearest winning in years past. This time Sandahl Bergman (Red Sonja), Marilu Henner (the horrible, nonsensical Rustler's Rhapsody), Julie Nixon (again), Brigitte Stallone and Talia Shire (both of Rocky 4) were up, and Brigitte Nielsen Stallone took the Razzie again, as the envelope came courtesy of a Brooke-inspired Calvin Kleins lowered from the ceiling.

The second Worst Film clip was from the abysmal, ludicrous Fever Pitch, and featured the even more ludicrous Chad Everett and Ryan O'Neal.



Next came the golden award for Worst Screenplay, as John Wilson introduced "that classic vamp, Theda Bara"; she mouthed out words to silent film-style title cards projected on a small screen behind her. "A last and, according to many of you, least is Year of the Dragon," the cards said. A Valentino-esque shiek came out with the winner's envelope -- it was First Blood, Part 2 (or Rambo 2 as I've been calling it) as the worst script of the year, 1985.

The next nominated Worst Song was "Seventh Heaven", also from The Last Dragon, and the character this time was the prim and proper "Gertrude Stern", who hilariously recited the "single entendre" sexual lyrics to the song.

The prize for Worst Director came next, presented by "Orson Welles, the self-proclaimed greatest director who ever lived or died." The envelope was lowered attached to a rose from the ceiling: "Rosebud?" Wilson asked, as the audience groaned. Out of the runners Richard Brooks (Fever Pitch), Michael Cimino (Year of the Dragon), George Pan Cosmatos (Rambo 2 -he's actually gotten much better as an action director in the last few years), Sly (Rocky 4) Stallone, and Hugh (Revolution) Hudson, Stallone kept the Razzies in the family by "taking this one home." (At this rate, they're posing a threat to the previous Razzie family unit, Bo and John Derek.)

Frank Stallone's "Peace in Our Life" was then played as another nominated Worst Song, as John Wilson commented, "No one can deny that both of these brothers are equally talented!" The cut was from the end of Rambo 2, "after Stallone has killed about 3,700 people." The lyrics were recited by an actor in church frocks, a la a Sunday sermon, and he had to shout over the sound of rapid machine-gun fire from the sound system (very clever).

The first half of the show was closed with a special Worst Career Achievement Razzie Award. The first year I attended the Razzies this award went to Irwin Allen, and another year's winner/loser was none other than Ronald Ray-gun himself. But this year it was Linda Blair, and her award was presented by "Damian Karras" from The Exorcist; he walked on stage behind a little boy car-

rying lighted candles, and "Karras" had to whisper "Go" to the boy to get him to leave the stage. The video monitor came back to life, as the father honored Linda Blair "since her first screen appearance, urinating on rugs and puking on priests." Clips were shown from Roller Boogie, Chained Heat, Night Patrol, Savage Streets, the execrable Savage Island and Exorcist 2. (Some of the more recent Linda Blair drive-in flicks have actually been very entertaining trash---some of them.) They even showed a TV commercial for Welch's grape jelly starring a cute, little 5-year-old Linda Blair. The tape ended with the actress John Wilson called "our lady of the rotating head", stating in an interview that her next role might be as a stand-up comic. A woman claiming to have seen Exorcist 2 182 times then accepted Blair's Razzie, proclaiming, for Blair, "There's no doubt about it, now: you don't like me! You really don't like me!" (A la Sally Field at Oscar time.)



"Now comes most people's favorite part of the show: the intermission!" The proceedings stopped for 15 minutes as coffee, sodas, and cookies were offered in the small lobby area. For sale was even raspberry-flavored Rambo-brand chewing gum (no joke), which is offensively named Black Flack.

After intermission came the last entry for Worst Song of the past year in film. It was called "Oh, Jimmy!" (from The Slugger's Wife) and the woman reciting it did so verbatim: "Wha, uh, ooh, oh ho; Jimmy...don't cha...wanna...do it?" (Aside from the double entendres, the lyrics to the song made no sense whatsoever.) As she droned on and on for the length of the cut, various Jimmys were projected on the screen behind her: Jimmys Durante, Cagney (doing his grapefruit thing), Carter, Hoffa, Olson (yeah, from Superman), Jimmy from the old Mickey Mouse Club, and even Jiminy Cricket. (These slides got lots of laughs.)

Worst Songs from the past include Stallone's abysmal "Drinkenstein!" from the equally abysmal Rhinestone and "Pumpin' and Blowin'" from The Pirate Movie. This year the presenter was "Shirley Temple", as a young woman dressed as the young Shirley mimed to the song "You gotta S.M.I.L.E. to be H.A. double-P.Y." stating, "I'm so tired of doin' this shit I could die!" with a pout and a little-girl voice. Describing one of the nominated cuts, "Shirley" said, "I think the Fat Boys should just stick to eating!" As the line "Oh, Jimmy, you know where to put it!" was played, "Alfalfa" came on stage with the winning envelope, accompanied by the Little Rascals theme. And the winner was: Frank Stallone, Sly's brother, for his

peace theme "Peace in Our Life" from the ultra-violent First Blood, Pt. 2.

The full trailer to Rocky 4 was seen next as an example of the third film nominated for the Worst of '85. Wilson called it "Rocky 4, the Rehash."

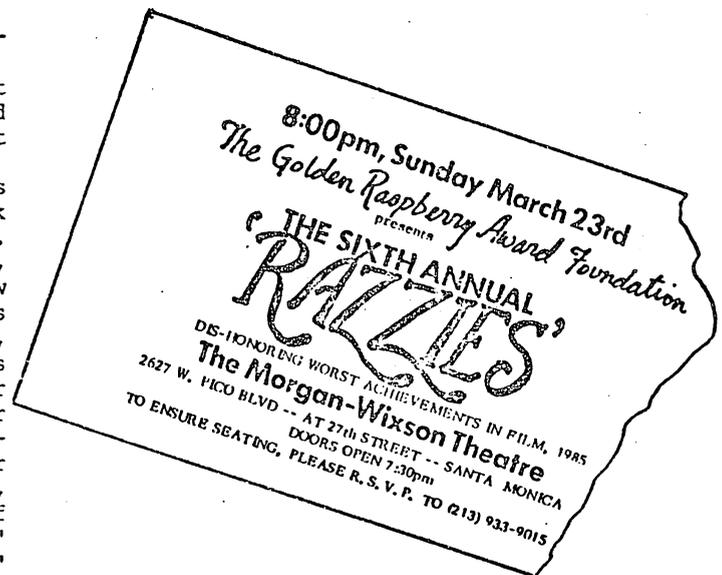
The time had come for the Worst Actress award. Winners from the past were Bo Derek for Tarzan and Bo Derek again for Bo Lero. The presenter was "last year's Worst Actor, Sylvester Stallone!" Wilson then had to show "Stallone" where to read from. The nominees this year were: Ariane (Year of the Dragon), Brigitte Stallone (Red Sonja), the gorgeous Tanya Roberts (A View to a Kill), Jennifer Beals (The Bride) and Linda Blair again (for Night Patrol and Savage Island -- her disembodied voice came over the speakers after her name was read, offering us the line, "All of that...horror for two little bags of green shit!"). A huge-chested "Dolly Parton" then bounced out on stage to help "Stallone" open the envelope and announce the winner: Linda Blair! (This was really her night, in a manner of speaking.)

The next Worst Film clip screened was from Year of the Dragon. M.C. John Wilson prefaced the video clip with quotes about the film from Time magazine ("A crime against film" -- funny, that) and a Dallas newspaper ("Could do for Chinese restaurants what Jaws did for beaches"). Wilson then showed us the massacre-in-the-Chinese-restaurant scene.

Recent Worst Razzie Actors include (Neil (The Jazz Singer) Diamond and, of course, Sly Stallone for the infamous Rhinestone (when playing a bit of the "Drinckenstein" track, Wilson remarked, "It does get worse each time you hear it, doesn't it?!"). Accompanied by appropriately dumb, inane video excerpts from the films, the sixth annual's list was comprised of Divine for Lust in the Dust, the non-actor Richard Gere for King David (featuring his unforgettable, embarrassing diaper dance!), Al Pacino for Revolution, Stallone for both Rocky 4 and Rambo 2, and that other non-entity, John Travolta, for Perfect (whose clip featured, naturally, his big-banana bump-and-grind--talk about being embarrassed in a movie theatre!). The winner was Stallone again, this time for his 1985 double threat. "The British safety counsel asked to ban Rambo 2 in Britain," John Wilson told the crowd, "and the film was banned in India. And to date," he added, "it has made over \$150 million!"

Which brings us to the Razzie Award Foundation's pick for the Worst Film of 1985. The nominees were: Fever Pitch, Rocky 4 (which one critic called "the worst film of the decade, and then some!"), Year of the Dragon, Revolution, and, last and, according to the Razzie voters, least, was Rambo: First Blood, Pt. 2, as it won hands down. Three dancing girls came out as Drew Wilson, John's father, accepted the award as "Pram-po", shirtless and sporting a black headband, suspenders across an expanded stomach, and a plastic machine gun. Was there ever any real doubt amongst the members of the Golden Raspberry Award Foundation?

The Razzie Awards

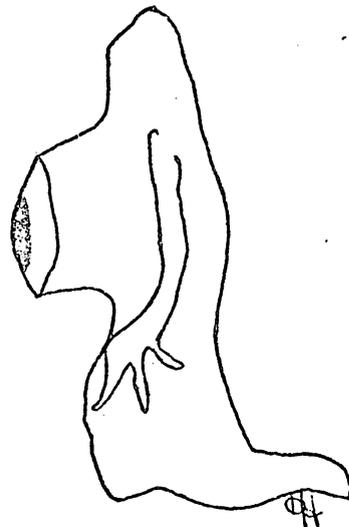


During the audience's applause more slides were projected behind the podium as, in keeping with Razzie tradition, ads for possible 1986 Razzie Awards were offered to the crowd's laughs of approval. Among them were: King Kong Lives, Silent Night, Deadly Night, Stallone's Cobra, Richard Gere's Power, and Bo and John Derek's Eve and That Damned Apple (which, after their most recent fiasco, Bo Lero, they are having trouble getting someone to finance). The final slide was one of Pia's buns, over which was written: THE END.

All in all, it had been another fun 2 hours during the 6th annual Razzie Award ceremonies. If you are interested in finding out more about the Golden Raspberry Award Foundation, and about possibly becoming a member, you can write:

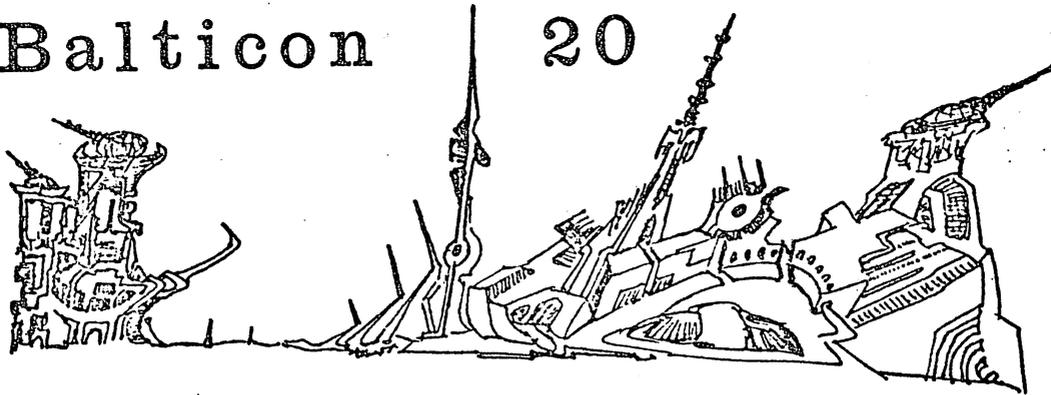
John Wilson
847 N. Formosa Ave.
Suite 8
Hollywood, CA 90046

And please tell him Kris Gilpin and LAN'S LANTERN sent ya!



Kris Gilpin

Balticon 20



A convention report by David M. Shea

BALTICON, one of the four largest Northeast Corridor Regionals, celebrated its twentieth anniversary over the convention's traditional Easter weekend (March 28-30, 1986) with a return to the luxurious Hyatt Regency at Baltimore's Inner Harbor area. More than 2500 fans turned out to attend varied games, programs, and parties, and to meet our Guest of Honor, Nancy Springer; Art GoH, Vivki Wyman; and special guests, Diana Paxson, Janet Morris, and Donald Kingsbury.

After a year's absence from the committee, I had been drafted to run the Main Program, to which a certain amount of planning had been devoted. I arrived early Friday to see that guest registration was set up, and to deal with the usual last-minute discrepancies. (Any convention programmer knows the law which states, "There will always be at least one no-show.")

However, I did get a chance to talk with some of the early arrivals. I've known Nancy Springer for a while--we sat together at the banquet at CONSTELLATION--but this was my first opportunity to meet her husband Joel. She also brought her children, Nora and Jonathan, who weren't too interested in the convention but enjoyed the Maryland Science Center and the National Aquarium (both within a block of the hotel).

I then had the chance to show Janet and Chris Morris around, admire their Porsche 928, and talk about science fiction and other conventions with them. We had actually met before at the lamented PARACON, a lovely little relaxacon in central Pennsylvania which disappeared because all the committee moved away. Janet and Chris gave me a "Heroes in Hell" T-shirt, and we discovered that Chris and I share a birthday (one year's discrepancy). Later, they got the program off to a rousing start by leading a panel on "Shared Worlds", letting us in on all the latest dope about "Thieves' World" and "Heroes in Hell". Jacqueline Lichtenberg also updated the audience on new developments in her Sime/Gen universe.

(Ann Crispin later lent me the manuscript of "Bloodspell", which Andre Norton has bought for the shared "Witch World" anthology. Ann has also sold a new "Starbridge" series to Berkley; and advises that Robert

Adams is trying to sell a shared "Horseclans" anthology and is looking for stories. "Bloodspell", a story of the origins of Herrel and the Were Riders, is excellent, though it's not quite like anything Miss Norton would have written.)

Friday is Masquerade night at BALTICON, and features the East Coast's largest and best costume contest. "Count" Marty Gear presided, as usual, in full vampire regalia. Sitting in a room with 1500 people is not exactly to my taste, so we had scheduled a full track of other program items. The Morrises, Alexis Gilliland, and others did a panel on "War in Space"; I found the general air of enthusiasm about the subject disconcerting. Marvin Kaye and David Hartwell led a well-attended panel on "Lost Treasures of Sr and Fantasy". Tom Monteleone, Darrell Schweitzer, and Paula Volsky headed up a brisk discussion on "Dark Fantasy".

With no disrespect to my own program, I found one of the highlights of the convention to be getting off into an unused room with some people to hold an impromptu "folk-ing not filking" session. This was revenge for those of us who like to sing and play, but are bored with cutesy songs about Spock's love life or Gordon Dickson's taste in recreational chemicals. None of us had ever performed together before, and the overall level of talent was not of professional standards. Well, we had fun anyway. So what if it was out of tune in places or some lyrics were forgotten? Dirk and Debbie and lots of other people sang; instrumental assistance was provided by Ed (guitar), Natalie (fiddle), Eric (flute), some young lady whose name I unhappily failed to catch (tenor recorder), and some thumb-fingered clod whose name shall remain forever nameless (banjo). Special thanks to all these people.

Afterward, those of us who were still up to it adjourned to parties thrown by the various bid groups, notably Cincinnati and Bermuda Triangle for 1988, Boston for 1989, and (a surprise development) Amsterdam for 1990. Perhaps we really are moving away from having the token out-of-North-America Worldcon once every ten years.

Saturday morning, running on about four hours' sleep, I megadosed on caffeine and

went in search of trouble. Fortunately there wasn't any. However I did get a chance to meet for the first time Esther Friesner, a funny crazy lady from Connecticut who would be an asset to any convention. She can also write. (Late on Saturday evening, we encountered Esther being carried around the halls Cleopatra-style on the shoulders of four beefy shirtless male fen. She kindly offered to lend one of her male odalisques to my friend Debbie Marshall.) We also got Esther to autograph one of her books to be used as a prize in the evening's Pun Contest.

The Writer's Workshop on Saturday went rather well under the leadership of Donald Kingsbury and Nancy Springer, though I couldn't stay for the duration. I did get some good feedback on my story. By 11:00 AM I had to drift back to keep an eye on my programs. Debbie and Tom Monteleone led an enjoyable discussion on "Dinosaurs and Reptilians in SF" despite the fact that, uncharacteristically, Hal Clement failed to show up for the panel. A minor glitch in communications: He failed to receive the schedule we had prepared for him. The number of no-shows for panels, and late arrivals, would have bothered me if I hadn't been off re-stoking on caffeine.

One of the more interesting serious topics was David Hartwell's panel on "Who's Really Running SF?" Jim Baen, who was drafted out of the audience by the other panelists, suggested that, were the four of them to suffer "delusions of grandeur", he, Hartwell, Tom Doherty, and Elsie Wollheim could probably make a good claim. Another good discussion was held on "The Real End of the World". Janet Morris, Hal Clement and Alexis Gilliland wanted to destroy the planet wholesale, while Charles Sheffield and ShariAnn Lewitt felt it would suffice to merely kill off all the humans. Sheffield suggested a contrived virus. All agreed the most likely scenario for an actual end of the world was nuclear war.

In late afternoon and early evening respectively, we ran two panels on "Future Sex" which were both well attended and sparked lively discussion even if neither turned out quite the way I had expected. On "Is Heterosexual Monogamy on the Way Out?", Diana Paxson, John DeCles, Lilian Stewart Carl, Donald Kingsbury and others started things off by agreeing that, yes, obviously it was, and proceeded to discuss that. The panel on "Human/Non-Human Sexual Interface" was enlivened by Ann Crispin's anecdote about fans telling her they loved her novel version of V, but why did she let the TV people mess it up?

At 5:00 PM on Saturday, convention Chair Elizabeth Rosenberg Bowers and last year's winner, David Palmer, presented the Compton Crook Award for Best First SF Novel of 1985 to Sheila Finch for Infinity's Web. She related that she had been away from home when the news arrived, and her daughter called her up at 2:00 AM to inform her. She then got her editor and her friend Charles Brown at LOCUS out of bed in the middle of the night to tell them. As this is being writ-

ten, I've been too busy to read the book, but I look forward to doing so. Sheila will also be invited back next year to present the award to her successor, in a BALTICON tradition which has so far encompassed Dr. Kingsbury (Courtship Rite), Chris Rowley (The War for Eternity), and Mr. Palmer (Emergence).

Following the award ceremony, Nancy Springer gave her Guest of Honor speech. Nancy began by saying that she had given long thought to giving some kind of "profound" speech, but found she wanted to talk about her beginnings in the field. She described how a middle-class housewife in York county, Pennsylvania, found time from raising two babes in diapers to write fantasy stories. Nancy reminisced over her first sale, described her first convention, a BALTICON six years, when she drove down the interstate "sweating like a pig" from nervousness. Fans appreciated an account of her first panel with the redoubtable Robert Adams, and her astonished delight at being asked to autograph her book.

The dinner break followed, and Ann Crispin, Debbie Marshall, Marvin Kaye and I trooped across the street and pigged out on Greek food and ouzo at Taverna Athena. If we got back a little late for Ann's next panel, at least we were relaxed. I was also introduced to "baklava", a Greek pastry which is a little sweet for my taste.

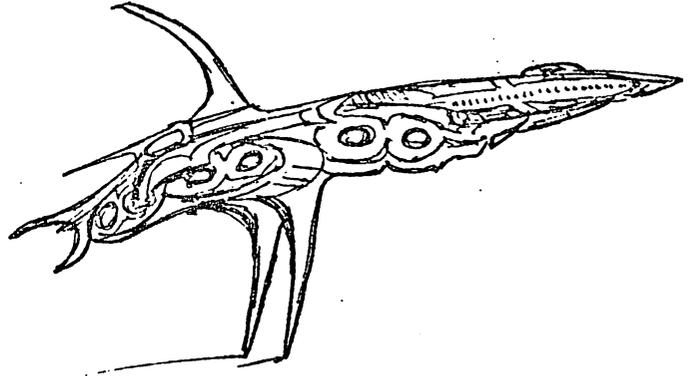
By the time we packed in the panels and a slide show on costuming, the Terran Empire Ball was under way with regency dancing. Other fen adjourned to the parties, filking sessions, and Marvin Kaye's notorious Pun Contest. The evening ended with a fannish version of "That's Incredible" as performed by Frances Freedman and her band of raunchy cohorts led by the ineffable Gardner Dozois. I didn't stay to see all of this event, but I am informed that, regrettably, Tess Kissinger kept all her clothes on this time. (The reference is to a well remembered panel at last year's DISCLAVE, of which perhaps the less said the better.)

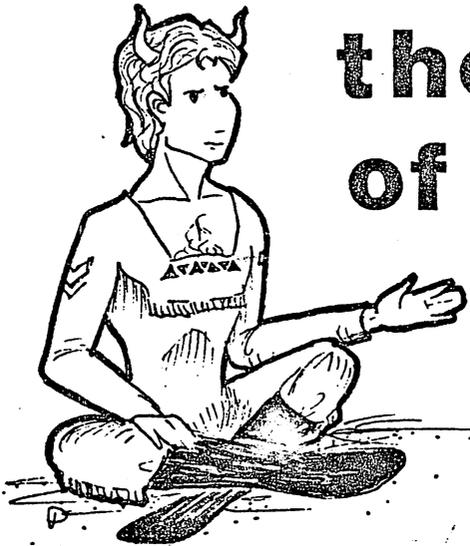
Contrary to usual convention practice, we had programming on Sunday morning beginning at 10:00 (since all my program space went over to the Art Auction at noon). Hal Clement gave a slide show and talked about the prospects of living in a "World without Time." The surviving editors led by Hartwell, Dozois, Chris Miller of Avon books, and late-arrival Owen Locke of Del Rey found lots of humor in their assigned topic, "How Not to Get Published Ever, Ever, Ever". Meanwhile, Jacqueline Lichtenberg moderated a discussion of "Science Fiction Cults" with Esther Friesner and Richard Grant. The formal program wound up with an address by the Fan Guest of Honor, my old friend Pat Kelly.

In addition to everything previously discussed, BALTICON featured many other items including large dealers' room and art show; an entire Science Program track featuring speakers from NASA's Goddard Center, L-5, and the Johns Hopkins space telescope project; and Art Program track, of which the highlights were generally held to be a

"Roast" of Art GoH Vicki Wyman, and Kelly and Polly Freas' slide show, "Sex and the Single Alien." There was also a full film program ranging from Ladyhawke and The Last Starfighter to cult obscurities such as She Devil, in addition to the video room with even stranger offerings. There were also gaming and computer rooms. If one gets the impression that BALTICON strives to be all things to all fans, that's true.

At length we got everything packed up, and Vice Chair (heir apparent) Marty Gear went around telling everyone to come back next year when our major Guests of Honor will be Roger Zelazny and Michael Whelan. Members of the committee and guests then smuggled (because Hyatts enforce corkage) large quantities of wine, ouzo and other recreational chemicals up to the tattered remains of the Green Room to celebrate the deceased canine festivities. It was generally agreed that despite all the work, another BALTICON had come off successfully. We also made money.





the phenomenon of horror film newsletters: their rise and fall

An article by Craig Ledbetter

Horror film fans are a vocal bunch. Just ask someone what their favorite or least liked horror film is and they will quickly let you know. Horror film fanzines have been plentiful over the last twenty or so years, running the gamut from cheap mimeo to slick offset. Horror film newsletters are a curious reflection of the '80s. Most are home-made, only a few pages long, and cover what is commonly referred to as gore and sleaze films. The proliferation of this type of film can be traced to both cultural and technological origins. The widening exposure of low budget inept "Golden Turkeys" in the print media and film festivals devoted to the World's Worst Movies brought out the closet horror film junkie and legitimized much of what was once considered guilty pleasures. The videotape revolution has made available many films previously thought lost

or forgotten. Most large videotape rental stores have sections devoted to Drive-in Movies or Le Bad Cinema. Videotape is also the dumping ground of unreleased horror films and even films shot on videotape and released exclusively to the market.

The following is a chronological overview of Horror film newsletters and some thoughts on where this sub-genre of fanzines may be going.

SLEAZOID EXPRESS, Bill Landis. The grand daddy of the current newsletter scene, it debuted as a bi-weekly in June of 1980. Landis has changed format a few times, including going to newsprint (which turned out to be a disaster). Currently Landis has left behind horror and gore and now concentrates on porno, NYC street life, and the 42nd Street drug culture.

Not recommended to the prudish. Landis remains the best writer in the field.

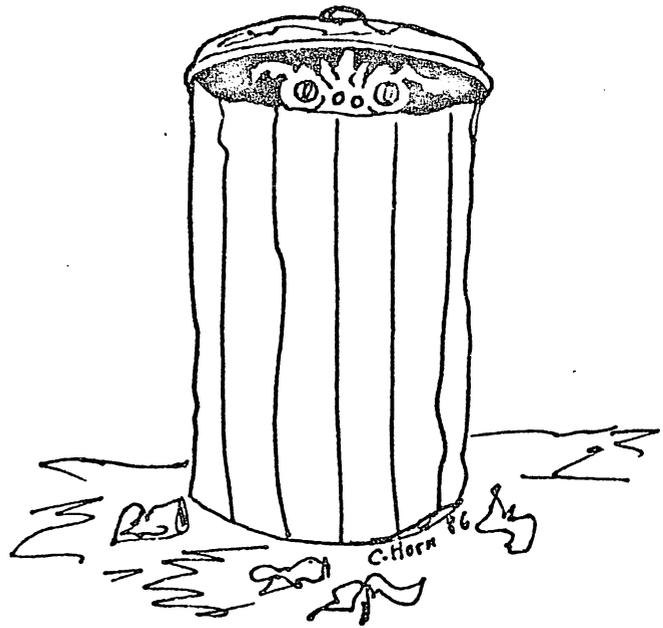
TRASHOLA, Jim Morton. A San Francisco based newsletter which ended its run over a year ago. Jim covered horror and sleaze both at theaters, television, and even what was available at the local bookstore. Fortunately Morton is still working in the obscure cinema field as he is guest editing the 10th issue of a soft-cover book/magazine called *RE/SEARCH*. That issue is subtitled "Incredibly Strange Films" and features interviews with low budget directors, articles on little known films, and a comprehensive appendix of people in the business of low budget films.

PSYCHOTRONIC, Michael Weldon. Inspired by Landis' *SLEAZOID EXPRESS*, *PSYCHOTRONIC* was a weekly TV guide to NYC's many television channels. All types of films (horror, SF, noir, beach party) were covered. Beautifully hand printed with lots of ads scattered throughout, Weldon even featured guest reviews by Lester Bangs. Unfortunately, it only lasted a year (switching to newsprint near the end) but fortunately Weldon went on to write the best-selling *Psychotronic Guide to Films*. Over 800 pages in length and covering 3,000 films, it is the definitive introduction to off-beat films.

GORE GAZETTE, Rick Sullivan. Another newsletter inspired by *SLEAZOID EXPRESS*, Sullivan is still going strong with over 80 issues published so far. GG is the most comprehensive guide to sleazy gore films currently playing NYC. Sullivan is constantly on the prowl for the goriest, most disgusting films around. The humor throughout the zine is black and Rick always manages to get the goriest photos possible to illustrate his reviews. Sullivan is currently attempting to film his own low budget movie.

CONFESSIONS OF A TRASH FIEND, Richard Green. Making its debut in 1981, COATF gets my vote for favorite newsletter. Richard Green experienced burnout and closed down after two years of solid output. Green always put a lot of his own personality into his reviews which made them much more than just a thumbs-up or thumbs-down recommendation. Green also covered the soft-core exploitation scene exclusively which helped to uncover (a poor choice of words) information on this oft-neglected genre.

CHICAGO SHIVERS, Ron Carlson. As the name implies, Ron covered the Midwest sleaze scene, debuting in 1982. All the other newsletters (except *TRASHOLA*) originated on the east coast, so CS was fresh in its approach and subject matter. After 2-1/2 years of output, CS disappeared without a trace but not before Ron built up an impressive track record. CS was one of the



few newsletters to include comments from its readers which made for entertaining and sometimes hilarious reading. The demise of Chicago's sleaze theatres obviously took its toll on Carlson as he soon was forced to discuss offerings on cable and local TV.

SCAREAPHANALIA, Michael Gingold. Debuting in 1983, Gingold reviews more mainline horror and SF films with occasional forays into 42nd Street fares. Still in operation after 38 monthly issues, *SCARE* can be depended on to cover the current theatrical scene with a timeliness that will aid the horror and SF moviegoer. *SCAREAPHANALIA* sometimes devotes an issue to reviewing videocassette releases and is partly responsible for the debut of newsletters devoted to that field.

1985 saw the debut of *HI-TECH TERROR*, edited by yours truly. What started out as an all-purpose periodical devoted to horror films on satellite TV, cable, and videocassette soon restricted itself only to reviewing genre product on video.

CRIMSON CELLULOID, David Nolte. A newsletter from Australia that covers theatrical and videocassette releases. David also covers the censorship problems in his country along with interviews of low-budget directors. A very worthwhile endeavor which uncovers films not available in the U.S.

VIDEO DRIVE-IN, Herb Schrader. Currently up to issue 7, VDI is devoted exclusively to reviewing films on video. Each issue is usually theme oriented with the current issue covering sexploitation films. Herb has a unique layout sense that makes each issue a challenge to unravel.

DEAD ON ARRIVAL, Jeff Queen. The newest arrival on the block with three issues published so far. Queen has improved with each issue and demonstrates a lot of talent when it comes to covering the video scene. Jeff is a true fan and plans on covering amateur films, bootlegs, and fanzines in general (with interviews of other editors upcoming).

It seemed for a while that the newsletter format was going to die out since so many of them stopped publication. Fortunately video seems to have revitalized people's interest and one can only hope more publications debut soon. The field is certainly ripe since so many unknown obscure films have been unearthed on video. Please note the following publications are currently being published, so if you're the least bit interested, sample a few. You might be pleasantly surprised.

SEAZOID EXPRESS - Bill Landis
\$8.00/6 bi-monthly issues
Box 799 Peter Stuyvesant Station
New York, NY 10009

GORE GAZETTE - Rick Sullivan
\$13.00/12 monthly issues
73 N. Fullerton Ave.
Montclair, NJ 07042

SCAREAPHANALIA - Michael Gingold
\$6.00/12 monthly issues
55 Nordica Drive
Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

CRIMSON CELLULOID - David Nolte
3 Cheyne Walk Castle Crag
New South Wales 2068
AUSTRALIA

HI-TECH TERROR - Craig Ledbetter
\$2.50/12 monthly issues
1 Yorkshire Ct.
Richardson, TX 75081

VIDEO DRIVE-IN - Herb Schrader
\$6.00/20 tri-weekly issues
Box 32313
Columbus, OH 43232

DEAD ON ARRIVAL - Jeff Queen
\$8.00/12 monthly issues
Box 825
Sheyboygan, WI 53082-0825



HURRAY
with the
plant food!

LEATHER BOUND SCIENCE FICTION

An article by Mark R. Leeper

For years there has been a small but virulent industry out there in the real world that takes classic books, like Plato's Republic, and binds them in rich leather covers with 14-caret gold lettering. They are dedicated to the proposition that it is the sizzle that sells, not the steak. Now everybody knows full well that there is no point in reading The Republic bound in rich Corinthian leather. These days anyone who really appreciates The Republic has read it in a dog-eared paperback that is at home in the back pocket of a pair of jeans and would look just atrocious on J. Paul Getty's shelf. There is, of course, a history of great books coming in fine bindings. When David Copperfield was on the best-seller list, only the very rich would buy a book like The Republic, and it would be well-bound, and a well-bound edition would be read. But the binding in those days would be functional. It wouldn't have the edges of the pages tipped in 14-caret gold leaf. That is a very pretty touch for a closed book, but it makes the pages stick together and they are tough to turn. When you see a book with all that gold trim on the pages, you know it was published to sit on the shelf as a status symbol with no expectation that it would ever be read.

Easton Press of Norwalk, Connecticut, is trying a new approach to the status symbol press business. If other companies can make a bundle selling leather-bound editions of books like The Republic, and with education on a down-swing if fewer and fewer high school graduates have ever heard of Plato's Republic, might they not get a leg up on the competition by putting science fiction in expensive bindings? Surely Stranger in a Strange Land must have more appeal than Plato's Republic.

Ah, but here is the rub. There was a tradition at one point of having classic books in expensive bindings. But science fiction came along well after that period. Frederik Pohl's Gateway is most at home in a well-worn paperback. For fancy occasions you might see it in a modest hardback edition. Putting Gateway in gold-highlighted leather covers with gilt-edged pages and a ribbon bookmark sewn into the binding is like putting a pig in a tuxedo. These books will probably be nearly impossible to read. If someone dares to lay a hand on them for reading, that still will not be the "science fiction experience." You can't be thinking about the future while you are smelling the book covers. I suggest that Easton Press make some sort of arrangement with Grove Press. I can see putting Story of O in leather!

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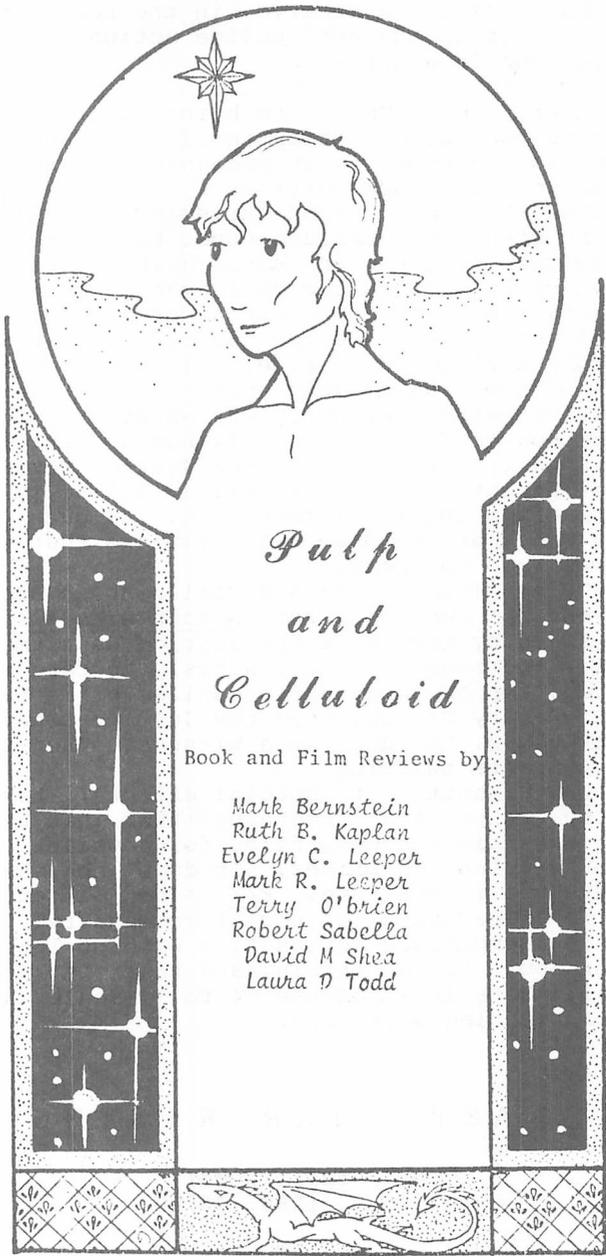
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F/X

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

CAPSULE REVIEW: A film special effects technician is pulled into service by the Justice Department to fake a murder. As the plot twists he finds that his bag of film tricks is surprisingly effective in the real world too. This is the best police action film we have seen in a while.

Every season seems to bring us at least one or two police action thrillers. The basic plots are pretty interchangeable and the way you tell them apart is by trimming. Of course, the best-known trimming is Dirty Harry with his oversized guns, but there are also the films with super-helicopters or super-cars or with the policeman being black and having to overcome racial prejudice. In a lighter vein the cop can be just Eddie Murphy having a good time. This winter Orion Films has a reasonably good police action thriller with a slightly different trimming. The cop isn't a cop at all, but a civilian pressed into service by the Justice Department for his particular skills. Rollie Tyler is a film special effects man. As such he has a bag of tricks and gimmicks that put James Bond to shame.

Tyler (played by Australian Bryan Brown -- perhaps best known for A Town Like Alice) is asked by agents of the Justice Department (Cliff DeYoung and Mason Adams) to fake the murder of an important organized crime figure. Jerry Orbach, whom the Justice Department wants to use as a witness. Then the plot starts twisting.

F/X (short for special effects) has a witty script and something that has been missing from suspense films for a while: it has genuine surprises. It does not have many, but it has some. F/X is not intended to be a deep piece of social commentary. It is an unambitious action film with no intention but to entertain, and that it does well. Rate it +1 on the -4 to +4 scale. Not a bad evening's viewing.

BLACK STAR RISING

by Frederik Pohl
Del Rey, 1985, \$3.50

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

As a member of a two-income family, I am acutely aware of what can and cannot be written off on taxes. So it is with some assurance that I say that Black Star Rising was written as a tax write-off.

Why do I say that? Well, a year or so ago Fred Pohl visited China. Black Star Rising takes place in a United States controlled by China (after an abortive nuclear exchange between the United States and the USSR). Castor (our hero) works on the Heavenly

Grain Collective Farm outside Biloxi, Mississippi. When he finds a head in the rice paddies on the Collective, he starts a sequence of events that embroil him in an alien (outer-space-type aliens this time) invasion of Earth.

Pohl leans heavily on his experiences in China for background, right down to the ubiquitous orange soda. (I say this with some assurance also, since I've also been to China. Unfortunately, I haven't figured out how to write off the trip.)

Black Star Rising is better Pohl than I've seen in a while. (Bear in mind that I am not a big fan of recent Pohl novels.) It's not a great novel and some of the coincidences tax the reader's "willing suspension of disbelief," but the background is interesting (and reasonably accurate). If the ending seems a bit of a let-down, well, it was fun getting there. The number of questions left unanswered make me believe there may be a sequel down the road.

(I don't see where the title comes from. It reminds me of Campbell's The Black Star Passes--a great old-time space story I would recommend--but the two stories have nothing in common.)

HARLOT'S RUSE

by Esther Friesner
Questar Books, 1985, \$3.50

A book review by David M. Shea

If Edgar Pangborn's Davy was SF/fantasy's answer to Tom Jones, then the second novel by a promising new writer from Connecticut is the genre's Moll Flanders, heavily laced with Perils of Pauline--though Pauline's inept virginity would not serve her well in Friesner's universe. The book chronicles the life of one Megan from innocent shepherdess, through accomplished courtesan, moving on to deputy succubus...well, you get the picture.

Lest the title and blurbs lead one to think of this as a thinly disguised porno novel, it should be noted that while a great deal of screwing goes on, the scenes are not particularly graphic--and are often funny (Friesner is well aware of what Mr. Heinlein once called "the world's oldest funny subject"). She tends to write around the act itself with such succinct euphemisms as "We coupled joyously...." This could be a PG of a very soft R as Megan humps her jolly way through what seems like a cast of thousands, beginning with her childhood sweetheart and moving hastily through a kindly old wizard, a stupid prince, a scruffy musician, a barbarian raider, and numerous others, not all human. Personally, I would not be tempted: the mortality rate among Megan's ex-bedmates runs appallingly high.

The author presents all this with style, charm, and a great deal of humor. Of course, not all of the humor will be to everyone's taste. For example, the chapter titles are



all bad puns (a redundant expression if ever there was one). The first is "Strumpet Voluntary"; the rest are mainly worse, including some which are not fit for printing in a family fanzine. However, though puns are not to my taste, I was frequently reduced to laughing out loud--which is not something I often do. Friesner has evidently studied the masters (and mistresses to be sure) of fantasy humor, and has a finely honed sense of the absurd.

This tends to mask somewhat the shortcomings of the book. Dare one say that after a while it becomes a trifle monotonous? Megan's first few ludicrous misadventures are entertaining; but after a while the effect begins to seem a little strained. There are also a number of comparatively stock characters: the abusive stepfather, the abusive husband, the kindly whores. One is tempted to think that the author threw in a few clichés to prove that she could triumph over them by sheer virtuosity of writing. To a limited extent she succeeds, but this is a tough conceit to sustain for 300 pages. Extended parody is very difficult to bring off, as witness anyone who's read Douglas Adams' Hitchhiker books, which are hilarious for about 45 minutes and then fade into oblivion.

There is another problem with Harlot's Ruse which I, as a male reviewer, find awkward to face. Megan, who is presented as a basically bright though headstrong kid, does an awful lot of really dumb things; and the way she gets out of these problems tends to be either by sheer dumb luck, or by falling back (sorry...) on her erotic talents to screw her way out of trouble. I have a sneaking suspicion that if a man had written this book and a woman reviewed it, she might object. Can a man call a woman "sexist"? (Before we rush to answer that question, let us all carefully consider The Color Purple.)

Okay, Harlot's Ruse isn't perfect. What book is perfect? This one is well-written and a hell of a lot of fun. Science fiction hasn't got so many good humorous books that it can afford to waste one. I can recommend this book to anyone who has had it up to here with much of the genre's pomposity; in fact, I can recommend it to those who are just looking for an excellent read. I look forward to seeing what else this imaginative and promising new writer does in the future.

WRITERS OF THE FUTURE, VOL. II

Edited by Algis Budrys
Bridge Publications, 1986, \$3.95

A book review by Terry O'Brien

I should point out that I was terribly disappointed at the previous collection. If that contained the best of the submissions, then there must not have been very many submissions. Out of all the stories in that collection, only one or two were really worth remembering or printing. I was admittedly apprehensive when starting this second volume.

I was slightly amazed at what I found within. Granted, there are still a number of the type of stories which raised my ire as the previous book, but they were far fewer. Stories with character development but no plotline, or just the reverse, or stories with jolting conflicts and jarring distractions, stories that I felt would have been rejected by any editor who would receive them as submissions.

"Mudpuppies" by Robert Touzalin is a good example. It is a character study of an individual and his observations of the results of a cloning process now growing into maturity. Unfortunately, there is little said about the individual, and he says little about himself (the story is told in first-person). When I finished it, I was left with a blank emptiness, wondering what the author was trying to say: judging by the story, it was obvious the author was trying to make some kind of statement, but what it was quite escaped me. When an author tries to make a statement in a story and neglects the characters the story is about, that is a fatal flaw.

"Click" by Ray Aldridge is another story with mostly character development and hardly any plot. I did like this character better than the main character of "Mudpuppies", but the setting was unconvincing and the supporting characters shallow. Both stories seemed needlessly artsy and lacking substance.

"The Book of Time" by Camilla Decarnin, and Laura E. Campbell's "A Sum of Moments", both had elements that destroyed the setting they were trying to create, thereby distracting and confusing the reader. The stories both start by describing a very nice setting, then introduce foreign elements to

those settings. The former's fantasy setting is cluttered by references to neon signs and telephones; the latter's Middle Ages setting turned out to be a colonized planet. Both of these distract the reader's attention from the story. In the first story, they don't add anything to the story and should have been removed. In "A Sum of Moments", the intrusion is a major story element and should have been introduced earlier to reduce the jolt the reader gets when first coming across it.

Bridget McKenna's "The Old Organ Trail" started nicely: a description of the Earth and society not too far in the future, and of the main character, and old organ-smuggler now retired. Into his retirement comes an old comrade who needs his skills to smuggle him to where a transplant is waiting. The trip is the rest of the story, but that story is cut off abruptly and almost casually, almost as if Zelazny would have ended Damnation Alley at the Mississippi River. The encounter with the renegade motorcycle gang is resolved by impossible coincidence (which is a weak point). This story could have been much better; a good editor would have at least wanted a re-write on it.

Marianne Nielson's "The Trout", on the other hand, had nothing to recommend it at all. The main character's dislike of her daughter's husband (who reminds her of her own late husband) is understandable, but her actions are as distasteful as her son-in-law's.

"Welcome to Freedom" by Jay Sullivan follows an old story line, down to the twist at the end. It is predictable as a result. There was an attempt to get the reader to empathize with the main character, but it didn't last.

The stories above comprise almost half of the collection. Not a very good percentage at all. I'm wondering that if the winners are of this quality, it should be very easy to place in the contest. I may be tempted to try again: I submitted a story to the contest over a year ago, but didn't place.

Gratefully, another group of stories show more promise. Their flaws are more subtle, so they are better, but they have something lacking in them.

"Beast" by Jon Gustafson is a nice tale, but I cannot believe the ending. You try hitting something in a car going ninety miles an hour and walk away from it, especially when the author mentions the engine thrust through the firewall. More likely than not, the engine would have wound up thrust through the driver as well. Yet he steps out of the car with a broken thumb as his only serious injury. Other than that, it is a very good tale.

"They That Go Down to the Sea in Ships" by Marina Fitch is a story of the waiting of a woman for her love as he sails between the stars in cryogenic suspension. It would have been much better if the author could have made the characters more distinguishable. There are at least six different characters in the story, all important, but the reader

cannot tell them apart very well. In a short story as this, it is hard to do, but it must be done.

"Redmond" by Kenneth Schulze is a madcap tale of covert activity and vampirism. The most glaring flaw is that people seem to be doing things for no apparent reason throughout the story. The plot line and the consequences of it are amusing, especially considering the nature of the participants. Robert Sheckley couldn't have come up with a more comic premise; what the author needs to do is clarify the writing to give the story more impact.

Sansoucy Kathenor's "The Cinderella Caper" is a re-telling of the Cinderella story, set in a highly-stratified society. The main character is nicely drawn for the most part, but still displays some inconsistencies. The rest of the supporting characters are shallow, except the the "prince". The conclusion is also forced.

"The Helldivers" by Parris ja Young has a good story in it, but the mysticism at the end detracts from it. Too much is left to the reader to surmise about the situation, leaving the reader all the more confused. This is another story that some good editing could recover.

That leaves only the following stories from the collection that I would recommend.

"In the Smoke" by Howard V. Hendrix was a nice tale about a trucker set in a post-holocaust West. The setting is presented in carefully balanced terms, just presenting the facts, but never coming right out and telling the reader what happened. A very good touch. This one, too, reminds me of Damnation Alley, but it can stand on its own.

Don Baumgart's "All You Can Eat" actually lives up to its introduction: it is quite amusing. Granted, the story about aliens vacationing on Earth has been done before, but this story about an alien bus-driver taking a group of alien partiers to a Mardi Gras, and a capsule description of their exploits, does have a new wrinkle on an old theme.

"Dream in a Bottle" by Jerry Meredith and D.E. Smirl is the story of an interstellar ship and the people that operate it. Actually, minds, because many of the people are disembodied brains locked into fantasies which actually control ship functions. The problem is that the fantasies must be controlled or they will malfunction and threaten the ship. The story concerns one such threatening situation, but the story is about the main characters. One wonders after it is over just who is running everything and who is in a fantasy, just the way the author intended.

The collection also has several short essays by some of the contest judges, basically advice to beginning authors. These essays are almost worth the price of the book themselves: essays by Niven, McCaffrey, Herbert, and Wolfe. There is also the obligatory obituary for Hubbard, as well as for two of

the judges, Theodore Sturgeon and Frank Herbert.

I'm ambivalent towards this collection. There is some raw gold there, and some good ore to be mined, but also a quantity of dross. I can't quite recommend the book, but I can't quite disparage it either. If I had to make a choice, I would recommend buying it, if only to see what is being selected for the contest, and who might be developing as a professional. I could not recommend it as a collection on any other ground.

THE BRIDE

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

CAPSULE REVIEW: Two decidedly unusual people have some surprisingly usual adventures. This continuation of Bride of Frankenstein has a visual beauty but desperately needs an infusion of imagination.

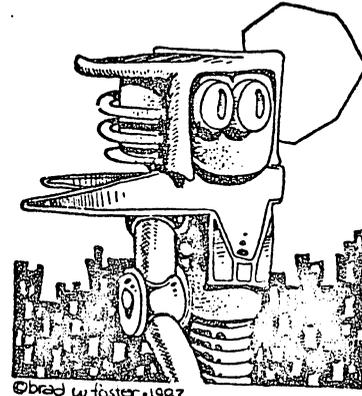
I missed The Bride when it was originally released in the theatres so I had to wait for it to come out on cassette. I have loved horror films all my life and from seven or eight years old I have been a Frankenstein film fan. So it pretty much goes without saying that I was looking forward to seeing The Bride and seeing what a modern filmmaker would do with the story derived from the old Universal horror films. The premise of The Bride was that is was something between a remake and a sequel to Bride of Frankenstein (1935).

The first sequence of The Bride is, in fact, a remake of the last sequence of Bride of Frankenstein. The bride is brought to life only to be repulsed by her intended mate. The Monster, rejected even by another monstrosity, destroys the laboratory with a pyrotechnic flare. But this time around the monster, the bride and the creator all live. That is the end of the first film, but just the first sequence of The Bride. It is, however, the end of the Frankenstein movie in The Bride. What remains is a bit of Regency romance, a bit of melodrama, and a disappointingly dull film. The story flashes back and forth from the bride's story to the monster's. There is little in the film from that point on that requires the monster to be anything but a large victim of mental retardation, not unlike Lenny from Of Mice and Men. The bride's unusual origins are less relevant to her story, than that of her guardian (Dr. Frankenstein) who secretly lusts for his beautiful ward (the bride).

Sting is actually a good choice for playing Dr. Frankenstein, who should have youth and a touch of insanity. He is well cast as Charles Frankenstein (Charles??). Now I bet you thought his name was Victor (or, if one followed the Universal horror films, Henry). Actually, in this film Victor is the monster's name! In the book, of course, the monster's name was Adam. He isn't called Adam here, but the bride is called Eva. In

the book she was not around long enough to have a name. That's a pity. If her name had been Charles or maybe Charlotte there would have been a nice symmetry with the film.

Anyway, the first sequence is worth seeing. Beyond that the film's lack of imagination will make you hanker for the old Boris Karloff days. The Bride shows that the means to make more imaginative films, some filmmakers are still making less imaginative ones. Rate it 0 on the -4 to +4 scale.



SHORT CIRCUIT

A film review by Mark Bernstein

Are you familiar with computers and robotics? Do you know anything at all about the differences in nature and complexity between organic and electronic brains? Can you turn off the rational part of your brain and forget all that stuff for two hours?

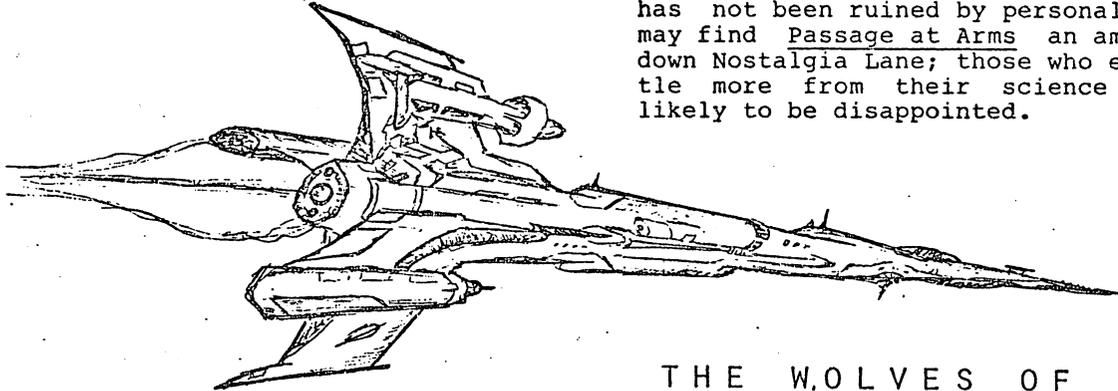
If you answered "Yes, yes, and no" to those questions, don't see Short Circuit. Otherwise, go to the theatre, remind yourself that even though this looks like sf, it's really a techno-fantasy, and prepare yourself for some good, mindless, junk fun.

Just in case you haven't already heard, the film centers around Number 5, a super-sophisticated military robot prototype who, after being hit with a huge power surge, becomes self-aware. Number 5 runs away, pursued by two of the computer nerds who built it (our heroes) and the cigar chomping, militaristic head of security (the villain). It hooks up with an animal-loving, independent, spunky (I'm sorry, there's no better word), young woman who tries to protect it. Naturally, all ends happily with the robot, the head computer nerd, and the woman going off to Montana to make a new life together.

Does that sound simplistic? Well, it's a simplistic plot. The appeal of the film is in how well it's executed. John Badham, who also directed War Games, knows how to frame an action sequence, and here shows a nice touch for comedy. Steve Guttenberg and Ally Sheedy, the leads, are likeable, professional performers who are fun to watch. The supporting cast, particularly Austin Pendleton as a scientist-turned-businessman who has trouble deciding which side he's on, and an

actor (whose name I don't remember) as a foreign techie with a talent for malapropisms, is outstanding. And Number 5 manages the ET-like trick of being cute but not cloying. There are also some very well-crafted gags and plot twists. Dumb as it is, there really is something funny about a trio of robots being reprogrammed to do a Three Stooges imitation.

Short Circuit is a cotton-candy movie. There's no real substance (the few attempts at infusing it with a message are intrusive). It's a little too sweet at times, but it's a lot of fun while it lasts. If you like mental junk-food, see it.



PASSAGE AT ARMS

by Glen Cook
Bantam Books, 1985, \$2.95

A book review by David M. Shea

A young man goes on a dangerous cruise aboard a deadly-but-fragile hunter-killer vessel, keeping a journal of the crew's hardships as they duck in and out of hiding in hyperspace, attacking enemy shipping and bases, fleeing the fatal enemy "destroyers". Does this have a familiar ring? Of course it does. Just as Battle Beyond the Stars was Kurosawa's immortal Seven Samurai rewritten as bad science fiction, and Outland was High Noon rewritten as bad SF, so Passage at Arms is Run Silent, Run Deep rewritten as bad SF. It's Destination Tokyo with ray guns and missiles.

It is not really surprising that even in the SF/fantasy genre, people are still writing World War II stories. It was, after all, the Last Morally Defensible War. (A point elaborated to the point of somnolence by, for example, Katherine Kurtz's Lammass Night.) The dominant generation of writers now are the people in their late thirties and early forties who grew up in the post-war period on a steady diet of WW-II books, movies, and television. Victory at Sea and Combat were popular TV shows even into the 1960s; right up, in fact, to the very brink of the Vietnam era.

Pulp & Celluloid

Homage to previous genres is not necessarily a bad thing. (See, for example, Roger Zelazny's "A Rose for Ecclesiastes", a brilliant updating of the "Martian princess" subgenre rendered artistically bankrupt by generations of bad Burroughs imitations.) However, Passage at Arms never rises above the genre to which it is allegedly paying tribute. It works at the level of a James White-type survival story (put people under intolerable stress for an extended period and see where the cracks begin to show); but it works only on that level. It has none of the moral authority of Joe Haldeman's The Forever War, or the emotional impact of Barry Longyear's "Enemy Mine".

The reader whose taste for war stories has not been ruined by personal experience may find Passage at Arms an amusing stroll down Nostalgia Lane; those who expect a little more from their science fiction are likely to be disappointed.

THE WOLVES OF MEMORY

by George Alec Effinger
Berkley Books, 1982

A book review by Ruth B. Kaplan

If you enjoyed Philip K. Dick's Martian Timeslip, or if you liked John Brunner's The Sheep look up, you'll want to track down this older Effinger novel. It is reminiscent of Dick's style, and even George considers it one of his best works.

The protagonist is a self-admitted failure who has been fired from the three jobs assigned to him by the world computer, TECT. Of course, the fact that the jobs were basketball player (he'd never heard of the game), science fiction writer (his first novel sold 4,438 copies in the three weeks it was on sale), and voltmeter faceplate assembler (menial labor maintained by the computer as a pastime for the millions), didn't stop him from feeling like a failure. So the computer orders him to report for deportation to another planet and he complies.

At first, life on the new planet, Home, is relatively easy, except that people keep dying of a mysterious illness, and that no one seems to know what they are supposed to be doing there. Gradually, the protagonist starts to come to grips with his own problems; he finds a useful niche in the colony and falls in love. When the woman he loves dies from the mysterious illness, he embarks on a heroic effort to find a cause and a cure. He fails and dies of the same disease, but in doing so rises above his seemingly futile life and saves the world, both Home and Earth.

This is not an easy book to read. It deals with feelings and problems I'd rather not, and the hero is the old-style anti-hero -- not a very lovable guy. But like many very good novels, it is worth sticking with. In fact, I plan to re-read it in the near future, not something I do often. It's that kind of book -- it bears some thought.

If you like Wolves of Memory, look for George's new novel, When Gravity Fails, due out in January 1987. I've heard the first chapter and it is damnably good!

THE DAY OF THE KLESH

by M. A. Foster
DAW Books, 1985, \$2.95

A book review by David M. Shea

M. A. Foster (no relation to Alan Dean) has been shown to be an effective decay-preventive dentifrice -- no, no, wait a minute. That's not right.

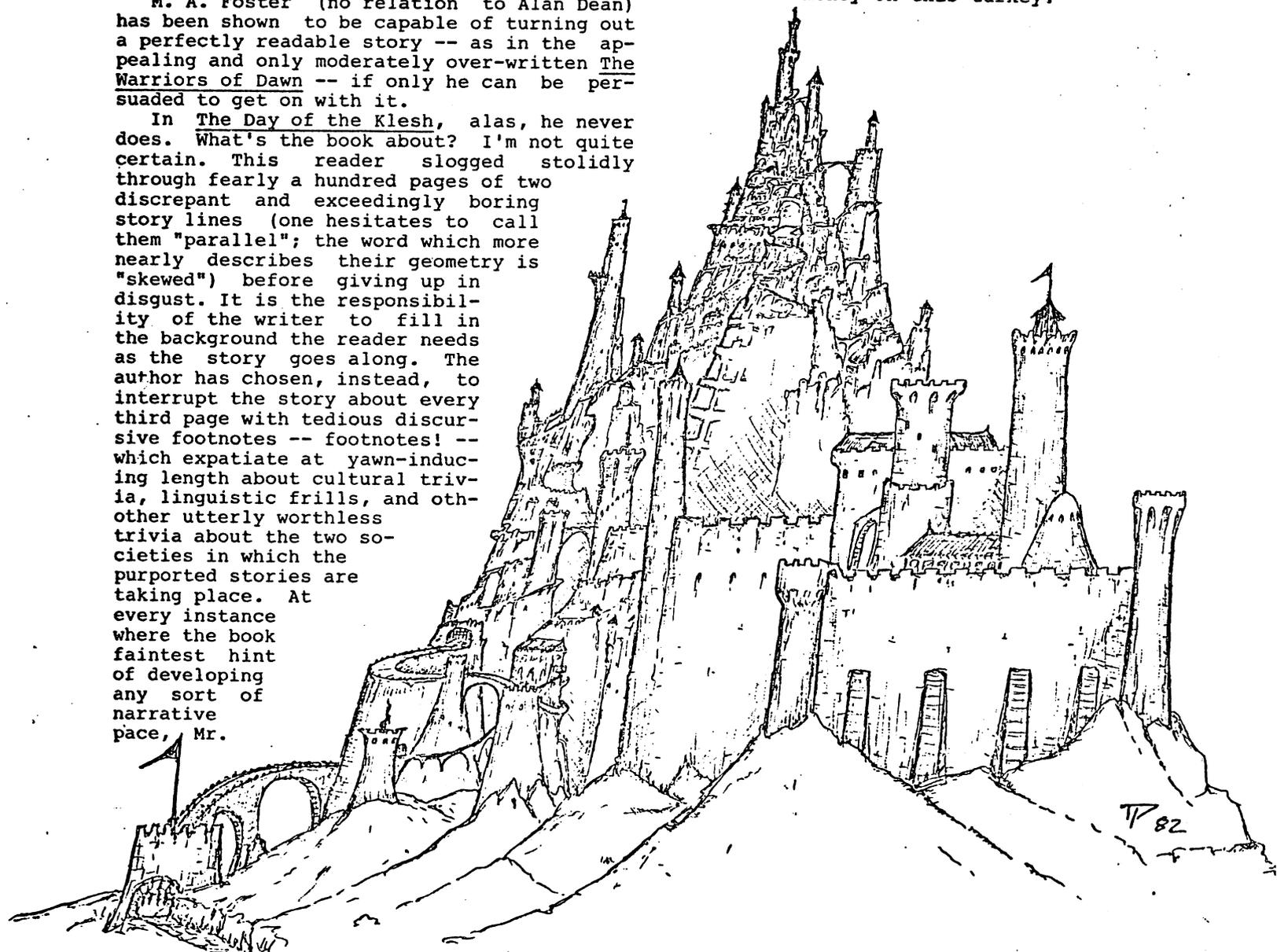
M. A. Foster (no relation to Alan Dean) has been shown to be capable of turning out a perfectly readable story -- as in the appealing and only moderately over-written The Warriors of Dawn -- if only he can be persuaded to get on with it.

In The Day of the Klesh, alas, he never does. What's the book about? I'm not quite certain. This reader slogged stolidly through fearfully a hundred pages of two discrepant and exceedingly boring story lines (one hesitates to call them "parallel"; the word which more nearly describes their geometry is "skewed") before giving up in disgust. It is the responsibility of the writer to fill in the background the reader needs as the story goes along. The author has chosen, instead, to interrupt the story about every third page with tedious discursive footnotes -- footnotes! -- which expatiate at yawn-inducing length about cultural trivia, linguistic frills, and other utterly worthless trivia about the two societies in which the purported stories are taking place. At every instance where the book faintest hint of developing any sort of narrative pace, Mr.

Foster breaks off into another clot of expository prose. This reader's patience finally gave out when the characters arrived at a castle (as to why, your guess is as good as mine), and some fellow came out. At this point we are treated to a one-hundred-seventy-six word (I counted) description of the helmet he was wearing. Nothing, mind you, about the character himself, what else he was wearing, or what any of this had to do with the plot, if anything. One hundred and seventy-six words about the helmet. Without, incidentally, a full stop anywhere in the whole appalling passage.

At that point in the proceedings, the book was air-mailed to my junk pile. The Day of the Klesh has all the narrative snap of a surgical report, and a good deal less interest. Whatever Mr. Foster may have been trying to do here, he has forgotten the first and most basic element of fiction writing: tell a story.

I strongly recommend you don't waste either your time or your money on this turkey.



TWO REVIEWS OF *The Quiet Earth*

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

CAPSULE REVIEW: Last survivors on Earth have to figure out what has happened to everyone else. Some intriguing ideas but the basic plot is old hat.

In 1951, Arch Oboler made the film Five about a limited number of people who survived a nuclear war. Every so often Hollywood makes another film about the last handful of people in a post-holocaust world. Notable was The World, the Flesh, and the Devil, a 1958 film with Harry Belafonte and Mel Ferrer as the last people on Earth and of course in a love triangle. The same situation arose in The Last Woman on Earth, a Roger Corman quickie made in 1960. In the '58 film an experimental super-bomb apparently dissolved everyone; in the '60 film something in the air did the same. In a TV movie called Where Have All the People Gone? a solar flare does the honors.

Most recently it was New Zealand doing the three-survivor film. The Quiet Earth is a film that very much resembles The World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Once again we have white man/white woman/black man as the last people on Earth with the two men competing for the affections of the last woman. If this plot had to be done again, at least it was done with quality filmmaking and some style. The characters are better than the 50's stereotypes of the previous film versions.

What sets this film apart is the force that de-populated the world. Since the explanation is the most intriguing part of the film, I will avoid spoiling it here. I came out of the film saying 1) the cause could not have happened, 2) given that it did happen there could not have been any survivors, 3) given that there were survivors what made the difference between who survived and who didn't is absurd, and 4) given that what decides who survives really decides, it is an absurd coincidence that someone would figure out what happened was also a survivor. Dale Skran (who some of you might know) defended the film on all four points. By my figuring he bested me on (1) and (2), tied on (3), and lost on (4). I still think the idea is impossible, but it does bear some thinking about.

Suffice it to say this may be a better film than it at first appears to be a deserves a modest +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

I do have a philosophical complaint about the film. One of the characters feels terrible remorse for having worked on a scientific project whose results could have been used for evil. I guess this is a natural outgrowth of a pacifist sentiment growing in New Zealand. My question to the filmmaker would be just how much human progress could have ever taken place without anyone working

on science that could have been used for evil. Most of my career I worked on a data network that could have been used by a repressive government for keeping tabs on its citizens. The knowledge of how to immunize against smallpox makes it possible to infect your enemies at no risk to yourself. Find ways to increase food production and you find ways to control others with the surplus. No field of scientific research is entirely harmless; it is just that most are less risky than stagnation.

A film Review by Mark Bernstein

At 6:12 AM one sunny morning, Zach Hobson wakes up feeling more than a little strange. He slowly discovers that while plant life still abounds and all the mechanical trappings of civilization are intact and functioning, all animal life has disappeared, and Zach may be the last man on Earth.

This is hardly a new idea, but The Quiet Earth does a generally fine job of handling it. Made in New Zealand by people whose names I unfortunately can't recall, this film manages, with few exceptions, to be a thoughtful, logical, well-acted exploration of issues and personalities.

The earliest scenes are the strongest. The role of Zach is an actor's showcase, allowing for a wide range of emotion and action. Happily, the actor here is up to the demands placed upon him. We observe Zach through a series of stages which follow a perfectly reasonable progression. After getting the first hints of the changes that have taken place (nothing on the radio, friends not home), he heads to the scientific installation he's been working at. Discovering that Zach was employed by the project that may have been responsible for the mass disappearance is a little jarring to the audience, but not too badly, and it does set the stage for the scientific explanations yet to come.

(While the science seems highly unlikely, it falls far outside my own expertise, so I'll refrain from comment.) All is not well at the lab. In fact, Zach barely escapes with his life. What follows is a fascinating study of a highly intelligent but somewhat unstable personality. Zach makes a series of attempts to contact any other survivors, decided to take advantage



of his position to improve his standard of living, eventually descends into schizophrenia and megalomania, stops just short of suicide, and starts to rebuild both his sanity and his life, using equipment scrounged from various sources to observe and evaluate the changes to the world around him. It is only after all this occurs that he meets another person.

The rest of the film, while good, never quite matches the level of intensity achieved previously. While the other two characters in the film are interesting, neither is as fully drawn as Zach. There are points where the character interactions just don't feel right---sexual tension that is obviously meant to be there isn't quite, people argue when a little talk would clear up the problem, and transitions in relationships are abrupt. Still, these are fairly minor quibbles, as most of the characterization works fairly well.

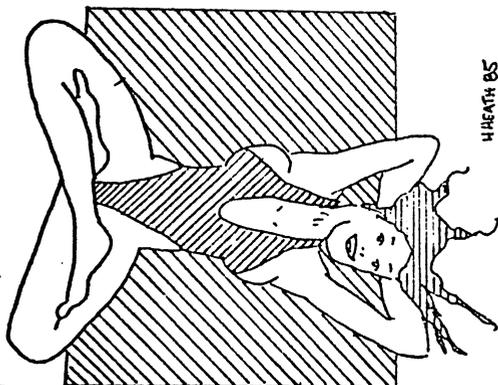
The ending scene is the weakest of the movie, which is a shame because the scenes immediately previous build some solid, consistent tension. The end, instead of resolving all that has gone before, takes off on a tangent, throws us into a totally changed universe, and leaves us there. In spite of all this, and of my other objections, I found The Quiet Earth to be well worth seeing. It's certainly not the best sf film I've ever seen, but it is the most intelligent I've seen this year.

A PERSONAL DEMON

by David Bischoff, Rich Brown,
and Linda Richardson
Signet/NAL, 1985, \$2.95

A book review by David M. Shea

This episodic novel arises out of a series of collaborative stories written in a writers' workshop of the late 70s with the deliberate purpose of producing an "old-fashioned" fantasy adventure, viz: A wonkish classics professor, blotto at a faculty party, decides to liven things up by conjuring a demon. What he gets is a horny (in more senses than one) demon-girl who sets out to reform both his mundane life and his sex



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life. At its avowed purpose, then, the book succeeds quite well: this is familiar territory, the offspring of L. Sprague deCamp out of I Dream of Jeannie, updated for our more promiscuous era.

Much of the book is, of course, standard post-adolescent sex fantasy -- Everywimp's dream: the perfect girl who looks like a teenager, screws like a mink, conjures up clean laundry and gourmet meals with a wave of her hand, and doesn't trouble Her Man with trivialities like a career or wishes or ambitions of her own. (Or pregnancy, for that matter. Although lots of mattress-bouncing goes on, more or less discreetly off-screen, birth control is never mentioned, though "Anathae" is reputedly half-human.)

In an apparent attempt to short-circuit criticism such as the above, the authors have turned the remainder of the book into a sort of mainstream-liberal travelogue through Social Issues of the Week, with pauses in the hustling-pigs-into-taxicabs style humor to issue pro forma denunciations of racism, religious cultism, drug and alcohol abuse, and so forth. On half expects AIDS to crop up.

The writing style is basically upbeat and cute, with occasional descents into patches of what the late John Wyndham once described as "schoolgirl purple" prose. The authors frequently slip into the second person to address "you, dear reader," personally. Gee, aren't we clever? We know what's going to happen even though the poor character has to bumble along through it, don't we?

In spite of all its flaws, the book is not without its appeal. Dare one say that if the "demonic" angle were toned down it would make an acceptable TV movie? If, at the end, one feels a little embarrassed---"Oh no, did I actually enjoy reading some of this tripe?"---presumably one may forgive oneself. Escapism is what science fiction and fantasy are all about, and here are a few hours of traditional "old-fashioned" escapism. Don't flagellate yourself. Relax. Enjoy.

REGIMENT OF WOMEN

by Thomas Berger
Delta, 1973 (1982), \$7.95

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

I read this book because I had remembered it getting a good review somewhere. It just goes to show: when you get older, your memory does start going!

This book is unbelievably bad. The premise is that society has somehow been turned around; women have all the power and men are helpless. At first I thought that this might be an alternate history, but, no. As it goes on, you discover that this society has developed from ours. How, you ask? How the heck should I know? Women dress in trousers and ties; men wear dresses and bras. Why, you ask? How the heck should I know? Women bind their breasts to flatten them; men get

silicon injections in theirs. Why, you ask? How the heck should I know? Although the story can't take place more than a hundred years in the future, test tube babies are the only method of reproduction and no one (well, hardly anyone) can remember society being any different. How, you ask? How the heck should I know? But there's still sex--except it consists of women with dildoes sodomizing men. Why, you ask? How the heck should I know?

Now I agree that in science fiction there must be a suspension of disbelief. But there are limits! The situation set up here is so ludicrous, yet it is presented (so far as I can tell) in such seriousness that I cannot believe that it is intended as satire. (Obviously some people do, because the back blurbs rave about it.) It's as though Berger wrote a normal "women's lib" novel on a word processor, changed all the male references to female and vice versa, and then patched a few things here and there. (And badly---although he talks about the "Mono Liso", with "his" enigmatic smile, Berger slips up and leaves it as "Los Angeles" in spite of the masculine gender of the article.) Berger also has some strange ideas about women---he seems to think that if women wear trousers all the time, it will wear the hair on their legs off. I wish!

Oh, the plot? Well, Georgie Cornell, a secretary with a publishing firm, finds himself caught up in the "men's lib" underground. He starts out as a nebbish and ends up pretty much the same way, so you can't claim that character development is this novel's strong point. The female lead (she's called Harriet through most of the book, but ends up nameless) starts out with some backbone, but gives that up and collapses into the stereotypical "clinging-vine" female. The ending of the novel (after they discovered "real" sex, of course---note that Berger has given himself the excuse to write both "deviant" and "straight" sex scenes) is truly wretched.

There have been many good books written about sexual-role-reversal societies. This is not one of them.

SOUNDING

by Hank Searls
Ballantine, 1982, \$3.50

A book review by Mark R. Leeper

In the 1960s and 1970s there were three authors who wrote fringe science fiction for the mainstream market. They would take current technology, advance it a little, and write a story on the edge of mainstream and the edge of science fiction. Most popular of the three was Michael Crichton, known for books like The Andromeda Strain and The Terminal Man. He eventually went in for writing film and has been doing little or no novel writing. Martin Caidin is known for his popular Marooned and Cyborg (which was

turned into TV's Six Million Dollar Man). The third was Hank Searls. His big novel was The Pilgrim Project, a novel about a projected U.S. project to put a man on the moon. (And yes, Searls major novel was also filmed, but under the title Countdown.) More recently Searls has done mostly stories with a nautical bent. They include Overboard and a novelization of Jaws II.

In 1982 Searls wrote Sounding. The book lies somewhere between pure fantasy and speculation. The main characters are sperm whales and in the book they are presented as having intelligence comparable to that of humans. They communicate, they remember history, and they ponder the greatest mystery of cetacean life: Man. Their point of view as envisioned by Searls is often rather cleverly put. They are puzzled how Man can be very friendly at times and at other times Man murders whales. They do not understand that some humans can disagree with other humans, though they do remember World War II. Those were the years that the boats got really noisy.

Not too surprisingly in a story seen from the point of view of a species being hunted out of existence, the story is downbeat and intended to make the reader feel a little guilty. Still, it is an engrossing account of whale society. And the relationship to Man, while it hangs over the whole story, often remains in the background while the reader learns something about cetacean family life. But of course here it is very difficult to tell where what is based on observation leaves off and where the fantasy begins.

There is also the predictable subplot of a Russian nuclear sub in trouble. On board is a sonar officer who forms a relationship with the whales. You can probably figure out for yourself the rudiments of the plot that Searls would put in about the Russian sub.

This is a simple book that could be enjoyed by a grade schooler or an adult. Rate it +1 on the -4 to +4 scale. It was better than I expected.

THRESHOLD

by David R. Palmer
Bantam Spectra, 1985, \$2.95

A book review by David M. Shea

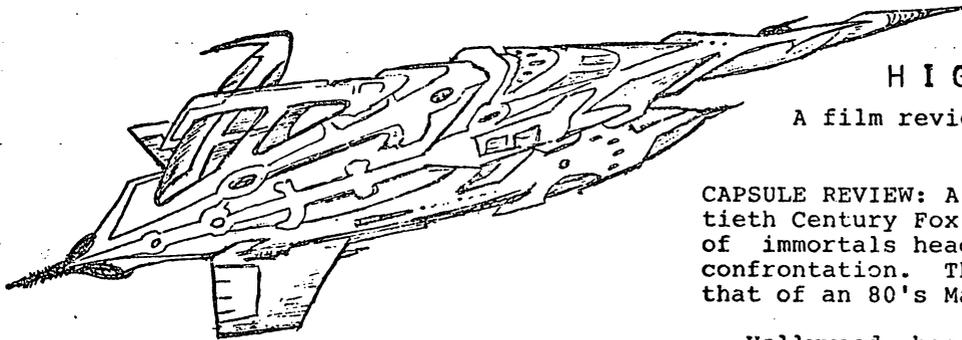
The temptation when reviewing a book like this is to pull out all the stops, to lead off with something like: "Move over, Spider Robinson! Look out, John Varley! Another contender for the title of THE NEW HEINLEIN is breathing down your necks!"

It's particularly tempting because the comparisons are valid. Palmer, the author of 1984's best-selling, and highly (and justly) praised Emergence, is playing run-and-gun with the Boston Celtics of the genre here; in other words he's taken on the big guns of the genre at their own game, and beating them at it.

Consider: Palmer has begun with that appalling cliché, *The Heroic Earthman Called Upon To Save The Universe* -- an idea hokey when Burroughs used it seventy years ago--an idea which has resulted in such sophomoric twittery as *The Last Starfighter*--Palmer has taken those hoary old chestnut by the horns (a mixed metaphor), bounced it off the walls of the universe a few times, shaken it into submission, and turned out what is by any standard one of the most wildly imaginative, exciting, and flat out entertaining reads of this or any year. *Threshold* is bigger and better and badder than Heinlein's *Glory Road* (the obvious comparison, with whiffs of Niven's *Ringworld*, Chalker's *Four Lords of the Diamond* tetralogy, and possibly Zelazny's *Amber*--remember Prince Corwin as "Carl Cory" on Earth? Can it be any coincidence that the hero of *Threshold* is "Peter Cory"? Or am I guilty of eisegesis?)

To attempt even a brief summary of the plot would require several pages, so I'll just hit you with the opening highlights: A wacky blond with a talking cat arrive (courtesy of a lightning bolt) on the private Caribbean island of sports superstar/business whiz/self-made billionaire Peter Cory and convince him that he is destined to (as we noted before) *Save The Universe*. After she conjures a few demons and so forth to convince him she's serious--and other interesting action--(and I know this sounds like fantasy but it isn't, it is all

If the acute reader of this review has detected a faint note of caution, he is to be congratulated on his perspicacity. While I was reading the book, I enjoyed it thoroughly. It was only afterwards that I had a slight problem. Granted, characters in a book may be (possibly should be) "larger than life". Still, one of the reasons this reader had a problem with Zelazny's *Amber* series aforementioned, was that the author never sold me the arrogant and ambitious Corwin as a character in whom I could invest empathy, and this fatally undermined as otherwise brilliant piece of writing -- for me personally, I hasten to add. I have the same problem with *Threshold*. There is a Nietzschean *ubermensch* quality about "Peter Cory" I find slightly disquieting. He verges on being a little too strong/heroic/smart/talented/whatever; in other words he's a little too good to be quite human. Another Superman we don't need. For the moment, at least, Palmer has his character under control. If he allows "Cory" to remain in touch with his own humanity, the next two books should be wild, woolly entertainment, not to mention the best sellers and surefire candidates for Hugos and Nebulas. If not... then we may have a problem. I hope not. I enjoyed *Threshold* a lot. It is devoutly to be hoped that future books build on its many virtues without cracking open at its one potential fault line.



HIGHLANDER

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

CAPSULE REVIEW: A new action film from Twentieth Century Fox tells the story of a group of immortals heading toward an apocalyptic confrontation. The feel of the film is like that of an 80's Marvel Comic.

straight-ahead science fiction)--after all that (we're still in the first three chapters) she explains that the first step is a brief invasion of occupied Tibet, following which Cory has to invent and build a faster-than-light starship, and then they can get down to the interesting and challenging part.

Palmer has never been one to think small, as witness *Emergence*, in which he got things off to a lively start by wiping out the entire human race on page 15 (as a preliminary to the real action). *Threshold* is the same, only incomparably more so, as the author takes us off through a series of adventures which would be zany (and are frequently amusing) if only they weren't so serious. Fighting carnivorous dragons is only one of the least and earliest of Cory's problems. The sheer magnitude of imagination, the scope of Palmer's work is staggering -- and especially when we consider that this is the first volume of a projected trilogy!

Hollywood has discovered that the most profitable audience to aim films at is the teenage crowd (as well as people up through about age 25). To make a profitable film, one strategy is to look at this audience, find out what it likes, and make films to appeal to those tastes. Very popular among this crowd are comic books, and films---notably the "Superman" series---have been made to exploit this interest. Most of these attempts, however, have imitated comic books not as they are, but as they were three decades ago. *Highlander* is a big comic book on the screen, but for once it is an 80's comic book instead of a 50's one.

Connor MacLeod is a Manhattan antiques dealer with a secret. The secret is that he was born in early 16th Century Scotland and is one of a handful of immortals who are biding their time and waiting to take part in an apocalyptic battle between the forces of good and evil. MacLeod leads the forces of good, and the forces of evil are led by the sadistic Kurgan. Preparing for the final battle, MacLeod fights the minions of the

Kurgan in small swordfights that somehow release enough energy to devastate city blocks and keep special effects departments hopping. The film flashes back and forth between the present-day battles and the story of MacLeod's origin in Scotland. MacLeod is mortally wounded in a battle between the Clan MacLeod and the Kurgan, yet he does not die. Later he gets his own personal Obi-Wan in the form of Ramirez, a Spaniard who was actually born in ancient Egypt.

The real problem with Highlander is that the story is really pretty thin. Whenever the writers had trouble deciding what to do next they threw in another fantastically destructive sword fight.

Christopher Lambert, who played Tarzan in Greystoke, plays the immortal Scotsman who stopped aging and who has an equally immortal beard that stopped aging at three day's growth. Clancy Brown, the Frankenstein monster from The Bride, plays the evil Kurgan, and Sean Connery is Ramirez. Highlander is big on flashy action scenes and has some very atmospheric scenes of old Scotland, but it is thin on plot or plot logic. Give it a disappointing -1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

POST SCRIPT: The day after I saw Highlander I went to a science fiction convention at which a representative of Fox had a presentation of the film based on a rough cut he had seen a month or so earlier. He enthusiastically talked about the fantasy elements, saying among other things that you will see what the immortal was doing over the many years of his immortality and why this particular person was immortal. Sitting in the first row we told him that it was not in the film we saw and he seemed a little irritated that these elements were cut out. The film is made up of fantasy, martial arts, and music by Queen, and when they decided what to leave on the cutting room floor, it appears to have been mostly the fantasy. This is how good film can go bad.

THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION

Edited by Gardner Dozois
Bluejay Books, 624 pages, \$10.95

A book review by Robert Sabella

If you enjoy short science fiction but don't have time to read Asimov's, F&SF, Analog, Omni, and every original anthology published, you cannot do better than to read Gardner Dozois' annual Best-of-the-year volume. For two reasons it is the best of its kind being currently published:

1) sheer size. 24 stories is more than both Terry Carr's and Donald Wollheim's volumes combined. Its bulk permits a wide review of the entire science fiction field, from fantasy to cybertech (how's that for an alternative to cyberpunk?).

2) overall quality. Terry Carr has a deserved reputation for choosing stories whose

quality is reflected by their frequent selection on Hugo and Nebula ballots. Dozois' taste is as good. This year fifteen of his selections were nominated for one or both awards. Two have won Nebulas already.

The novellas alone make the volume worthwhile. Where Carr and Wollheim have room for two at most, Dozois has five. My favorite was Kim Stanley Robinson's "Green Mars", a thoughtful story about climbing a twenty-seven kilometer Martian volcano. While I have never climbed a mountain (or anything higher than a stepladder!), Robinson made me feel the exhilaration -- and at times the terror -- of actually being there. There is strong characterization and a thought-provoking subplot about the suitability of terraforming Mars into an imitation of Earth. This is the best sf mountain climbing story I've read since Roger Zelazny's "This Mortal Mountain" twenty years ago. That's pretty good company he's traveling in!

Almost as good was Robert Silverberg's Nebula winner "Sailing to Byzantium". It is the tale of a race of immortals who maintain their joie de vivre by re-creating historical cities. Silverberg excels at historical settings and he had a field day here with sites as diverse as Timbuctoo, Alexandria, and Mohenjo-daro. The plot concerns the relationship between the immortals, one of their number who for genetic reasons is shortlived, and a visitor from the twentieth century. It is good to have Silverberg back in top form after several years of Lord Valentine adventures and non-sf historicals.

The other three novellas are as varied as James Tiptree Jr.'s space opera "The Only Neat Thing to Do", Bruce Sterling's Far Eastern political thriller "Green Days in Brunei", and Avram Davidson's quirky fantasy "Duke Pasquale's Ring".

Two of the novelettes also stood out. Orson Scott Card's "The Fringe" shows the struggles of an intellectual keeping the idea of civilization alive in an after-the-disaster setting. S.C. Sykes' "Rockabye Baby" probes the psyche of a man who, suddenly a quadriplegic, passes through the usual stages of anger, self-pity and resignation before finding a slim hope of regaining normal body use. But at what price?

There are six other fine novelettes, including award nominees "Dogfight" by Michael Swanwick and William Gibson, and "The Jaguar Hunter" by Lucius Shepard.

The volume has seven award-nominated short stories by John Crowley, Frederick Pohl, Bruce Sterling, Howard Waldrop, James Blaylock, Joe Haldeman and Nancy Kress (the Nebula winner "Out of All Them Bright Stars").

Of the twenty-four stories, only two did not seem to fit with the others. Both are by authors who apparently struck a responsive chord in Dozois but not in me. Fortunately, they only totaled twelve pages, no loss with 612 other pages to choose from.

If you enjoy short science fiction, this is definitely the volume to buy.

LEGEND

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

CAPSULE REVIEW: Ridley Scott does a live-action fairy tale that visually matches the illustrations in classic books of fairy tales. The pacing occasionally flags but visually the film is all you expect from the man who made Bladerunner. Tim Curry as the Prince of Darkness in make-up by Rob Bottin is particularly effective.

There is a style of traditional British fantasy -- one I don't generally care for -- with the wood folk. There are faerie and wood sprites, unicorns and goblins. Their stories are recounted in The Blue Fairy Book or The Crimson Fairy Book or one of those. This kind of fantasy rarely makes it into live-action except perhaps in an occasional film of A Midsummer Night's Dream. More often this faerie world shows up in animated film for the obvious reason that it is a lot easier to put onto film in animation. Legend is the first film to create the enchanted faerie world in live-action.

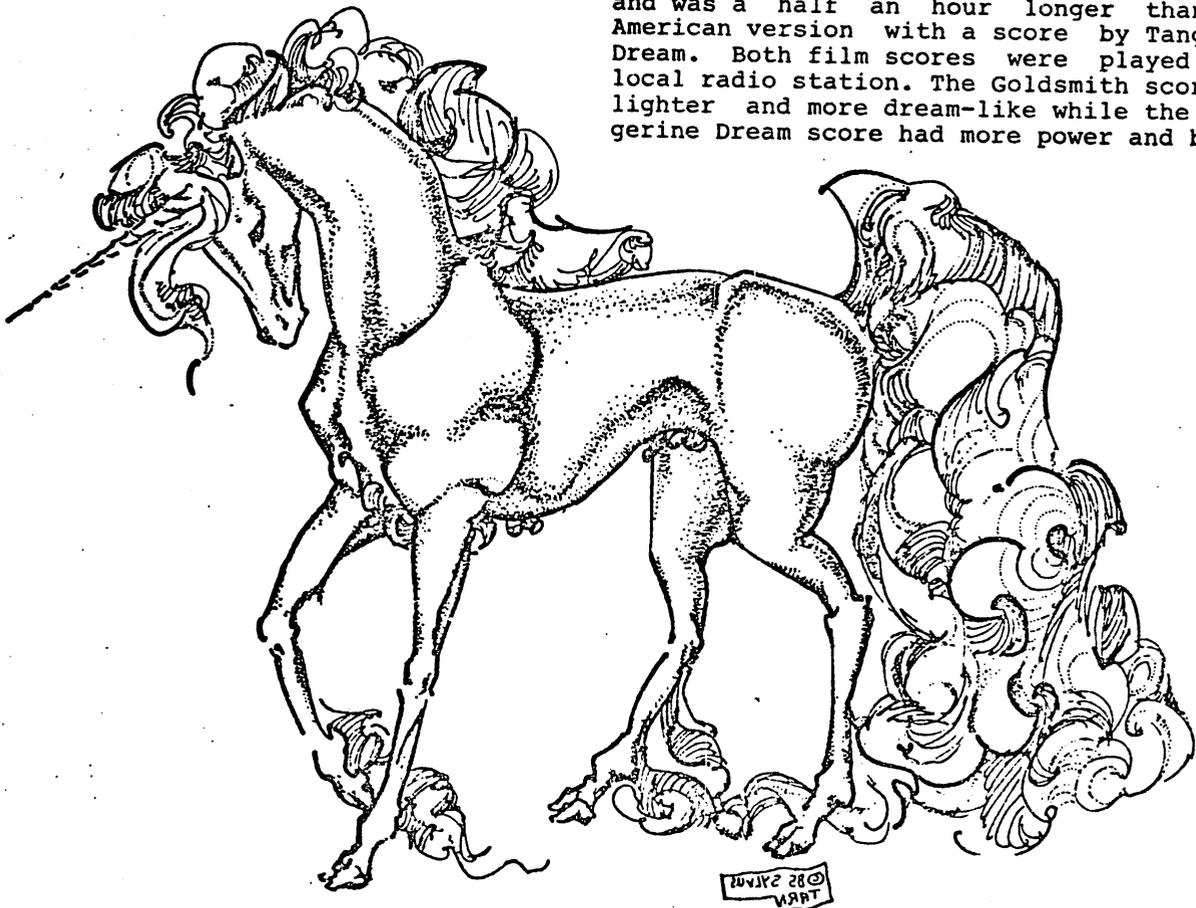
Lili is a princess, but she loves to run through an enchanted forest where she meets her platonic love, Jack, a boy of the forest. Jack knows the secrets of the forest and takes Lili to see the last two unicorns. Lili cannot resist petting the unicorns and in doing so makes them vulnerable to the

Prince of Darkness. These unicorns, it seems, were all that kept the world out of eternal darkness and unending winter. Jack must go off in search of the horn of the slain unicorn. It is a common fairy story and is often less than enthralling.

Scott's sets in Legend are almost as detailed as his sets were for Bladerunner, though in most cases the sets are somewhat easier to create here. If anything, the sets are over-cluttered with fantasy touches. Every scene looks like it could be an illustration from a book of fairy tales, with one exception. Scott's unicorns are horses with horns. Scott has either given in to the popular misconception of bad modern fantasy artists, or has never bothered to look up "unicorn" in the dictionary. (A unicorn is supposed to have the tail of a lion and the hindquarters of a stag.)

The make-up effects were done by Rob Bottin, who did an excellent job with the werewolves in The Howling. Some of the make-up effects work well in Legend, particularly in the make-up for some of the elves and in most scenes of the Prince of Darkness. However, our first scene of the Prince of Darkness has him in the dark but painted with glowing black-light paint and that effect is most unconvincing, as are some of the witch make-up jobs early in the film.

Legend has been embroiled in problems over its release. It was intended for 1985 release, but seemingly ran into problems, was re-edited and released in two versions. In Britain it had a score by Jerry Goldsmith and was a half an hour longer than the American version with a score by Tangerine Dream. Both film scores were played on a local radio station. The Goldsmith score was lighter and more dream-like while the Tangerine Dream score had more power and better



built a dark mood for the scenes of the Prince of Darkness.

Legend comes as close as I have seen to being a live-action version of a Disney cartoon. At times its pacing flags but it is always a spectacle for the eye, much as a Disney cartoon. It rates +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

THE WINDRIDER

by Stephanie T. Hoppe
DAW Books, 1985, \$2.95

A book review by Laura D. Todd

This book was what I call a potato-chip book: easily consumed, but with little nourishment. The protagonist is a woman named Oa, a princess of the Gandish Empire who is forced to flee and renounce her position when political machinations threaten her lover's life.

Beyond the borders of the Empire, in a land of untamed steppes, she encounters the Windriders. These free spirits share a semi-telepathic rapport with their Windsteeds, and tend the "herdbeasts" who roam the plain. Though their relationship with their steeds is supposed to be of paramount importance to them, this aspect is not stressed by the author. Instead, their major pre-occupation seems to be a ceaseless struggle for rank via a periodic combat ritual. Those who fall to the bottom in rank lose their Windsteeds and become "housebound", a dependent, embittered servant class.

The greater part of this tale consists of Oa's struggle for rank and power within the Windrider hierarchy. There are interpersonal struggles and finally a conflict with the expanding Empire itself. The book is smoothly written and entertaining enough, but the plot drags in places and several developments are not resolved.

Most of all, what makes The Windriders a unsatisfying book is the lack of appeal in any of the characters. Oa's flight from the Empire is motivated by love, but after that it becomes apparent that she took the Empire with her. She never loses her royal arrogance. I kept waiting for her to show any love, compassion or humility, but she never does. Occasionally she doubts herself and feels a vague discontent with her life, but overall her will to gain power remains her dominant characteristic. The other Windriders aren't much better. They show no concern for those who swear fealty to them or depend on them for livelihood. Likewise, within their own ranks they seem to have no family ties or affection for each other. In fact, I wondered what held this culture together.

A lot of authors today are striving to create strong female protagonists. Oa certainly qualifies. In fact, she is as arrogant and cold as the "macho" stereotypes we all decry. That was why I never really became involved in The Windriders. I actually found myself hoping something awful would happen to Oa, just so she would grow up and start acting like a decent human being.

A TRAVELLER IN TIME

by Alison Uttley, 1986

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

In order to regain her strength after an illness, an adolescent girl is sent to her aunt's ancient farmhouse in the English countryside. She falls under the spell of the house, at first only seeing people from Elizabethan times, but later traveling back in time herself. She falls in love and becomes involved in a plot to save Mary, Queen of Scots.

Uttley's writing style reminds one of the beauty of the English countryside but the book, though not labeled as such, appears to be aimed at a juvenile audience, since none of the characters show the development an adult reader might hope for. As such, however, it is recommended for younger audiences, particularly those who have just studied the era in school.

Two other notes: the book was originally written in 1939, which may explain the style; the spelling of the title as it is on the book (perhaps the British preference is "traveller" instead of "traveler"?).

BEYOND THE DRAAK'S TEETH

by Marcia J. Bennett
Del Rey Books, 1986, \$2.95

A book review by David M. Shea

Marcia Bennett's third novel of the world of Ver-dreek and of the interaction of its human and Ni inhabitants is, like its two predecessors (Where the Ni-Lach and Shadow Singer), enjoyable light entertainment for the reader who does not approach the book with too high expectations.

Ver-draak orbits a close binary system. Nearly a thousand years ago, humans came to Ver-draak and settled in its subtropical areas. The humanoid natives, the Ni-Lach, accepted the human presence calmly, and for centuries Ni and human lived peacefully side by side. Some of the crystal-eyed, green-haired Ni even worked for humans as the Draak Watch, using their talents to control the dinosaur-like draak which are one of the planet's major hazards. However, for reasons not quite clear (one hesitates to use a nasty term like "plot device"), the lords of the human city-state Sarissa perceived a threat from the yet unexplained Ni talents, and embarked on a genocidal war. Many Ni were killed and some enslaved; the remainder fled to other areas of the planet. (These stories are covered in the first two books, to which this volume is related but not exactly sequential.)

In Beyond the Draak's Teeth, Bhaldivin, a young Ni who has been in a state of apparently psychotic withdrawal since being brutalized and mutilated in childhood, conventionally recovers his mind. The humans who had ignored the useless halfwit are quick to see

possibilities in owning Bhaldivin, especially when it becomes clear that he has some of the talents of a draak singer---those Ni who by the power of song can control the fearsome draak. Killing and treachery soon surround the helpless prisoner as humans fight over him, with total disregard for his own wishes. In time, as he learns the skills of a draak singer from another captive Ni, Bhaldivin realizes that his only hope for freedom is to cooperate with a mad project of his captor: a journey across the brutal mountain range called the Draak's Teeth in search of the legendary first human city. Though the goal itself means nothing to him, Bhaldivin joins the company attempting the journey on the doubtful premise that he will be given his freedom if they succeed.

The usual comparison made about Bennett's writing is to early Andre Norton. A comparison which seems more apt to this reader would be the early Marion Zimmer Bradley -- about the point of, say, Star of Danger. Bennett has the same knack which both of those esteemed ladies possess, that of making her characters come alive, and she knows how to get on with her story, such as it is. The book is sensibly structured and adequately written, although Bennett has a long way to go before she achieves the prose level of either of the writers mentioned above. (Of the hero's captivity: "Six days of being trussed hand and foot had tested him both mentally and physically." To which one is tempted to make the traditional rejoinder, "Hey, no shit....")

There's nothing wrong with this book except that it operates on about the same emotional level as Star Wars. In other words, it's a juvenile. It's a perfectly good juvenile. Probably I would have like this book a lot if it had been available when I was fifteen. As it stands, the adult reader may find the Ni a little too saccharine to be quite believable; it's comforting, for example, to see Bhaldivin succumb to the un-Ni urge to punch one slaver in the snoot. To the reader who is looking for a reasonable facsimile of the wonder found at the age of fifteen reading early Andre Norton or Robert Heinlein books, this is a perfectly readable choice. It could also be recommended to any literate fifteen-year-olds, if you know any (if there are any...).

GALAPAGOS

by Kurt Vonnegut
Delacorte Press, 1985, \$16.95

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

I really enjoyed this book. The fact that I read it in the Galapagos has nothing to do with it.

Galapagos is the story of the "beginning of the human race" in 1986, told a million years in the future by a ghost who has seen it all. It starts in Guayaquil, Ecuador's major port and largest city. The Bahia de

Darwin is about to set sail on "The Nature Cruise of the Century" to the Galapagos Islands. Originally scheduled to carry the great (or at least the famous) personages of our time, it has been reduced by financial crisis, economic collapse, and threats of war to carry ten passengers and a captain to fulfill their destiny as the ancestors of the "human race". The "human race" in this book is a race of fur-covered seal-like descendents of what we think of as the human race (which the narrator refers to as the "big brains").

The picture of Guayaquil gradually sinking into chaos as the world situation degenerates is well drawn. Vonnegut has traveled to Guayaquil and the Galapagos and it shows. (One minor quibble --- the Galapagos has no vampire finches as he describes. On islands populated mostly by birds and reptiles, what would they feed off of? Vonnegut is certainly allowed this literary license; I just feel obligated to point out that it is literary license.)

Anyway, our cast of characters includes a drunken captain, a middle-aged widow, a slick con artist, a Japanese couple, a millionaire, his daughter and her seeing-eye dog, and six Kanka-Bono girls who speak no English or Spanish. (I realize that I have listed more than the ten passengers I mentioned earlier. They don't all make it to the ship; Vonnegut tells you this from the start.) How they come together and how they produce "the human race" is reminiscent of Stapledon's Last and First Men, though considerably shorter. The device of the first-person ghostly narrator has an interesting effect in that, although the attitude of the narrator is clear, Vonnegut's opinions are not so clear. Does he believe (as the narrator does) that the "big brains" were stupid and useless and an evolutionary dead-end? Or does he have the narrator present these ideas in such a manner that the reader is supposed to see how wrong they are? How you interpret Galapagos will depend in large part on how you perceive mankind, technology, and progress. Read it and decide for yourself.

EYES OF FIRE:

Things That Go (Natty) Bumpo in the Night

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

CAPSULE REVIEW: An unusual horror film set in pre-Revolutionary back-woods America. After a shaky start, this horror film has some unexpected thrills as settlers move into a valley cursed by Indians whose spirits live inside trees. Not always coherent, but often surprising.

Somebody once described war as being sheer boredom punctuated by moments of stark terror. That's not a bad description for Eyes of Fire, a rather unconventional horror film. To begin with, it is set in the forests of pre-Revolutionary America. It has

Pulp & Celluloid

been a good long time since I have seen any film with that historical setting. A genuine horror film set in "Last of the Mohican" country is a real oddity.

A preacher who has spent some time in a backwoods community has soured his welcome by fooling around with one of the local women. He is saved from hanging by the daughter of a witch whom he has taken in and who appears to have some of her mother's talent. The preacher, his paramour, her children, the witch's mother daughter, and assorted hangers-on set off to find a better place. Instead, they discover a hidden valley cursed by Shawnee Indians whose souls live in trees that at times take on human faces. As our intrepid band are establishing a settlement they start facing dangers that old Dan'l Boone never imagined. Bloody corpses reach out of the ground, swamp creatures grab the unwary, children get sucked into trees, Indian bands in various degrees of undress appear from nowhere, attack, and disappear.

This is clearly not a glossy, professionally finished film. But as films like Night of the Living Dead, Carnival of Souls, or Lemora have demonstrated in the past, horror is one genre in which a film can overcome rock-bottom budgets and even high-school acting to still be effective. I liked Poltergeist but, frankly, this film is often just as effective and the whole film probably cost no more than one or two scenes of the Spielberg film.

In spite of its slow start, give Eyes of Fire a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

THE FRANKENSTEIN PAPERS

by Fred Saberhagen
Baen Books, 1986, \$3.50

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

Saberhagen did such a wonderful job with his "Dracula" series (The Holmes-Dracula File, An Old Friend of the Family, Thorn, and Dominion, as well as The Dracula Tape) that I was eagerly looking forward to this novel. What a disappointment!

Told in the dual first-person (half by Benjamin Franklin's son, half by monster), it suffers from the division of point-of-view. Had the monster told the entire tale it might have been better. The addition of Franklin seems to be more so that famous personages can be discussed than for any real dramatic reason. And the denouement is both predictable and disappointing. Read Saberhagen's "Dracula" books, but skip this one.

THE DRASTIC DRAGON OF DRACO TEXAS

by Elizabeth Scarborough
Bantam Spectra, 1986, \$3.50

A book review by David M. Shea

This rather odd book seems to draw its inspiration jointly from Jules Verne and The

perils of Pauline. Set in the American Southwest of the 1870s, it chronicles the adventures and misadventures of one Pelagia Harper, late of San Francisco. Miss Harper is a vivacious Victorian virgin (with a suspiciously complete knowledge of the seamier sides of life) who, feeling her style will be cramped by a prospective stepmother, set out on her own. Pelagia proposes to support herself by writing western adventure stories, a task for which she is manifestly incompetent, but never mind. Thus she heads for Texas to do "research". Pelagia is soon kidnapped by drunken Indians, who seem to have in mind a Fate Worse Than Death, but have second thoughts about a gang-rape after being frightened by a large, green, fire-breathing dragon of hippophagous habits. So the venturw will not be a complete loss, the Indians sell her to the notorious white trader, Frank Drake, for the modest price of three horses. Pelagia ingratiates herself at Drake's trading post of Fort Draco, Texas (got it? Drake? Draco? Dragon?) by insisting she is a famous writer ("Valentine Lovelace") and will reimburse Drake for the cost of the horses by writing his life story.

Meanwhile (back at the pass) the various locals---of whom there seem to be an inordinate number considering that the desolate landscape is unlikely to support such a population---are all convinced that the other group is stealing and quick-frying their livestock (rimrock them woolies); and while white, Indian, and Mexican men are chasing each other around the desert in circles (they went that-a-way), it is left to the plucky Pelagia and the Fort Draco Ladies Aid Society to run the trading post, haul water from the spring, and deal with the dragon. The latter, incidentally, has little to do in the story, other than eating horses and providing a flimsy excuse for publishing this as a genre book.

Presumably all this is intended to be humorous, or at least whimsical. Humor being a highly subjective phenomenon, others may find more levity in the story than did this reader. I have something which serves me for a sense of humor (TV's Cheers has been known to reduce me to rolling helplessly on the floor), but the first chuckle which Drastic Dragon elicited from me was on page 80, and the second was on page 146. By that point I was not exactly skimming, but certainly reading less attentively. It should also be noted that from the extensive list of people the author thanks for help with the book, it was extensively researched to seem "authentic". It certainly achieves an authentic patronizing attitude toward Mexicans and other non-whites....

Due to an idiosyncratic policy at my local SF bookstore, I got this book, effectively, free. At that price it was not a bad value. I could not honestly recommend, however, that anyone else go out and pay \$3.50 for this. If it sounds mildly appealing, wait a few months and pick it up used at half cover.

AFTER WAR

Edited by Janet Morris, 1985,

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

This collection of eleven stories of life after a nuclear war is less interesting than its introduction, in which Morris explains that her first request for such stories netted a large number of "elf stories". Although the list of contributors is impressive -- Gregory Benford, C. J. Cherryh, Ian Watson, and others -- the stories are uniformly dull. There's not one (except perhaps Watson's "When Idaho Dived") that sticks in my mind even now. Skip it.

SPACE CAMP

A film review by Mark Bernstein

It's a formula movie, and an overused formula at that. The lead actress isn't all that great. There's at least one supposedly dramatic moment that drew laughs from the audience. There's a "cute" robot, far too intelligent and self-motivated for believability, that happens to be central to the plot.

I had a great time.

Okay, maybe I'm too easy to please. Still, most of the audience was laughing and even applauding right along with me, so I can't be too unusual. Space Camp may be slick, predictable, and a little manipulative, but there's enough real tension, solid characterization, and pure enjoyment to recommend it.

The formula is an infinitely malleable one, having been used in films ranging from An Officer and a Gentleman to Police Academy. Take a small group of people with widely diverse backgrounds and personalities, put them together in a situation where they have to work together as a team to succeed, and then set up a predicament that gives each of them a chance to shine. It works well here partly because the situation, the Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, is both real and new to the screen, and mostly because the characters manage to have a little more dimension than the stereotypes you usually find in these movies. There's the boy with the "I don't care" attitude, who's only at the camp because his father bribed him to go, who has to deal with the responsibilities of leadership when he's appointed commander of his team. There's the girl who wants to be the first female shuttle commander, and wants it so badly that she's a fanatic pain in the neck much of the time. There's the twelve year old genius who wants to be Luke Skywalker. There's the black kid who really loves science, but doesn't have a lot of talent for it and has to work his ass off to succeed. Finally, there's my favorite, the Valley Girl who turns out to have a photographic memory. Leading them is a



tough, ambitious female astronaut who's still waiting for her first chance to go up.

The cast handles the characters and their interactions with considerable skill, giving a sense of reality to the friendships that develop, the arguments that occur, and the support they end up giving each other when crisis hits. The weakest link in the cast is Kate Capshaw as the astronaut. Capshaw (remember the blond twot in the last Indiana Jones movie?) has never impressed me. Some of it is a sloppiness bordering on the unprofessional -- she has a Southern accent in the early scenes that disappears later on. More subtle but more important is her seeming inability to make that last little leap into character that lets the audience forget she's an actress playing a role. She has excellent technique -- there just doesn't seem to be a lot behind it. Luckily, while Capshaw gets her share of the spotlight, so do the others.

The crisis occurs when the group is allowed to sit in the Shuttle Atlantis while and engine test is being conducted. Due to the manipulations of a robot named Jinx, that thinks it's doing its friend Max (the twelve year old) a favor, the computers report a thermal shielding failure that requires the shuttle to be launched in order to keep it from exploding. While Jinx is a pretty dumb plot device, I will give the screenwriter credit for using something other than coincidence to get them off the ground.

Once in space, the fact that Atlantis is not fully flight-ready becomes apparent. There are no long-range radio communications, so once they reach orbit they're on their own. There isn't quite enough oxygen to make it to the next landing window, so they have to rendezvous with a space station under construction to pick up an extra tank. Naturally, other difficulties arise as they go so every member of the crew has a chance for some bit of heroism.

Corny as it is, most of this works. While there are lapses (the unwanted laugh I mentioned at the beginning of this review came from the sight of two people in pressure suits attempting to hug), there are a couple of catch-your-breath surprises, and the characterization stays consistent. (There's one line late in the film that borders on classic. The Valley Girl gets the bright idea of communicating with Houston by flashing Morse Code over the telemetry -- having

read a book on Morse, she knows it. When NASA, hours later and at the last possible minute, finally notices and responds, she exclaims, "Whip me, beat me, take away my charge cards, NASA is talking!")

Thanks to believable dialogue and acting, adept direction, and a solid blending of special effects and shuttle footage, Space Camp achieves most of what it sets out to do. It's not a movie for cynics, but it will appeal to a wide audience, especially people who would like to see a shuttle flight overcome major problems and succeed in grand fashion. If emotions are going to be manipulated, far better this than Rambo.

BRAZIL

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

CAPSULE REVIEW: This is the best science fiction film of 1985, but catch this story of an Orwellian future quickly---it won't be around for long.

1984 never came. At least, not the way that George Orwell pictured it in 1984. The book was his prediction of what the next 36 years could bring, looking from the year 1948. It is a moot point of how accurate his prediction was, but the book is still a valuable yardstick for measuring our current world. It has been a valuable yardstick for years. Brazil is a new film. It does not have the track record of having been useful for years. However, it also seems to be a prediction from the year 1948 of how the world could have turned out, and today it is no less valuable than 1984 as a yardstick for measuring today's society.

In the world of Brazil technology has stagnated. The lords of creation are a megalithic bureaucracy and, apparently, the people who make heating ducts. All the technology in the world is refinements of inventions that were around at the end of World War II. (One exception, I think, is the Fresnel lens, but for society to have changed so much and for only one invention to come along is a rather telling indictment of this political system.) This is a paper-bound society in which the path to getting the smallest thing done has the form of a triangle. The greatest public enemy is a man who does repairs without red tape.

In this world one minor official, Sam Lowry, has abstract dreams of escaping the dingy crush of government world and flying free with his ideal woman. These fantasies have sapped Lowry's will to get ahead at the dismal Ministry of Information. When he finds that the woman he has been dreaming of really exists, he starts fighting the mournful inertia of the society to try to find her.

For some time, Terry Gilliam seems to have wanted to do in live-action the sort of things he did in animation for Monty Python. He nearly succeeded in Time Bandits, but the script of that film was very uneven. This time he co-authored the script with Tom

Stoppard, considered to be one of the greatest living playwrights. And the choice of Stoppard paid off. For the first time in his career, Gilliam was not just making people laugh, he was telling a story of substance. Instead of just joking about the meaning of life, Gilliam is now actually saying something about it.

Jonathan Pryce, who oozed malevolence in Something Wicked This Way Comes, carries the film as Sam Lowry. Also on hand are familiar faces like Robert De Niro, Ian Holm, Katherine Helmond, and Michael Palin. This film gets a +2 for pleasure, but on the -4 to +4 scale it can get nothing less than +3 for artistic achievement. This was the best science fiction film of 1985. A recent Film Comment takes Universal to task for releasing Stick, Jame's Joyce's Women, Creator, Morons from Outer Space, Dream Child, Wild Geese II, and Holocaust Covenant in 1985, while deciding Brazil was unreleasable. Universal is absolutely right. A film this good probably will not attract enough of the teenage audience to make it profitable. It will play at your local art theatre a week and then disappear, like Smile or Stunt Man. And just like these films, people will be rediscovering Brazil for years to come.

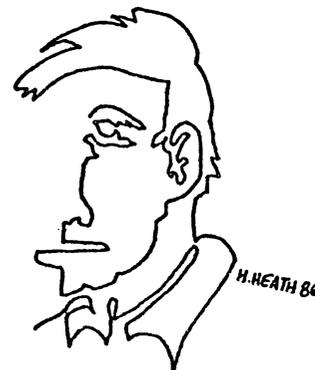
WONDER'S CHILD

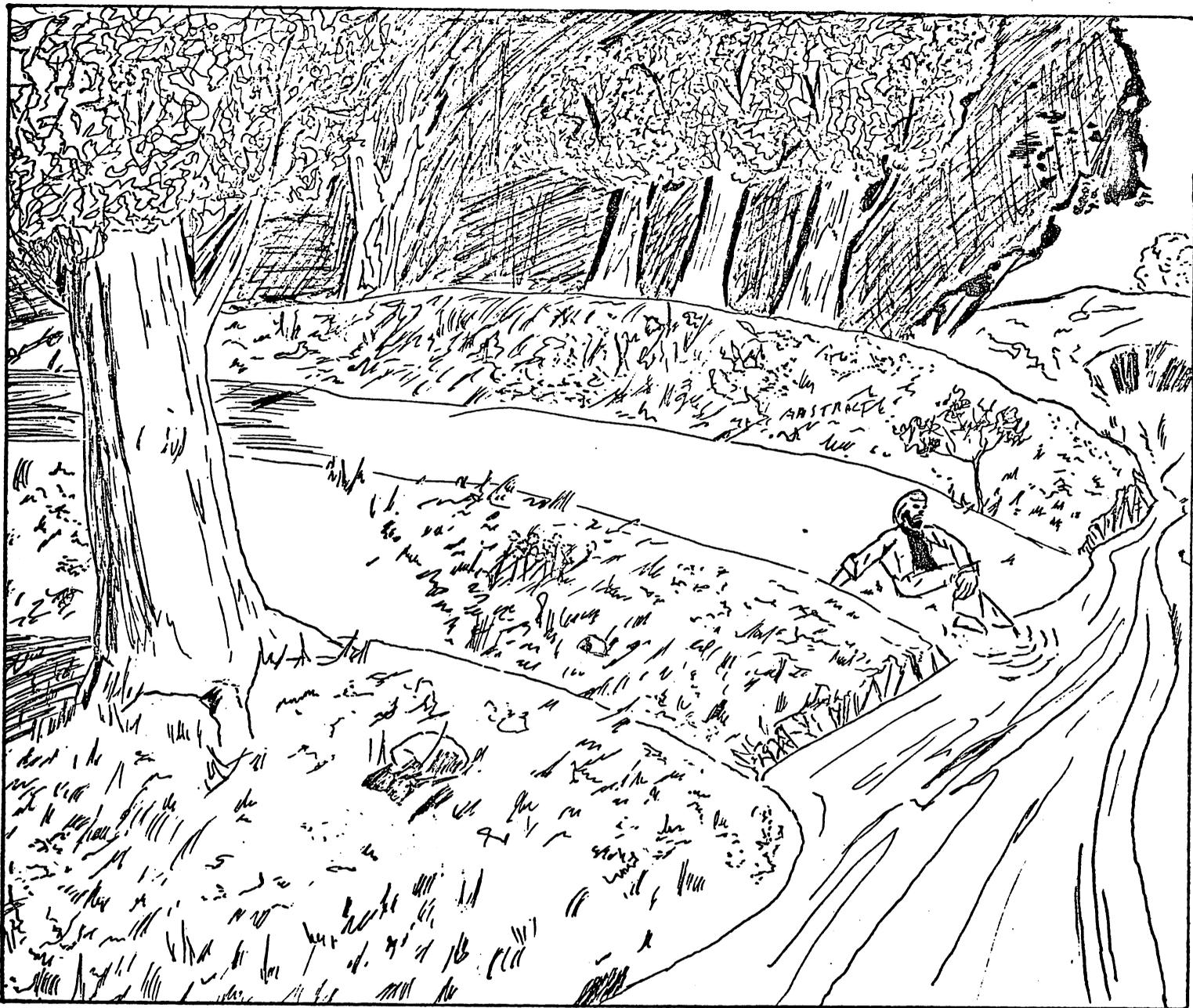
by Jack Williamson
Bluejay Books, 1984, \$15.95

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

This rather quirky autobiography has a lot going for it. For one thing, it's unselfconscious: Williamson doesn't suffer from the ego one sees in (for example) Asimov's In Memory Yet Green. For another, Williamson has led a long and interesting life, though his experiences outside of science fiction are far more interesting than those within it. If Williamson seems to gloss over the specifics of writing this story or that---well, how well could you describe events and feelings after a gap of forty years or so?

Wonder's Child won the Hugo as Best Non-Fiction Book of 1984. Some of that might have been due to an urge to honor someone who may very well be science fiction's oldest living author (I can think of no living science fiction author published before Williamson), but don't let that put you off. Wonder's Child is well worth reading.





CONREPORTS RAMBLINGS 20

by Lan

RAMBLINGS 20.1

October. The days of summer have drawn to a close, and the leaves are turning their multicolored shades of death. Autumn certainly puts on a show here, a last gasp of life to indicate that the living persists in spite of its imminent demise. Geese herald the dawn each morning, and sometimes an occasional jogger. Frost covers the grounds and cars at times, but some plants in the garden refuse to succumb to this cold, white assassin. The taller plants are now withered husks, but they protect the ones lower to the ground. Nature works wonders in harmony when left to Herself.

The cool mornings are invigorating for me. Scraping frost off the windows isn't the most fun of activities, but it chills me just enough so that when I get back into the running car, the warmth feels wonderful. I think of the deluge of white to come in a few weeks; it makes scraping the windows a bit easier.

"Powering-up" the faculty room has become my job, more because I am the first one there than because of an extreme desire on my part to do so. Still, I have an ulterior motive: if I start the coffee and hot water, there's less likely to be a problem of people using the wrong filter-baskets -- I keep one basket for coffee and one marked for hot water only; likewise separate and marked pots. I turn on the xerox machine, then head for my classroom to do work until breakfast.

The dining hall on the Cranbrook campus looks like a church from the outside, like a set out of Oliver Twist on the inside. Long tables are evenly spaced along both sides of a center aisle. The high, vaulted ceiling allows for a lot of echo and reverberation. When filled, the noise strangely enough is not deafening, although it is difficult to distinguish what is said from more than a few feet away. Breakfast is usually a quiet time. Not too many arrive at 7:10 when the kitchen opens its doors. I am among the first people through the line, and by 7:30 I am on my way back to my classroom, bag of fruit in hand for the faculty room. I pick up any supplies that go to the faculty room, and my coffee/hot pot thermos, and head for the faculty room. With both the faculty room and mine supplied for the morning, I am ready for classes.

I teach the first four periods, Algebra IIB (a slow Algebra II class) alternating with Geometry. Most other teachers balk at teaching more than two classes in a row. I like it. I would have taken five in a row, but the chairman figured I would need a break by then.

Emerging from my room after fourth period has its appeal. Although I have an entrance to the academic building from my classroom, I rarely use it. I walk outside in all sorts of weather and enter the building proper through one of the many other doors. With coffee/hot water pot in hand, I walk up the stairs and across the top of the colonnade, gazing left over the football field and the track ovaling it to the stand of trees be-

yond. The sight is impressive in the fall, the greensward stretching to the red-and-gold-colored backdrop. I then enter the building and encounter a blast of noise from the student Commons Room and the occasional smell of fruit rotting in the wastebasket. Although those containers are supposed to be emptied every day, sometimes that doesn't happen.

In the faculty room (off the student Commons Room) I rinse out my pot, fill it with hot water and make more of the same, grab a package of instant cup-a-soup, check my mailbox, and head back to my classroom. I use those two periods, fifth and sixth, productively by catching up on Service Program records, grading quizzes and tests, preparing for classes, writing up worksheets and testing materials, and occasionally reading. Sometimes students come in for extra help.

After the seventh period Geometry class, I head for the faculty room again to await the time my room will again be free (someone teaches in it eighth period), or meet with students, or even run home or to the bank.

When the academic day is over I usually leave the Cranbrook Campus. The drive home past trees now beginning to disrobe in preparation for a cold and long winter's sleep is punctuated with occasional waves to students and faculty, pauses for other cars who have the right-of-way, stops and starts at stop-signs, and slow-downs along the sharp curves. A brief in/out at the apartment to check the mail and drop off/pick up some materials, then on to Kingswood along the leaf-strewn back road to the computer room, the dorm, the faculty room, to do more work.

It's a typical day, and for the most part enjoyable.

The classes are fun to teach and very much what I like to do. The students are usually bright and sharp, and we do manage to get some good arguments in Geometry. Questions abound in all classes, so things do get pretty active and lively. This year I have been letting the students work in small groups more. I've heard some constructive arguments going on, especially with the Geometry classes, when this happens. I have to arbitrate at times, but I think this has been healthy for the students for consolidating the ideas and concepts. And there have been some group-graded assignments, which causes some interesting reactions when they get the paper back ("It's your fault we got that wrong..."). At least it's been interesting.

November. Some snow has fallen already, but the bigger storms have not yet arrived. The garden is dead, and some of the support fences stay frozen in the ground. The cold weather doesn't affect me much once my metabolism is altered to accept it. Days in the thirties feel outright warm compared to the days with temperatures in the single digits. Routines at school remain the same, with the occasional administrative directives mysterious to us who have to carry them out. An interim Chairman for the Math department was appointed without consultation of the other math teachers. Another alienation incident

between the administration and faculty. But I concentrate on my particular tasks, the classes, and the detestable Service Program. My sights are on the end of January when I hand over the records and materials of the Program to the second semester people. My colleagues in this semester's venture feel the same.

The few days after CONCLAVE were spent getting the students through some material, and testing on it before the Thanksgiving break. This was the first long vacation, and everyone was looking forward to it.

As usual, Maia and I went to my older sister's place for the traditional meal. My youngest sister was unable to make it since she had a baby a week or so prior to the holiday. Her husband Tim and daughter Sarah did show, however, leaving Jan to take care of Joshua. Tim's family was also invited, and we have a gut-bursting meal. Conversation was lively, as it usually is at our family gatherings, and Maia and I left early, since we were leaving at 6 the next morning.

CHAMBANACON

We awoke before dawn, quickly packed the car, and made our annual trip to Champaign, Illinois, for CHAMBANACON. This particular convention is my anniversary-con. I started going to full weekend conventions with this one back in 1975, and have made every one of them since. An additional reason for going to this one is that we are good friends with Tim and Anna Zahn. If you read Analog, you may recognize Timothy Zahn's name. If you follow the Hugos, his name is quite familiar as he has been nominated several times in the past few years. His novels are now receiving the good reviews they deserve, and he has more in the works. Tim will be the Pro GOH at CONTRAPTION this Spring, and we are looking forward to that.

One aspect of this convention is that it is a filkers' relaxacon, a place for SCAers, and home of the midnight swims. Because of the layout and placement of the pool, there is no skinny-dipping. But the con has the pool reserved from 11 PM to 1 AM on Friday and Saturday nights, provided there's a Life Guard. And traditionally I have been the Life Guard, ever since Al Babcock (the former conchairman) David Brim (the current conchairman) found out that I had my Red Cross Lifesaving. So that's another reason for going to the con.

The filksings are usually quite good. This year a couple of the better filkers did not make it to the con: Murray Porath and Margaret Middleton. And I was hoping to spend a lot of time talking to Sharon Porath and Margaret -- well, Sharon wrote and said that she would be at CONFUSION.

One tradition that has cropped up for us is the annual lasagna dinner with the Zahns, with Tim making the main course. It's the best lasagna I've had, and we reciprocate with various baked goods from my oven (usually cinnamon bread), and usually take them out to dinner at INCONJUNCTION (if we can

afford it). While at their place, Tim showed me his new computer which has doubled his writing output. So I am looking forward to more Zahn novels and stories.

I talked to a lot of people at CHAMBANACON, including Don Blyly and Jane Strauss, Rusty Hevelin, Gregg Ketter, Erin McKee, Buck Coulson, Dick Spellman, Mike Brim and Paula Robinson. Paula had sent me a story for LANTERN #19, and I returned the original to her. She told me that she had revised it, and would send me a copy of that. We also talked about several other things.

Andy Offutt is the perennial Guest of Honor for CHAMBANACON, and once again I missed his speech. I didn't get to the banquet room in time. Fortunately, he sent me a copy of it, which is published in this issue of the LANTERN (see the tan-colored pages).

Tim was on a panel with Glen Cook on Saturday morning, talking about writing. The audience was so small that they didn't sit on the risers; rather they sat with the audience. I listened and contributed some stories about publishing that I knew, and everyone had a good time for that hour and a half.

Early Sunday afternoon we started back home. The weather forecast was for rain and some snow, so we wanted to get ahead of it. We arrived home without incident.

RAMBLINGS 20.2

The following Wednesday I cracked two ribs, and a week and a half after that we went to Toronto for the annual Doris and Hania Christmas Party.

Maybe I better back up and talk about the injury.

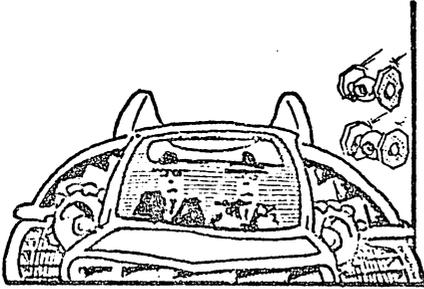
At CONCLAVE Susie Stefl had asked if I could help out in testing her lifesaving class. She needed another victim for the water test, someone she could trust not to be obnoxious to the students as they went through their paces. Being an experienced lifeguard and water-safety instructor, I agreed, and subsequently showed up at the pool on the appointed evening, the Wednesday after CHAMBANACON. Suzi Stefl was glad to see me, and I watched the students warm up and practice while she furiously tried to grade the written tests before starting the water test.

The first "station" was the life-saving leap, a long swim from the deep to shallow end and back, pick up an unconscious victim, put into a hair-carry, carry to shallow end and back, and a lift from the deep end onto the pool deck. The first person did fine. The second person did fine also, until the lift from the pool. He did not lift me high enough before bringing me into the wall, and I felt the ribs crack. I still went on with the tests, since the pain eased, but it came back as time went on.

The next day I went to the clinic (we have an HMO plan). Three hours and 5 x-rays later the doctor confirmed the "splinter fractures of the 8th and 9th ribs on the left side." However, he couldn't do anything

for them, except write out a prescription for something to relieve the pain. He didn't even tape them.

So I went to Toronto in slight discomfort, but with little trouble, except for the Alliance. The car began to misbehave about 80 kilometers from Toronto. It started to buck and misfire, then would stop and run smooth again. When we got into the city, it looked as though we had no headlights, although from the reflection in the bumpers of the car in front of us, we could see the lights shining. The snow we were driving through could have nothing to do with it, could it?



The next morning I checked the lights and there was ice 5 centimeters thick on the glass. I could find nothing wrong with the engine or wires. When we got back we found out that the wires had hardened and the distributor cap needed replacing. The car also needed a tune-up.

When we got to Mike and Doris' place, they treated us to an short episode from that evening's Twilight Zone on their VCR. It was based on a Joe Haldeman short story called "I of Newton," a "deal with the devil" story. It was marvelous. We stayed up and talked, then retired for the evening.

The next day Maia and I went into downtown via the subway and bus system. We wanted to do a little shopping, and visit both The Silver Snail, a comic store, and Bakka, a SF bookstore. Our friend Tanya Huff worked at Bakka, and we surprised her there. I bought a couple of books as gifts for one of the girls in the dorm. At The Silver Snail I found copies of a series of four magazine-sized books on The Avengers, the British TV series, by John Peel (no relation to Emma). I was sorely tempted to buy them, but I didn't have enough money for that. Since then I have obtained the complete set.

That evening was the party--at Hania's apartment. Lots of people showed up. There was a lot of food and snacks, and Mike again played "I of Newton" for everyone on Hania's VCR. I had several good conversations with Peter Roberts, Jack Brooks of Bakka, Heather Ashby, Roane Simkin and Ray Thompson, Kevin Davies and Susan, Brad Westervelt and Wendy Council, Mike and Doris, Mike Harper and Sue Levy, Hania and many others.

We left fairly early on Sunday. We were unsure of the car, and we both had things to do for the following week. Maia had exams, and I had to put together tests and quizzes to finish off some topics before Christmas break.

On the last day before vacation I gave my geometry students a "pop" quiz. They were somewhat worried and resentful, since they had had a test the day before. Once they started it, they enjoyed it. It consisted of multiple choice and matching questions about soda-pop.

Once school was out, I spent my "relaxation" time by working on the fanzine. I wanted LL #19 done for CONFUSION so I could hand out copies there. We also fulfilled some family obligations. We travelled down to Columbus, Ohio, to visit Maia's family. We also made it a point to see some friends as well, and stop at Arvey's Office Supply. We always stop there whenever we visit Columbus. The place has the best prices for paper, office supplies, and printing supplies. They also have some computer disks -- 10 for \$16, but they were on sale for \$13. I picked up some colored paper for the cover of the next LAN'S LANTERN at \$3.01 per ream.

Anyway, the visits to my inlaws were fun. Maia's sister Joy has 4 children (2 natural, 2 adopted which happen to be older) and they did make opening presents on Christmas morning fun. Right after that we jumped in the car and drove back to Michigan to spend the rest of the day at my parents' place with my three sisters and their families and my brother. We didn't stay too late, claiming exhaustion from travelling so much for the last couple of days. Besides, we still had to open our own presents. Maia got me a couple of books--Miss Piggy's Guide to Life and The Avengers Anew, which gives plot summaries of The Avengers shows with Gambit and Purdy as well as lots of pictures of Cathy Gale, Emma Peel, and Tara King -- and a pair of jeans. I got Maia a pound of cashews, a couple of books on Mozart (her favorite composer), and a colored TV set. Actually, the set was for both of us.

The rest of the vacation was spent in going to lots of parties, catching up on sleep and paperwork for school, seeing a few movies, apahacking, and working on the fanzine.

The New Year's Party at Chris Clayton's was very enjoyable--lots of good food, people, and conversation. I had extended talks with Halina Harding, George and Diana Hunt, Jennifer Dye, Tom Barber, Tara Edwards, and Chris himself. We interrupted everything to watch the ball come down in Time's Square, drank a toast to the old and new year, then continued talking. The weather continued clear and cold, and there were no incidents on the ride home.

We had three weeks of class before exams when we all returned from the Winter Break. Exams went well for me, not so well for some of my students, especially the kids in my Algebra IIB class (the slow Algebra II). Out of the 31 students 11 actually failed; with the scaled scores, 7 still failed. However, the semester grades (of which the exam counted either 25% or 1/3, whichever would give them a higher grade) were much better. No one failed there, but there were a few D's.

My Geometry classes did the best any of my geometry students have ever done. Two of the three A+ grades came from my students. I

((Continued on page 60))

CHAMBANACON
GUEST OF HONOR
SPEECH

Uncle Andy's Advice

by Andrew Offutt

(c) 1985 by Andrew J. Offutt

Last June, National Geographic Magazine told us about a questionnaire handed to various high school, and then college students. Some of them named Canada as one of the 50 United States. Three thought Albania was the capital of New York. Only 21% knew the Nile River is in Africa, and 19% thought that Africa was a country. Six thought that Josef Stalin was a Prussian dictator who started World War II and that Karl Marx was a comedian. Others placed Nigeria on six different continents. And so on. Some didn't know in what country the Mississippi River flows, much less the Amazon.

The editor of Geographic was appalled, and so was I. I had thought it was just English that our schools had stopped teaching!

Jane West of El Cajon California---that's in Lithuania, right?---wrote the following brief letter to the Geographic:

"What is so upsetting about the majority not knowing where the Amazon River is? What earthly good does it do a physician or clergyman to know this? If college students don't know where the Amazon is, it's my hope that they are learning, instead, to solve problems, to be risk-takers, and to apply the knowledge of their given specialty. It's counterproductive to clutter the mind with unnecessary information."

This makes the ninth time I have read that letter. I just keep going back to it, the same way you keep poking your tongue at that swollen place on your gum that hurts so much when you poke it with your tongue. "Appalling" is a mild word to apply to that letter. It's appalling that Jane West signed her name to it!

Because it comes from someone who shows signs of education, I consider that the most

ignorant statement I have ever read. "It's counterproductive to clutter the mind with unnecessary information." Surely it would not be possible to write anything more directly antithetical to the truth, to reality! Oh, true, attempting to define the entirely subjective term "unnecessary information" could occupy the planet's best debate team for a decade or more. Yet surely not to "clutter" the mind with "unnecessary" information is subhuman!

Where better to bring such a piece of massive ignorance than to a group of us bright folk who read the most imaginative form of literature, the one that demands the most of the reader -- knowing that every one of us here has done its level best to clutter its mind with as much "unnecessary information" as possible!

This is the season for saying "God bless us, one and all!" Let's make it "Plato, Aristotle, Johnny Swift, and Ben Franklin bless us all!"

By the way, what is important, necessary information and doubtless The Burning Issue of Our Time is exemplified by the cover of a recent TV Guide:

Is KNOTT'S LANDING
Now Better Than
DALLAS or DYNASTY?

Jodie Offutt and I have never seen any of those three telesoapseries, and we wear that fact as a badge!

My mind is marvelously cluttered with unnecessary information. Now that I have reached A Certain Age--the aging process exacerbated by going to SF/fantasy conventions for the past sixteen years -- I dare to tell you of various resolutions I have made over the years, and urge them upon you. Some are serious, some un-. Herewith then,

<|> Uncle Andy's Advice <|>
<> to His Fellow Earthlings <>

To me this is a big one: Vow never to buy from anyone who shouts at you, whether it's on the street, from the TV, the radio, or in church.

Never take seriously anyone who pronounces the word "now" as "At this time/tyeem" or even more monstrous, "At this point in tyeem."

Or anyone who says "basically" or "ongoing" more often than once a month.

Make that every two months.

Do start a campaign to get PBS or even George Lucas to make a film of Shakespeare's Henry IV and Henry V, starring our own Al Frank as Sir John Falstaff.

Don't wear your politics out on your sleeve.

This want's some amplification. Most of us have a kneejerk response to this and that. I say that I'm above that, but most of you know how I respond to being told what to do; to authority symbols. We also tend to mouth that which is In; the popular; what we think the other person probably wants to hear. A real In In cliché, for instance, is bad-mouthing all conservatism, the convention hotel, the banquet food, and Lin Carter. (Welll...OK, one of those is consistently justified)

It is very In to be liberal or pretend to be.

One way to do this is to disparage whatever president is in office. Six or seven years ago I was talking with someone whose friendship I really wanted, for some reason. As we conversed, I made a casual reference to President Carter as "President Weak." It didn't occur to me that not all intelligent people agreed (or that not all people are intelligent) and that furthermore I might offend someone. I did.

That person didn't say anything; didn't challenge me or argue. He just pretty much clammed up and we weren't friends. Three years later I learned why, from a third party.

Wearing my political comments on my sleeve cost me something I wanted.

Now Carter is out and Reagan is in. Twice the majority have chosen him over his opponents. That means that a few more people fa-
vor President Reagan than don't; maybe be-
cause he taught us that inflation isn't an inevitable constant. Yet let his name come up, or a reference to educational funds in the presence of a college student or parent of one, or to some other individual personal issue...and up jerks the knee and out comes a crack or a standard anti-whoever's-in-power cliché.

I don't take Locus; I take Andy Porter's Science Fiction Chronicle because Porter strives to be honest. I also like Andy Porter; he used to come to MIDWESTCONS and I first met him there a decade ago. Yet a few months ago, in a very brief editorial, he

swiftly offended me twice, without ever thinking. One was a crack about the President. It was a dumb one: Porter was faulting him for not being liberal once he'd been elected because he's a conservative. Stupidity offends me, yes. The other was a reference to the Atlanta WorldCon. Brooklyn-born and still there, Andy Porter wrote "so I guess we'll have grits along with rubber chicken at the banquet."

That's doubly stupid, and betrays bigotry besides. To begin with, he was making a cute kneejerk-mindless crack about the south, the gilded New York bigot! For another he was merely mouthing a stupid cliché; I've had so-so food and even not-so-good food at some banquets, but we can always depend on the chicken. What's "rubber chicken" mean? Nothing; it's just a dam' dumb cliché.

Now I will bet you money that kneejerk iggurunce cost Andy Porter some subscriptions and some respect. It surely gained him some animosity. And to what purpose; to what gain? Zero. You can bet he considers himself a liberal and free of bigotry, too! I maintain my sub, but he cost himself my respect.

Yeah, I think he'd care, if he knew.

When I say "don't wear your politics on your sleeve," then, I use "politics" quite broadly; symbolically.

It's just a matter of learning to control your mouth. And your knee.

* * * * *

I voted for Jimmy Carter, by the way. I soon considered it a mistake. Maybe you did and don't consider it a mistake. OK. We don't need to talk about that.

* * * * *

Now back to the heavyweight stuff.

Be mighty careful about taking advice from orange people. If TV people aren't competent enough to make their commercials in proper color, what do you think you can expect of what they're peddling?

Root for the University of Kentucky.

Vow never to catch yourself mouthing the phrase "hands-on experience." It means "doing it by doing it", and how can you possibly do it without doing it? In other words -- what the bloody hell is "hands-off experience"? Who can define "hands-off computer use"?? Along with "ongoing" and too many others, this is called JARIC: Just Another Rotten Idiomatic Cliche -- Used By Those Who Refuse To Think.

Listen to yourself and try not to mouth clichés. Why try to be mindless? That's not for us fans, that's for dummies. You know --sitcom writers and the government and Glen Larson and back cover blurb writers.

Support your favorite author.
Better still, support me.

Never drink alone. Drink only when you have company.

This is the best reason I know for keeping a cat. Cats count. (So do goldfish.)

If you love space opera, read Ann Maxwell and F. M. Busby. They're the queen and King.

Write a fan letter every now and then. When you just read a book that's better than the last one you read, for instance. All publishers forward mail addressed to writers in care of the publisher, and nearly all of us answer nearly all mail. Roger Zelazny sends handwrit postcards!

As a corollary, when you read something really rotten and are able to say why, write the editor, not the writer. Go on. It takes about the same amount of time as perpetrating one more book review, and can bring rewarding response.

Root for the Reds.

Always try very hard to throw up in Long John Silver restaurants. Creeps who think open-mouthed crunching [crunnch-chommp!] "sounds good to me" and inflict it again and again on us on both radio and telly are obviously unoffendable.

Also taste-free, not even to mention sub-human.

They love it. Why, I threw up in a Long John's just last Tuesday and received a free coupon! Run right out and do it, Do It!

Buy my books.

Loan my books. Only one per person, however. First you suck 'em in, then you cut 'em off so they buy their own, right?

I and several breweries will thank you forever or nearly.

When someone mentions having gotten a good deal on a purchase, and/or says what she paid and you paid less or know she could have gotten a better deal at your store...be humane. That is to say, be HUMAN. Keep Your Mouth Shut. The only purpose served by telling someone he could have done better if only -- is sadism. Remember that this practice was invented by Caligula and raised to a fine art by Marquis de Sade, and try to put yourself in better company.

You probably haven't noticed, but I never start a sentence with "I don't think" You know, as in "I don't think it'll snow tomorrow" or "I don't think it's fair to compare Shimeon Peres with Tony Perez." This too is the result of a vow. I noticed that too frequently when someone begins a sentence with "I don't think," whether written or orally, I tend to believe the first three words and consequently not to notice the rest. Since I don't want that to happen to me, my practice is not to say those three words. Naturally I recommend the practice.

Be liberated. Always pleasantly say "You're welcome" when you step aside or hold a door for someone.

Increase your volume if she doesn't thank you.

Be mighty careful about taking advice from green people. If they aren't competent enough to make their commercials in proper color, what do you think you can expect of what their peddling?

Avoid eating fish on Friday. (If you insist, try to look Methodist.)

<> Uncle Andy's <>

<> Special Convention Advice Section <>

Never go back for thirds at a con banquet. Being a hawg is one thing, but going snort snort in public is quite another. This is a consistent conversational topic for people at the head table, who are Watching.

Let's put a "Please" on this one: Please don't change out of the terrific dress-up outfit you wear to the banquet before the GoH and MC get to see you up close. I am a big fan of clothes and seeing people sharpened up. Too often at cons I get a glimpse of a great-looking suit or gown from up front, but when I at last shut up, that person vanishes instantly and reappears four minutes later in teeshirt and whocares.

Buy your favorite writer a drink.
 Better still, buy me one.

Let it be known that this is serious, good advice:

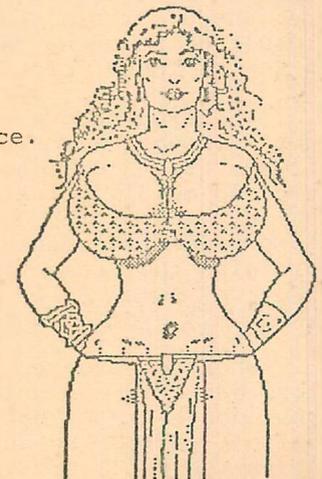
Never ask the hotel desk for a time extension. This is just asking for a refusal; it gives someone power over you, and powerless people just love that. Wait until the time you know is checkout time, and phone the desk. Act sleepy and sweetly embarrassed. Ask when checkout time is. Chances are you'll hear a smile in the voice of the person who answers.

Say embarrassingly, "I think I'm going to need more time!" Practice at home; it's worth it. The desk clerk will offer you an hour at the very least.

Works for me.

And Finally...

Be careful about taking free advice.



TYPICAL FEMALE ON DARGAS'S PLANET

--MacAndo '86

ANOTHER
CONTRAPTION

FAN Guest of Honor Speech

by Lan

Ten and a half years ago I became a fan. I wasn't dragged into fandom kicking and screaming, nor was I forced to undergo strange rites of passage to become a fan. There was no entrance exam (what sorts of questions would be asked on it, anyway?), no membership fee, no secrets that had to be passed on. Except, maybe, the "Secret Handgrip of Fandom", but that's another story.

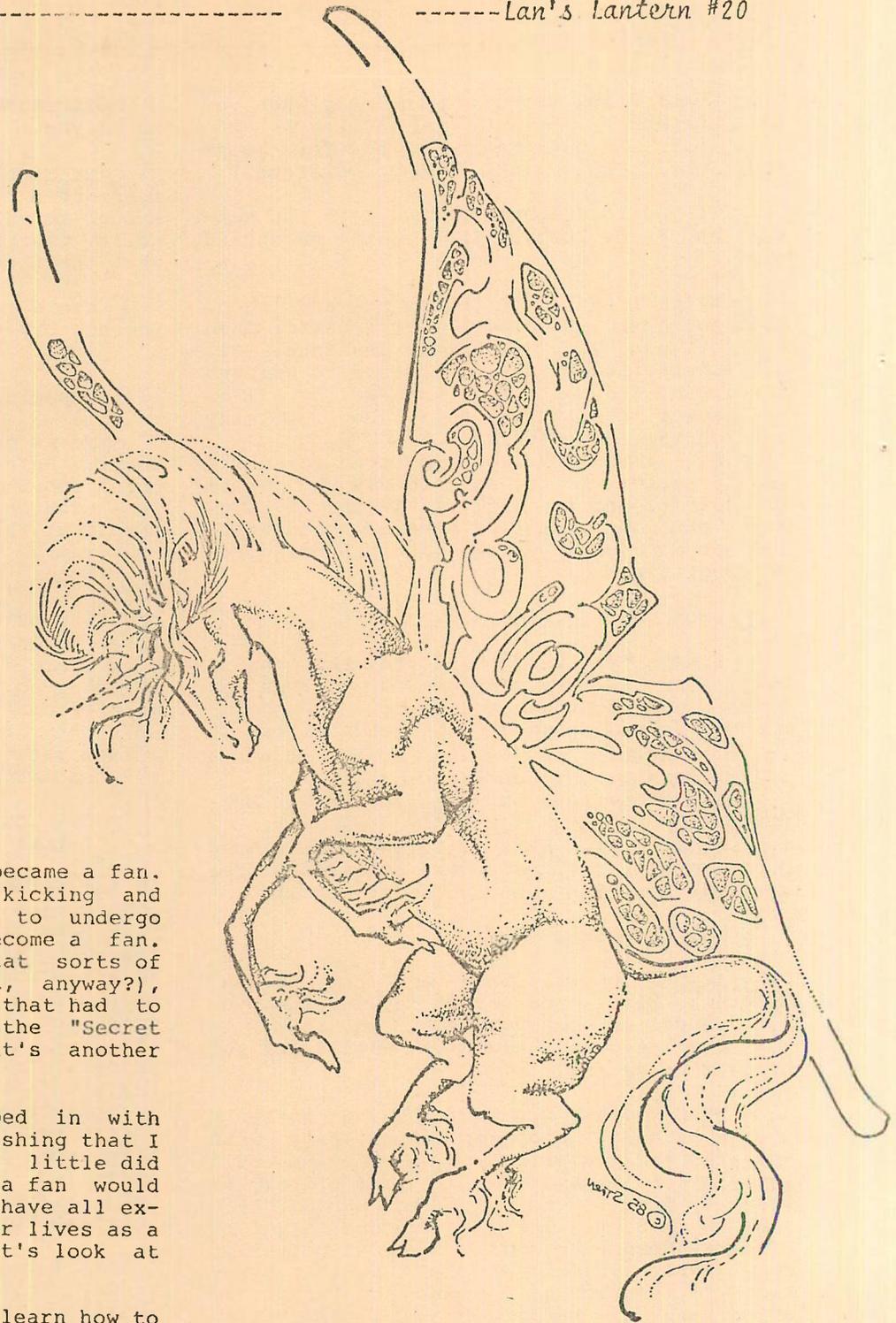
When I became a fan, I jumped in with both feet, eyes wide open, wishing that I had found it earlier. However, little did I know then the effects being a fan would have on my life. In fact, we have all experienced certain changes in our lives as a result of becoming fans. So let's look at a few of these "effects".

*When you become a fan, you learn how to get through a weekend with little or no sleep. You also learn how to survive the weekend mainly drinking liquids in the con-suite, unless the concom is solvent enough to provide free munchies. Of course, there are also the room parties which usually provide some sort of snack-food, some of which may even be nutritious.

*When you become a fan, you learn to love jacuzzis and whirlpools and saunas. If you don't know how to swim, that really doesn't matter because not too many people go in the pool, or stay in. They rinse off there and head for the aforementioned jacuzzis, whirlpools and saunas.

*When you become a fan, sometimes you get this urge to put words to paper and produce fanzines, or apazines, or maybe even write stories that get published. Or even get nominated for a Hugo. ((Look at Tim)) Or maybe be lucky enough, and talented enough, to win one.

*When you become a fan, you suddenly discover you have a "voice". You talk to people and they listen; they converse with you. It is a nice feeling to know that what you have to say does matter. Gordie Dickson



once said that people found it amazing that a group of people could be in a room and a conversation could start up in which every one listens to one person and responds intelligibly.

You sing along with people, and the only way you know if your singing voice is not good is if they leave when you start joining in. Or they turn off their cassette recorders when you start. Then there's Julia Ecklar, whose fans pack the filkroom to hear her sing.

*When you become a fan you suddenly have an outlet for all those drawings that your friends only said were "nice". Some of them may have liked unicorns, and pegasi, and other *strange* creatures you painted or drew, but in fandom you found out that fans do like them, and *understand*. You also found out how many OTHER people drew unicorns, and pegasi, and so on. So now you really have to become creative....put wings on cats, dogs, giraffes, elephants, dinosaurs, toasters, anything to be different.

*When you become a fan, you find that sometimes having a table in the hucksters room is one way of getting rid of your duplicate books, and extra fanzines, and art, especially all those drawings of unicorns, and pegasi, and other creatures. An advantage to being a huckster is that at some point everyone in the convention passes by your table. If you're lucky, they'll stop and talk, even buy something. Depending on the person, they may or may not stay long which, again depending on the person, may or may not be a *good thing*.

Which brings up the following:

*When you become a fan, you find that not all fans are sweet and kind and wonderful and generous. Most are, but many are still learning. For the most part, fans are an intelligent, caring, and tolerant lot, but they've learned to be that way, and are willing to teach others. Fandom has been described as a family. True. But as Brian Earl Brown once pointed out, families feud, bicker, quarrel and fight, as well as being kind and generous and wonderful to each other. So fandom is one big happy normal family. Right. Just don't call a fan "normal" very loudly.

*But being a huckster can cause you to miss out on certain events, program items you wanted to attend but couldn't because no one was around to watch your table. You could always close your table but you might *lose some sales*. And if you do find someone who is willing to watch your wares, chances are he or she wants to see the same program item. So sometimes you get stuck. But think of the money....or lack of it.... well, as long as you make expenses....

*When you become a fan, you learn a whole new way of telling time and placing events. My niece was born the day before we got married. I remember it was a Thursday, because we were married on the Friday of RIVERCON Weekend. We couldn't go to the con because we were also moving. Our car was purchased over a year ago, right after CONFUSION.

My family celebrates one of my nephew's birthday on the Sunday of MIDWESTCON. Another nephew was born before Thanksgiving, which for us is CHAMBANACON. That's also the convention we have a lasagna dinner because Tim Zahn cooks it for us.

The 4th of July is either WILCON or INCONJUNCTION. Labor Day Weekend is the WorldCon. And for us, Memorial weekend is MIKECON, in Toronto. Easter is still MINICON, but we unfortunately haven't been able to afford to go there the past few years.

And let's see, the last time I put out the LANTERN was in time for this last CONFUSION. And I want the next one out for MIDWESTCON, or INCONJUNCTION, or SPACECON or RIVERCON the latest. I might even have it out as early as DORSAI THING or, or even AD ASTRA.

*When you become a fan, you learn how to circumvent questions like these from your family and friends: "Why did you travel 300 miles just to go to a party on the weekend?" "Why did you spend all that time in <name any city> without going to visit your relatives?" "Why are you limping? What happened at the 'conference'?" My colleagues always call them conferences. Vernacular in the teaching profession, I guess. One way to answer the question of: "What did you do at the convention?" is to tell them the truth. "I spent a couple of hours in a jacuzzi while some lady wearing moose antlers licked chocolate mousse off my knee." Or "I spent some time watching the surfing competition in the swimming pool." Or "I got chilled standing in the parking lot waiting for the volcano to erupt." Or tell them part of the truth so they won't ask again. You know you succeeded if, after you tell them the truth, they reply: "Well if you didn't want to tell me, just say so. You didn't have to make up something!"

*When you become a fan, you learn to stay up late at night during the week, mainly to use the phone when the rates are cheapest.

*When you become a fan, you learn to spend money. Lots of it. All you have, in fact. On those things that are dear to you. And this depends on your own personal interests. I spend it on paper, postage, putting together LAN'S LANTERN, buying books and comics, and going to conventions. I'm not into costuming, so I save some money there (but that's eaten up by the record collection). We're not into gaming, so that money goes into cassette tapes, for the car, which we drive long distances to various conventions. We just purchased a computer, so some money will have to be set aside for those supplies, and the payments, of course. We don't have a VCR....yet. With any money we DO have left over, we buy food and clothes. I mean, a person DOES have to have priorities!!

*When you become a fan, you find out how many really neat people there are who are interested in the same things you are. And sometimes you find someone special with whom you can share all of this. ((Give Maia a hug))

((Continued from page 54))

am quite proud on how they did on this departmental exam. The student who got the highest grade was a freshman girl (a young freshman, only 12 years old). Geometry at Kingswood Cranbrook is normally a Junior-level course, so Lisa is really doing very well.

CONFUSION

The weekend after exams was CONFUSION, the largest of the local conventions, and I had a very good time at the con. Somtow Sucharitkul was the Pro GoH, Bill Roper (of Moebius Theatre fame) was the fan GoH, Kelly Freas was the Artist GoH, and local author/editor Bob Asprin was the Toastmaster. Apparently Somtow was a wonderful GoH, though I didn't spend much time with him. He was around a lot, talking to fans, signing autographs, etc. I spent most of my time talking to, and being with, friends. I also handed out a hundred copies of LAN'S LANTERN #18. That took care of 20% of my mailing list.

Julia Ecklar was in attendance with many Pittsburgh fans. I sat in on a run-through of "The Once and Future Jedi", a musical comedy of the Star Wars Trilogy set to the tunes of Camelot. About half of it was done at that point, with an outline of the rest. Julia is the director, writer, producer, and probably lead character of the musical. She did some of the casting, and it appears that Joey Shoji will have one of the main roles.

That Joey Shoji was at the con was a big surprise. I was delighted to see him again. This time I introduced myself, and mentioned that Michele Cox had praised his singing in D'APA. He was quite flattered at the attention. Saturday evening I got to hear him sing. He is still a bit unsure of himself--there is some quavering in the sustained notes--but his voice is clear, it carries to the back of the room so everyone can hear, and he enunciates his words. His range is wide, and the voice strong in both the low and high notes. Others I talked to agree that in another year Joey will have one of the best filking voices in fandom.

Our yearly dress-up-meal at the Jolly Miller, the restaurant attached to the hotel, went off in grand style. Four years ago one of our Toronto friends bought a feathered boa. Doris then needed a sleek dress to go with it. Once she had that, she needed a place to go to while attired in the slinky black dress and feathered boa, and, not wanting to eat alone, invited her friends to join her. This started the tradition of getting dressed to the nines and having a marvelous dinner at the Jolly Miller during CONFUSION. People have told me I look good in a tuxedo, but I think I had better drop a few pounds before putting mine on again. It was a bit tight.

RAMBLINGS 20.3

The time from CONFUSION to Spring Break is usually the slowest of the school year.

Conreports & Ramblings 20

This time, however, it wasn't too bad. The classes went well. I handed out topics for the paper I usually assigned as a third quarter requirement, and amid groans and complaints the students accepted the work. The paper was due at the end of the quarter, April 7 (which would give me two and a half days to read and grade them all to include them in the third quarter grades), which gave the students more than two months to write them.

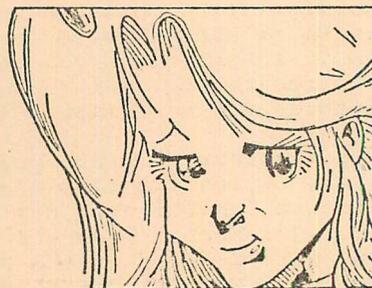
Much to my surprise and delight I no longer had to contend with the Service Program. Since I was the only "experienced" person in the Program, I fully expected to be pressed into "Service" for the second semester, despite promises to the opposite. That made the semester go much more smoothly for me. I was able to concentrate more on my classes, and work more on my fanzine.

To break up this time period from the beginning of second semester to Spring Break, the school schedules a three-day weekend in February. I usually take this particular weekend as dorm duty, and this year was no different. The weekend was rather quiet, with only about 20 students in the dorm, and I did get some work done both for classes and for the 19th issue of LAN'S LANTERN.

With the new TV set, I found that I could pull in more clearly the Toledo stations. That was fine with me. I discovered that Channel 36 was showing The Avengers on Sunday evenings, and for about a four week period, began showing them every weekday evening at 11:30. I re-arranged my schedule to accommodate watching the show, though it wasn't too much trouble since I usually stay up past midnight anyway.

Then I discovered The Sandbaggers (before Mark Leeper mentioned them--his endorsement appeared in the last issue). This British spy show lasts fifty minutes (no commercials--PBS), and has more suspense than any two-hour spy-thriller movie I've ever seen. Not only is there the weekly episode, but there is a continuing story of Neil Burnside, who is head of operations of the Sandbaggers, and of the supporting crew. It is marvelously done, and I highly recommend it.

Wendy Council and Brad Westervelt threw a February Party. This also broke up this slow time of the year. Several Toronto fans were invited as well as many local fans. During the course of the party we found out that Ray Thompson and Roane Simkin, who met at the last WINDYCON, were engaged to be married. I had some good conversations with several people, including Peter Roberts, Heather Ashby, Hania Wojtowicz, and (of course) Brad and Wendy. There was also a



snowstorm which blanketed the Southeastern Michigan area in a matter of hours. It had little effect on us: although we did have a bit of a drive, I was careful on the highway and we arrived home safely.

Contracts came out. I specifically did not want the Service Program for next year. I also wanted a raise, since I effectively got none (and even lost some money) from the previous year. In the '84-'85 school year, I had been paid extra to do the Service Program. I still had a couple other assignments, but the SP ate into a lot of my free time. At several points I had to tell kids I couldn't see them for extra help because I had to do some Service duties. For the '85-'86 school year the administration cut off the stipend, made me keep the SP, but only for one semester, and with no other duties (other than the usual ones for a teacher and resident (dorm) faculty member).

Well on the contract was Service Program, along with a list of duties normal for any faculty member. Did this mean I was going to be in charge again? I also had no other "Special Duties" listed. Other teachers I talked to did--like "Junior Class Advisor", or "Coaching Football and LaCrosse", etc. So I made an appointment to see the Headmaster, Sam Salas, and found out that he had no free time before Spring Break, and would be gone during that vacation. So, I ignored the date I was supposed to return the contract (the last day of classes before Spring Break), and made the appointment for after. I was not about to sign without my questions being answered.

Another problem was money. In the past several years the raises were small because of the economy. While cost of living expenses went up between 6% and 12%, raises went up 3% to 6%. Some of the teachers in the upper pay brackets received as low as a 1% increase. This year, the Cranbrook Educational Community (CEC) sold its Evening News Association (ENA) stock for \$45.6 million. The administration and Board of Governors looked into the question of faculty salaries, and approved a three-year plan to raise them up to the top 10% of all private independent schools nationwide, the top 25% of those schools of highest academic quality. (Of course, the 10% figure is used to impress other people, like parents and alumni/alumnae.)

I expected a larger raise than the 10% (actually 9.98%) that I received. I was below the median salary this school year, even though I have been here longer than half (more like two-thirds) of the other teachers. For next year, I will still be below the median--by an even greater margin. And the new teachers being hired in are getting close to my present salary; this includes fresh-out-of-college teachers.

When I finally went in to see Sam, I had resolved the salary issue to my own satisfaction. Those teachers who had been here much longer than I had the greatest discrepancy in their salaries, and were "taken care of" with large increases, which left less for others. Next year (this is only the

first of a three-year plan) I should see a larger one. Then again, I might be gone next year. Sam and I talked about workload, class time, and other things. I left it open for them to ask me to help out with Service, but I would not be asked to do any major assignment because I would be teaching five classes (the normal is four classes and coaching). What is going to happen will have to wait until fall when classes begin.



MILLENICON -15

Maia and I were packed and ready to leave as soon as I got home from classes on that Friday, March 14. The drive down was uneventful, except for turning off on the wrong exit. This was a new convention for the Dayton area, and hopes were high that it would be a good addition to MidWestern cons. Maia was not actually going to attend the con. She accompanied me on the trip, and was going to spend Saturday in Columbus visiting her family.

As we entered the hotel, we were met by the Resnicks, the Offutts, Dean Lambe, Doug Andrew and several other fans. After checking into the hotel and registering for the con, I sat and talked with Mike and Carol Resnick who had just returned from their trip to Africa. Mike said that if I wanted, I could have his trip report to publish, to which I gladly said yes. ((See page 4.)) He said that he would mail it to me in a few days. (He actually gave it to me the next day--Mike said that he wrote the trip report that morning, and since I was at the convention, he would give it to me there.)

Andy Offutt was the Professional Guest of Honor, and he did a marvelous, funny job. He did a reading of "The Black Sorcerer of At-rimentos", which I had heard him do before, and which seemed funnier this time. I told Andy that I had received the articles he had sent me, and that his CHAMBANACON GoH speech would be published in this issue. His GoH speech for MILLENICON chronicled the changes that have happened in the past 10 years or so, particularly with the economy and technology. The story of his switch from writing by hand, then typing, to strictly composing on a Macintosh computer was humorous. If you get a chance, ask him about it.

The convention itself was well run. Mike Kennedy ran the single track of programming

very well. Since I was on two or three panels (three, I think--I can't locate my program book, and I've been on so many panels the past several months that they tend to run together), so I should know. I do remember the panel on Convention Horror Stories, and a panel on Midwestern Fandom. I think there was another one on fanzines and fan publications, but I'm not sure.

Bill Cavin, the Fan GOH, was on one particular panel with me (or I was on with him--after all, he was the Guest of Honor!), and he has become extremely relaxed in front of crowds. And very funny. His timing was impeccable in drawing out extended laughter with the audience. We were talking about conventions, and he said that many people think that a lot of sex goes on at cons. "All I know is that at night, while lots of people are going to parties, some fans stay in their rooms..." *pause for laughter*

"...reading..." *more laughter*

"...about it..." *lots of laughter*

Doug Andrew, the conchairman, and the rest of the committee correctly decided not to try an art show. If there is not a lot of good local talent, particularly connected with the con itself, it is a bad idea to try one the first year. There was a sizable huckster room (in which Dick Spellman had his usual wide selection of new books), a movie/video room, and the standard Midwestern consuite. There was also a swimming pool, which I unfortunately did not get a chance to use. Both Friday and Saturday nights had parties hosted by Midwestern convention groups.

There were also some surprises at the convention. I saw Debbi and Cheryl, with their friend Dale. I had not seen the two sisters for several years. We were all invited out on a dinner expedition Saturday evening by Carol Siegling and the four of us sat together, talking before, during and after the meal. I was also surprised by Roxanne (Meida) Shields, who is now married and living in the Dayton area. She just stopped by to say hello to whomever she might know at the con. Sonja Tabakow showed up on Friday and, although I didn't get a chance to talk to her much, it was nice to see her again. Bruce Burdick also showed, a pleasant person from Columbus who, I thought, might not be able to make it because of teaching commitments at Ohio State University.

Along with some very interesting conversations with those mentioned above, I got a chance to talk to Arlan Keith Andrews and his wife Joyce. Fascinating people who I look forward to meeting again at other conventions. Joe Ellis, who entertained people at the filk with his electric piano, I found out was a school teacher, and would be at the coming CONTRAPTION. And lots of other people.

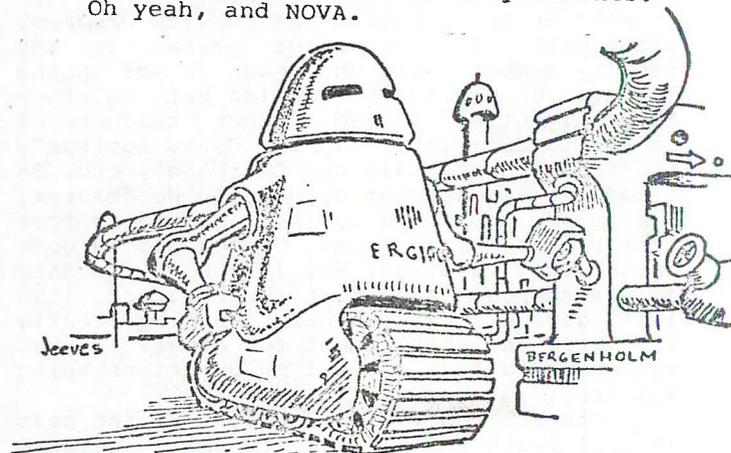
MILLENICON was a super first-convention, and I hear they are looking for a new hotel to put on a larger, better con next year. I will be there, and I hope it comes about the same time of year -- the first weekend of my Spring Break. I needed a con this year at that time, and MILLENICON filled the need more than adequately.

RAMBLINGS 20.4

With two weeks left in my Spring Break, I spent most of it working on fanac. Since our stint as GOHs at CONTRAPTION was coming up, both Maia and I needed to prepare our speeches, and I had to write a story for the Chapbook, Forbidden Knowledge. I also wanted to have copies of my fanzine (LL #19) ready for distribution then, so I worked hard to get it done, copied, and collated. When Maia and I sent in our Hugo nominations ballots, we enclosed a SASE so that Jeff Copeland and Liz Schwarzin could send us the list of finalists for the Hugo. I was holding the inside back cover of #19 for that list.

The weekends were taken up with family obligations, and I think a party. My memory seems to be going--of course what sticks in my mind for that period is preparing the LANTERN, attending my nephew's birthday party, and spending Easter with my Parents.

Oh yeah, and NOVA.



NOVA

Nova is a relatively small convention on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. It is primarily a gaming convention, with hopes and desires of becoming a real SF con. Leo Frankowski, whose first novel Cross-Time Engineer just came out, was the Guest of Honor, and Diana Stein was one of the Fan Guests. I spent time mostly wandering the university Student Center with Joanne Pauley, talking to Diana and David Stein (while he furiously tried to finish a story for the Short Story Contest -- I think he did win!), cruising through the hucksters room (where I had some nice conversations with Tom Barber, Sylvus Tarn (she had some art for me), Vince Tuzzo, Halina Harding and Gary Bernstein), and walking quickly through a very sparse art show. Attendance was low, probably because the con was scheduled on the Saturday before Easter.

RAMBLINGS 20.5

When school resumed on the Tuesday after Easter (Monday was an In-Service day filled with meetings for us teachers), I was confronted with a sea of tanned students fresh

from their trips south during break. I reminded them that the papers were due the following Monday, and classes resumed as before.

The papers, end of the third quarter, comments on all students, my last weekend duty and the decision to purchase our own computer all happened within two week's time. The computer was a deal we could not afford, but could not afford to pass up. DAK Industries picks up various special deals on electronic equipment and offers them at reduced prices. The Visual computer was such a purchase. The offer was an amber screen and CPU which is IBM Compatible, dual disk drives, a letter-quality Silver Reed printer, all the cables, ten diskettes, \$400 worth of software and a word processing program. We had the memory boosted to 512K, and asked for a tractor feed for the printer. The price was under \$1200.

The first piece of equipment to arrive was...the tractor feed. A week later the rest of the equipment came. All our current software worked, as long as we used DOS 2.0 or higher. Maia has used it for her school work and other things. I've used it for my fanzine, apazine, and letter writing. It's great to have it sitting in our living room, ready for our own use.

The weekend I was on duty was also comment weekend. I finished them by Saturday, which made things very easy for me. Maia had walked over to school for dinner, and since the weather turned cold very quickly, I drove her back home. When I arrived in the dorm office, I was told that I had to call home as soon as possible. The dorm office phone was in use, so I ran down to the nurse's office and used that phone. There was a message on our answering machine and Maia had great news: LAN'S LANTERN had made the final ballot for the Hugo award. I was stunned. I had hoped...and dreamed. A warm



glow suffused me, and I smiled with delight. I asked Maia to call Jeff Copeland and Liz Schwarzin to get the entire list of nominees so I could publish them. And I said that she could call whomever else she wanted to tell them the good news. Meanwhile, I was very content and happy the rest of the night.

The next week was hectic, but the fact that I was a Hugo nominee, and that I had the list ready for the inside back cover of LAN'S LANTERN, and that I was to be fan GOH with Maia at CONTRAPTION, and Tim and Anna

Zahn were going to be there as well--Tim as the Pro Guest--made the week seem like a breeze.

ANOTHER CONTRAPTION

Even though the convention hotel was only a short drive from our place, we left as soon as we could. Tim and Anna were already there and they and David Stein helped us move stuff into our room. I immediately started handing out copies of the new LL. My name badge proudly sported a small message--"Hugo Nominee".

I floated through the convention. Everyone and everything was wonderful. The Chapbook, Forbidden Knowledge, which contained stories by Julia Ecklar, Timothy Zahn, Maia Cowan and myself, looked great, and it was strange having people ask me for autographs. Julia Ecklar sang at opening ceremonies, and we all received brightly colored shirts and leis, since the theme was Hawaiian. We had a good dinner at The Restaurants on Main Street, watched a volcano erupt unspectacularly in the cold wind on the parking lot (there was too much light for us to see the pyrotechnic display, but Rusty Westbeld repeated the eruption later with greater success), and Tim entertained us with his slide show, "The Star Trek Suggestion Box", a humorous look at the mistakes on the show, and what could have been done to correct them. We hit the pool and jacuzzi, and I spent a long time talking in the consuite with Anna Zahn, Joann Pauley, Liz Young, Ann Cecil and many other fans. Flonet Biltgen and her friend (whose name keeps slipping my mind) came from Pennsylvania particularly to see Tim as the GOH.

Saturday morning, we took Tim and Anna on a short tour of Cranbrook and Kingswood, the grounds, and our apartment. We had brunch in the Kingswood dining hall, and then scurried back to the hotel for his morning panels.

I spent some time wandering through the Hucksters room (and passing out copies of my fanzine). Dick Spellman and Gary Bernstein were the big book dealers, and there was the usual spattering of used books, comics, media prints and posters, jewelry and other fannish things. Dick was particularly delighted to be there. He has been a big fan of Tim Zahn, and had all his books there.

I watched the "Surfing Contest" in the pool in mid-afternoon (before my panel). It was rather interesting to see attempts at surfing when the waves were no higher than 8 inches. Still, it was a tough contest, but Jamie McQuinn won.

Aside from attending a couple of Tim's panels, Maia and I also had some of our own to do. The fanzine/apazine panel was sparsely attended at first, but gradually more people showed up for it. It actually was an easy discussion for us, since we both have been involved with the two general types of zines as long as we've been in fandom. Explaining the differences between the two was easy; explaining why an individual's apazine isn't really a fanzine was a little more difficult....but we managed.

The evening festivities began with the Hawaiian Luau. The Guests of Honor sat at one table with Mr. & Mrs. Harlan, Diana parents (Diana Stein was in charge of programming), and many members of the concom. There was a real roast pig and a wonderful buffet. Unfortunately, there was no sharp knife provided so no one cut into the pig.

The program room was quite crowded, so I was glad we were up at the front, even if we did have to give speeches. Tim went first, telling us of "The 9-fold Path to Success in Writing Science Fiction", which someone later dubbed, "Zahn Buddhism". Tim's speech told of his career in writing, how he was intending to be a physics professor, but his advisor died just after he got his Master's degree, and no one else wanted to take on his particular dissertation topic. So Tim decided to turn to writing full time, and is making a nice success of it. The speech was full of witty remarks and asides, and was extremely well-received.

I dove in next and delivered mine. It too was witty and well received. And you can read it on the tan colored pages.

Maia was last, at her request. "Let's just assume that I've already given one, and go right to the question and answer session." *standing ovation* "Remember, be careful what you ask---I have the microphone." The questions were quite bizarre, as were Maia's answers, but everyone enjoyed themselves.

Several minutes later we sat down to watch Julia Ecklar's The Once and Future Jedi--a parody of all three Star Wars movies in two hours. It was hilarious. Julia played Princess Leia, Tom Howell played the handsome but slow Luke Skywalker, Pam Spurlock was a marvelous C3PO, Mitch Radelt was superb as the egotistical Han Solo, Don Wenzel was the evil Darth Vader, David Stein was the wonderful voice for Yoda, Mark Bernstein provided the narration, and Joe Ellis orchestrated the music on his electronic piano. There were lots of bit parts, and hilarious scenes, and funny lines. It was videotaped,

so if you get a chance to see it, do so. Just think, the Star Wars films done as a musical parody to the tunes of Camelot. Joe Ellis' scoring of the Death Star theme as counterpoint to "Guenivere" alone is worth a listen.

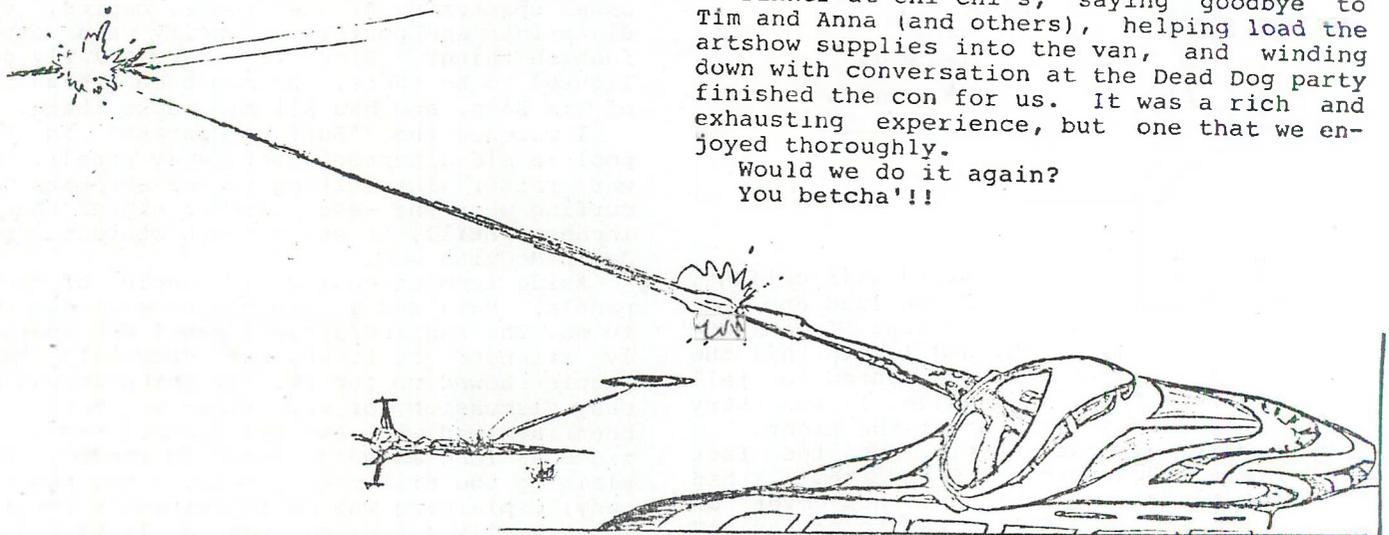
After the performance, the room was cleared for the masquerade and dance. Tim, Maia, Rusty Burke and I were the judges, and we made the decisions quickly. The rest of the evening was one conversation after another with many people. I stopped at the filksing, and ended up talking for a long while to Pam Spurlock. We were joined later by Tim Zahn, Ann Cecil, Joann Pauley and a others, and the topics ranged in variety. By 4 or so I claimed exhaustion, and a 10 AM panel, so I retired.

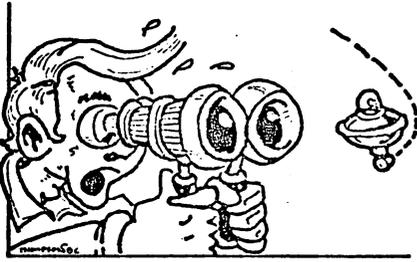
Joe Ellis and I are both fans and teachers. I teach high school and Joe teaches at the elementary level in the Dayton area. He teaches music, and has gotten his kids national recognition by having them write songs about the space program for NASA associated contests. I teach math, and haven't gotten national recognition for my kids. One thing we do have in common: we don't always limit ourselves in the classroom to the subject we primarily teach. Often Joe gets off on tangents about the space program and other things unrelated to music. That happens to me as well--we get off the track often on books and other topics. I am also the only math teacher currently at Cranbrook Kingswood who assigns a paper for all my classes. Joe and I do cross-disciplinary stuff in our classes, something that natural to fans.

The last panel Maia and I did together was on "Specialization in Fandom"--talking about the fringe-fans and the splinter-groups that have broken off of "mainstream" fandom. The general consensus was that fans who concentrate on one or two aspects of fandom are really too narrowly confined to enjoy what fandom has to offer. Fandom is a rich world, and closing one's self off from 90% of it by too narrow a view is a disservice not only to one's own person, but also to everyone else, for you also withhold what you have to offer others.

Dinner at Chi-Chi's, saying goodbye to Tim and Anna (and others), helping load the artshow supplies into the van, and winding down with conversation at the Dead Dog party finished the con for us. It was a rich and exhausting experience, but one that we enjoyed thoroughly.

Would we do it again?
You betcha'!!





Same Bat time, Same Bat channel...

A column by David M. Stein

Episode 3

Well, the regular television season has ended, summer re-runs have begun, and it's time to see whether or not to eat crow. Near the beginning of the season I reported on the two big contenders for the SF TV audience, namely Twilight Zone and Amazing Stories.

Amazing Stories varied the most from my original opinion, so I guess I'll be spitting out a couple of black feathers. I am still taken by the outright production quality put into each episode. The story quality, unfortunately, was a different, uh, ... story. It was wildly variable and almost always below expectations. One week there would be a story like the one about the magnetic teenager, hopeless trash and predictable to the end. Then next week there'd be something like "Mummy Daddy" which, I'll admit, wasn't what I'd call an Amazing story, but was clever, humorous, and enjoyable, nonetheless. The episode about the "Voodoo" babysitter was interesting but predictable. I still enjoyed the premiere episode "Ghost Train" even the second time through. It struck a chord within me that made itself endearing. I think the best episode was the one starring Mark "Luke Skywalker" Hamill as a man promised by a rambunctious little elf (played by David Rappaport) that if he never threw anything away, he'd gain riches beyond his wildest dreams. Unfortunately, most of the other episodes were grand disappointments.

Twilight Zone was also a mixed bag. In total, their story quality outshone its NBC competitor. There thankfully were a couple of shining examples, so no crow feathers over this one. The adaptation of Zelazny's "Last Defender of Camelot" by George R. R. Martin was a true gem. The treatment of the Arthur C. Clarke story "The Star", in which a peaceful, artistic race was wiped out to create the Star of David, disappointed me because of the softened ending they added to it. The episode "Kentucky Rye" was preachy and dull. One of the best was the Silverberg story, "To See the Invisible Man". A truly wonderful production. Several of their original stories were enjoyable too. The "Children's Zoo", where kids could trade in their parents, was good. Also delightful was the episode starring Danny Kaye (a favorite actor of mine), in which he owned a very special timepiece. Several of the old TZ scripts were remade and updated. I enjoyed the San-

ta Claus story (originally made with Art Carney) where a down-and-out department store Santa is given a bag of endless gifts.

It was sad that Harlan Ellison has yet again been driven screaming from television. For once I agree with Harlan's reasoning. The powers-that-be at CBS had promised in the beginning to allow more mature and forefront story lines, and now have balked on their design. So Harlan left. It was advantageous of them to hire George R.R. Martin as a replacement. The one episode that he personally adapted was superb, and his style, I think, lends itself to the medium.

What's ahead? Well, both shows have been picked up for the fall. Amazing Stories will move to Mondays at 8:30. Twilight Zone will move to Saturday, in the 10:00 PM slot, a better slot in my opinion. It should allow for more mature story lines and, I think, a bigger audience. Over the summer, keep an eye on the movie of the week schedule. Although I don't have names to give you, I have seen previews and rushes of some pretty interesting films.

Some of next season's shows have been announced. NBC will be bringing us a series called "Alf" about an alien who moves in with a typical family. CBS is offering a show starring David Rappaport (of Time Bandits and The Bride fame) as a CIA Big Brain who uses not-entirely-of-this-realm methods of working in the world of the spy game. ABC announced that their fall line-up will include a TV version of Starman starring Robert (Airplane) Hayes in the Jeff Bridges role. Our friendly alien has returned to Earth to search for his son. I predict disaster for this one.

I attended the MEDIA*WEST media convention over Memorial Day Weekend and learned that the British SF TV show Blake's 7 is appearing in the US. Many PBS stations around the country are beginning to air the show. For those unfamiliar with the show, it's the brain-child of Terry Nation (of Dr. Who fame). The show is not known for its happy endings, not a show to watch when severely depressed, but it high-quality Space Opera and well worth a look. Watch for it around your area.

Well, that's it for this installment. See you next time....

Same Bat Time....

Same Bat Channel....

Same Bat Time & Channel

BLADERUNNER

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

TWO COMPARISONS

WAKE UP! TIME TO DIE!

An article by Carol Harvey

I am an artist living in Ann Arbor. Recently I began paintings about computers. At some point, the artists I know seem to get interested in computers because they can do computer art on them. They get drawn in, even though basically the concept of computers horrifies them---art being intuitive and right-brained, computer application being cold, logical, objective and left-brained. Last fall I spoke with a scientist working on artificial intelligence. He is developing a program by which computers can not only learn, but can teach themselves to learn unfamiliar skills. We hypothesized about future generations of computers out-evolving human intelligence. We speculated upon what they would do with us once we were no longer necessary to them.

In Phillip K. Dick's novel, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, this has happened.

"The nexus-6 android types, Rick reflected, surpasses several classes of human specials in terms of intelligence. In other words, androids equipped with a new Nexus-6 brain unit had, from a sort of rough, pragmatic, no-nonsense standpoint, evolved beyond a major--but inferior--segment of mankind. The servant had, in some cases, become more adroit than its masters."

In Blade Runner, Ridley Scott's movie adaptation of Androids, the human creators of artificially intelligent beings are no longer working with metal, motherboards, and bytes, but with flesh and bone. They have successfully joined artificial intelligence with artificial gray matter. These androids share with the computers of the past high intelligence and the inability to empathize. Bounty hunters in both book and movie who go after killer androids distinguish them from human beings by administering an empathy test. If the replicants can't empathize, they are not human and are, therefore, dead ducks.

(continued on page 68)

ANDROIDS VS. BLADERUNNER:

THE INTELLECT OF MECHANISM
OR
THE MECHANISM OF INTELLECT?

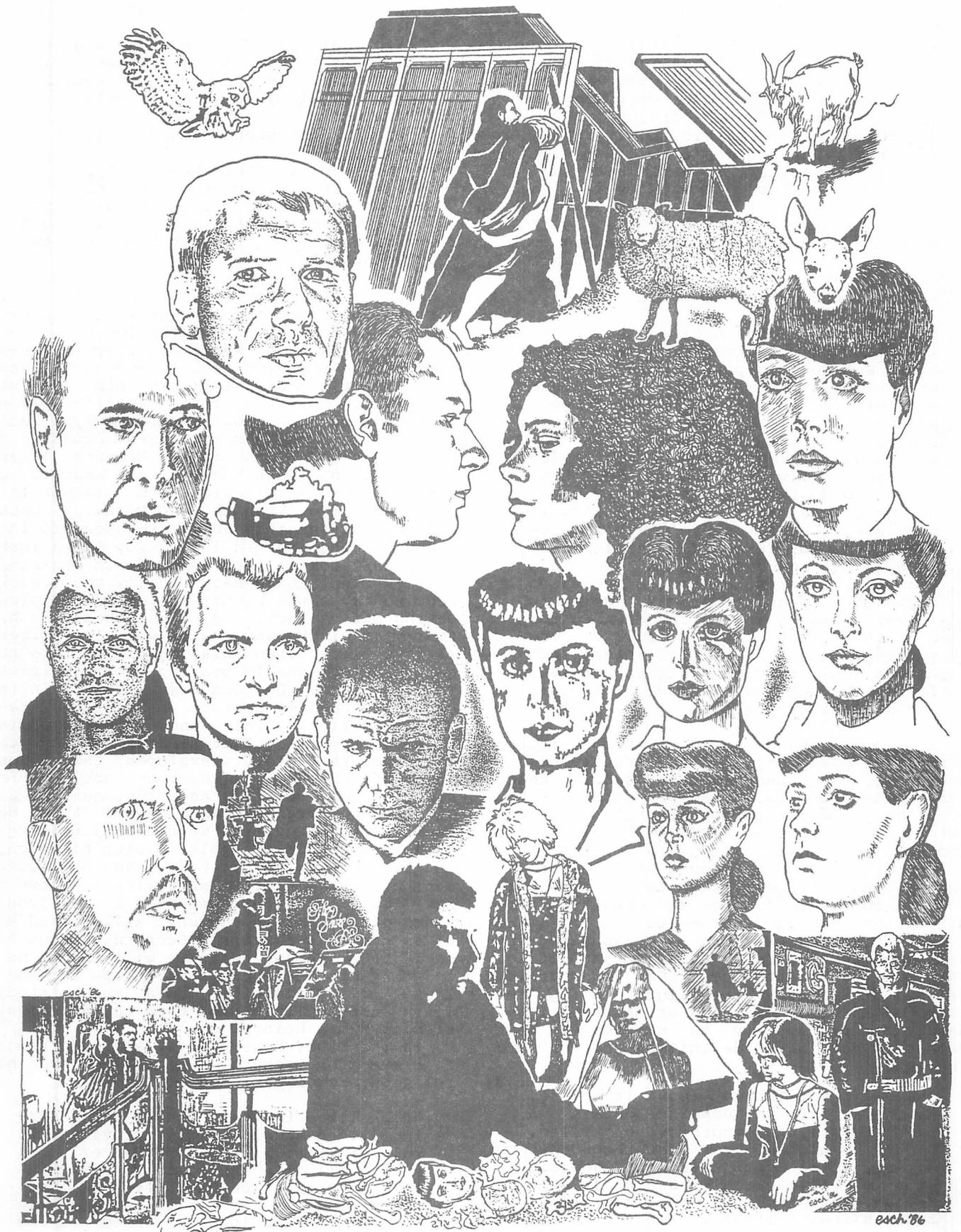
An article by Michael Rudas

The movie BladeRunner was released in 1982. Based on the novel, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick, it was released to mixed reviews and did not do very well at the box office. Despite this initial luke-warm reception, the movie has gone on to greater success as a videotape. In addition, the visual texture of BladeRunner has had an impact on popular culture (similar to the effect of the Mad Max movie series). Examples of this influence include clothing, "punk" styles, music videos, and TV commercials. There are several reasons for this; the director, Ridley Scott, got his start directing television commercials in Great Britain, where such commercials are more of an "art form" than they are in the US. A dense texture is often used to get a message across as quickly as possible. Another reason is the contribution of futurist Syd Mead. Mead designed the "look" of the movie, including the ziggurat-like buildings and the police "spinner" hovercraft. Finally, the special-effects wizard Richard Trumbull (of 2001 and Close Encounters fame) brought this vision to film.

Visual texture, futuristic visions, and award-winning special effects are all well and good, but a movie must have a core, a plot-framework to hang these things on. In order to evaluate the success or failure of BladeRunner in this area, some comparisons with the original Phil Dick book will be useful.

Set in a post-World War III San Francisco (in the early twenty-first century), the story opens with Rick Deckard and his wife waking up by means of a mood-altering device, a "mood organ". He goes up to the roof of his apartment building to care for the mechanical sheep he keeps there. Nuclear fallout has killed nearly all the animals (especially birds) and those creatures which

(continued on page 71)



"He had wondered, as had most people at one time or another, precisely why an android bounced helplessly about when confronted by an empathy-measuring test. Empathy evidently existed only within the human community, whereas intelligence to some degree could be found throughout every phylum and order including the arachnida. For one thing, the empathic faculty probably required an unimpaired group instinct: a solitary organism such as a spider would have no use for it; in fact, it would tend to abort a spider's ability to survive. It would make him conscious of the desire to live on the part of the prey. Hence all predators, even highly developed mammals, such as cats, would starve.

"Empathy, he once decided, must be limited to herbivores, or anyhow omnivores who could depart from a meat diet. Because ultimately, the empathic gift blurred the boundaries between hunter and victim, between the successful and the defeated. As in the fusion with Mercer, everyone ascended together or, when the cycle had come to an end, fell together into the trough of the tomb world. Oddly, it resembled a sort of biological insurance, but double-edged. As long as some creature experienced, joy then the condition for all other creatures included a fragment of joy. However, if any living being suffered, then for all the rest the shadow could not be entirely cast off. A herd animal such as man would require a higher survival factor through this; an owl or a cobra would be destroyed."

Evidently, the humanoid robot constituted a solitary predator. In the first scene of the movie, one Leon (Brion James), being subjected to the Voight-Kampff empathy test, blows away the bounty hunter three questions into the exam because he knows he will fail. Androids have also developed a will to live.

Both the book and movie take a look at what it means to be human. Is it necessary to have both intelligence and empathy to be classified homo sapiens? -- to survive and evolve as a species? Can a human being develop empathy toward an android, and, if so, what are the consequences? Can an android, or any artificially intelligent being, responding to other androids or human beings, develop the capacity to empathize? What does this do to our definition of the word "human"?

"He had never thought about it before, had never felt any empathy on his own part towards the androids he killed. Always he had assumed that throughout his psyche he experienced the android as a clever machine -- as in his conscious view. And yet --- a difference had manifested itself. Empathy toward an artificial construct? he asked himself. Soemthing that only pretends to

be alive? But Luba Luft (an android) had seemed genuinely alive: It had not worn the aspect of a simulation.

"'You realize,' Phil Resch said quietly, 'what this would do. If we included androids in our range of empathic identification, as we do animals.'

"'We couldn't protect ourselves.'

"'Absolutely. These Nexus-6 types ... they'd roll all over us and smash us flat. You and I, all the bounty hunters---we stand between the Nexus-6 and mankind, a barrier which keeps the two distinct.'"

Despite the book's warning, the movie version of Deckard (Harrison Ford) exhibits increasing amounts of empathy toward the androids, even as he systematically "retires" them. Leon smashing Deckard's head against the side of a car, impaling him upon his frustration over a four-year life span -- "What do you do about an itch you can't scratch?" "Yes," sympathizes Deckard, as blood runs down his face. Moments later, Rachel Rosen (Sean Young), an android of more complex construction, and a longer life span, guns down Leon to save Deckard. Deckard then kisses this doll-like humanoid into empathy. The android leader Roy Baty (Rutger Hauer) comes for Deckard in the final battle. Even though Baty clearly beats Deckard, he saves the bounty hunter from plummeting off a building, and then, as his four-year clock runs out, quietly expires. (A dove flies from his shoulder into the heavens, presumably bearing Baty's spirit?) In voice-over, Deckard says, "Maybe in the end he rescued me because he loved life--anybody's life." This android, in saving Deckard, reveals that he has, during the course of the plot, developed the highest form of empathy: a reverence not just for human beings, or other androids, but for all of life--and even for his enemy. A few moments before he dies, we see Baty driving a nail through his own palm to stop his decaying fingers from twitching. The New Testament association with sacrifice and love is not lost on us. BladeRunner's replicants start off as cold, rational killers and end up as empathic saviors. Deckard rescues Rachel from humans he fears will retire her, and they become lovers who escape together. These movie androids are a quick study, learn empathy fast, and even teach compassion to human beings.

In the book, however, the androids remain fair game for Deckard. Ruminating upon his religion, Mercerism:

"Rick liked to think [that] in retiring ... an andy, he did not violate a rule of life laid down by Mercer. 'You shall kill only the killers.' (An interesting twist on one of the ten commandments.) A Mercerite was free to locate the nebulous presence of The Killers wherever he saw fit. For Rick Deckard, and escaped humanoid robot

which had killed its master, which had been equipped with an intelligence greater than that of many human beings, which had no regard for animals, which possessed no ability to feel empathic joy for another life form's success or grief at its defeat -- that for him epitomized The Killers."

The book's Rachel Rosen tries to trick Deckard into feeling empathy for androids in order to blunt his purpose. She makes love to him hoping that once he is intimate with an android, he will no longer be able to kill one.

"You're not going to be able to hunt androids any longer. ... No bounty hunter ever has gone on," Rachel said, "after being with me."

"The idea is old fashioned," Rick said."

Additionally, all the androids in the book are replicants of each other. When Deckard finally faces Pris (Darrell Hannah) to kill her, she will have the face of Rachel, the woman he loved. He could not sleep with Rachel and kill her; could he then kill Pris?

Deckard had another internal block to overcome before he could assassinate the rest of the "andy's," Isidore, the "special" who is brain damaged by fallout from World War Terminus, tells him, "If you kill them, you won't be able to fuse with Mercer again."

Mercerism developed in the wake of World War Terminus. It is a religion based on empathy, and its adherents participate in a ritual in which they use an empathy box to fuse personalities. It is as if by conducting the mass suicide of thermonuclear war, humans had damaged Empathy itself---the very essence of their will to survive and evolve as a group. So they concocted a compulsive ritual around empathy, making it their salvation and their god. They knew, after that final war, that this emotional bonding together of the group for its own protection was the only way human life would survive.

"So, taking a deep breath to steady himself, he grasped the twin handles.

"The visual image congealed [on the cathode ray tube]; he saw at once a famous landscape, the old, brown, barren ascent, with tufts of dried-out bonelike weeds poking slantedly into a dim and sunless sky. One single figure, more or less human in form, toiled its way up the hillside: an elderly man wearing a dull, featureless robe ... [The man, Mercer, plodding forever up a hill out of a bottomless wasteland. All the people holding the handles of the empathy box] ...cross over in the usual perplexing fashion; physical merging -- accompanied by mental and spiritual identification... [both with Mercer and with each other.] He

experienced them, the others, incorporated the babble of their thoughts, heard in his own brain the noise of their many individual existences. They --and he--cared about one thing; this fusion of their mentalities oriented their attention on the hill, the climb, the need to ascend. Step by step it evolved, so slowly as to be nearly imperceptible. ...Higher, he thought, as stones rattled downward under his feet. Today we are higher than yesterday, and tomorrow---he, the compound figure of Wilbur Mercer, glanced up to view the ascent ahead. Impossible to make out the end. Too far. But it would come."

The antagonists in this morality play, which is centered on man willing his own evolution out of the trauma and aftermath of World War Terminus, are the killer rocks that hurtle down from above on the human hands grasping the handles: so real that when they let go, their arms are bleeding. These rocks symbolize The Killers who try to stop the forward advance up the hill of evolution out of the tombworld filled with "kipple", the debris and radioactive dust left behind by the bombs. "Kipple" represents "the final disorder of all forms," the very end of existence and of time itself -- "the absence that could win out." In the future world, salvation must be accomplished in fusion with others.

Like most ritualistic group mergings, whether induced by drugs, religions, tribal dances, or empathy boxes, the orgiastic state of Mercerism becomes an addiction for many. Like any drug, it produces a comforting state of original fusion with a mother figure, when an individual in this future society momentarily faces anxiety or fears moving ahead to true personal identity---the mature, integrated personality's wholeness, separateness, individuality, an uniqueness as displayed in the character of Deckard.

John Isidore's admonition to Deckard that if he killed an android he would be acting in contradiction to the religious tenets of empathy, is a misunderstanding of Mercerism which would be characteristic of a "special". Specials seem to be afflicted by the radioactivity in such a way that they experience an evolutionary reversal of brain function and return to a phylogenetically more primitive state concerned primarily with emotion and intuition. Isidore identified readily with animals; they are on the same level. Isidore's mental capabilities allow him to empathize, to identify with other life forms, and to live in the survival instinct. His abilities seem also to match with what contemporary researchers call right brain function: intuition, emotion, psychic abilities, and empathy. Since the purpose of these functions is to ensure survival, when they are abrogated, they seem to threaten survival. Therefore, the empath will make a moral judgment upon the being who seems to act in defiance of them. Reacting to the androids' allegations that Mercer is a drunken fraud, Isidore tells Mer-

cer: "I didn't like that about the whiskey ... That's lowering." Mercer answers: "That's because you're a highly moral person. I don't judge, not even myself."

Isidore represents empathy without a purpose. He befriends the androids out of sympathy without realizing that they are alien to human life and represent a threat to it.

"The chickenhead knows they're androids. He knew it already before I told him. But he doesn't understand," thinks Deckard."

He can empathize indiscriminantly with anything because he is limited by his lower and/or partial brain functioning. He, unlike Deckard, does not recognize them as "The Killers" they are. Isidore symbolizes a part of the human brain function cut off from the other parts. As such, his empathy which was originally meant to protect the species, is helpless and purposeless. Mercer, of course, sees this, and he tries to explain to Isidore that the androids perceive things about Mercer that are outside of Isidore's understanding. "You're too close," Mercer said. "You have to be a long way off, the way the androids are. They have a better perspective."

The androids represent the cerebral and/or left brain function: the analytical, the inductive, the logical, the mathematical. This is their "better perspective", but it, too, is only partial. Their highly intelligent curiosity about life detached from empathy causes them to tear life apart to see how it works only to destroy it in the process. Pris horrifies Isidore by cutting the legs off the last living spider. Isidore tells Deckard, "If I took it back up there, she'd cut it apart again. Bit by bit, to see what it did." "Androids do that," replies Deckard.

This is a novel about mankind's death instinct slicing the human brain in two parts, and, thereby, weakening the human race. Through the technology that leads to thermonuclear war, Humans have created "specials" who have devolved to the level of right brain or limbic system activity. By that technology which produces robots and artificial intelligence, we have invented a creature who functions solely out of left brain activity. Since these two functions of the brain must work together for the person to be fully human, it is up to Deckard to try to put them back together again. He does it by the mentally integrative process of understanding. His own empathic abilities are balanced by a detached, but not feelingless, logic that sees the androids as ultimately incapable of being human, as dangerously fragmented, bad copies of humans who do not carry the empathic survival instinct within them. (The movie Deckard does not see this.) He understands this because his two brain functions, empathic and cerebral, are intact, and because they work in synchrony. Momentarily, Isidore's statement, "If you kill them you won't be able to fuse with Mercer again," throws him off balance by

playing on his own over-developed empathic sense intensified by the social bath of Mercerism in which he has been immersed. He also knows he has to confront and kill Pris, the replica of the woman robot he had loved. At the moment of his wavering, Mercer himself comes to Deckard's aid.

"I'm not an android," the figure said. 'My name is Mercer.' It stepped into a pool of light. 'I inhabit this building because of Mr. Isidore, the Special who had the spider; you talked briefly to him outside.'

"Am I outside Mercerism, now?" Rick said. 'As the chickenhead said? Because of what I am going to do in the next few minutes?'

"Mercer said, 'Mr. Isidore spoke for himself, not for me. What you are doing has to be done. I said that already.'"

What Mercer had "said already" was "You shall kill only the killers." He points out to Rick that the Pris/Rachel robot is "the hard one of the three" and helps the bounty hunter kill her. "Quick, Mr. Deckard. On the steps."

Deckard understands that empathy, though a vital mental function, is an evolutionary throwback without the balance of reason or logic. But he also discerns -- with a nudge from Mercer--that logic cut off from empathy is nonsensical, and potentially lethal. He kills all the remaining replicants except for Rachel. In accomplishing this task, Deckard momentarily rises to the level of Mercer, to a position above both his own empathy and above his own logic where there are no moral judgments, no morality. In this position of mental clarity, Deckard sees truth. Symbolically, he carries the entire human race with him to this state of higher consciousness. His wife says, "Buster Friendly claims that Mercer is a fake. What do you think about that, Rick? Do you think that could be true?" "Everything is true," he said. "Everything anybody has ever thought."

The movie and book ask the same questions but arrive at divergent conclusions. The movie seems to say, "Sure we can create a good creation and fall in love with it. There will be dangers, but our technology will overcome them." The book seems to suggest what Mary Shelley observed in Frankenstein a couple of centuries back: that if we use our technology to play around with life, we are going to throw growth and evolution out of balance and endanger the future of our species.

The movie is enormously popular.

(Continued from page 66)

remain are considered precious, yet are so expensive that many people keep mechanical analogs, not letting their neighbors know that the animal is not real. In the book, one of Deckard's main motivations to return to "retiring" wayward androids is to earn enough money to get a real animal to replace the mechanical. The prevalent religion is called "Mercerism", the practice of which is based on a "Mercer box" electronically producing an empathy-link with other users of the device. The sanctity of all life is one of the basic tenets of Mercerism; he had the power to bring dead animals back to life. This power was "burned" out of him by government cobalt irradiation of his brain; the Mercer box allows others to share the ascent from the "tomb world" back to the world of the living (the "descent" part of the cycle is never depicted in the book). The other main exponent of popular culture is a man named "Buster Friendly", who broadcasts nearly twenty-four hours a day on both radio and TV.

Most of the survivors of the war have migrated from Earth to colonies on other worlds. The fallout can cause reproductive changes and mental deterioration (many men wear lead codpieces); a further inducement to leave is that each emigrant gets a sophisticated android servant when he or she reaches the destination colony. These androids are not allowed, by law, to travel to Earth. Six of them have; the bounty hunter assigned to retire them has killed one and been injured by another of them. This is because the newest models are quite intelligent and difficult to tell from human beings. This mishap gives Rick Deckard a chance to earn the money he needs for an animal.

After getting the assignment to retire the remaining androids, he went, armed with a testing apparatus (which tests for empathic abilities), to the Rosen Corporation headquarters (the androids' maker) to test the Nexus-6 androids similar to the rogues. There he meets Rachel Rosen. Introduced to Deckard as a human to be used for benchmark purposes, after testing she turns out to be an android, a fact she was unaware of. She offers to help Deckard, an offer he refuses, at first.

Armed with the experience gained by the test results, Deckard goes android-hunting. He nearly gets killed by an android posing as his Russian counterpart, but manages to kill the android instead. This gets him picked up by a police unit he knows nothing about; it turns out that it is headed by an android. After dispatching THIS android, Deckard suspects that one of his underlings (Phil Resch) is also an android; despite this, he accepts help from him to track down the next android, who is posing as an opera singer. Appalled by what he feels is cold-blooded killing by Resch (Deckard wants to test her first; Resch just kills her), Deckard realizes that Resch is a man, not an android. This adds to the moral and emotional

ambiguity of the story. Deckard then goes out and buys a goat on an installment plan.

Those who have suffered mental deterioration due to fallout are referred to as "chickenheads" and are, for the most part, pariahs. Not allowed to reproduce, and rarely allowed to hold jobs, they nonetheless can still achieve the "fusion" brought on by the Mercer box, something that the androids cannot experience. One chickenhead (John Isidore, a central character in this part of the story) lives in the rubble of an apartment building, surrounded by "kipple" left behind by those who have moved on or died. An important part of the plot revolves around the fact that Isidore works for a mechanical animal "hospital" (the repairmen wear vets' uniforms so "the neighbors need never know"). When he hears the sound of another person in the building, he is surprised to the point of shock. When he goes down to discover who else has moved in, he encounters one of the illegal androids, who first identifies herself as Rachel Rosen (is this "cookie-cutter" identity?), then calls herself Pris. The interaction between the android and the chickenhead, over a period of days, leads to something akin to an awakening for Isidore. Roy Baty, the leader of the renegade group, shows up at the apartment building with the other remaining female android. They are helped by Isidore, even though he has a dim realization of what they are. As a result, they refrain from killing him.

Finally accepting Rachel's offer of help, Deckard meets her in a hotel room; they have sex (which is illegal between human and android). Rachel knows that Pris looks just like her, and seems to want Deckard's resolve to waver, even to the extent of keeping him from killing the remaining androids. Deckard does continue, however, and tracks them to Isidore's apartment house. At the same time, Buster Friendly reveals on his TV and radio shows that the "Mercer" that people experience when tuned in to the empathy box is actually an actor; that the hill he ascends, with its dust and scraggly shrubs, is actually a set on a stage. Isidore discovers a spider. Filled with awe, he shows it to Pris. She promptly begins to dissect it, showing a cold curiosity which even to the chickenhead's dim intellect is clearly inhuman. Leaving his apartment, he encounters Mercer, who gives him another spider. Deckard arrives shortly thereafter, and is warned by Mercer that it may be hard to kill Pris, not because she is smarter than the others, but because of her resemblance to Rachel. Despite this, Deckard does retire the last three androids. Traveling to a remote area afterwards, he begins to experience fusion with Mercer without the box. Realizing what is happening, he returns to normal consciousness and discovers a live toad half-buried in the sand. Returning home, he discovers that his goat was pushed off the roof...by Rachel, who made sure that she was seen doing it. Deckard falls asleep; while he sleeps, his wife discovers that the toad is mechanical.

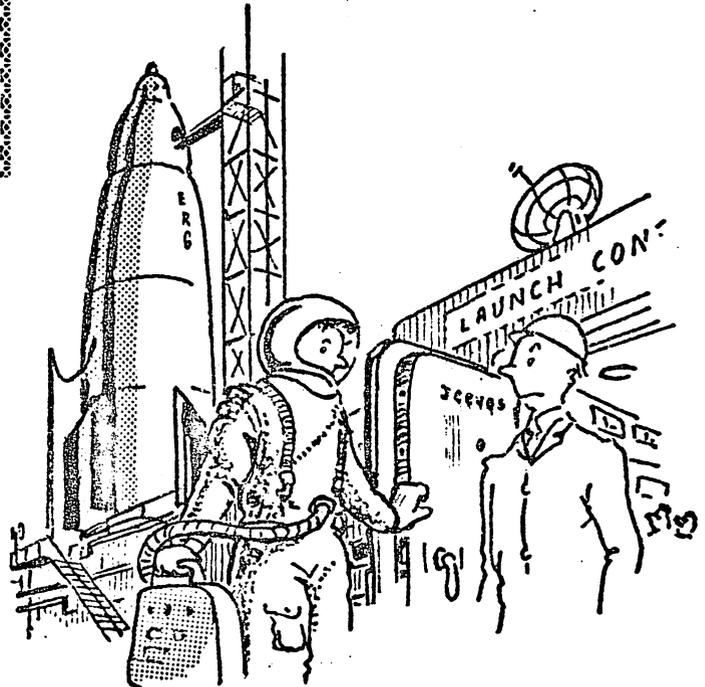
The above plot synopsis is intended to illustrate certain themes that Philip Dick was bringing out: that life turns counter to entropy, striving to rise higher even in the face of adversity; that the "kipple" can be pushed back, and order brought from chaos; that this motivation toward higher order is "stronger than dirt" even in the chickenhead; that spiritual reality can in some ways be "more" real than flesh-and-blood; that (in some ways) man has more in common with an insect than he does with the androids, despite superficial resemblances; that it IS possible to love life and yet kill when necessary; and that such love can make that abstract tangible, even in the face of intellectual disbelief.

The movie has some points of similarity to the book, but is vastly different in other ways. The subtlety is sacrificed to the visuals; the plot line is streamlined, with elements important to the book missing and new ones added. Examples include: the elimination of Mercer and the animal-related subplot, an explicit reason being given for the androids coming to Earth (to attempt to have their four-year lives extended), the character of Isidore becomes an android designer (who also faces a shortened life due to progeria), and the changed role of Rachel (to eventual love-interest). There is no reference to the atomic war or fallout; the movie seems to imply that the poor conditions are due to pollution and overcrowding. The only animals in evidence are artificial; Zhora's snake and Rachel's owl at the Rosen headquarters. This is NOT to say that the movie does not have a philosophy; the androids are portrayed as creatures on the verge of self-awareness, almost as if (given longer life spans) they might become nearly human. This is heavily implied at the climax, where Roy Baty saves Deckard's life just before dying, and in the ending, where Deckard and Rachel go off together. There is also an indication that Deckard gets a better understanding of his "humanness" through his contact with the androids. Another divergence from the book is that Rachel is different from the other Nexus-6 androids in that she has no "termination" date. This implies a more-or-less human life span.

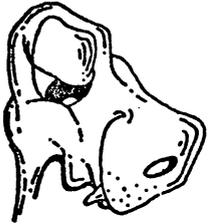
While the movie and the book are different, the comparisons between the two, I feel, can enrich the experience of both. It would have been very difficult to make a commercial movie out of the book; Philip Dick's vision is a bit discomfiting to have mass appeal. In fact, the movie did have several proposed endings and the choice was difficult. It also must be noted that Mr. Dick died shortly before the film's release, so we don't have his comments on it. Both the book and the movie seem to stand up to scrutiny; if not, this essay would never have been written.

LAN LOOKS AT AND MAKES HIS CHOICES FOR

THE 1986 HUGO AWARDS



"Do you have another match? The fuse went out."



yup...there it is...
right there.

BEST SHORT STORY

This was perhaps the easiest category of the Hugos for me to make a first place choice. After reading all the selections (none of which were nominated by me), I concluded that none of them were Hugo-worthy and therefore elected No Award to the first place position. That said, I should go on to the next category, but there are some comments I want to make.

All of these authors have written better pieces of fiction, and some of them have been nominated for (and have even garnered) the coveted Hugo award. It almost seems as if people picked the worst of each author being published this past year and put them on the ballot.

Fred Pohl's "Fermi and Frost" I placed in second position. It's a short, after-the-bomb speculation, but nothing spectacular in idea or execution. John Crowley's "Snow" caught third place -- a rather interesting story about keeping a person's memory alive through recorded scenes of his/her life. Actually it is not a bad story, but again not Hugo-worthy. "Hong's Bluff" by Bill Wu is a futuristic card-game cum gunfight whose participants are more mechanical than human. Cute, but trite. I put it on fourth place.

Bruce Sterling's "Dinner in Audoghost" is a dinner set in the ancient city of Audoghost, North Africa, and is passed off as SF/Fantasy. I found it neither, and not even very good as a story; I placed it fifth. And Howard Waldrop's "Flying Saucer Rock and Roll" is another of his speculations about earlier twentieth century music. As written, he couldn't get it published in the more popular magazines (where it probably belongs), but seems to fit right in with most of the Omni stories: pointless. I rate it last.

BEST NOVELETTE

The selections here were much better than those in the Short Story category. Two of my nominees made it to the final ballot, one of which has already won the Nebula.

Michael Swanwick and William Gibson teamed up to write this cyber-tech story, Dogfight. Deke is a bum and a thief, but he likes computer games, especially those directly linked to his mind. He steals and learns to handle a dogfight game, and with the help of Nance who speeds up his software, he challenges the "top dog" Tiny and defeats him. The story has some interesting points, but gives a rather dismal presentation of the future. The feeling is unpleasant, even the excitement of the game has a grimy feel to it. If that was the intent,

fine. But I think that gloomy presentations of the future, with little prospect of hope for the better, have too long permeated the field (and manage to get on the ballot).

"The Fringe" by Orson Scott Card is another after-the-bomb story wherein a crippled teacher (in a wheelchair, and who must speak using a mechanical voice-box) tries to maintain civilization in a small town on the fringe of devastated areas. Carpenter does his best, but makes painful choices in his effort to retain a civilized world. And his vindictive students do not make things easy for him. In contrast to what Swanwick and Gibson present as a future, Card manages to present hope, though there must be sacrifice now to have that better future.

"A Gift From the Graylanders" by Michael Bishop is not only an after-the-bomb story, but encompasses the "before" and "during" time periods as well. The child Cory is stuck living in the basement of his uncle's house, and is fearful of the "graylanders", people who live underground. As long as there is light in his living space, he does not have to fear them coming through the basement walls to get him. Cory paints the walls with bright colors as an extra guard, and, caught by his uncle (since he didn't have permission to paint), is forced to stay in the basement--when the bombs come. Finally extricating himself from the rubble, he finds "graylanders" on the surface. The story is a good study of a child's mind and his mental processes in working through problems and fears.

Harlan Ellison's "Paladin of the Lost Hour" presents an old man who guards the hour lost when the calendars were reset. Gaspar has a watch which holds that hour, and he hooks up with Billy Kinetta, to whom he passes on the watch and the responsibility. The story is very interesting, and how the relationship between the two men develops is the crux of the plot. As usual, Harlan uses his words to good effect in wrenching emotions from his readers.

In "Portraits of his Children", George R. R. Martin also uses his words to write an effective, emotional story. Writer Richard Cantling receives paintings from his daughter Michelle, all of which are main characters from his books. They are more than real, and haunt him and his dreams. It's a powerful piece of work, and the final two paragraphs echo through the mind as they communicate such finality of a relationship.

My Choices:

Martin's "Portraits of His Children" has it over all the others. He won the Nebula, he should also have the Hugo. Scott Card's "The Fringe" I place second -- a good cautionary tale with some hope. Ellison and "Paladin of the Lost Hour" I rank third, Bishop's "Gift from the Graylanders" fourth, No Award fifth, and "Dogfight" by Swanwick and Gibson last.

BEST NOVELLA

This category was fairly easy. Three of the five nominees I started and put down after a few pages. Of the other two, I enjoyed both very much, but one does stand above the other.

I have had some trouble with Kim Stanley Robinson's writing in the past. Many of his stories just skim the fringes of SF and fantasy, and those that have been outright SF have had serious flaws. I found "Green Mars" rather refreshing. It is set in the future on a terra-formed Mars, and Roger Clayborne and a group of climbers scale the escarpment of Olympus Mons. I first thought that this would be a regular mountain climbing story merely transferred to Mars, but several of the subplots refer to things that could only be in the future, only on Mars. There is a lot of interpersonal reactions, and some reviving of a former relationship. Roger and Eileen were lovers over two hundred years earlier, though she has forgotten it; Roger is unique in that he remembers most of what has happened in his three centuries of life. The story is interesting, and I'd like to read it again.

"The Only Neat Thing to Do" by James Tiptree Jr. was interesting for the first couple of pages, then got boring very quickly. I didn't finish it the first time. I read it again all the way through when it garnered the nomination. I'm glad I had to force my way past the boring part, for the story was indeed rather good. Coati Cass is a spoiled rich kid with a yearning to explore space. Her birthday gift is a new spacecraft. She outfits it for deep-space exploration and takes off for the edge of known space. Coati finds two lost explorers and discovers an alien race, which could be a threat to the human race.

Robert Silverberg won the Nebula for "Sailing to Byzantium", and this story of the far future where nearly everyone is immortal also got a spot on the Hugo ballot. In this future Earth, there are only five cities allowed. They change from time to time, but the limit is only five. The immortal inhabitants spend their time exploring such cities which are taken from all periods of history. Charles Phillips is from the twentieth century, and wanders in amazement of the whole fifty-first century world. Gioia is his companion, seemingly one of the immortals, but is actually a short-timer -- a genetic defect prevents her from being an immortal. Who Charles really is, his relationship with Gioia, and a solution to her particular problem all intertwine with the background of the cities they visit. In general I found the story boring. Again I didn't finish it the first time, and was hoping that I wouldn't have to read it through for the Hugos. Alas, it did make the ballot.

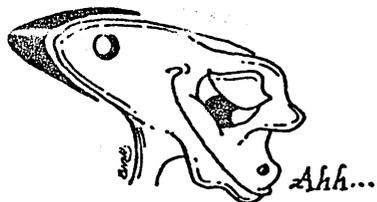
A very heartening nominee was "Scapegoat" by C. J. Cherryh, because it never appeared in a magazine but in an original anthology edited by Betsy Mitchell. (I would have preferred Tim Zahn's "Cordon Sanitaire" to be on the ballot, which is from the same col-

lection.) The conflict between the human race and a race of elves (called such because of their resemblance to the mythical characters) started with a misunderstanding, and can be resolved if the captured elf Angan can persuade his captor DeFranco to cooperate. The interaction between the two and the understanding that grows, more with DeFranco's superiors than with the man himself, makes peace possible. Not vintage Cherryh, but a good, interesting story.

"24 Views of Mt. Fuji, by Hokusai" by Roger Zelazny was the third nominated story that I had put down after a few pages when I read through the magazines. Once nominated, I pushed my way through, and found a very good, very interesting story. The "24 Views" is a group of paintings by the Japanese artist Hokusai, and Mari, intent on a personal mission, travels around Mt. Fuji to see the mountain from those 24 views. The dual plot, her mission and her travel, intertwine and culminate in her accomplishing one, and possibly the other. Do read it; it's worth it!

My Choices:

Robinson gets it with "Green Mars". I was excited when I finished it, and I told several friends that they should read it. As I said above, I will have to read it again. Zelazny and "24 Views of Mt. Fuji by Hokusai" is second. Cherryh's "The Scapegoat" I put in third place, and Tiptree's "The Only Neat Thing to Do" in fourth place. No Award and Silverberg's "Sailing to Byzantium" (I really did not like the story) take fifth and sixth places respectively.



BEST NOVEL

I cannot say that I was disappointed in the novels that made the final ballot for this category, save one. I nominated four of the five, and deciding the one to put in the first position has been the toughest choice for me since I've been voting for the Hugos. As difficult as it was, I have managed to rank them. First, however, let me run through them.

Blood Music by Greg Bear is one of three nominees to be expanded from a shorter work. Vergil Ullam is a genius-level scientist who has trouble seeing all the ramifications of his work. He develops a self-replicating, super sophisticated, miniature biochip which he injects into himself. It has the potential for artificial intelligence, and in Vergil's body it certainly develops it, and explores anything else that Vergil happens to touch. It takes over the US, and eventually the world.

The work that Greg Bear did in expanding the short story to the novel was very well done. Like David Brin did in The Postman (see below), Timothy Zahn did in Cobra, and Orson Scott Card did in Ender's Game (see

below), Greg re-wrote the story into the novel -- he didn't just drop it in without changes. However, stretching the idea as far as he did also stretched my suspension of disbelief. He lost credibility about three-fourths of the way through, but the novel still held my interest. Looking back on it after several months, I see more flaws, but it is definitely worthy of the nomination.

Like many of C.J. Cherryh's novels, Cuckoo's Egg starts by confusing the reader. Slowly things fall into place, but not so slow as to make you lose interest. Her prose is such that you want to continue reading to find out what really is going on, to see if your guesses are right.

Thorn is a human being raised by aliens. There is no indication that there are other humans around, but the hatani, Duun, raises Thorn as a hatani -- a judge whose word is law. We watch Thorn grow up and train with Duun until his existence could no longer be kept secret. The Shonunin are split as to what to do with Thorn, but the hatani clan accepts him as one of their own, and though not entirely safe, Thorn now has a better chance to fulfill his reason for existence.

Several weeks after reading Cuckoo's Egg I still felt the nagging for more. I do hope that Carolyn writes a sequel to this one. In fact, that's really the only thing wrong with this novel -- in retrospect, it seems more like a prologue to something greater.

On the other hand, Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card, which is a prologue to his next novel, Speaker For the Dead, didn't leave me with that sort of feeling. The novelette was wonderfully written into this novel length. The new material and subplots helped enormously and gave a greater depth and feeling for Ender Wiggins, and his sister. Although I knew what was coming, the route to the climax of the novelette was extremely enjoyable to read, and the conclusion that followed was every bit as good. I am looking forward to reading the sequel (it's on the shelf right behind me).

The Earth almost didn't win against the "bugs" in the first round of battles, and the military forces still aren't sure how or why they did win. Nevertheless, Earth has put all its resources into preparing for the next war with the insectoid race, and most of the World's hopes are pinned on Ender, whose genetic make-up indicates that he has the best chance of succeeding. We follow Ender's training through to the final battle, and the establishment of a colony on a world deserted by the insects.

As enjoyable as this was, the novel is painful to read. Ender is hurt and he hurts others. We feel a lot of what he feels. He doesn't want to hurt anyone, but seems always to be in a position where he must do so in order to prevent greater harm later. Ender is never wrong; though his decisions are correct, he is never sure himself that he is doing the right thing. This flaw makes him that much more human, and that much more a hero.

Footfall by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle was the novel I did not nominate. I

had not read it before nominations had to be turned in, and even if I had, I still would not have put it on the ballot.

Earth is invaded by dual "trunked" baby elephants. The alien culture is much different from ours, and they assume that once we surrender, we submit to their wishes. We don't. Since most humans are "rogues" in their eyes, the aliens employ a "footfall" to bring the Earthlings back in line -- they drop an asteroid into the Indian Ocean. Eventually the humans secretly build a ship which attacks the mothership, and forces a surrender from the aliens.

This is a long, wordy novel which has few memorable characters. About 200 pages could have been cut and would have made this a nice, tight story. As it is, there are lots of boring sections, and the ending is about a chapter short. It is filled with in-jokes peculiar to the SF community and fandom. As a resource in such times as alien invasions, the SF authors are called upon, and treated as experts in this area. Lots of pseudonyms are used for many writers, most of which are easily discernible. Still, this does not make for a good novel, though it is understandable why some fans would nominate it.

The first half of David Brin's The Postman consists of two novellas, "The Postman" and "Cyclops", both of which were written with the purpose of becoming the novel. (Gunn's Law: "Sell it twice!") As a master craftsman and wordsmith, Brin did not just drop the two novellas in, and continue from there. He rewrote portions of them, expanded and added some new material, deleted repetitious and unneeded passages, and finished the last half of the novel with a section called "Cincinnatus".

In the aftermath of a limited nuclear exchange, the US is left a shambles. Gordon Krantz is traveling westward to the Oregon coast to see if things are better there. He is set upon by scavenging Survivalists and loses almost all he has. In his run to safety he comes across an old mail truck, buries its dead driver, takes the uniform and some of the mail, and continues on his journey. Through the rest of the novel, Gordon uses the mailman routine to gain food and shelter as well as promoting a myth of a Restored United States, for which he is re-establishing postal lines. His adventures are many, and he continually torments himself for the lies he tells and the lie he lives as, a representative for his mythical country. He is a hero and a mythical figure himself, though he doesn't realize this.

This is a more realistic view of the after-the-bomb story, albeit an optimistic one. It's a novel difficult to put down once you've started.

My Choices:

First place was the hardest. It was between the Brin and the Card, and I'm placing Ender's Game first, with The Postman second. Cherryh and Cuckoo's Egg I place third, Bear's Blood Music fourth, No Award, followed by the massive Niven and Pournelle tome, Footfall. I read several novels in the last year better than this one.

BEST NON FICTION BOOK

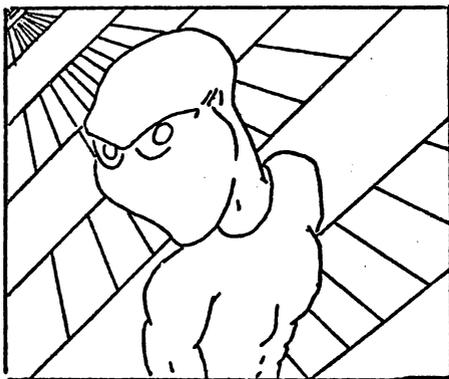
This was difficult, only because I could not get hold of all the books. The Pale Shadow of Science by Brian Aldiss was in no bookstore or library I consulted. I also could not find Faces of Fear by Douglas E. Winter, The John W. Campbell Letters, vol I by Perry A. Chapdelaine, or Benchmarks: The Galaxy Bookshelf by Algis Budrys. However, I have read Budrys' reviews before, and have read excerpts of Campbell's letters in other places, so I can speak intelligently about them. We did get Science Made Stupid by Tom Weller, and With an Edge in My Voice by Harlan Ellison.

So, what can I say? I enjoyed AJ's reviews in Galaxy, and his current ones in F&SF. Ellison strikes me one way or the other depending on my mood at the time. He is usually good, but does tend to rant on at times. Some of Campbell's letters were longer than the stories he critiqued, but they were interesting, creative, thought-provoking, and generally fun to read. Interviews with the Horror Writers should be good, but I have seen bad interviews done, so I can't really say how good Faces of Fear is. Science Made Stupid is hilarious, a definite companion for all who teach science in high school (college even). And I can't say anything about The Pale Shadow of Science, but I will give it the benefit of the doubt and place it above No Award.

My Choices:

First: The Campbell Letters; second: Benchmarks; third: Science Made Stupid; fourth: With an Edge in My Voice; fifth: Faces of Fear; sixth: The Pale Shadow of Science; and No Award brings up the end.

For the rest of the categories, I will put down my choices, with some comments where and when necessary (or if I feel like it).



HUGO 86

DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

Back to the Future is my first place choice. For me it was between that and Enemy Mine, which gets second place. The latter film uses a voice-over for one of the most important scenes (the encounter on the Drac Homeworld and the recitation of Sami's lineage), and borrows ideas from other movies,

ignoring perfectly good plotting from the original novella. Back to the Future took things on their own merits, and left us with a delightful movie. My only complaint was the drawn out scene involving the return to the future, er, present.

LadyHawke was superb until the end. The eclipse was impossible, given the full moon seen the previous evenings, and the final battle was very unrealistic. (The dancing didn't help either.) Cocoon was a nice, feel-good movie, but I had some problems with the aliens, their original reason for being here, and the stated reason of leaving the pods behind. I place Cocoon in fourth position. Brazil and No Award bring up the end.

PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

I still like the job that Stanley Schmidt does with Analog, so I have voted him first place for the past several years. This year is no different. Shawna McCarthy continued to do a superb job with Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine until she left (remember, her editing continued through the end of 1985 even though she left in June -- the magazines are done roughly six months in advance). She gets second. Terry Carr still puts together some of the best original anthologies and "Best of the Year" collections. Terry gets third place. Ed Ferman and Judy-Lynn get fourth and fifth in that order (for personal reason).

PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

I was happy to see that Kelly Freas has been active more so than before. His style is distinctive, but also very good. I put him first. Michael Whelan follows in second place. He is very good, and I could ONLY put Kelly above him. Barclay Shaw, Rowena, and Don Maitz follow in order with No Award bringing up the rear.



FAN WRITER

That Don D'Ammassa is writing again and producing MYTHOLOGIES is a plus for fandom. His essays are intriguing and thoughtful, and always good reading. He gets the first place position. Dave Langford is one of the best of British fan writers, and I've enjoyed his many humorous essays. He gets second place. Arthur Hlavaty is also very good, and he gets third. Mike Glycer, Patrick Nielson Hayden, and Dick Geis follow in that order.

SEMIPROZINE

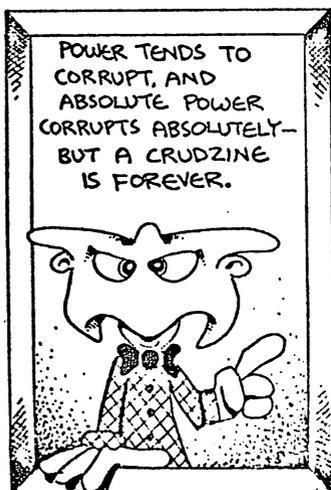
LOCUS still continues to have the best coverage of fan news, pro news, and news in general about the SF world, so LOCUS gets the first place position again. SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE covers the East coast more completely, and Andy Porter's arrangement of the new book releases serves our purpose better than Charlie Brown's in LOCUS, but Andy doesn't have the breadth in coverage that Charlie has, so SFC gets second place.

The rest, in order: SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW edited by Richard Geis, FANTASY REVIEW edited by Robert Collins, and INTERZONE edited by Simon Ounsley and David Pringle.

FANZINE

This category is near and dear to my heart, as might be apparent since I am in it. In following the advice suggested by Mike Glicksohn in his Guest Editorial this issue, I thought long and hard about the No Award choice, and put it in fourth place. LAN'S LANTERN is in first, ANVIL in second, and HOLIER THAN THOU is third. I watched Charlotte Proctor pull ANVIL from the ranks of clubzines more and more into the area of a decent fanzine. A few months ago she removed the club news and made it a real full-fledged, fanzine, filled with articles, fan-nish news, reviews, and a nice letter column. She's done a good job.

Marty and Robbie Cantor have been putting out a decent fanzine for a long time, but it



is still missing a consistent tie to SF. I consider that essential for a good fanzine, in my humble opinion.

I have in my hands (not exactly as I type this, but close by) a copy of UNIVERSAL TRANSLATOR. It is a catalogue of mediazines with an occasional review and some letters. This is NOT my idea of a fanzine. I have not seen a copy of the GREATER COLUMBIA FANTASY COSTUMER'S GUILD NEWSLETTER, but from the title I surmise that it give hints and instructions on costume-making. It is too limited in appeal, and therefore not a good fanzine. Besides, it bills itself as a "Newsletter".

I not only wish myself luck, but also Charlotte and the Cantors. I'll see them at the WorldCon.

FAN ARTIST

Quickly, in order: Brad Foster, Steve Fox, Joan Hanke-Woods, Stu Shiffman, William Rotsler, and No Award. Comments this time around would be more in line of personal taste, so I won't make any. But good luck, all.



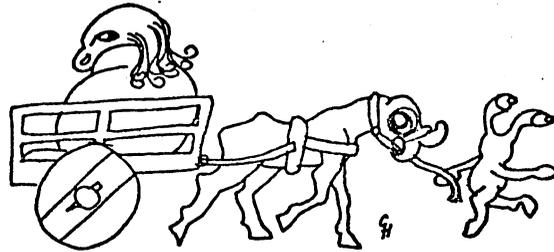
CAMPBELL AWARD

I have heard of most of these people, and through my D'APA connections I found out about David Zindell. Tad Williams appears in our catalogue as having only a story in 1986 which means he appears in a magazine we do not get, or he has a novel(s) we have not seen. Thus, my choices for this final (and Non-Hugo) category are as follows:

First: Karen Joy Fowler. I have read a number of delightful and (sometimes) confusing stories by her, and she seems to be the most inventive of this year's group. Second is Guy Gavriel Kay. His The Summer Tree has been favorably received, and the second novel appears to be as good. I place Melissa Scott third. Her novels are a bit over-done, but she is making a name for herself. David Zindell is fourth. The one story I read was all right, but there are things about it that bothered me. Carl Sagan is fifth. True, he has had non-fiction published before the two-year cut-off, but Contact IS his first work of fiction. Sixth and Seventh are No Award and Tad Williams.

>Well, that ends my choices for this year. <
>Now we just have to wait until the World- <
>Con in Atlanta to see how close I came. <
>See you all at Confederation. <

Post Scriptings



FANZINE, LAYOUT & GENERAL COMMENTS

Thanks to all who congratulated me for the Hugo Nomination. All of you helped make LL what it is today -- so you also can take the credit (and the blame?).

Mike Glicksohn: It was good that you proved yourself correct when you told Allan Hunter "I can spell fine", and I'm hoping that you'll add other words to that list soon, and I thought it was wonderfully droll when you told Robert Teague "I understand typos" and proceeded to make two right away.

I also thought that the overall look of the issue was better than before. One must definitely admit that the material put into the computer was certainly justified. What still astounds me, though, is that you can be using this high-tech repro system and yet the issue literally abounds with typos. With word-processor capabilities and a wife who's a professional proofreader is there really any excuse for this? You wanna win a Hugo you gotta proffread [sic], boy! Still, it does look much better than LL #2 I've got here beside me, so I guess you've come a long way, baby. Personally, I find your art sense and your feeling for graphics frequently....er....shall we say "naive"? But wotthehell, Archy, wotthehell, not everyone likes my fanzines either and I can live with it. LAN'S LANTERN is most definitely a success and you are to be congratulated on achieving what you set out to do.

Cathy Howard: A sense of unreality sweeps over me as I read you don't have typing skills. Considering how few typos there are in your zine I would earnestly suggest you leave your typing "as is."

While I'm thinking of it, your layout this issue (#19) is PERFECT. Easy to read and entertaining to the eye. If anyone has the nerve to disagree, kick 'em in the shins.

((Mike, are you listening? // I am trying a spell checker with the word-processing program this time, though I have not used it for all parts of the fanzine. I just hope I catch most of the errors. // I would like to avoid making mistakes while I type. Even with a word-processor, it slows things down.)))

T.K. Atherton: I've noticed that your letter column often (always?) contains a letter or two of criticism of your skills as a layout artist. I make a large part of my income as just that: a layout artist. I design and execute brochures, annual reports, newsletters; that sort of stuff. And without

making any claim to being the final authority or even a great authority on matters of design, I think I can claim more expertise on the subject than those who have been returning the favor of your sending LL by offering what they imagine to be constructive criticism. And though these credentials may be irrelevant in the world of fanzines where tradition and serendipitous typos are more highly valued than pretense to a slick, commercial look, still I hope you'll be heartened to learn that I think that LAN'S LANTERN is among the most nicely assembled of the fanzines in my experience. It gets high marks in the most important area: readability. Readability, that is, in the typographer's sense: the comfortable column format, the sufficient (if ungenerous) margins and gutters, type size, the relatively good ink to paper contrast (relative to mimeo on medium-blue paper), and well-positioned illos all contributing to easing the reader into what should be the reader's main activity: reading. I could do like the above-mentioned LoCcers and make all kinds of niggling complaints and unsolicited suggestions for improving (and how tempted I am to put that last word in quotes to indicate sarcasm) your zine, but I won't. Without actually going to professionally composed type, without laying the thing out on board, without paying for the kind of printing that no sane person would use without a profit motive; without these steps which would, in fact, be moves from amateur to professional publishing, LAN'S LANTERN looks as good as a fanzine needs to look. It also looks damn good and deserves compliments, not potshots. Maybe LL looked awful in the past and such carping as you've reprinted in the Letter Column has given you the impetus to tighten up your act, I dunno. But I do think the time has come for people to stop instructing you and to start imitating what you're doing right.

((Thanks for the compliments, T.K., it is very heartening to hear things like this. Some of the complaints have been justified. The format has been boring -- the title of the articles always being at the top of the page, cramming in everything as tight as I can, etc. I have been changing a few things, doing some experimenting, creative use of white-space, and above all correcting the typos.))

Robert Sabella: LAN'S LANTERN #19 was quite a pleasant surprise. It reminded me of all the good serconzines I used to read when I was active in fanzine fandom in the late

60s and early 70s. Reading LL gave me the itch to get back into fanzines a bit. I drifted away in the mid-70s to devote more time to writing science fiction (a process I am still struggling with). The only fanzines I kept reading were such things as LOCUS and SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. But lately I renewed my subscription to THRUST and on a whim ordered LL #19 after seeing mention of it in LOCUS. I'm glad I did.

((So am I. Welcome back into fandom, and thanks for the review. Hope to see more from you,))

Colin Langeveld: I must congratulate you on the layout and the quality of the reproduction, How on earth do you find the time to put it all together? When I get home from work I just want to sink into my favorite armchair and THINK of what I would do. Actually doing it is another matter. Ah well, I suppose that's what you get for being middle aged.

((I don't sleep much. I do seem to have a bit more energy and drive than many of my colleagues so I put it to good use on the fanzine and other fanac. But the way I've been going lately, I better take some time off; I'm not sure what days this is. Yeah, maybe I should get some sleep!))

Brad Foster: Good lord, here I get LAN'S LANTERN #18 early in March, and then issue #19 (a thick issue 19) only about a month and a half later! Can we expect this to be an ongoing publishing schedule?

((No, no NO! I am taking some time off after I finish this issue. The next one is scheduled for October.))

Roy Tackett: LAN'S LANTERN 19 is at hand jam-packed as usual with more goodies than any one fan could possibly comment on. It'll have to be a matter of picking and choosing. The devotion and amount of work you put into turning out a 78 page fanzine is mind-boggling. And not just a 78 page fanzine, but an excellent one. LAN'S LANTERN has been nominated for the Hugo? I hope you win. You deserve it. LAN'S LANTERN is what a fanzine is supposed to be.

((I pack my genzine with a lot of different kinds of articles so that it will appeal to a large number of fen. So, do feel free to pick and choose among the articles, reviews, and letters.))

Buck Coulson: Got #19 today, with a note on the envelope saying it had been opened by mistake. Can't you imagine some local farmer, expecting a new seed catalogue, opening the envelope and seeing that centaur?

Bob Shaw: Many thanks for LAN'S LANTERN 17.

Dish!

P.S. In case the comment above should appear a little too cryptic I should explain that this is all part of my cunning new scheme to get in more fanac with far less typing effort. The secret is an extension of

the use of fannish contractions, such as an-nish = anniversary issue, and thish = this issue, to encompass a far wider range of meanings.

The basic ones I've thought of so far are: dish = delightful issue; fish = funny (peculiar) issue; mish = mixed issue; pish = puerile issue. As you will no have doubt observed, the trick is to arrive at a code word which has connotations appropriate to its full meaning. Examples are mish, which has natural associations with mish-mash, and wish, which suggests wishywashy. It's all very ingenious.

Another one in the series is blish, which stands for belles-lettres issue, or perhaps even bloody literate issue. This, of course is also meant as a tribute to our departed buddy, Jim Blish.

Anyway, using this crafty plan means I will be able to respond to fanzines by writing only one word to each! Think of the time I will save, time I can use to... Wait a minute. What in hell is going on here? I'm nearly at the bottom of this page... All those words I've written... The plan has gone wrong! Gnash gnash! Or should I say gnish, gnish? Perhaps not--I haven't worked out what gnish means yet...

((Great letter of comment = gloc. Hey, this could be fun!! // Sorry, I've no suggestion for gnish.))



THE WORLDCON & HIGH COST OF VOTING

Eric Lindsay: As a perpetually broke fan, I echo you comments on the very high cost of voting for Hugos. I really can't see any purpose being served in having the cost of voting higher than the cost of a couple of paperback novels. As a supporting member, I'm not very interested in elaborate progress reports. Indeed, I'd be satisfied if progress reports and program books were no more elaborate than the average fanzine. However, since it appears this is unlikely to occur, I do have one way out, and that is not to be a member of the Worldcon, not to vote, and not to attend, so that is what is happening.

I also have to wonder whether the organizers of large conventions actually manage

to have any fun at their own cons. When I was organizing relaxacons in Australia, I was able to do all the organizing personally in a matter of 30 to 40 hours spread over the months prior to the con. My "at the con" working time was generally less than two hours a day. In contrast, at AUSSIECON II, despite not having any intention of working for more than one day, I seemed to be working on stuff for up to eight hours a day, didn't manage to attend a panel in which I wasn't a participant, and generally missed every event I was particularly wanting to see. And I was one of the least busy fans at the con. The actual committee people were putting in enormous hours, had co-opted fans from every state of Australia, and were still short of staff! My reaction to all this is now simple. If anyone in Australia wants to hold another Worldcon, they can manage without me, because I'm not attending.

Jean Weber: I agree that paying the price of a Worldcon membership just to vote for Hugos is too much. A voting membership only sounds good. (Actually it costs more to vote for the next site as that carries a further fee.) On the other hand, I think the attending membership fees are quite reasonable.

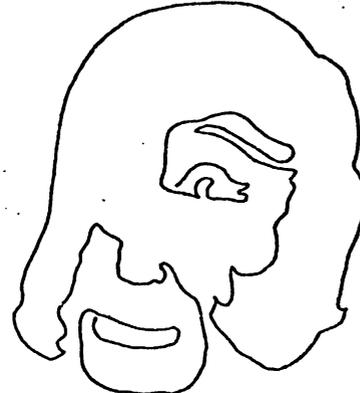
Rob Gregg: I agree with the suggestion that Hugo voting should be broadened to fandom as a whole, rather than just Worldcon attendees. Because of ill-health and lack of funds I'll probably never attend a Worldcon, but I'd love to vote for the Hugos every year, even if it cost me about £10. At least I'd feel that I was doing something positive, and subsidizing the con for more active fen like yourself.

((That's what the supporting memberships are for --to allow those who cannot attend the Worldcon a chance to support it and vote for the Hugos.))

Jan Story: Add my voice to the growing chorus crying that, with the increasing cost of even supporting Worldcon memberships, there should be some kind of voting-only membership that would entitle a fan to receive only the Hugo nominations and ballots. Personally, I'm not interested in progress reports and program books for a con I'm not going to attend. We have enough junk around here as it is.

Martin Morse Wooster: I think Mike Roger's letter on the cost of a Worldcon captured the problem Worldcon committees have better than anything else I've read. If a Worldcon prices itself out of the range of most fen, attendance levels will fail to reach profitable levels and the Worldcon will fail. This seems to be happening to Atlanta. I don't think the solution is a permanent Worldcon committee; this already exists at an informal level, which is where it should stay. I hope, however, that fen in the US will not vote against foreign bids purely because they can't afford to go to them. The Worldcon needs to be held in as

many different cities as possible; it doesn't need to be artificially priced beyond the means of most fen (Bermuda Triangle, for example.)



H. HEATH

HUGO VOTING and HANDICAPPING

Terry Jeeves: Agree with you over the high cost of (Hugo) voting. I have never yet voted though, even when eligible, simply because I have never liked the voting system. This is a personal viewpoint: for my money it seems that nominations are either (a) author plugged, or (b) nominated by people who wish to be seen as "intellectuals" and so only name those titles which they feel will foster that image. Because of this, "pure entertainment" titles stand little chance. One might make out a very strong case for giving the awards for titles with the best sales -- in the case of books, for instance. In the case of fanzines, "Best" almost invariably means "best known", or in other words, the fanzine with the biggest circulation. Not invariably, but not far from it. Because of these and many other similar variables, voting for the Hugos seems rather a waste of time, let alone lolly. To really put my neck on the block, I might add that I almost always find that Award-winning titles bore me to tears! Incidentally, how many people will have read all the eligible material??? And if they haven't read it all, how can their vote be unbiased? Of the novels you list as "best", I have read but two (and wasn't impressed by either); of the novellas, I hadn't read one.

Rob Gregg: David M. Shea's "Handicapping the Hugos" was good but a little unfair to Harlan. The guy wins because he is good, not because he is a big name. If that were true, Heinlein, Asimov, or Niven would win every year (instead of of every other year).

THE HUGOS: 1986

Sheryl Birkhead: Yeah Cuckoo's Egg. (And under the Non-Fiction -- I'd dearly love to have Harry publish another fanhistory book and see it residing in this category, hint,

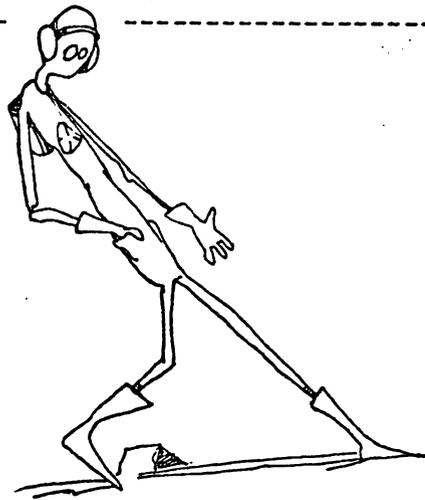
hint.) Saw Back to the Future and Ladyhawke -- loved those horse, but still haven't found out what they are. Yup, Fan Artist -- Brad Foster, no ifs, ands, or buts, with hanke-woods second. Congrats for making it onto the Fanzine ballot. Makes me feel even more out of touch when I've only heard of two other nominations and seen only one of them! Fan-Writer -- I don't feel qualified in. I'd really like to be able to purchase a set of nominated fiction to be able to vote intelligently, or I won't vote at all. The same might be said of Fan-Writer. I've read something by each of the nominees, but not a LOT by any of them, and seeing a "selection" would make it a lot easier to decide. As has been mentioned, it may very well BE a popularity contest (if that's true, how come Foster hasn't won before? Hope he has his mantel already dusted off!).

Milt Stevens: By the way, congratulations on your nomination for the Hugo. Now about this ballot-stuffing scandal... (Not that this year's ballot-stuffing scandal has anything to do with LAN'S LANTERN, but the juxtaposition of ideas amused me.) As you undoubtedly already know, the Hubbard types were apparently at it again this year. I find it difficult to understand why they don't realize that this sort of thing gets them more bad press than it is worth. In spite of all the discussion that has taken place on lowering the price for the Hugos, that isn't very likely while there is a ballot-stuffing problem almost every year. I even suspect that the days of the supporting membership may be numbered.

((I chuckled when I read it. // I think I have to agree with you that as long as ballot stuffing continues, the cost for supporting memberships will not come down. But I don't see them being done away with altogether.))

Ben Indick: Old friend, I am delighted that LL has been nominated for a Hugo! Of the competition, I only know HOLIER THAN THOU, which is formidable competition. I could not be averse to either winning, but your Special Author Issues would, for my taste, grant LL the edge. Then again, there is that famously infamous cover by Brad Foster last year on HTT, which somehow missed out on an indictment by the Congressional Committee on Pornography (but still tickles the risibilities in memory).

Jan Story: It's time to be a voice crying in the wilderness again. The fact that clubzines and mediazines get on the Fanzine Hugo ballot -- with less than 20 nominations! -- is squarely the fault of fanzine fandom. Every year -- until finances fafiated us from Worldcons -- I heard the same tiresome bleat, how the fringeferen were taking over. But did the bleaters bother to nominate and vote? Seldom. Mediafen know how to organize; fanzine fen never have. A clubzine has a built-in voting bloc. (Not that I have anything against a good club/genzine; I



seem to recall that RUNE got nominated back in the Haskell era.) But the old-line fanzine fen have got to realize they're not the only people in fandom any more, and if they want "their" zines on the ballot, they have to join the Worldcon, nominate, and vote!

JOHN THIEL'S "FORBIDDEN BOOKS"

Frank Lyall: Referring back to LL #15, and the comments published in #17, the article by John Thiel on "Forbidden Books" was surprising. The Book of the Dead is a famous translation by Wallace Budge of the Egyptian text, first published in the 1920's, but which is still in print in the UK and doubtless also in the US. I too was very puzzled by the reference to John Calvin's Malefactus Malefactotem and think it is an error. The famous book on the interrogation of witches is the Malleus Maleficarum, which was first published by two Dominican friars Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger in 1485. A modern translation was published by Montague Summers in the UK in 1928 and 1946, with a paperback version in 1971. Its main interest today is that it is the best account of the rules of court procedures and evidence in use at the time it was written. On the Necronomicon, US readers may care to know of The Necronomicon: The Book of Dead Names, edited by George Hay and researched by Robert Turner and David Langford, published by Neville Spearman Publishers in 1978, and in paperback by Corgi in 1980. It claims to find more than traces of the Necronomicon in work by John Dee, who lived in Elizabethan times. All that said, dabbling in such matters is ill-advised.

HUGO GERNSBACK

Terry Jeeves: I found the two items on Gernsback interesting and stimulating though I must admit to being in the pro-Gernsback camp. It is debatable whether or not he was responsible for "hiving off SF" into a side ghetto, but it is pretty certain that had he not brought it into a magazine field of its own, we should not have had today's glut of magazines/books/films, and certainly no fandom as it is now. The occasional SF novel

would have had a hard time getting by the publisher's readers, and with no magazine outlets to speak of -- I shudder to think. Perhaps a comparable idea might be to look at Westerns or Detective and Sport fields. None of these have really budded out into the magazine ghetto-plus-fandom that SF has achieved, and whilst each has a small footing in "mainstream", none of those areas has blossomed like SF. No, without Gernsback our SF would have been the (very) occasional "mainstream" watered-down tale clinging as closely as possible to "the real world."

AMSBURY'S "Joe and I and the USSR"

Terry Jeeves: I found the bit on USSR quite fascinating. My only encounter with a Russian (knowingly) occurred in Antwerp in 1957, just before the UK Worldcon. I was strolling down the Arteveldestrasse when a chap on a scooter pulled up beside me and jabbered a query in some foreign tongue (probably "Which way to Moscow?"). So I gave the Gallic shrug and outwardly deployed hands--the universal sign of total ignorance -- and said, "Me English." Amazingly, his face lit up and he said, "Me Russian," revved up the engine and vanished in a cloud of blue smoke. I like to feel we had done our collective bit for International relationships.

TOM EASTON'S "2050: Eye of the Needle" (And related comments)

David Palter: Thomas Easton's predictions for the future of humanity in "2050: The Eye of the Needle" are quite logical and there can be little doubt that they will come to pass, provided only that there do not occur, before 2050, any major events (which could be scientific discoveries, technological projects, major wars, or many other things) not foreseen in this analysis, to exert a major influence wither for better or worse. I cannot help but suspect that somewhere, sometime, the limitless surprises inherent both in humanity and in the universe we inhabit, will confound all attempts to see that far into the future. But even so, I must admit that the expected surprises my surprise me by failing to appear, and if so, everything should pretty much follow the schedule outlined by Mr. Easton. This does not depict a terribly pleasant long-term future for myself, since I cannot plausibly expect to make it to the good times of 1050, and therefore face only the steadily more overpopulated and underfed world leading up to them. Perhaps I should start now to stock up on imperishable food -- your best investment in years to come. Could be.

Mike Kircher: Tom Easton sounds like a gloomy kind of guy? Is he?

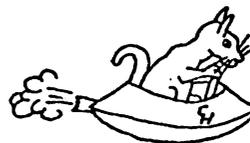
((Not that I know of. I think he's somewhat realistic.))

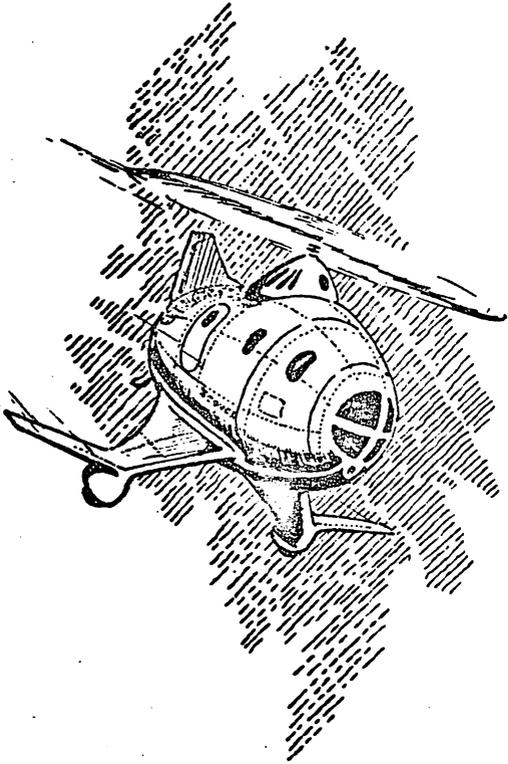
Post Scriptings

Terry Jeeves: Well, comment on the USSR disaster seems as pointless as comment on the Challenger accident. A great big gift to the disaster-loving media so they can gloat in glorious details with animated diagrams and cries of "Woe! Woe! Woe!" It seems a combination of carelessness and bad design by the Russians, but to my mind we MUST press on with nuclear power...and its cleaner version, fusion power. We only have, say, a hundred years to establish an alternative energy source and then we'll be in schtook. Wind and water power won't touch the surface of demand, and for those who say that automobiles can be done without, I wonder if they have wondered HOW our food can be harvested in the quantities required to feed a world, then transported to other countries and finally distributed. Unless we go back to each person having his own plot and cow to rear their own food, I fancy there'll be famine to make the African affairs look like slimming diets. Of course, the most viable alternative seems to be either put all A-plants in satellites, or else build solar-power collectors in orbit and beam down the energy. Snag is, that requires BIG political decisions and the spending of much money. With governments like those in the UK, NOT A CHANCE! What's the betting they cancel the Channel Tunnel once again?

Colin Langeveld: At the moment the big thing over here [in the UK] is the cloud of radioactive dust that is hanging around. As I write this I hear that it has invaded your fair shores as well. What worries me is the feeling that all has not been told. The news media seems to be playing the whole business down. How safe is safe? Can you REALLY drink the milk? I haven't. I usually enjoy this time of the year, the bright green of the new leaves, the sense of renewal. Now, the only feeling I have is that the world I know and enjoy so much has somehow been defiled. I am not a happy person at the moment. I don't think I will ever take pleasure in running in the early morning dew again.

((We have an exchange teacher here from Cranbrook Kent, England, but I didn't ask him how he felt about it (and he's gone for the Summer). I really can't imagine fully how you feel, though there is a growing concern here about something a little bit different, but still a subtle form of growing danger. Pain-medicine capsules are showing up on store shelves tainted with poisons. More and more are being found. It's a very mild form of terrorism, but it is getting wearisome. // I hope that things have indeed settled down in the UK. // Mala and I hope to be able to make it to Great Britain for the Worldcon next year.))





THE HEINLEIN ARTICLES

Terry Jeeves: I thoroughly enjoyed reading the first part of Fischer's article on R.A. Heinlein. I must admit that he used to be one of my favourite authors, but after Stranger in a Strange Land I began to tire of his more socially oriented works. ONE VERY minor point...and certainly NOT a quibble...in mentioning Campbell's favorite plot as being an Earth taken over by aliens, one should not forget his "Frictional Losses" -- the first in that line.

Incidentally, Heinlein's Puppet Masters (in Galaxy) was foreshadowed by a much earlier (c.1934) yarn in ASF. I can't recall title and author off-hand, and I'm too lazy to start researching the files right now -- but the "leech on back" idea was right there.

Rob Gregg: I discovered Robert A. Heinlein several years after I started reading SF, so I can't claim to be a great fan of his, even though in the past year or so I've read and enjoyed Methuselah's Children, Friday, and Stranger in a Strange Land. Dennis K. Fischer's critique of RAH was interesting to me as I am largely ignorant of the older, more obscure, works, but I think it would've been better if he had contained the piece to novels only. By including every short story the guy ever wrote, he weakened the overall impression of the article and made it (a bit) more difficult to assess Heinlein's fiction as a whole. Still, has persuaded me that it is worth looking out for a few of the older novels in the second-hand bins. Personally, I dislike Heinlein's politics, but I try to keep these things separate from my SF reading, and judge each novel individually. It is stupid to ignore someone because you disagree with them on some mundane

point. Anyway, I for one am looking forward to the second part of the article.

Dave Yoder: Fischer's Heinlein article shows a lot of time and effort spent in its production. It reads well and is a pretty good capsule summary of Heinlein's career. Of course, one can argue with some conclusions and opinions, but his are intelligent and reasonable -- and Heinlein tends to be a very emotional subject anyway. (And I'm not sure that there are really any people who read science fiction who have never read Heinlein. Don't remember reading him, maybe....)

Michael Kircher: Enjoyed the Heinlein number, though any criticisms, justified or un-, of Lazarus Long grates me the wrong way. Also enjoyed hearing of the various pseudonyms he's used. Is there a master list somewhere of who everyone's said they were?

((Barry McGahan and Howard Devore have put together a book of SF and Fantasy authors' pseudonyms.))

David Palter: Fischer's article on RAH is extremely well researched, well organized, well written, and perceptive. If part two can sustain this level of quality, it will constitute a superb study of the genre's most popular and influential living writer (and if we include all SF & F authors, past and present, it may be that only J.R.R. Tolkien is more popular, and only H. G. Wells more influential).

I have only one rather minor disagreement with this article. The author, noting Heinlein's reference to a dilating door, notes that such a door would not be very practical, having too many components for its simple function. Certainly that is true in the context of contemporary human civilization. And indeed, it may remain true for all time to come. Or it may not. Future advances in science and technology may make the construction of such a door much easier, and future social situations might provide a more important reason to use such a door than any presently existing reason (the only apparent one being sheer novelty). Certainly it would be strange for dilating doors to come into use, but not necessarily implausible. One thing I think we can confidently expect of the future is that one way or another, it will be strange. If I live another fifty years (not at all impossible, as I am only 34 years old), I expect to see stranger things than dilating doors coming into use. And it could happen sooner--fifty years is a conservative estimate.

Dennis Fischer: Buck Coulson's letter of comment was correct. I didn't particularly enjoy Beyond This Horizon and failed to re-read the novel before writing the article, leading to the error he pointed out. Thanks for the correction and my apologies for having made the error in the first place. But, to err is human; to really foul things up you need a computer.

Buck Coulson: No major disagreements with Fischer this time. I don't always agree with his opinions, but it's his article. Might mention that The Star Beast wasn't the only Heinlein juvenile to be serialized in an adult magazine; Between Planets was first published as a two-parter in Bluebook. I suspect that the characters in Rocketship Galileo were based on the characters in the books that Heinlein himself read as a boy; I know they're similar to the ones in books I read. Like adult fiction, the juvenile brand has changed quite a bit over the years, and Heinlein's later juveniles may be better because he'd read more in the field by then. Of course, Rocketship Galileo was for a younger audience than were his later books, also. At age 7, you don't notice the characters as much as you do the action. A lot if Heinlein's juvenile work was published in Boy's Life, which may well be why Farmer in the Sky featured boy scouts.

David M. Shea: I read with much interest Dennis Fischer's article about Robert Heinlein. The main problem I encountered with this was that at no point does the article even come close to acknowledging the distinction between fact and opinion. For example, it is flatly asserted that Lorenzo, the protagonist of Double Star, is "Heinlein's greatest creation". Really? On what authority? Close reading of the article reveals no clue; presumably one is supposed to assume it's so because Mr. Fischer says so. In short, it's his opinion. I consider myself fairly well versed on Heinlein's work and I don't happen to share that opinion. This reader would have found the article much more accessible if the author had occasionally broken into his stream of dogmatic assertions with a qualifier to the effect that this was how he happened to feel about it.

It was not until re-reading the editorial column at the front of #19 that I realized that this was all there was to Mr. Fischer's article. Even if one is only treating Mr. Heinlein's fiction on the basis of "telling a good story" (which as nearly as I can make out seems to be Mr. Fischer's major criterion), it seems highly unrealistic to dismiss the last 25 years of Heinlein's career in two brief paragraphs. Surely most of fandom would acknowledge that Heinlein's work leaned heavily into the tendentious (not to say preachy) in later years, but Glory Road, Starship Troopers, and especially the vivid The Moon is a Harsh Mistress are all crackling good reads. Stranger in a Strange Land holds up pretty well (though I confess to a belief that it is a book which works best on the first reading); and even I Will Fear No Evil had its moments.

Robert Heinlein must be regarded as not only one of the most popular and creative, but also one of the most influential figures in the field; and that's not just my opinion. If you don't believe me, ask Joe Halderman, David Palmer, Spider Robinson, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, John Varley, and a host of other writers who freely acknowledge

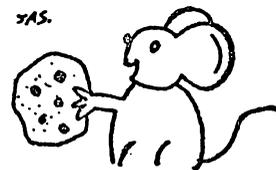
their debt to the old master. I think Mr. Fischer does Heinlein a disservice by brusquely disregarding a major (possibly the major) portion of his work.

At least, that's what I think...

Mick Hamblen: The Heinlein article was too long and convoluted for me to enjoy. I usually read SF for escapism, but won't reject new ideas and critical articles as long as they provide entertainment. Academia can be quite boring.

Milt Stevens: I got quite a bit of nostalgia out of Dennis Fischer's two part article on Heinlein. I realized that it's been thirty years since I read things like Double Star and Puppet Masters. Once upon a time I thought I'd never forget anything about the science fiction stories that I was reading. It's amazing how the brain becomes less sticky after a few decades. I've never really been bothered by some of the infelicities in some of Heinlein's plots. It's the little details in his stories that I really remember with pleasure. Like the zero-gravity bird and the zero-gravity dog. After all, some of the most major mainstream novels have had little or no plot. Thomas Wolfe got through an entire career as a major American novelist without having any plots at all. I notice in passing that The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag must have been rewritten for book publication. The 1976 Berkeley-Medallion edition that I have has a different ending than the one Dennis Fischer describes.

Terry O'Brien: I've sworn off reading Heinlein now for several years: I don't go back and reread any of the books that so captivated me in my early years of reading SF, nor do I try to find and read the ones I had missed. I read Friday when it came out, and was slightly disappointed in it: no matter what anyone else says, it still seems to me that he can only create one female character, and that character is quite unrealistic. Number of the Beast was a waste of time. I don't remember another book in which the principle characters spent half the book arguing with each other without advancing the story, and the ending was self-indulgent. He also screwed up the six-dimensional theory at the end when he added time-travel as one of the six dimensions, leaving only five dimensions to travel along. I've ignored The Cat Who Walked Through Walls, both on general principles and from what I've read about it.



Sweetie-fan says
"Let's eat cookies!"

Robert Sabella: The Heinlein article was interesting. I did not enter science fiction through the Heinlein juveniles, so my opinion of him seems less colored by fond childhood memories than other people's. My "golden years" were the mid-to-late 60s when Heinlein was past his prime. While I appreciate his earlier fiction, he has never been a particular favorite of mine.

Ben Indick: Cheers for Dennis Fischer's splendid wrap-up of his Heinlein article. Here is an Emperor whose new clothing is revealed for what it is, at least the mantle he has worn for some years now.

Craig Ledbetter: The second part of Dennis Fischer's overview of Robert Heinlein's fiction was even better than Part one. Probably due to the fact that I'm more familiar with the material in part 2.

Roy Tackett: Dennis Fischer's commentary on Heinlein contains nothing new. Heinlein, being a giant in the field who says a lot of things that the modern generation of fans disagree with, is second only to John W. Campbell when it comes to being a target for criticism. Fischer's effort here is moderately interesting but nothing to get excited about.

Clif Flynt: I very much enjoyed the Heinlein article. Hmmm, discussing Heinlein as #3 after Sex and Drinking....
Hmmm....

Drinking, Sex, and Heinlein, Heinlein, drinking and sex.
You can pick one or the other, but I like them all the best.
If I could pick my novel, I'll tell you who I'd be:
Rhyssling, in that Whorehouse on Mars, getting all my "drinks" for free...

Naww, it'll never fly, Orville.

((Naww, Cliff. It'll never filk!))

Toni K.F. Weisskopf: I like the idea of a good long piece going over all of RAH's work, and it is done fairly well by Mr. Fischer. Still, we don't exactly agree on Heinlein, though, at what he's good, and how he can be interpreted. It's close, but not quite the same. Probably the best way I can show the disagreement is to just produce some criticism of my own, which I am in the process of doing. It'll be a little more sympathetic, I think. After all, I can find worth in all of RAH's later work, not just the ones reminiscent of the early works. In fact, the Fischer article helped set my thoughts rolling, so I should thank him.

ALTERNATE HISTORY

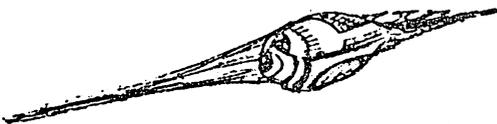
Danny Low: During the 1930's, the Japanese High Command concluded that war between the USA and Japan was inevitable and that Japan could not win such a war. The plan that they eventually came up with was to make the war so costly to the USA that we would be forced to settle for a negotiated peace that would allow the Japanese to keep their vital Asian conquests. This strategy required avoiding a war with the USA until their island fortresses in the western Pacific Ocean was completed. The construction of the fortresses was expected to be completed some time in the mid-forties. Considering the cost of taking the incompleated fortresses in the actual war, this strategy could well have succeeded and may even have resulted in a Vietnam type settlement where the USA was defeated in all but name. The attack on Pearl Harbor was the result of a series of aggressive acts by President Roosevelt against the Japanese that endangered their strategy. In "The City on the Edge of Forever", a pacifist USA would not have taken the aggressive actions that were actually taken, and the war with Japan could have been delayed enough for the Japanese to carry out their original war plan.

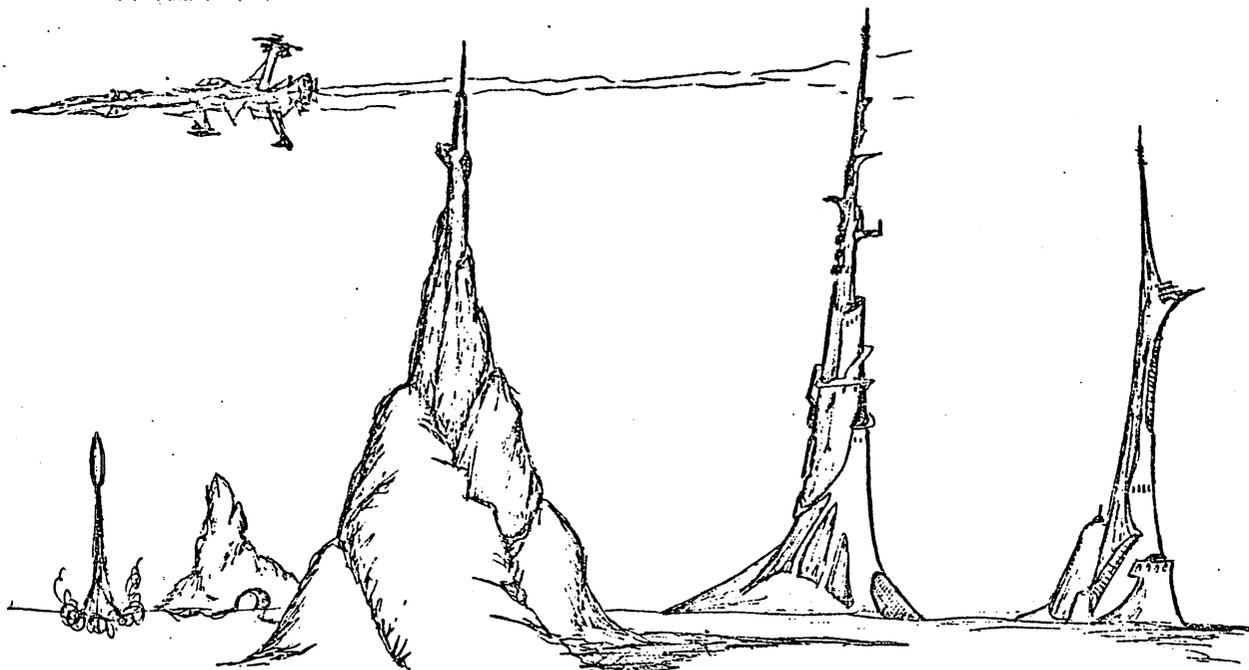
On a related matter, Hitler's original war plan called for a delay of war until about 1942 as the German re-armament was not scheduled to be completed by then. The ease of his early aggressions caused Hitler to move up his time table and the war with Europe started three years early. One of the reasons that the Allies gave in so easily was that they also wanted more time to re-arm themselves. However, I suspect that if Hitler had managed to delay his war until 1942, his military strength relative to the Allies would have been greater than it was in 1939. If both Hitler and the Japanese had managed to delay the start of World War II for the 3 to 5 years that they wanted, they could have won WW II hands down.

Dave Yoder:

The conclusion reached by Evelyn Leeper is pretty accurate. Even if one were to find a producer willing to undertake such a project, it would be likely to find success only as a cult film as most movie goers would probably not be willing to exercise the mental effort necessary to follow and appreciate a piece of work of this nature. I suppose you could go the route of explaining the concept, the change and the consequences, but to do this without making the film choppy or boring would require a great deal of skill on the parts of the writer and director, and would leave very little room for a story.

Rob Gregg: The best alternate history I've read is West of Eden. Since I'm not much of a media fan, I can't comment on that side of it.





Milt Stevens: In answer to Evelyn Leeper's implied question as to why movies and TV don't deal with alternate histories, I suspect that most Americans know so little history that alternatives wouldn't mean much to them. Also, most of the history they do know has been framed in a good-guy/bad-guy context. They know that the good-guys are supposed to win, and thinking about alternatives would confuse them terribly. World War II (Hollywood's favorite war) lends itself to a good-guy/bad-guy interpretation. Very few other situations in human history are quite so clear cut. (Although, come to think of it, little good can be said about invading Huns, either.)

LYNN HICKMAN'S
"The Wonderful World of Yesterday"

Roy Tackett: Lynn Hickman's comments on the early Argosy are interesting although I can't make up my mind about the way he framed his item. At one end I feel it would have been better as a straight article...on the other I rather enjoyed his commentary on modern youth.

Buck Coulson: I wish Lynn hadn't gone cutesy with his column, but I expect it will be a success. As for me, I just want the facts, ma...errr...sir.

Craig Ledbetter: I vote for a continuance of Lynn Hickman's column. The opening one on the forgotten pulpheroes was interesting, but even more rewarding was his style of writing. It made the long article a very quick read indeed.

Sheryl Birkhead: Lynn Hickman -- oh, oh ...brings images of gorgeous penmanship to

mind.... Pulp, great stuff. I'm still trying to prod Harry Warner into a sequel, but in order to do that, he suggested I read the stuff that has been mimeoed since All Our Yesterdays, and I'm still rooting around trying to get the zines together. A lot of people simply don't respond to mail! Then, once I've done that and know what has seen "print", I can get back to nagging Harry. It is time another "real book" was published.

Ben Indick: It's good too see reminiscences of the Munsey Magazines. I must question Lynn's references to A. Merritt. Yes, he used Haggardian settings -- scarce wonder, considering HRH's popularity at the break of the century -- but Merritt's first published story, 1917's "Through the Dragon Glass", was pure fantasy, as was The Moon Pool, The Ship of Ishtar, etc.!! In the early 30's, when he came to write "Burn, Witch, Burn", he abjured his flowery manner and wrote straightforwardly, however. This was most likely due to the success of his earlier non-fantasy Seven Footprints to Satan. Don't forget that in the late 30s Merritt's The Ship of Ishtar was voted the favorite novel ever...over Burroughs, Erle Stanley Gardner, Max Brand, etc. It led to Famous Fantastic Mysteries, which lasted over a decade.

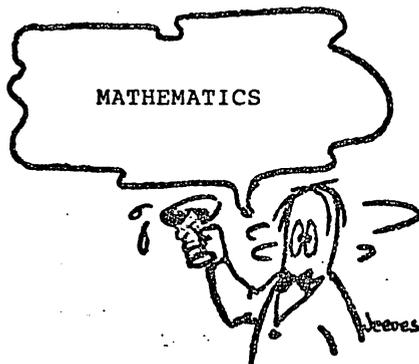
Milt Stevens: By all means, get some more contributions from Lynn Hickman. I always enjoyed THE PULP ERA when it was appearing. It's interesting to read summaries of some of the things that most of us will never live long enough to read ourselves. I used to enjoy Bob Madle's "Twenty Years Ago in Science Fiction" columns when they were appearing. For some reason, summaries of that sort are very seldom done in fanzines.

John Thiel: Lynn's a follower of the

policy "lay off writing for ten years or thereabouts, and then resume," I believe, and here he returns with just what I wanted to be reading. A review of The Shadow it is not, but a real look at some fine pulps I may have missed, or is that the right word? No, nix, make it a regular column, Lynn, do not desist. Alvar Appeltofft may write and say he doesn't like it, but he won't if he mistakes W.C. Tuttle for E.C. Tubbs.

Mike Glicksohn: I though Lynn's piece on the pulps was a hell of a lot better written than much of what I see in fanzines nowadays (and I told him to forego false modesty when he showed up as AUTOFUSION).

Martin Morse Wooster: The Lynn Hickman column was a nice little bit of nostalgia, a refreshing glimpse into the pulps that was worthwhile because of its humor. Too often the standard article about pulps begins, "Now, as everyone knows, good old-fashioned science fiction vanished when Captain S. P. Meek unclenched his mighty pen," or some such rot. Hickman at least has the sense to know that most pulp fiction was dreadful, but enjoyable in a way that modern fiction cannot recapture. I look forward to more of his dredgings into the past, but I hope in the future that he will use a word-processing program that will crash whenever he dares to use the word "groovy". Like wow, man, no one's groovy anymore, dig?



Terry Jeeves: Regarding Glicksohn's comments on "followed a logarithmic curve": I always take that statement to mean something approaches nearer and nearer to a limiting value without ever reaching it -- or, of course, if in the opposite function, something that rises more and more steeply without ever reaching vertical/infinity. One of my little fun items is graphing polar coordinates on the computer. This is much more fun that doing it the hard way (using graph paper and function tables) as one simply enters an equation in Polars, the size limits and the angle step interval, and bingo!, there is your pretty Polar diagram. I've also been using it to do a visual representation of FTL effects on time, length and mass --but ooooh, how the Mass diagram takes over the whole screen on that last $C = .9999$ region.

Sam Long: By the way, didja hear about the bunch of mathematicians in southeast Texas that started a consulting firm that they called the Houston Eulers?

MIKE RESNICK's "Limerick History of SF"

Michael Kircher: Not bad for 17 minutes or whatever!

Rob Gregg: Mike Resnick's limerick was amusing, and very, very true. But then we wouldn't be here now if it weren't for Gernsback and his dream.

MAIA'S "Best of the Magazines"

Wendy Council: As you may already know, I am a magazine reader, too. Asimov's and F&SF are my regular reads, although I have been known to read the fiction out of any Omni for which I do not have to pay.

In addition to the benefits of Magazine reading stated by Maia, it also seems a must to read them if one plans to vote intelligently for the Hugos or any other award. However, what keeps this fan reading them is the enjoyment, the thrill of discovery of a great new story or great new author, and the acquisition of fuel for literary discussions with friends such as Lan, Maia, Armin Scheans and Brad Westervelt.

I agree with many of Maia's choices of "best" of 1985; at least those with which I was familiar were indeed good stories. I am still interested in seeing more analysis of George R.R. Martin's "Portraits of His Children", which, while I found it well-crafted, disturbed me so badly I can't bring myself to reread it. I have myself already chosen my personal best short story of 1986, by the way... And someday I'll unpack the magazines (just moving) and figure out the date and title of it.

From a recent issue of IASFM there is a finely written, compelling story of the near-future by Kim Stanley Robinson, who is surely one of my favorite new authors. (Pretty new, at least.)

Milt Stevens: I was particularly interested in Maia's listing of the best short fiction of 1985. I did a listing of Hugo Nominees for short fiction at the end of February for APA-L:

Novella:

- "Green Mars" (Robinson)
- "The Only Neat Thing to Do" (Tiptree)
- "Loaves and Fishes" (Martin)
- "The Gorgon Field" (Wilhelm)
- "To the Storming Gulf" (Benford)

Novelette:

- "Portraits of His Children" (Martin)
- "Storming the Cosmos" (Rucker & Sterling)
- "Dogfight" (Swanwick and Gibson)
- "Les Mortes D'Arthur" (Iverson)
- "The Jaguar Hunter" (Shepard)

Short Story:

- "Travels in the Interior" (Sanders)
- "No Regrets" (Tuttle)
- "How My Heart Breaks When I Sing This Song" (Shepard)
- "Send Me a Kiss by Wire" (Schenck)

If I'm counting correctly, only two made both our lists and the ballot. Two stories made her list and the ballot only. Two stories made my list and the ballot only. Two stories made both our lists and didn't make the ballot at all. Such is horse racing.

I've long thought that publishing complete data on the Hugo nominations would be sort of interesting to look at. I realize that discovering that you had just missed the ballot by two votes would be a definite "Awshit." Nonetheless, I'm sure you could do all sorts of interesting statistical analysis with the data. On the other hand, you might be able to do something like the Nielson Ratings which might lead in the direction of Common Denominator SF. That might not be a good idea. I can remember when some of the L. Ron Hubbard types were coming around LASFS with questionnaires as to what we like to see in SF stories. The answer, "Something I haven't seen before" didn't seem to satisfy them.

As you might guess, I don't agree with David Shea on "Handicapping the Hugos." It isn't really a kneejerk process, even though I have disagreed with the results on many occasions. A lot of people take the Hugos quite seriously and vote as best they can. Just looking at Maia's list, my list, and the final ballot shows that there is quite a bit of room for reasonable disagreement.

Roy Tackett: Maia says more of us need to admit we read the sfzines. I always have and always will. There is more good fiction to be had in the magazines than in the padded, repetitive, and ghodawful flood of novels, trilogies, and series in paperback.

Toni K.F. Weisskopf: The ultimate judgement of a story for me is if I remember the little bugger or not. I've been remarkably consistent over the years -- the stories I tend to remember also tend to win awards, so someone must agree with me. And of course one reads the magazines! Despite the ups and downs of the publishing industry, the magazines are going to be at the "cutting edge" of SF. Certainly a good argument can be made that the short story form is the right and proper one for SF.

At any rate, despite mutual appreciation for RAH, it seems our tastes in stories differ a bit. Of the stories you listed that I had indeed read (not all unfortunately, but most), I felt "Top of the Charts", "Deathglass", and "Gorgon Field" to be lacking. Good enough, maybe, but not great. "24 Views of Mt. Fuji, by Hokusai" I thought was just fantastic. Gets my vote for best of show. All the rest fail the test: forgotten, they can sleep ignored. I wish I could look them up, but one of the worst things about being a student is that I just don't have the room

to have my (almost) complete run of IASFMs around for handy reference. Instead, I have to cart them home at vacations and let my father read them!

((There are arguments that the novelette or novella is the natural length for SF. They give you enough room to develop not only the background but also the characters without over-burdening the reader with a lot of excessive detail about either.))

CONREPORTS AND RAMBLINGS

Jeanne Mealy: Con reports, yea! I met Bruce Schnaier at MINICON; he was going to share a room with us, but changed his mind. We were a bit disappointed (it would've cut our costs), but not devastated. I liked the string of comments a lot.

I coordinated the efforts of about 10 local fans into a "tripzine". Four of us who went to Australia wrote trip reports, most of which are illustrated. The front and back covers were done by the 1986 and 1987 MINICON Artist Guests of Honor (Ken Fletcher and Erin McKee)! Writers: Linda Lounsbury, Joyce Scrivner, Dean Gahlon, and myself. We just did a small print run, and will attempt to sell as many as possible (though we realize we may not recoup out costs). They're \$3.00, more if mailed. Now I know that the words "fans" and "coordinated" don't belong together! (HHOK)

((I may try using quotations from people in another con report. It will depend on how many I can get. // The tripzine sound great!))

Dave Yoder: The "Conreports and Ramblings" column is always close in competition with the reviews as to which I read first. (Usually I scan the conreports to see if my name is there and then turn to the other.) It is a great way to keep your friends current on what is going on in your life and, for those of us who don't get to many conventions, a wonderful way of keeping us in touch with the real world.

Terry Jeeves: I agree with Lynn Hickman in the lettercol about con size. I attended the Worldcon in '80 in Boston, and found it just too big -- finding a friend who you had spent the previous week with was almost impossible without either making an appointment or, if you were lucky, ringing his room and finding him there. Pity, cause both Val and I love America and meeting the people, who invariably have proved friendly and pleasant.

We were looking through our American photos the other day -- and dreaming of when Reader's Digest sends us that £100,000 we are always getting congratulated about (but never get)...

((we'd like to win the Reader's Digest Sweepstakes too. Interesting to find out that you get the same type of offer there in the UK as we do in the US, but \$ instead of £.))

Post Scriptings

Review Comments

General Comments

Dave Yoder: I have this fantasy that you, Maia, and the Leepers are someday going to quit messing around and do a regular monthly reviewzine. If this should ever occur, please sign me up for a lifetime subscription. Good work done by people who obviously know what they are talking about.

Clifton Amsbury: A couple of book reviews remind me that the people who tell the Reagan administration what to do are not reviving the Cold War. We are in the full swing of a psychological warfare campaign to prepare us for a real Hot War. And they keep testing to try to start one. So far the chosen opponents (victims-elect) have managed to sidestep, though not completely avoid, the blows.

Watch carefully. Such campaigns are run by experts, but we are more resistant now than we were in the Fifties. We learned something from Vietnam. And even from Granada. Or can't we see what SDI is all about?

DAVID STEIN'S: "Same Bat Time..." and TV SERIES

Jeanne Mealy: I liked the "Pulp and Celluloid" section, and David Stein's reviews. I do disagree with David on the quality of Amazing Stories, though. I watched a few of the first shows, and got tired of the drawn-out pace, not to mention the "gosh-wow, it's Steven Spielberg!" attitude. Maybe overall it's better than that; I haven't made an effort to see it since.

((See David Stein's "Same Bat Time..." this issue on page 65 for his latest assessment.))

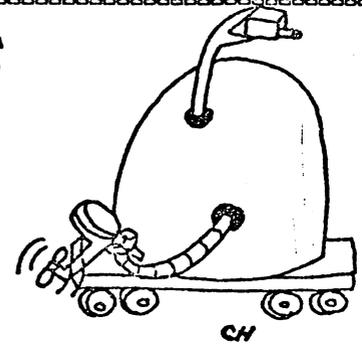
Dave Yoder: High marks go to David Stein and his review of the upcoming season. I'm always relieved to have confirmation that I'm not the only big kid who spends his Saturday mornings watching cartoons. It is quite clear that some producers know they have some adult audience as well since in many of the better shows there are bits that the show's erstwhile audience could not be expected to appreciate.

Terry O'Brien: Mighty Orbots was definitely better than the vast majority of the fare of Saturday Morning Cartoons, in both story content and art. A pity it didn't last. Dungeons and Dragons is the only show on presently that displays as much promise. The half-hour format does limit it, but it did surprise me several times with, amazingly, character development! Unfortunately, there haven't been any new episodes this season, so it also might not get renewed,

TELEVISION

FILMS

BOOKS



which is very unfortunate, since there is very little else on that is original.

Terry Jeeves: I'd rate ALL the items and Saturday Morning TV in toto as being the "brain candy" which David Stein decries. Wasting a whole Saturday morning watching TV is not my idea of time well spent.

Craig Ledbetter: Now that the current TV season has run its course, I'd like to read what Mark has to say about the three anthology series. TZ has been renewed and moved to Saturdays (CBS is to be commended for staying with a ratings lose), and of course Amazing Stories was promised two seasons going in. Unfortunately, Hitchcock was cancelled, and ironically a lot of the times it beat AS in the ratings. Hitchcock redid old episodes but changed them around enough to make them just as interesting the second time around. Art direction on this show was great and I wished I'd kept the Burt Reynolds-directed episode starring Martin Sheen. A gory but hilariously funny affair.

Frank Johnson: One thing that people forget is that Amazing Stories doesn't just mean Science Fiction or Fantasy stories. The whole theme of the show is stated in the opening sequence, that of the story-teller. All sorts of stories are fair game for the show, but they do have to have an element of "amazement" to them, something strange and different. Still, there were a lot of disappointing episodes.

Terry O'Brien: I'd like to know what Mark Leeper has thought of the remainder of the Twilight Zone and Amazing Stories episodes. I agree with him that the first episode of AS was lousy. Unfortunately, just about every story since then has been just as bad, if not worse. When the story is not so sugary as to make it unpalatable, it is so predictable as to make it boring, or so overstated as to make it obnoxious. There have even been episodes without a story ("Gather Ye Acorns" with Mark Hammil was one). Spielberg needs some professional writers to write for his show. I don't think I could stand seeing another "Story by Steven Spielberg" in the credits: he has no sense of subtlety or restraint, and it shows, both in his writing and in his direction and production.

On a much better note, though, I would heartily agree that the spirit of Rod Serling and the old Twilight Zone lives. I fondly remember several episodes, and will gladly watch them again.

Twilight Zone has done what made the original series great, just as what made the first two years of Star Trek great: they've gotten stories from pros, and the quality of the series has reflected it. I counted almost a dozen name authors who had stories adapted to the show, or who did the adaptation. Pros like Roger Zelazny, Ray Bradbury, William Wu, Greg Bear, David Gerrold, George R. R. Martin, Charles Beaumont, Arthur C. Clarke, Harlan Ellison, Joe Haldeman, and Stephen King. There may be more, but these are all I can remember off the top of my head. They are part of the reason that TZ is light-years ahead of AS.

Book Reviews

Terry Jeeves: The "outrageous howlers" in Diasporah are only outrageous to someone well versed in Jewish lore. 99% of the readers would never spot them as incorrect. If howlers are required, pick almost any of the proliferating sword and sorcery trilogies, epic sword-toting fantasies, and the like.

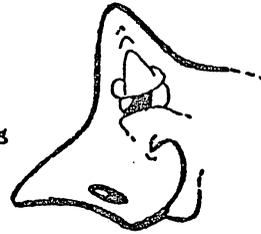
Rob Gregg: I hadn't realized that there was a sub-genre of Jewish SF until I read about Diasporah. I suppose to non-Jews the language differences are no different to reading some alien lingo in a fantasy novel. Evelyn C. Leeper was more critical because she understands the language. I noticed that the review in Analog didn't mention these criticisms -- they were probably overlooked.

((Jack Dann edited a collection of SF stories about Jews called, Wandering Stars. And I heard somewhere that he is editing a second volume.))

I'm a great fan of Michael Kube-McDowell from his Analog stories, so when I heard about Emprise, I immediately rushed out and purchased an import copy of it. I can only agree with your assessment, and I'm disappointed that it wasn't nominated for a Hugo. Certainly one of the best I've read this year, along with Mythago Wood, West of Eden and The Glamour. I think we've pretty similar tastes when it comes to fiction, as your reviews tend to be of books I've either read or am planning to read in the near future. I sent for Blood Music a couple of weeks ago and am still eagerly awaiting it---it sounds very good. Nominations for both Hugo and Nebula awards speak for themselves. I'm not sure I like this "Childhood's End for the eighties" stuff, though. Is Greg Bear not an author in his own right, rather than just an Arthur C. Clarke clone?

The other interesting novel on the Hugo Ballot is The Postman. I'm waiting for the paperback release before I read it, but it sounds like Brin's best yet. Could it be a post-holocaust tale with a difference? The field is getting rather crowded, but I hope this one lives up to your review.

...that's
SOME
lineup!



In his review of Far Frontiers II, Mark Leeper sounds surprised that John Brunner has written a tale from a left-wing perspective. Admittedly one wouldn't expect to find this kind of thing in a Pournelle anthology, but as Brunner is a prominent Socialist and known as such within British fandom, it can hardly be a great surprise. Full marks to Pournelle for still publishing it though. Maybe he is mellowing in his old age. If they weren't so obviously right wing, I think I'd enjoy these anthologies, as I like Analog. But as it is, I think they'd probably remind me of the late, unlamented Destinies.

Spinneret is superb, and I'm surprised this isn't on the Hugo list. It's far better than the dull Cobra, which was over-militaristic for my taste. I understand that Zahn's The Blackcollar is being released in Britain next month. (Hooray!) Definitely an up-and-coming author.

Interesting trying to compare Stephen King to Clive Barker. Aside from the fact they both work in the horror field, I'd say they're like chalk and cheese. King is the master craftsman of the chilling page-turner, while Barker's writing is more dense and moody -- not so outwardly appealing, but far more haunting in the long run. Barker is more in the Ramsey Campbell mould.

Robert Sabella: I liked all the reviews, since I am a bit of a review freak. I thought you and David Shea were the best reviewers.

My only major disagreement was with Evelyn Leeper's review of Edward Byers' The Long Forgetting. Apparently she did not realize it was really a cobbled-together novel (what some people call a "fix-up") from a fine series of short stories in Analog. The whole religious bit was mostly a framework for those stories which together were a good history of the character Pan Kirst.

Mary Price: Thought I might pass on the following from my correspondent Glenn Cook. Sent him a copy of the Leeper review. His comments:

"Odd review of A Matter of Time. Real thread of passion running through it, eh? It is an alternate history novel, three times, though I never bother to tell the reader. He/she has to be familiar with certain historical events to see that."

Mick Hamblen: David M. Shea's comments on "Melancholy Elephants", that it was didactic and "whiney," accurately reflects what I

thought of the story. The fact that it won a Hugo reflects more on Spider's name and not on the story itself.

Comment on "Herbert West -- The Reanimator"

Bob Bloch: Thanks for another LANTERN and the light it sheds on SF and fantasy offerings in print and on film. But there are times when that light seems to flicker and grow dim amidst shadows of speculation.

As a writer soon must learn, criticism is a given; it comes with the territory. It is the critic's right -- perhaps even his duty -- to offer opinions. And these opinions, favorable or unfavorable, must be accepted as such. But when opinion becomes sheer surmise, it's the writer's right to take exception. Supposition is no substitute for fact, particularly when factual data is readily available.

Such is the case with Mark Leeper's review of Lovecraft's story, "Herbert West, Reanimator", or "Herbert West -- The Reanimator", which is actually its original title.

"Reading it," says Leeper, "I got some insight into how the author must have used his name to get stories published." And, "Lovecraft told this same story six times and was probably paid as if each was an original." Leeper's statements are placed in his review in such a manner as to assert -- or at least strongly suggest -- that Lovecraft used his prominence as a writer to unload what he had "churned out" on a hapless publisher in return for big bucks, very much in the same fashion that film producers capitalize on initial success by offering up an endless succession of numerically-designated sequels.

It's a pity that Leeper depended on "insight" rather than information. There's no lack of the latter; much has been written about Lovecraft's work, including "Herbert West -- The Reanimator", and had Leeper bothered to consult such material or even read L. Sprague deCamp's basic biography, his ignorance would have been quickly dispelled rather than displayed.

Lovecraft did not use his "name" to get stories published at any time during his career. And in 1921, when he wrote the "Reanimator" pieces, he had no "name" to trade on. Up until that time his work appeared almost exclusively in amateur journalism magazines; aside from a smidgen earned by prizes or ghost-writing activities, he efforts had brought in nothing. Indeed, it was another amateur journalist who solicited his work, rather than the other way around -- asking for six connected horror stories to run in his new professional magazine, Home Brew.

The first person to label the results "hack labour" was Lovecraft himself. He was undoubtedly correct, and the "Reanimator" series represents him at his worst, as an amateur writer's fumbling attempt to turn out commercially-saleable material for the

short-story market. Home Brew wasn't much of a market even then; the first "Reanimator"

story appeared in the January 1922 issue of a publication which, shortly after running Lovecraft's second "serial" attempt, "The Lurking Fear", vanished into oblivion.

It's true that Lovecraft was paid for each story in the "Reanimator" series as though it was an original, but again the implication -- that he did so for the sake of the money involved -- is entirely false.

The six stories in the series brought Lovecraft exactly \$5 apiece.

Only the first two were paid for promptly; he was forced to wait months for the rest of his princely stipend.

Mr. Leeper's attempts to cover and comment upon a wide variety of material in print and on film is commendable; it represents a great deal of effort on his part. But in this instance it would appear that he himself "churned out" a review without regard for the factual basis of his surmises. The result does disservice to Lovecraft's motivations as a writer -- and also to Leeper's own stature as a critic. Perhaps fewer reviews and more research would enhance his criticism in the future.

I offer this merely as constructive opinion, with no condemnation expressed or implied, and I hope both you, Lan, and Mr. Leeper will accept it as such, along with my best wishes.

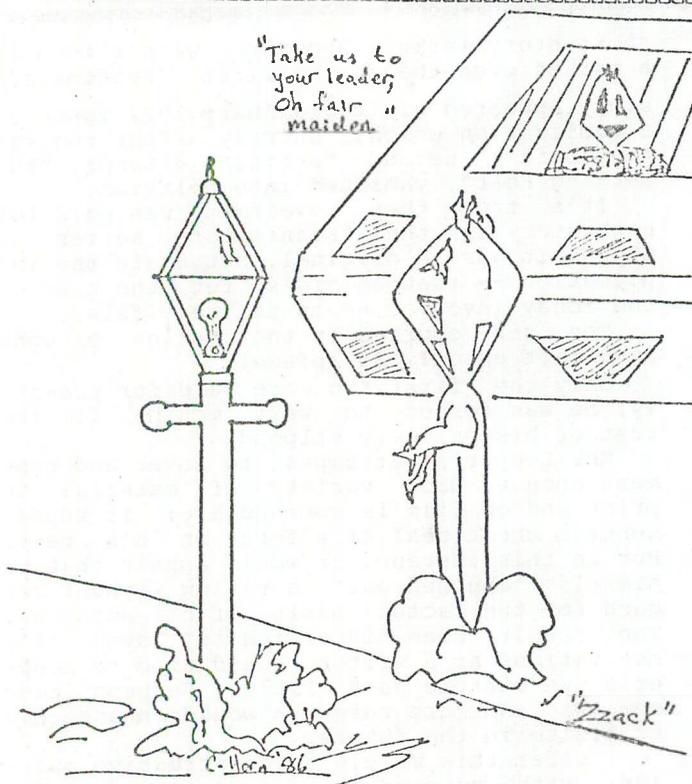
Comments on Vampire Junction

Craig Ledbetter: Without a doubt, Evelyn Leeper's review of Vampire Junction leaves the others I've read in the dust. It is both educational and interesting.

Mary Long: I particularly enjoyed Evelyn Leeper's review of Somtow's Vampire Junction. I'd like to show that to a friend in St. Louis who is interested in the subject. In fact, she's just written (well, in the last year or so) an epic vampire story, and I wonder if any of it happens to coincide with this one (i.e., in some of the reasoning behind the myths connected with the legend). I believe it was Richard Matheson who observed that vampires did not necessarily get stopped by religious symbols (and what about Jewish vampires, if it comes down to it?). I suppose it's all a matter of conditioning.

Sheryl Birkhead: Has anyone written about a vampire getting AIDS yet? Could he sue?

Sam Long: I was reading Evelyn Leeper's review of Vampire Junction, and fell to thinking about vampires and vampirism -- at least the cinematic kind from which we take so many of our "canons" of vampire behavior.



It occurs to me that it should be possible, given a vampire to use as a test-object (or preferably more than one), to develop a semi-empirical semi-theoretical science of vampirology. For example, given that vampires are repelled by crosses, how big does the cross have to be before it repels a vampire? Presumably vampires are not phased by the tiny crosses made by threads in their clothing (the warp and the woof). Do the vertical and horizontal pieces of a cross have to be perpendicular to one another? If not, what is the critical angle θ as which the two pieces cease to be a vampire-repulsing cross? Again, the cross is usually held in such a manner that the plane of the cross is perpendicular to the vampire's line of sight. If you rotate the cross around a vertical axis (or even a horizontal one) so that the cross is edge-on to the vampire, what happens? Is there a critical angle ϕ at which the repulsion ceases? What is the relative efficacy of a "square" cross + and a saltire cross x and how does the repulsion vary as the one is rotated to become the other? What is the phobovampiric effect of a square cross +, a Latin cross †, and a tau cross T? I fancy there could be a dimensionless number H ("van Helsing number" analogous to Reynolds and other dimensionless numbers in engineering), where $H = \ln(V/C)$, where V is the length of the vertical component of the cross and C is the length of the crosspiece. $H = 0$, of course, when $V = C$ as in +; and there might be a critical H below or above which the vampire would not consider two crossing pieces a cross and would not be repelled. + might repel him, but ---+---

might not. If you make C the "projected length of the crosspiece", you could factor in the critical angle θ mentioned above, and perhaps even ϕ .

Other questions that might happen are: What happens to the extra mass of the vampire when it turns into a bat (the largest bat only weighs a couple of kilos at most)? What component of sunlight is most deleterious to vampires? It should be possible to make a particularly effective anti-vampire light bulb.

And (to stretch matters into other realms a bit) what is the critical mass of silver you need in a bullet (need it be pure silver or can it be alloyed with lead?) to kill a werewolf? And what percent full does the moon have to be before a "were" turns into a "wolf"? Questions, questions....

Comments on Clan of Cave Bear

Clifton Amsbury: On of the panels at the recent WESTERCON included Jane Auel, but the other two panelists did not show. I don't know whether she enjoyed it, but I did. She's a very serious woman and dedicated to her subject. However, she has accepted (possibly for story contrast, I don't know) an outdated stereotype of the Neanderthals. The first Neanderthal fragments were found in Germany, Spain (actually Gibraltar, so it's in the British Museum) and Belgium. Finally an almost complete skeleton was found in France and turned over to an eminent French anatomist. He milked it for nearly twenty years. By the time his final report came out there were several other and better skeletons and Ales Hrdlicka of the Smithsonian examined all of them he could get access to. He pointed out that the French "type" specimen was aberrant to say the least. It was an old man, badly crippled by arthritis. I imagine that except for the brow ridges (which can be matched on many modern people) and some prognathism (which would be normal for some modern populations) and what we would now call a "weak" chin, he looked very much like my older brother whose legs are likewise bothered and bent by arthritis and who also tends to be a bit stockily built.

"Flatheads": Hrdlicka was sort of a specialist on foreheads. He pointed out that if you look at the rise of the Neanderthal forehead above the torus (the browridge) it indeed seems low. But if you measure from the nasion (root of nose) then the forehead is about the same as ours. Hrdlicka himself had a very high, straight forehead.

Somehow it wasn't until the 60s Revolution that a new generation of American physical anthropologists looked over another generation's accumulation of specimens and concluded that Hrdlicka was correct.

Brainsize: Neanderthals had lots more brains than most of us. But then, Erasmus, one of the smartest men we know of, had a very small head.

Jan Story: I don't think Mark Leeper saw the same Clan of the Cave Bear that Dan and I did. Of course, when I see a film made from a book I know well, I tend to view the film as an extension of the book. We were very favorably impressed. And I really do wonder where Leeper learned his geology. Dan (a former geology major) read those remarks about earthquake-proof caves and started chortling. First of all (not explicit in the film but clear in the books), Cave Bear takes place in a part of the world that remains unstable to this day. Second, the enormous weight of the Ice Age glaciers created stresses in even stable parts of the planet, causing quakes when the stresses adjusted as the glaciers receded. Third, runoff from the melting ice sheets would have created caves even in unstable sections.

FILM REVIEWS

Craig Ledbetter: "Pulp and Celluloid" continues to be my favorite section as this go-around contained interesting reviews of both books and films. Mark Leeper continues to be my favorite writer currently appearing in LL. Mark is a good critic, both witty and perceptive, even though I don't always agree with his conclusions. His mention of The Howling as the best werewolf realized on the silver screen gets no argument from me, Leeper's review of After Hours, treating it as a horror film, is an example of his perceptiveness. It is indeed a horror film, and reflects on the fact that Scorsese's favorite director is David Cronenberg. Scorsese was also responsible for one of the more horrific episodes of Spielberg's Amazing Stories.

Unfortunately, Mark, Teen Wolf 2 goes into production this year. Fortunately I saw the film on video where the eject button came to my rescue.

I completely disagree with Evelyn Leeper's review of She, but then, knowing Italian filmmakers as I do, the last thing I expected was a faithful adaptation of Haggard's novel. In the late 50s and early 60s when Hollywood was trying to fight off the onslaught of television, they turned to the Epic Film. Many of these were shot overseas (in Rome) where the Italian Cinema began its copy-cat ways. Muscle-man movies were the order of the day, followed by spaghetti westerns (over 400 were made), horror films



"I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THOSE YOBBS ATTACKED ME MABEL. I TOLD THEM THIS WAS A VIOLENCE-FREE ZONE"



#24 in a series—collected them all!

(influenced by Hammer's success) and the two most current genre ripoffs: gore films and the Mad Max/Road Warrior series. She falls into the latter category, but possesses a lot of visual details that really sends the film over into looney land. Even the Heavy Metal soundtrack seemed appropriate. Oh well, different strokes.

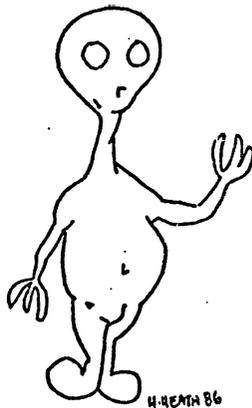
Ben Indick: Surely LL #19 tells me all I ever wanted to know about all the new films, books, etc. I used to think, pre-VCR purchase, I would wish to see these flicks I disdain seeing in theatres. Forget it! I see no reason to rent what I would not cross the street to see before. Nearly all fall into such a category. And of those poor Mark Leeper suffered through, just about all I would not watch in the house.

I do see a lot of live theatre, some of which is amateurish, and some is wonderful, but I choose my films carefully. I fear nearly all horror films -- in spite of my love of the genre -- are not among them. (For one thing, my wife abhors violence and gore; she even hated Ran because of its war and bloodshed. Good thing she walked out of the room prior to the ending, with its magnificent shower of blood!)

What do I use the VCR for? I do retain PBS music programs -- opera, concert, ballet -- which I might want to see again in a year; some science shows; the splendidly beautiful architecture series, Pride of Place; little drama, however. But any Marx Brothers film I can catch! I had a choice between Duck Soup, a beloved favorite, and a PBS Berlioz "Damnation of Faust". I decided to tape the greater, more enduring artwork: naturally, that was Duck Soup!! While taping, I watched the Berlioz. An updated style, from Philadelphia, it was pathetically, even ludicrously, unwatchable.

Hail, hail, Fredonia!

" TO ARE OR
NOT TO ARE,
THAT IS THE
QZPLK! "



PAULA ROBINSON'S
"A Custodial Incident"

Ben Indick: There is not harm in Paula's story, not in your using occasional fiction, so fear not.

Sam Long: I'd've thought they'd have robot janitors at a spaceport -- but why not? A good story and quite chuckle-worthy.

Terry O'Brien: I liked Paula Robinson's story, but there were parts that were a little unclear. Duzi's unease was not really clear until the end, but it should have been, in order to make his actions clearer. The use of the phrase "the unpronounceable sound" was a drawback: it didn't stick in the mind the way an alien sounding word would have, so it was hard to remember exactly what the problem was. The object of contention, too, was a little silly.

Still, I did like the characters, so the story does have something going for it. I got caught up in wondering what exactly was going on. I didn't believe Duzi when he said the government was trying to kill him, but I did wonder what made him think so.

MARK SCHULZINGER'S "Contact"

Mike Glicksohn: I thought Mark Schulzinger had a magnificent title for an unfortunately mediocre con report.

Mick Hamblen: Why does Mark Schulzinger start his article, "The story begins in Indianapolis"? Seems like it started in Evansville.

((Arrangements for Mark to share a room with the Beams were made at INCONJUNCTION in Indianapolis.))

Cathy Howard: Mark's troubles with the hotel desk clerk reminds me of when I stayed at the Galt House. I had prepaid the room and showed the receipt stamped paid to the clerk. He wanted to know if I was going to pay cash or credit card. Maybe they're required to test each guest to make sure they're alive or something.

Stan Schmidt's rejections are hard to understand. When he was at Asimov's, he rejected a story of mine and sent me three

forms with a no-no checked off each one. I didn't understand what he meant until this year. He was right, but I would have liked to have found out about my little weakness when he first pointed it out.

((As far as I know, Stan Schmidt has never worked for IASFM, only ANALOG. However, since the two magazines are owned by Joel Davis, and their offices are across from each other, Stan and Gardner (the newest editor of IASFM) trade some stories back and forth.))

Sheryl Birkhead: A very interesting report. Is Schulzinger planning on doing any more for you?

((Actually it is up to Mark to submit something else to me. For sure I would look at it!))

MARK R. LEEPER'S "Green Slime"

Roy Tackett: Mark Leeper might be interested in knowing that "Green Slime" is one of the favorite films of the Albuquerque Science Fiction Society. The annual "awards" given out at BUBONICON are the Green Slime Awards, and are given for what we consider to be the worst achievements of the year.

Steve Fox: I liked the article. I wish, however, that it would have been longer. Odd that he should name the article "Green Slime". Just last week an SF movie of the same title aired on a local station. Anyway, I do agree with his notion that alien life forms will not probably look like us or anything remotely earthlike. However, on the other side of the coin it may be a law of biology that dictates that creatures which evolve on very, very earthlike planets be earthly in their shapes or other characteristics -- bird-like, mammal-like, fish-like, and so forth.

((It was the title song to the film Green Slime that inspired the article.))

MARK LEEPER'S "Prejudice in Star Trek"

Steve Fox:

Mark's commentary on "Prejudice in Star Trek" did hit upon a concept that is rampant through the show. Despite the fact that humans acted stupid, greedy, warlike, and other negative actions, their way was always viewed in the end as good for everyone else. Or, even though you're not human, our way is better, regardless of your alien points of view or social structure. This sort of stuff is not only rampant through ST, but other shows as well. One which comes to mind is the old Tarzan TV show. The blacks are always helpless, but Tarzan, the only white man for thousands of miles, always has the right answer and the right advice for the poor, dumb blacks in the show. He can even speak to the jungle animals, while the blacks (the natives on their continent) can't do this at all.

This always seems to be true on Star

Trek. The aliens always need help from Kirk to clear up their problems. Some of the logic of the show apparently has been thrown out the window (at least it seems that way to me). Some of these aliens are thousands of years ahead of man, but they need our help in solving their problems? I hardly think that would ever be the case if man came into contact with more advanced races. We would look for help from them, not the other way around.

On the subject still: The movie, The Search for Spock bothers me the more I think about it. The preceding film, The Wrath of Khan, was good on many levels as a film -- a great science fiction adventure which pulled few of its punches. This film also gave us a peek at Kirk's inner feelings about death, his view of life which dictated that he must always win, his run-on battle with cheating death and chance and his defeated enemies. We even see the results of all this high adventure: the death of Kirk's friend Spock!

Oddly enough, I thought that the death of Spock would be good for ST, because it would force them to do stories in another direction, that is, the stories could change with the subtraction and addition of new characters. But what we get with The Search for Spock is something right out of Marvel Comics (or comics in general). No-damn-body wants to kill off a major character to make their stories a bit more realistic. A perfect chance for the Star Trek people to deal with death in a real manner, and now they blow it! Jesus Christ! What's next... Star Trek meets Rockie and Rambo?!

((Mike Resnick's novel, Birthright: The Book of Man, is written such that the human race goes to the stars and deliberately sets itself as superior to the other races. It sums up both what is good and what is detestable about mankind. You may find it interesting. // John Campbell, when he was the editor of Astounding/Analog, he insisted that in any encounter with an alien race, the humans must come out ahead. This was why Asimov came up with his universe inhabited only by humans; it was a lot easier than throwing in aliens and having to "best" them.))



ARTWORK and ILLUSTRATIONS

Ned Brooks: I can remember when there were more good artists in fandom than doing professional art. Now, most of them are pros and I don't know anyone much who can do art -- or will. The British seem much

better off, what with Jeeves and ATOM and Harry Bell still turning out cartoons.

((All right, fan artists, Ned needs some art, so get drawing! // I agree with you particularly about Terry Jeeves. He's always sending me art; then so do a lot of fan artists.))

Terry Jeeves: Many thanks for the nice use of my illos--will enclose some more with this letter. Must agree with your comment on the use of fillos. It is nice if they can be relevant to the text, but if not they still serve a very useful purpose in breaking up the otherwise solid and off-putting pages of text.

Dave Yoder: If I had to find anything wrong with LL #18, it would be the use of your artwork this time around. You get a lot of good stuff and use it pretty well, but this time I think you tried to work in too much. The reproduction is much better-- except for Joan Hanke-Wood's piece (which I thought was the best of the lot). Also, while Sylvus Tarn's work is quite nice I think it suffers from there being too much of it, particularly as all of it is done in the same distinctive style. Then too, it doesn't copy well onto lilac paper which seriously detracted from the appearance of your cover. Come on, George, I know you can do better. (Please note that I'm nitpicking here; except for the cover we are not talking about anything too serious -- just a factor I found to be a very minor irritant while reading. While I'm talking about the cover: I'd really love it if it were a heavier weight paper.)

((I'll see about heavier paper. In #19 I mentioned that the cover looked good in my mind's eye, but was somewhat disappointing in the actual copy. Then, it did look all right, once my eyes adjusted to the poor contrast.))

Rob Gregg: The cover was very poor this ish. It didn't stand out like it should. On the other hand, Brad Foster's back cover was marvelous, and deserved to be on the front. How does he think these illos up? Jeffrey Tolliver is a new name to me, but his "Galactic Derelict" was very good -- looks like your average unemployed astronaut. The Terry Jeeves illos were nice (as usual) with my favorite being the one on page 68--shame authors haven't got this attitude instead of trying to bribe votes. Best of the rest was the BEM on page 64.

Terry O'Brien: I like Sandy's artwork a lot. She's improved her style considerably over the past few years that I've known her. Her cover for LL #19 was great, and I hope to be seeing more from her in the future.

Steven Fox: Real nice cover for #19, interesting line work, plus the fact that the figures are drawn quite well. Considering most fan art, this is refreshing. The rest of the art (with the exception of Joan Hanke-Woods) was average. Joan's work was

exceptional; too bad we don't see a lot more of her stuff lately.

((I'd like to get more art from both Sandy and Joan, too.))

Sheryl Birkhead: After seeing Brad Foster's corner of page 7 ---- I may not have many ideas about the upcoming Hugos, but the Fan Artist category will be the only one I won't have to take any time to consider --- and about time!



THE SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB

Ben Indick: I did not want to neglect comment on Ellen Asher's eyebrow-lifting statement that Doubleday's SFBC's books are printed on acid-free paper. Considering that DD's books in general are the worst-manufactured, neither better nor worse than their book-clubs', on pulp paper in paper covers, I cannot believe such a description. Tell her to look at her product!

Mick Hamblen: The fact that the SFBC uses acid-free paper was quite a surprise. Now if we could talk them into higher quality cover and dustjacket. Maybe a separate Book Club (for people like me) who want higher quality bindings.

Cathy Howard: Evelyn C. Leeper's article told me a few things I didn't know about the SFBC, much to my surprise. Have been in and out of the Book Club Doubleday runs many, many times over the years. Somehow it never occurred to me their paper would be acid-free or hold up very well. Every time I read one of the SFBC's list I find maybe two books I'd like. Cheaper to go ahead and get what I want (even in hardback) at a local bookstore than get entangled in a book club where I always wind up ordering more than I would buy at a bookstore on impulse.

John Thiel: Quite a respectable examination of the SFBC. I've always found it fills out my want lists with what's new and what's in stock. I'm not a member of it now because they made a few errors sending me books I'd asked them not to send, but no harm done.

Robert Sabella: Evelyn Leeper's comments on the SFBC were interesting for several reasons. I never heard of the New Jersey Science Fiction Society. Twenty years ago I belonged to an Eastern Science Fiction Association based in Newark which was mostly a group of old-timers discussing the good ol' days (Sam Moskowitz was the focal point). But the NJSFSS? If must have sprung to life since my ten year gafiation began.

After reading that Ellen Asher prefers fantasy to SF, I located an SFBC ad and counted the selections offered: of 30 books to chose from, 15 were pure science fiction and 15 were either fantasy or fantasy-seeming (such as Anne McCaffrey's Pern books). An interesting split which I had never noticed. Preferring science fiction to fantasy myself, I see why my purchases from the SFBC have declined in recent years.

Martin Morse Wooster: There's another explanation for the switch to fantasy described in Evelyn Leeper's article on the SFBC. Fantasy novels tend to be longer than SF novels; fantasy series are longer than SF series. The more books the SFBC sells, the more profit they make; it's much more profitable to sell a five-book fantasy series than it is to sell a solo novel by a SF writer. I also suspect the dwindling number of SF novels which appear in hardcover also accounts for the shift to multi-book fantasy reprints.

Mary Price: I noted that Evelyn Leeper mentioned Glen Cook in the SFBC article. The amusing thing is that he didn't know he was going to be featured last month by the Book Club.

I returned home from MINICON, found the flyer, and wrote him asking why he hadn't mention it. Turns out he had a phone call from a fan-friend when he got back to St. Louis. Thought it was an April Fool's joke, until he got my letter a couple of days later. Figured I couldn't be part of the hoax. Called his agent. Fellow knew absolutely nothing either.

Publisher neglected to inform either of them. Communication has improved since then.

PETE FERGUSSON and COMPUTERS

Terry Jeeves: I enjoyed the article on why digital computers can never be intelligent, and whilst not wishing to deny the erudition therein, I can't help thinking that the human brain uses neurons and synapses which fire, pause and recover before passing another impulse. Now couldn't one say that the human brain was "inactive" during these recovery periods? just like that digital computer--so maybe being switched on/off by a timing clock may not inhibit intelligence after all? As for number and complexity of programs required, well humans have autonomous programs to look after things like breathing, heart beating, digesting, and so on. Let's not confuse size and complexity with impossibility.

P.M. Fergusson may well be right, but I can't help thinking of the mathematicians who proved bees couldn't fly, that man could not survive speeds greater than 30 mph, that aluminum couldn't be soldered, that computers (c.1940) had to be the size of a house. Hmmm, impossible? Maybe.

Sam Long: The digital computer has put analog computers on the sidelines, that's true, but there's one place where analogs still have the edge and are still being used, and that's in the fire-control systems of battleships. Both the USS Missouri and the USS New Jersey, built in late WW II and recently refurbished to join the fleet again, use analog computers (with gears and cams, not electronics, I think) to point the big 16-inch guns. Why? Reliability and simplicity. Digital computers could do the job (but of course they didn't exist when the ships were built), but the applied ballistics formulas are difficult to evaluate and in any case are not "derived" but empirical, and the analogs do the job faster and better. And, of course, for many purposes (e.g., telling time) analog methods are preferable to digital ones. You can read (analog) faster than you can listen (digital); and for occasions where one or two decimal places is sufficient, a slide rule is as fast as a calculator and doesn't give you a false impression of precision. I still have my slide rule (10" log-log) and can still use it.

((I occasionally pull mine out too, especially when the power is out and my calculator batteries are dead))

You know, you might consider a typewriter an analog computer (at least a traditional typewriter). A word processor is almost by definition digital; and I've become a believer in them. I had a 100 page report to do at work and did it all on our word-processor ("Officewriter" on an IBM PC), such that I didn't need to cut & paste, and could change things in a jiffy and all like that -- and when it was done, I shipped it over to the EPA's WP shop by modem, and they more or less just printed it out the way I sent it in, and everybody was happy. I'd like to get a WP for use at home but we've not got a PC yet. Perhaps in the next year or so; Mary

It's PRIMORDIAL
SOUP. WHY?



could use sure use one. I also use the PC at work to keep track of leaded-gasoline inspections and attainment statistics (i.e., to determine whether a given place has attained the air quality standards or not) and to draw graphs (on Lotus). David, of course, loves computers (he uses them at school -- kindergarten no less) and we'd like to be able to have one for him to use too. But not just yet, unless we win the lottery right soon.

REPLIES TO THE LETTER COLUMN

Rob Gregg: The loccol was extremely well-edited, and the way the comments on particular subjects were placed resulted in a smooth, pleasant read. My only quibble is that I wasn't wahf'ed from the last time. I agree that LL is a nice blend of sercon and lighter pieces. Most zines tend to lean too far to either extreme instead of catering to all.

I entirely agree with Milt Stevens when he states that mundanes are totally unable to grasp the complexities of your average SF novel. This is why fen are superior--we are the elite. It isn't ghetto-ization as some have suggested. Rather, it is a natural progression that, as fen read and understand far more, they're cut off from those who aren't able to appreciate the finer points of our genre. When you think about it, SF is unique. One western is much the same as another, and fans of detective fiction read anything with a murder in it, but SF is the only fiction that can encompass the likes of Harlan Ellison, Robert A. Heinlein, Andre Norton, et al. The similarities between these and others is non-existent, but we can appreciate them all.

Don Wollheim: I do appreciate good fanzines, even now after -- what, fifty years? -- and you manage to get some interesting material. Like Hickman's piece and the study of Heinlein. I read the letters but hate your method of breaking up contributors by subjects. Can't form a picture of personalities that way.

There was indeed a short-lived pulp, I think called Don Winslow's Adventure Magazine -- junk, but I do recall seeing it.

Lynn Hickman: As to the Don Winslow pulp magazine, it was Don Winslow of the Navy published by Trojan (1937). Other pulps taken from the comics were Dan Dunn Detective Magazine (C.J.H. - 1936), and Flash Gordon Strange Adventure Magazine (C.J.H. - 1936). I also remember a Joe Palooka mag, but not the year or the publisher. All of these were very short-lived.

Buck Coulson: Don Winslow was on the radio, too, though I never listened. I heard ads for it.

That's Charles Aidman, not Aickman, as I recall. Fans might recall him from some Wild Wild West shows; he substituted for Ross Martin several times when Martin was ill.

Even with Aidman, I can't see TZ as being that much better than Amazing. Neither one comes close to the Alfred Hitchcock episodes.

Craig Ledbetter: I note in the letters that it was my sloppy handwriting that made Charles Aidman come out Aickman when discussing the new TZ narrator.

As to owning a VCR, I couldn't live as happily without 4 or 5, but without one it would be dismal indeed.

Joan Hanke-Woods' description of pizza is one I'll remember from now on (along with her description of ham).

Sam Long: Re Joan Hanke-Woods [sic]: this all-lowercase spelling is silly. I don't spell Rich Brown's name that way (on those rare occasions when I have occasion to write it). I will, on occasion, use all lowercase for E. E. Cummings, but he's made a name for himself.

Al Curry: Re Glicksohn's letter: I've always wondered about those folks who rather grandly announce that they are "no longer reading science fiction" in the same way they might announce that they are no longer shooting smack or buttfucking chickens. Mike refers to them as idiots, and I think I have to agree with him for a couple of reasons.

(1) The type of persons that would make such an announcement is apt to be the type who enjoys making announcements for the sake of an audience, being a firm believer in the philosophy that any attention is better than no attention. One fellow I know fits perfectly in this category.

Recently, while sitting in our neighborhood bar, several of us were watching 60 Minutes. There was a segment on fashion designer Calvin Klein in which they discussed controversial sexual aspects of Klein's television commercials. One of the commercials depicted a young boy with very obviously sensual interests in the model wearing Calvin Klein clothes.

"Typical lesbian bullshit!" announces the fellow I'm using as an example.

Everyone who had been watching the bit either groaned or turned to stare at him in disbelief. I wondered if the statement had been inspired by anything in the real world, or if he had simply found a convenient orifice of his body from which to draw this bit of wisdom forth, still steaming, into the daylight of an unsuspecting world.

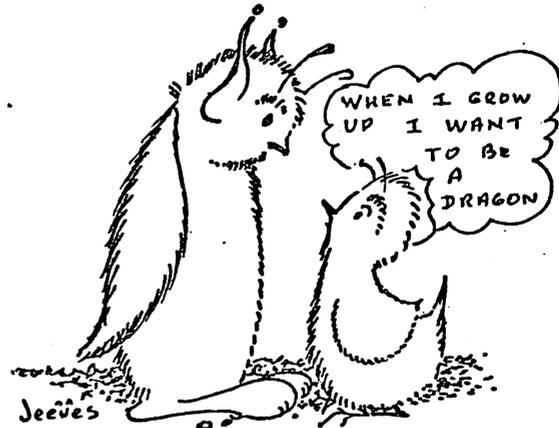
This fellow, I would expect to hear announce that he no longer reads science fiction...nor buttfucks chickens.

(2) Another type who might make such an announcement would be one who never truly "read" science fiction in the first place. Rather, this person scanned it, found nothing to hold interest in the material scanned, and labeled an entire genre as escapist or pap or whatever other adjective they might apply to something beneath consideration. Idiotic? It seems that way to me.

I also have to agree with Mike on the

business of in-depth analysis of the body of an author's work. I don't know whether it's a matter of being unable to do it, or simply not caring to do it. Thinking about it now, it seems to me that such analysis might do little more than change my feelings for my reading. Unlike Mike, I don't think I envy this ability at all.

((Question, Al: Is buttfucking chickens different from regularfucking chickens? // I read books and stories with a semi-critical eye, since I am keeping in mind possible Hugo nominees. If a story doesn't catch my interest in the first few pages, I skip over it. Only if it has been strongly recommended, or is on the final ballot (see my Hugo Comments on p. 72 ff), will I force my way through a story.))



MICHAEL KUBE-McDOWELL'S

"Searching for Hope"

Terry O'Brien: I was quite amused at finding Michael's speech included. I was the one who started the process to get him to Fort Wayne for that event. It's a good speech, too. I'm glad others got a chance to see it.

Toni K.F. Weisskopf: I wish I had been present to hear Kube-McDowell's speech; it read very well. I notice that both he and Tim Zahn found fandom only after they became pros. This seems to be a trend recently, rather than the pros coming from the ranks of fandom. Might you or any of your readers perhaps have any ideas on why this is so?

((I think that many authors are too busy reading and writing to have the time for fandom. They had been reading from their earliest years, were isolated from others, and didn't have contact with people who also read sf. When they finally got published, they were urged to go to cons to promote their books. Then they found fandom. // Now let's see what other people think.))

Roy Tackett: Bravo! That is the sort of attitude one finds all too rarely these days. Wells lived, of course, during an age much more simple than our own. The attitude that man could do anything he set his mind and

hand to was a fairly common one. Today, unfortunately, far too many (and not just the older generations) seem to feel that the only thing man is going to do is make the species extinct. It is refreshing to have someone like Kube-McDowell come along and point out that we can still make it. I will have to start paying more attention to his stories. (Memories of the final scene in Things to Come when Massey points to the mud and to the stars and asks: "Which shall it be?")

Al Curry: I'm really sorry, but I have a great deal of trouble with what the gentleman has to say. From what I've seen of our species, from what I've read of our histories, from what I see now of society (whether American or any other), I can only put more and more stock in the old saying about humanity living down to its lowest potential.

There are exceptions, of course. These exceptions form foundations, paint great paintings, bequeath to charities, write great books, inspire greatness in others. They make massive contributions that frequently consume their lives in brilliant but brief flares that, at best, manage to maintain humanity in precarious balance above its baser tendencies.

I have nothing against happy endings in literature, nor against cheerful endings or even hopeful endings. But please, when writers give you bitterness, give you unpleasanties that force you to lie awake with uncomfortable musings, realize that they are holding up a mirror that refuses to lie to you.

If you simply must label these writers, pick an appropriate one: Realists.

Sheryl Birkhead: "Searching for Hope" (who's she? -- uh, sorry.) Please try to find more stuff along this line. Great!

Clif Flynt: Well, because of the Michael P. Kube-McDowell article, I picked up a couple of his books at CINCLAVE. Even said "Hello" to him. Would have said more if Gwen hadn't dragged him off right then. (Well, if Gwen had asked for me, I'd have left him standing there talking to empty air, too. So, I guess I understand,) Since then I've read the two books in the Trigon Disunity Trilogy. I'm impressed. They were both good. He's managed to cover a LOT of territory, and still keep a decent amount of characterization. I was noting that in many ways these resemble history texts. Enigma (the second book) is a pretty classic novel in that it is the story of Merrit Thackery, a character who grows and develops as the story progresses. I was annoyed a bit at the lack of changes in technology in 400 years of starfaring civilization. Consider that 200 years ago the flintlock was popular state-of-the-art, and it only took a day to get mail from New York to Boston. But he did manage to convey the changes and time passing fairly well. Better than Asprin did in The Bug Wars, though not as convincingly as Haldeman did in The Forever War.

Emprise was more of a future history

book. Instead of a main character, it has a main plot device, and traces that device (the message/visitation) through various protagonist-for-a-day episodes.

((Well, Clif, it still takes a day for mail to go from New York to Boston -- sometimes longer. //I haven't read Enigma yet. This summer...))

Cathy Howard: Michael P. Kube-McDowell is a man after my own heart. I too have yearned for more optimistic fiction to be written/published. Maybe the loss of "sense of wonder" is being blamed on the wrong thing. It isn't having read it for years which dulls it, but what is available to read. I have noticed an upswing in the fictional tone of SF & F. Must be what's encouraging me to buy more of it this year than I have in the past few. He gives a nice capsule of what it is like to be an author.

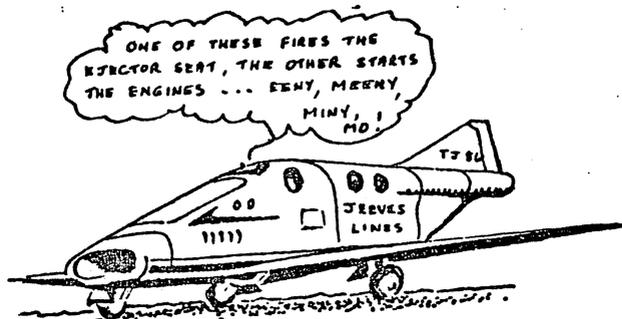
Have to admit I'm guilty of the first thing mentioned. I tend not to recognize people if they are "out of place".

((I too tend not to recognize people who are "out of place". Many times I am not sure if they would be who I think they are. While at MIKECON I saw a couple of people I thought I knew in Bakka (Toronto's SF Bookstore). I tentatively asked if they were from Detroit, and they replied in the affirmative. They thought they recognized me too.))

Brad Foster: Could identify with the line about "writing means...time between significant checks balloons to three months, or four, or five." Can put that pretty much to most free-lance operations. As I've pointed out to a few people who asked what it was like to do free-lance art, it is very easy to sell my work -- it is damn tough to get paid for it! And the trouble is, I can think of maybe only two or three publishers tops who have treated me with even normal respect as regards contracts and payments. Not that they were wonderful and gave extra advances, just living up to their own contracts. This makes them seem extraordinary when the other 99% of the publishing industry seems to be busy doing everything they can to keep from paying for what you've already delivered in good faith. I keep looking forward to the day when I finally hit it big, and can then exercise my righteous indignation on those jerks. Nyahahahahahaha!! Revenge is sweet!



CHRISTIAN LAWYERS?
WELL, THERE WAS
THOMAS MORE... AFTER
HE MADE SAINT HE
WENT TO A HIGHER COURT.



GERRI BALTER'S "Clarion West"

Terry O'Brien: The Clarion West report was the first that I had ever seen about the goings-on at a Clarion Workshop. It almost makes me wish that I had the time to attend one: unfortunately, if I had the time to go, then I certainly wouldn't have the money, because I obviously wouldn't be working. Still, the description leads me to believe that they do some good, if only to get the people there to believe themselves to be writers. I wish Gerri Balter all the best.

Craig Ledbetter: Gerri Balter's piece on Clarion West was okay, but it reads like every other writers' workshop ordeal. At least in this one the author doesn't resort to a constantly whiney tone.

Ben Indick: Gerri Balter tells a useful piece. I trustfully think, had Clarion existed a generation ago, I mightn't be scribbling this in my pharmacy! Is there a senior citizen discount, Gerri? And a brain-restorer? It sounds just great!!

Sheryl Birkhead: I understand about paying to work harder than ever in your life. I've been doing that for three years now [in graduate school] (one person I talked to when applying said, "Explain to me WHY, at this stage in your life, you would put yourself through all this?" and he had already been there!) Someday I hope to write -- I have a file cabinet full -- but I don't take critiquing too well. Friends oohed and aahed, and YOU know it's not that good (but vainly hope no one will tell you it's that bad). It's easier to understand about my art -- classmates have seen a little of it and say what are you doing here when you could be making the big bucks...but in this case I KNOW better. I know I'm not good and it is easier to deal with---just nod knowingly and smile and the subject is dropped. My skin is just too thin to live with the barbs and arrows (slings of outrageous fortune?).

Brad Foster: I enjoyed Gerri Balter's story on Clarion West quite a lot. It's the first really long overview of this I've ever read. Sound like a fascinating experience. Wonder if we could start up one for artists?

Sit around and doodle all night, then take big black markers and critique it all the next day. Hell, we could draw blood if we worked at it right.

Cathy Howard: I now wonder if I would be able to produce "on command" as she did. Probably would be good for me. I'm awfully lazy about getting fiction written. Gerri writes a nice article.

Martin Morse Wooster: Gerri Balter says that she expected Arthur Byron Cover to be "a tall, slim man dressed in a three-piece suit with a British accent." Do most of the suits she runs into talk to her? I've been trying desperately to have my suits tell me things in southern accents, or even Midwest accents, but for some reason they stay strangely silent...

Robert Sabella: I really enjoyed Gerri Balter's article on Clarion West. It reminds me of my own summer there in 1972. Apparently the same comradery and intensity still exists, which is good. It was the most valuable writing experience of my life and I'm glad it remains so now. On part of her article particularly amused me: when I attended Clarion West, one of my fellow students was Art Cover. Now he has become an instructor! Some other fellow students who have gone on to be excellent writers include Lisa Tuttle, Vonda McIntyre, F.M. Busby and Mildred Downey Broxon. Not a bad group of writers.

EDITORIALS: "Ten Years a Fan/Fan-ed"

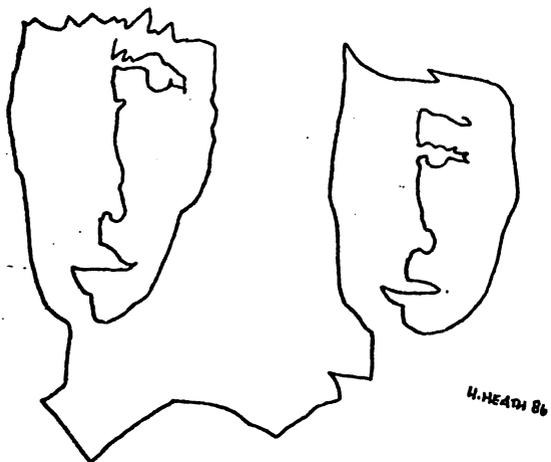
David Palter: Your editorial leads me to wonder exactly when I might be able to write such an article myself, and I find that both my memory and my written records are insufficiently complete for me to give a precise date for my entry into fandom, which should be the date I wrote my first letter of comment to a fanzine (the SF VOTARY, #1) which I believe occurred some time in August 1978. However, I can precisely date my first fan-nish social encounter--my visit to Gil Gaier on October first, 1978. Since I can date it precisely, and since it does, at any rate, mark a significant step in my fannish evolution, I should perhaps use that date for my official "coming of fandom." So on October first, 1988, -- roughly 2-1/2 years from now -- I will write my own "Ten Years a Fan" memoir -- if I remember to do so.

Jeanne Mealy: Congrats on your 10th year in fandom! It's mine too. I attended my first MINICON in 1976 (though I did help create a college SF Club dating from the previous fall). I'm glad we're both enjoying activities in our own ways.

((The 76 MINICON was also my first MINICON. I went to several of them in the years after since I had such a good time at that one.))

Terry Jeeves: Ten years in fandom, eh? Well, youngster, stick around. It's fun all the way...well, nearly all the way....

Herewith a semi-news item: I have NOT been elected GoH for the 87 Worldcon. They have already chosen that very worthy Fan GoH



Ken Slater, but there is a move afoot by several fans to have me elected as second GoH. However, the grapevine tells me that another group are actively opposing the idea --because of "my politics". Just what my being a Conservative and anti-Militant Left has to do with me being a GoH I fail to see, but it gives you an idea as to the sad state of UK fandom. Fifty years in fandom, and now I am considered a pariah!

((Gee, Terry, maybe we can get a US con to have you over as its GoH. That'd be great.))

Al Curry: Let's see...I guess I got into fandom in time for MIDWESTCON of 1974, so this June will make twelve years for me. Put out a couple of different fanzines in that time, one as co-editor (QUANTUM), the other one (GNOMENCLATURE) as my own private bag of rocks and assorted silliness. That part of fandom was a lot of fun. I've met a number of great people, yourself and Maia included in that number of course.

To borrow a phrase from Bernadette Bosky, "Ain't it great?" It seems like a nice twelve years to look back on, with hopes of many more to come.

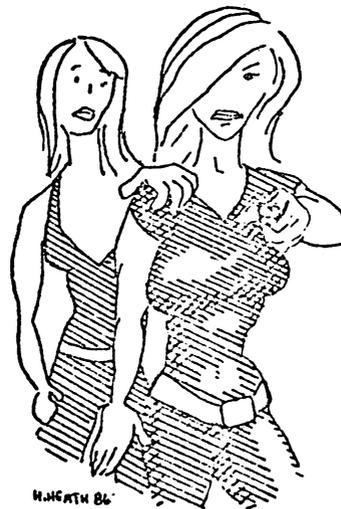
Milt Stevens: So you've been in fandom ten years now. Gee, when I'd been in fandom only ten years I had hardly gotten into any trouble at all. I'd never worked on a convention committee or held any sort of office in any club. Darned near nobody hated my guts. Obviously, that all changed later. For the first five years of my fan career, I was in college and was almost exclusively a fringish club fan around LASFS. It was the second five years that I joined three or four apas, did a little genzine activity, and started going to conventions on a regular basis. It was after the ten year mark that I found I couldn't leave well enough alone.

Mike Glicksohn: The thing that excited me most about LL #19 was your oh-so-casual reference in your editorial to having begun one of the LL's trademarks of con speeches

with my own AUTOCLAVE Toastmaster remarks in LL #2. I had completely and totally forgotten about this! (Knowing me as you do I doubt this will surprise you... In fact, there are those who are surprised I even remember being the AUTOCLAVE Toastmaster!) Naturally, as all serious fanzine fans would do, I plucked LL #2 from my oh-so-organized files and reread the comments in question. Hot Damn! That was close to being good stuff! I had no recollection of my introductions being that long or that carefully worked out. I have this very vague and completely general "feeling" about the AUTOCLAVE banquet that "tells" me that it went well, people loved Gene Wolfe, I got some egoboo for turning 30 from my friends, and I had a damn good time despite being nervous as hell about the whole thing. But I didn't really have a single concrete memory of the proceedings. Now, thanks to you, I can recreate some of what went down. I appreciate the memory jog...and I wonder how much other stuff of mine is sitting out there in fanzines I've long forgotten about? Damn this sieve-like memory of mine, anyway!

((All right, readers, scour your back files of fanzines and look for stuff written by Mike. If you find any, send him a copy.))

Buck Coulson: Don't know if you happened to run across Larry Nichols at MARCON. I hadn't seen him for at least 15 years; maybe 20. I did get to point him out on one of my panels as the fan who threatened to take a handful of custard at a MIDWESTCON banquet, just to outrage the mundanes watching. (He did, too; a concerted gasp went up.) Ben Indick is a little my senior, too; in fact, if I remember right, he's slightly older than Harry Warner. Certainly no younger. He's got a year on Juanita and I in marriage, too.



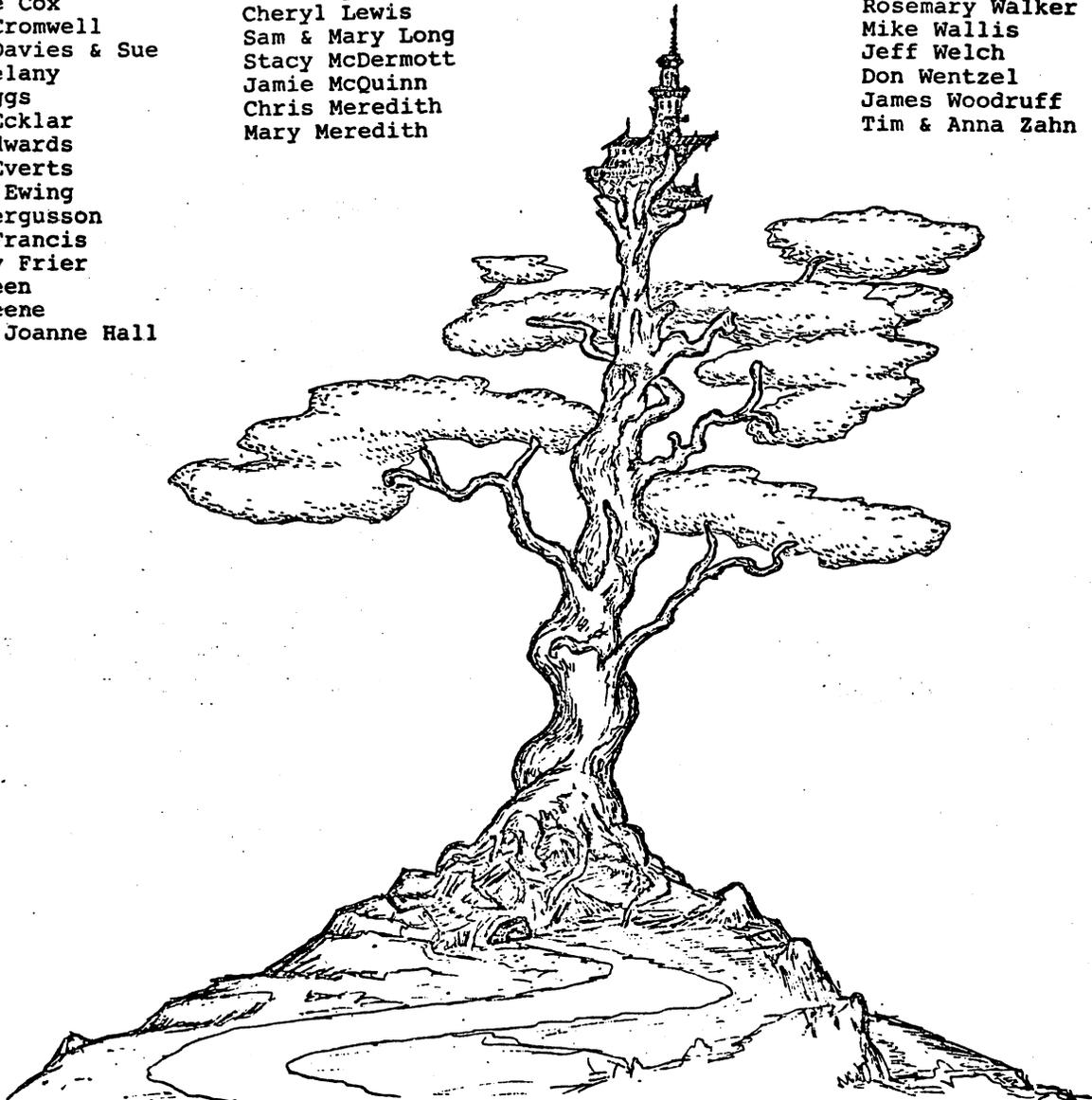
I ALSO HEARD FROM:
(I hope I got every-
one; many comments
were verbal.)

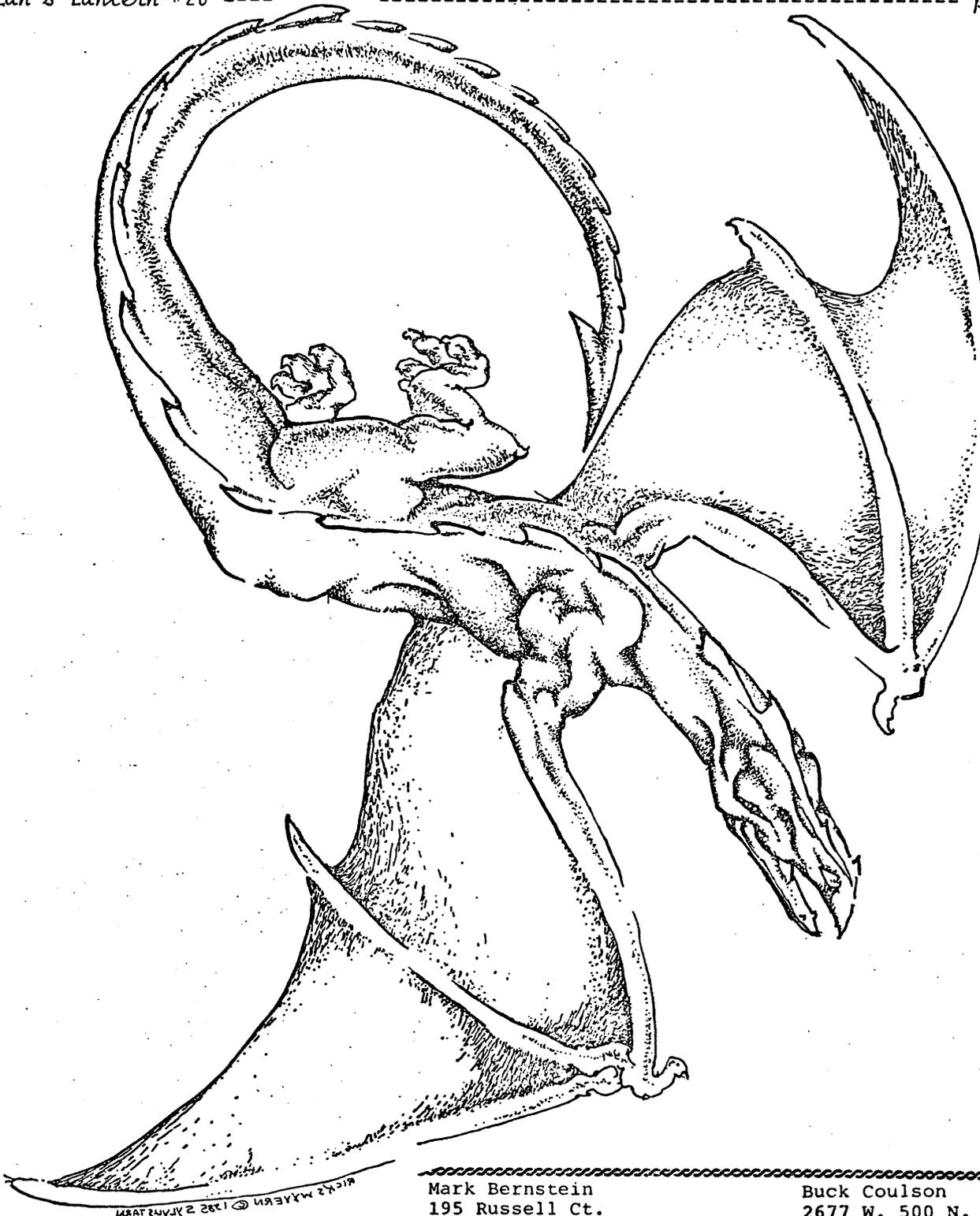
Alyson B. Abramowitz
Dale Adams
Arlie Adams
Andy Andruschak
Bruce D. Arthurs
Heather Ashby
Mike Banks
Tom Barber
Rose Beetem
Mark Bernstein
Ken Borovich
Bill Bowers
Jack Brooks
Bruce Burdick
Linda Bushyager
Ann Cecil
Ed Chambers
Craig Chrissinger
Kathleen Conant
Sharon & Doug Cooper
Michele Cox
Carol Cromwell
Kevin Davies & Sue
Chip Delany
Pat Diggs
Julia Ecklar
Tara Edwards
Geoff Everts
George Ewing
Pete Fergusson
Steve Francis
Shelley Frier
Joe Green
Bob Greene
John & Joanne Hall

Halina Harding
Mike Harper
Hank Heath
D. Lynn Hickman
Lynn Hickman
Cheryl Horn
Keith Allan Hunter
Doug Houseman
Steve Hudson
Tanya Huff
Thea Hutcheson
Ben James
Frank Johnson
Neil Kaden
Ruth B. Kaplan
Donald Kingsbury
Mike Kube-McDowell
Karla Kube-McDowell
Richard Lamb
Colin Langeveld
David Langford
John Langner
Lisa Lemans
Sue Levy
Cheryl Lewis
Sam & Mary Long
Stacy McDermott
Jamie McQuinn
Chris Meredith
Mary Meredith

Ed Meskys
Linda Michaels
Marie Miesel
Neology
Kathy Nerat
Bill Nichols
Andre Norton
Frank Norton
Anna O'Connell
Jim Odbert
Jodie Offutt
Frank Olynyk
Elizabeth Osborne
Joann Pauley
J.G. Pauley
Curtis W. Phillips
Debra Popadyn
Murray Porath
Sharon Porath
Mike Resnick

Ted Reynolds
Roger Reynolds
Peter Roberts
Ross Rocklyne
Tim Ryan
Leland Sapiro
Steve Scherer
Ansdyschreiber
Joe D. Siclari
David Singer
Joe Sokola
Dick Spellman
Pam Spurlock
David & Diana Stein
Somtow Sucharitkal
Brian Suth
Caryl A. Thompson
Don Thompson
Laura Todd
Gregg Trend
Verna Trestrail
Teresa Troutman
R Laurraine Tutihasi
Joan D. Vinge
Keith Walker
Rosemary Walker
Mike Wallis
Jeff Welch
Don Wentzel
James Woodruff
Tim & Anna Zahn





Here is a list of the addresses of the contributors to this issue of Lan's Lantern.

Clifton Amsbury
768 Amador
Richmond, CA 94805

T.K. Atherton
3021 N. Southport
Chicago, IL 60657

Mark Bernstein
195 Russell Ct.
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Sheryl Birkhead
23629 Woodfield Rd.
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Robert Bloch
2111 Sunset Crest Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Ned Brooks
713 Paul Street
Newport News, VA 23605

Buck Coulson
2677 W. 500 N.
Hartford City, IN 47348

Wendy Council
8270 Nectar Dr. #759
Canton, MI 48187

Al Curry
3160 Linwood Ave, #109
Cincinnati, OH 45208

Peter M. Fergusson
1128 S. Virginia Ave.
Clarksville, IN 47130

Addresses

Clif Flynt
3976 Massillon #D
Uniontown, OH 44685

Brad W. Foster
4109 Pleasant Run
Irving, TX 75038

Alexis Gilliland
4030 8th St. South
Arlington, VA 22204

Kris Gilpin
4400 Melbourne Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90027

Mike Glicksohn
508 Windermere Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M6S 3L6 CANADA

Rob Gregg
103 Highfield Road
Romford
Essex RM5 3AE
UNITED KINGDOM

Mick Hamblen
5471 University Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46219

Carol Harvey
PO Box 4034
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

David Heath, Jr.
332 33rd St.
San Pedro, CA 90731

Hank Heath
5117 NW 5th St.
Miami, FL 33126

Lynn Hickman
PO Box 6
Wauseon, OH 43567

Cheryl Horn
USPB 33107
WPAFB, OH 45433

Cathy Howard
3600 Parker Ave
Louisville, KY 40212

Keith Allan Hunter
1420 E. 5th Ave.
Denver, CO 80218

Ben Indick
428 Sagamore
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Terry Jeeves
230 Bannerdale Rd
Sheffield S11 9FE
S. Yorkshire
UNITED KINGDOM

Frank Johnson
1 Delipua Place, Apt 3
Cincinnati, OH 45230

Ruth B. Kaplan
2132 Middle Dr.
Slidell, LA 70458

Mike Kircher
3521 Cummings Lane
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Sherri Lynn Kline
15011 Peck
Warren, MI 48093

Linda Leach
20190 Milburn
Livonia, MI 48152

Craig Ledbetter
1 Yorkshire Ct.
Richardson, TX 75081

Mark & Evelyn Leeper
80 Lakeridge Dr.
Mattawan, NJ 07747

Eric Lindsey
PO Box 42 Lyneham
ACT 2602
AUSTRALIA

Sam & Mary Long
PO Box 7423
Springfield, IL 62791

Jeanne Mealy
2633 Dupont Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Terry O'Brien
7303 Tanbark Lane
Fort Wayne, IN 46815

Andy Offutt
The Funny Farm
Haldeman, KY 40239

David Palter
137 Howland Ave
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 3B4 CANADA

Mary Price
4150 Springer
Royal Oak, MI 48072

Tullio Proni
Isher Enterprises
530 W. Walnut
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Mike Resnick
11216 Gideon Lane
Cincinnati, OH 45249

Michael Rudas
PO Box 4489
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Robert Sabella
13 Marshall Trail
Hopatcong, NJ 07843

Jessica Amanda Salmonson
PO Box 20610
Seattle, WA 98102

Bob Shaw
66 Knutsford Road
Grappenhall
Warrington
Cheshire WA4 2PB
UNITED KINGDOM

David M. Shea
2-B Ridgebury Ct.
Baltimore, MD 21207

David & Diana Stein
1325 Key West
Troy, MI 48083

Milt Stevens
7234 Capps Avenue
Reseda, CA 91335

Jan Story
8715 Nottingham Drive
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107

Sylvus Tarn
1946 Canary Ct.
Troy, MI 48084

John Thiel
30 N. 19th Street
Lafayette, IN 47904

Jim Thompson
3202 Andrea
Dallas, TX 75228

Laura Todd

Jeffrey Tolliver
305A E. 19th Ave
Columbus, OH 43201

Bill Waldroop
1400 Parkview
Detroit, MI 48214

Jean Weber
PO Box 42 Lyneham
ACT 2602
AUSTRALIA

Toni K.F. Weisskopf
OCMR Box 1321
Oberlin, OH 44074

Don Wollheim
66-17 Clyde St.
Rego Park, NY 11374

Martin Morse Wooster
PO Box 8093
Silver Spring, MD 20907

David Yoder
RD 2, Box 264
Bernville, PA 19506



((Mike Glicksohn's Guest Editorial -- continued from page 2))

recognize when a sercon fanzine is One With The Ages. LL is currently the best sercon genzine we have, but comparatively speaking I cannot rate it as Hugo-worthy. I like the mixture that George puts into LL but neither the content nor the production of LAN'S LANTERN puts it in the forefront of fifty years of fanzine publishing. And I think I have the boxed, indexed fanzines to prove it.

So when I look at this year's fanzine nominees I see a fannish genzine which occasionally verges from the mediocre to the superb, a sercon fanzine which is never less than competent and sometimes is damned good, a clubzine that can best be described as better than many other clubzines, and a masquerade instruction manual along with a mediazine catalogue. I ask myself is anyone can take the long view and still honestly use

the word "excellent" in conjunction with any of these. If they can, let them vote that way: but if they can't, let's remember just why "No Award" is on the ballot. "No Award" is the Forgotten Man on every ballot. And I think it's time we all remembered that.

If the Hugos are to have any meaning at all, they have to represent our Best, and that means not only the best of the year, but also a continuation of the best of years gone by. In a year when the nominees don't stack up against previously established standards let us remember that NO AWARD is meant to be a viable alternative.

I love George and I like Marty and I enjoy what both of them do. But this year I'm voting NO AWARD in the Best Fanzine Hugo.

Think about it.

FROM LAN-----

IN THIS ISSUE:

LAN'S LANTERN #20 is packed with articles this time. It is also out a lot sooner than I really intended, mainly because I wanted to publish my choices for the Hugo Awards before the ballots are due, which means that I've been working like crazy to get it done.

Mike Glicksohn opens with his editorial about using the "No Award" slot on the Hugo Ballot, and applying it to the Fanzine category in particular. Mike Resnick follows with his trip report to Africa, with some lovely illustrations by Sherri Lynn Kline. I return with full conreports and ramblings, which also happens to include Andy Offutt's Guest of Honor Speech from CHAMBANACON, and mine from CONTRAPTION. David Shea writes a report on BALTICON 20, and Kris Gilpin reports on his trip to the 6th Annual Razzie Awards.

On the serious side, Mark Leeper talks about "The Golem in Literature", gives us numerous film and book reviews, and reports on some books and films "On the Oriental Side." His review of The Sushi Handbook is done in good fannish style, and worthy of your attention. Carol Harvey and Michael Rudas both compare BladeRunner with the Philip K. Dick book from which it was made. Craig Ledbetter talks about the Horror Film newsletters, David Shea gives us a list of books with which to give a neo a good background in SF (which some people may disagree with, so write in and give us your list), and David Stein returns with a third installment of his column, "Same Bat Time, Same Bat Channel...." And there are also the ubiquitous film and book reviews, with some new reviewers being added to the fold.

On the lighter side, Mark Leeper talks about the "Leather-Bound SF Books", and Keith Allan Hunter answers the question, "Why did I do that?" Of course, some of the other

articles are quite humorous and on the lighter side too (but I had to divide them up somehow!).

As for the letter column, I've included as much as I could in the time constraints I've allowed myself. Since I will start handing out copies at MIDWESTCON this year, I have had to break off at some point to allow me time to copy and print the final pages. Any letters not in this time will be in the next issue.

In any case, happy reading, and keep those cards and letters and articles and art coming in.

IN COMING ISSUES:

In the next three years, several authors will be celebrating their 50th year as SF/Fantasy writers. In each year I hope to have a Special Golden Anniversary issue, commemorating those particular writers. Please feel free to submit art, articles, anecdotes, and reminiscences on the following authors:

- 1987: L. Sprague DeCamp and Frederik Pohl
- 1988: William F. Temple, Lester delRey and Arthur C. Clarke
- 1989: Isaac Asimov, Alfred Bester, Robert A. Heinlein, Fritz Leiber, Theodore Sturgeon, and A.E. Van Vogt

I know that Ted Sturgeon has passed away most recently, and my policy has been to honor those writers still living and still contributing to the SF field in some way, but he is an important author, so I want to include him.

The deadline for material will be March 31 of that year. Please think about this, and do try to help honor these writers who have given us so much pleasure for a half-century.

Wrapping it all up!!



...Amidst the towering boles of the swamp the young adventurer strove to learn the skills of knighthood and the mastery of the force. (And the artist fought off simultaneous lawsuits)