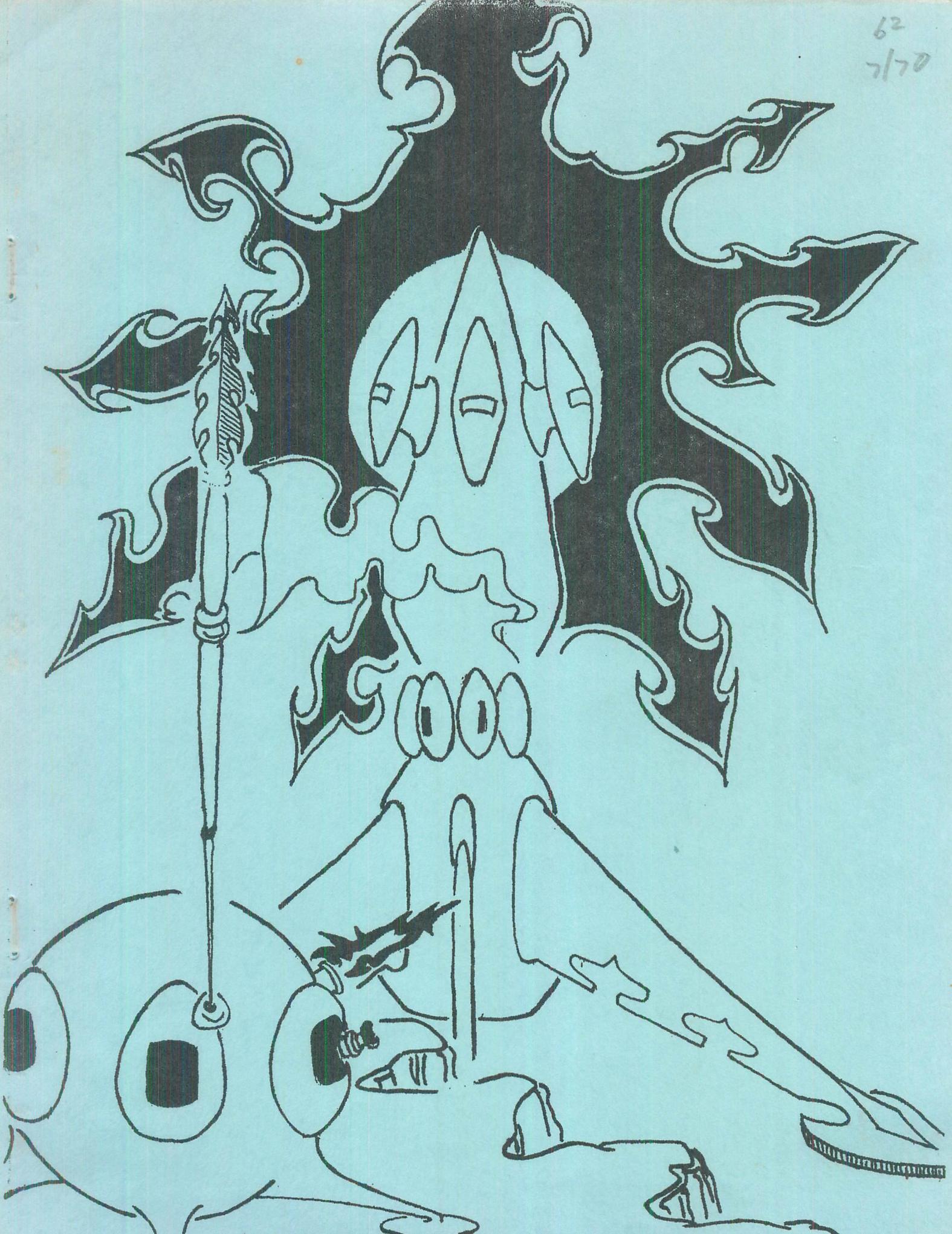


62
7/70



Mike Kaus

TIGHTBEAM

This is Tightbeam, July-Aug., 1970, #62, the letter column of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Tightbeam is published for the N3F by Gary H. Labowitz, 1100 Betzwood Dr., Norristown, Pa. 19401 to whom all letters, manuscripts, and artwork should be sent. A return envelope with sufficient return postage would be appreciated with all non-letter material. Tightbeam is published more-or-less bi-monthly and is distributed free to members of the N3F and for trade of other science fiction fanzines. Persons mentioned in passing are invited to comment, regardless of membership status, if so inclined.

George Nims Raybin

George Nims Raybin died of cancer of the intestine June 17 at Mt. Eden Hospital in the Bronx. He was 46. Raybin was most famous in fandom for his role as lawyer for the ill-starred World Science Fiction Society, Inc. After the vicious feuding which accompanied the WSFS dissolution in 1958 subsided, Raybin's primary fanac became running the N3F Recruiters Bureau, attending Lunarians meetings and going to conventions. ((Source: Focal Point))

George was an active member of N3F; he was responsible for sponsoring many new members into N3F. He was also active in CB and Ham radio.

(News also received from Harriett Kolchak, Locus, and others.) ghl

Last month I commented that I used up all the letters sent. Several of you called me on that statement. Let me rephrase it: I use all the letters I cannot lose. And if you saw the frantic housecleaning I did here during last month, you'd be amazed that I kept any letters. I try to be careful (I have an IN box for TB and Canticles from Labowitz) and all letters used are filed for two or three issues. If you suspect I'm losing your letters too often, relax; everything that happens is merely chance. I have no ax to grind (publicly, anyway) and will not use my position (gentle chuckling in background from my wife, who knows how much TB costs) to subtly grind any.

Letters this issue represent all the letters I received in June. I had planned to get this issue out early in July, but you know the tune by now. I'll bet even the words are beginning to sound familiar. There are many letters here which I will begin working on as soon as this issue goes out for the Sept. issue. All you students: get your address changes for the school year in as quickly as possible. Any magazines returned to me are held one month. They will only be remailed if you request them and include postage for them. They are disposed of when the following issue is sent.

Cover work is still needed and appreciated. This issue's cover is by Mike Klaus.

See insert for changes of address. Please report any errors to Janie Lamb, Route 1, Box 364, Heiskell, Tenn. 37754 and me.

Keep smiling,

Gary

Alma Hill

463 Park Drive, Apt. 11, Boston, Mass. 02215

Glad to see Ed Ludwig back as he has long been one of the old friends of this club -- started the Story Contest as the first of its managers if I recall aright. Those early days of a project are the hardest too. I hope it gets smoothed out to where the manager can enjoy the fun and stay on year after year, for a project like that needs momentum too. I always say that the news of the winners should go out in the same issue with the next year's rules and entry blanks, but that hasn't worked out that way yet. I ran the Contest one year when they were extra desperate for somebody to do it, and can say right now that there never is a big rush EXCEPT at the last minute.

//Well, we almost got to announc a call for elections at the same time as we announced the Directorate for the year. Does that count?? ghl//

So, get your entries in right away like now, because THEN it is possible to send back a kind word about how to improve the story. In England, I hear from the BSFA Secretary, they have a pro doing that and sifting their entries so as not to swamp the pro judge with anything but THEIR best. They are tough competition and very good for us that way. So now is the best time -- you won't even get this in the mail before another month soonest, but get that story in anyway.

I always say that the best results come from direct comment on real live unpublished mss. Remember that the members of the Writers' Exchange have often done this for people who are not even Exchangers. I feel confident that if you say to one of them, any one of them, "This is meant for a Contest entry, how'm I doing?" you will at least get a courteous reply. I do not fear overloading the Exchangers this way, either, since it is only too likely that few will have entries early enough to take advantage of the opportunity.

In case you're wondering just what it is the Writers' Exchange, the wee WE, tries to do and what it accomplishes. What sort of opportunity does it provide? What contribution does it make to this club and thus to fandom? As a matter of fact, I have never checked on the membership status of any Exchanger or of any member of Project Semi-pro, any more than I would care to check on a sales record, nor have I been asked to; so this is one of the club's direct contributions to fandom-at-large already.

Well, then, the only purpose of WE is to circulate unpublished mss., (retaining one copy on file as a safety measure, losses in the mail being not unheard of) to obtain a readership-poll of comments from others who are also writers. This does lead to much discussion of allied topics, and as old readers of NFFF publications know, I have been working on a Fandbook for Writers which will take care of some of the recurrent questions and problems. Some of that material has already been published and needs only to be gathered into one booklet; other material is being gathered and checked out when I can. Publications, then, fall into the scope of this department on a when-and-if basis, just as do the publications for Collectors' Bureau or Tape Bureau or Welcommittee -- but like some, unlike others, publications for writers are not essential to the project. Exchange of manuscripts is the first and last benefit in WE and it is, by galactic sectors, the most important part. A little unpublished ms. may not look like much, except to its author, but it is the entire source material of the entire field when all's said and done. We work

on what comes our way and do not seek more, at least I certainly don't. But all is welcome and you should see some of the grateful letters, especially when sales do result! Oh boy, do we respect sales and editors! They make thousands of readers difference, don't they?

As to the semi-pro effect, try to avoid it, you can't. This field is maintained almost wholly by sporadic part-time writers who happen to have something to say and who want to say it as well as possible. (One of the SFWA members, with a statistical turn of mind, checked up with an author-index to magazines and found that the average production was THREE stories per PRO -- and mind you, that average takes in some very PROLIFIC pros as well as the qualified-by-one-story pros.) Now, you are hearing from one who has seen a great deal of work both from unpublished writers and published ones. So please take this seriously:

Dilettante amateurs are not a feature of this field: the more the mean earnest amateur endeavors, the more they put out and the better it gets. Occasional sales are almost inevitable. They are, however, semi-pros in my opinion until they make a living that way, and in any other writing field people would say the same. But we are also serious about amateur standing. Even ONE sale contaminates a person with money, so to speak, just as even one payment would take a golfer or tennis player and so on out of amateur sports competition. Okay, the usual writer in this field is neither amateur NOR pro, really. One has some other occupation and why not? Life is interesting that way. SF writers whether serious amateurs or full-time writers or, as the overwhelming majority seems to be, semi-pro in intention and in fact, all are energetic people full of ideas and observations about our own times, and you know these are times when new discoveries and inventions make enormous differences; so we tend to write about those in multiform ways.

So of course WE is semi-pro, what else could it be and keep moving as it does? I now absolutely demand that Exchangers start off with proof that they really produce, three copies, same or different, to get off to a good start. I don't care how bad that first example of writing may be, there is all the difference in the world between one who writes and one who just thinks maybe he will some day. As a matter of fact, the worse the better at first, for then he will find out whether he can take tough criticism.

From there, it is up to individuals, what else could it be? We have no charges and no other obligations, but we do have good intentions and from what I've noticed we have produced some good results. What more could one expect? If one really tries to improve one's skills, the seminar-method of getting opinions from other writers is a peerless method; any sf reader is a good reader; an sf writer is sympathetic as well but never, or anyway seldom enough, too sympathetic. I've seen it work but of course the individual must work it for himself.

Bob Sabella

32 Cortright Road, Whippany, N.J. 07981

On the back cover of TB 60, the editor of TNFF is listed as open. That just about tells the whole story. Ever since Don Miller resigned as editor back in 1968, TNFF has been almost nonexistent. What this means is that the 200+ members of N3F are paying \$2 per year for a subscription to TB. In my case, I also get more out of it (Round Robins, Story Contest, etc.), but I would be willing to bet that the vast majority of members get nothing but TB.

This is a bad situation.

A bi-monthly TNFF is a necessity if N3F is to survive. There must be at least one dozen N3F members with the capability of editing a bi-monthly fanzine of the same size and quality of TB. Half of the 'zine could be taken up with reports from bureau heads. That leaves only ten pages an issue to fill. Just flipping through the pages of TB 60, I find many people who could write regular columns for TNFF: Darrell Schweitzer, Roy Tackett, J J Pierce, Bob Weinberg, maybe even myself. You get four or five regular columnists, and you have TNFF every issue. The main problem is get an editor, and then get four or five reliable writers. I don't claim that it would be easy, but it certainly could be done.

//Unfair. After taking up TNFF in August, 1969 I published regularly. ghl//

William Linden's Hugo choices should really be ignored as nothing more than personal opinion, but I'm going to comment anyway. I didn't particularly like Fourth Mansions because basically the book seemed pointless. The characters just seemed to wander around doing clever things and meeting exotic persons to no value. Maybe the book WAS a celebration of life, but was it a novel?

I also disagree with you on your classification of The Left Hand of Darkness as "unquestionably great." I often think that much of the popularity of the book is a reaction to the New Wave. I mean, here is a book all about sex, a situation that many writers would play up for all it's worth. But Miss LeGuin rather takes a very low-key, almost clinical approach to the subject and emerges with technically fine book, but one that is interminably dull.

I do agree with "To Jorslem" for Best Novella, but for Short Fiction I must go with Samuel Delany's "Time...As A Helix of...Stones." Not only is this a very fine story, but do you realize that he is yet to win a Hugo? In fact, he has lost out to such junk as The Moon is a Harsh Mistress and "Wyer Search."

As for Bug Jack Barron, both Bill and Darrell seem to miss the point: Spinrad's method of stringing words and phrases together is the only logical way to convey to the reader the fact that a number of things are happening simultaneously. Although I will agree that the overuse of "fading black circle" was unnecessary.

Finally, on to John J. Pierce. I must comment on John's statement that "I'm prepared to stick out this fight for at least ten years. I've found that stubbornness is an asset."

Picture this situation: the year, 2010. Harlan Ellison has just been buried, alongside J. G. Ballard who is buried alongside Phil Farmer. With Harlan's burial goes the last of the New Wave. The next day John Pierce comes forth, white beard and all, and announces: "I told you I'd do it. Stubbornness is a virtue."

J. J. Pierce

275 McMane Ave., Berkeley Heights, N.J. 07922

Ed Krieg: "Herr Hickman" indeed. You really have to practice the current tactic of McCarthyism in reverse, don't you? I don't think you'd have considered it very funny if in the mid-1950's somebody had written in to TB and called you "Comrade Krieg." Can't speak for Mr. Hickman, but I didn't like The Andromeda Strain and, in any case, neither of us has been "pushing" it. So what are you arguing about? And 1984 and Brave New World are so science fiction; where did you pick up the idea that a book can't be S.F. and be a "warning" or an "allegory" at the same time. The most idiotic cliché ever promoted by the mainstream against our genre is, "This can't be S.F.; it's good." (Of course, some stuff popular with the mainstream is bad S.F. -- like Vonnegut and Barth. But that's another issue.) And, as I have said before, this business about "plot vs. character" is a lot of horseshit too. Characters in New Wave fiction are no better characterized, on the average, than those in "Old Wave" S.F. They're only stupider and weaker. I've yet to run across a memorable character in a New Wave story, whereas I can remember many good ones from Heinlein, Weinbaum, Simak, Cordwainer Smith, Zelazny, LeGuin and other "old wave" writers.

//This can't be New Wave; it's good. ghl//

England Swings SF is worth reading -- not for the stories, but for the introductions. Like the one about the guy who's been "security guard at the Tottenham Pig Farm and Sewage Works," and another one who remarks, "I'm pretty confused and I think everyone else is pretty confused, too." As for Ballard and Aldiss, they were just writers until about 1964, when Moorcock suddenly proclaimed them and others who wrote in the same vein to be a movement. Aldiss' pre-1964 stuff was mostly Old-Wavish, but he's toed the mark since.

As for Heinlein's I Shall Fear No Evil, Mr. Weinberg, I'll read it and judge for myself, as, I am sure, Mr. Hickman will. Personally, I didn't like seeing RAH get sidetracked into mysticism with Stranger in a Strange Land, but I wouldn't call it New Wavish. Rather, it was a throwback to the religious messages often put into S.F. long, long ago. I wonder, though, just what right-winger Heinlein makes of the Hippie cult that has been built around Stranger.

Ed Krieg

510 N. Chapelgate Lane, Baltimore, Md. 21229

Gary: Thanks very much, you cad, you. Hooboy, did I ever stir up a hornets nest of argument. Even J. J. Pierce got on me. Nothing like controversy to arouse the passions. I think I'll shut up from now on on the matter of people's Hugo choices. However, I will suggest a few titles for this year's awards. For novel, there should be only one book: Left Hand of Darkness. This towers head and shoulders over Slaughterhouse Five and Bug Jack Barron, the recent Nebula contenders. LeGuin does a beautiful description of the world of Winter. I do not think I've ever seen such a more complete analysis. For novella: "Dramatic Mission" by McAaffery. Short stuff: pick 'em. I'm not up on the short list. Prozine: Galaxy over Analog. Both zines had pretty good stuff in them,

but Galaxy was more consistent than Campbell's zine, though knowing the Germans, I betcha that Analog will win. "Today Analog, tomorrow-?" Artists: Freas, Gaughan has won too often. I'd prefer to see another man win this time. Fan-artist: Bill Rotsler. Fanzine: Geis' Science Fiction Review. All else: No Award.

//I've always hoped for an end to the "He's won before, so I'll vote for someone else, even if he wasn't as good" approach to fade away. The awards are given for excellence, my friend, not democracy. You might just as well say: "Bolling has been a representative long enough. Let's give somebody else a chance. Vote for Smutzic." You're supposed to pick the best, not the one who's won least. Take the Oscars: they pass them out to actors who last the longest. "Gosh, Joe Stutter hasn't won any award and he's been making class D pictures for 25 years. He ought to get something!" Yeah. Another line of work. ghl//

John Pierce: Thank you for your remarks. I have taken them under advisement. I have begun to see the light gradually, though I prefer at the moment to remain objective, one of the lessons I learned all too well at the University of Md. College Park in 1966. And earlier, especially in the elections for US President in 1964. "Fascist" and Commie pig were the milder epithets tossed about - even in collegiate elections. I offer you the peace pipe (for now, anyway).

//Watch yourself Pierce, you're not just fooling around with anybody, there. This mad has had experience with mudslinging. Good Lord, Krieg, what's what was said during a national election in 1964 or a collegiate election in 1966 got to do with anything? Is that the way you form your ethical and moral judgments, study elections? I suppose good training for a career in Mathematics would be to keep score for a 3 and 2 team. ghl//

Weinberg: Apologies sincerely on the matter of personal choice. If people want to vote for a hippy book, let them. I agree with you entirely on the matter of Heinlein's new book. In addition, I'm inclined to agree with you on the matter of reading anything worth reading.

//But how do you know it's worth reading without reading it? ghl//

Keith Krieger 2412 Masters Dr., Cape Girardeau, Mo. 63701

This is how it was, at least until I received TNFF yesterday. The editor of TNFF had left his post, for reasons stated in June TNFF. We could have gotten Publications to do it, but that bureau was open as well. Hmmm. For a while, it seemed that NFFF would have to do without an official organ this year. Not the end of the world, but enough to be a bit concerned about. But, as usual, one of the members jumped to the rescue. But how could we circumvent this if it happens again? A few months back, FCH sent me, along with their usual bundle of goodies, a copy of TB, January 1964 ish. In it, Don Franson lists in his letter the editors of TB for the three and a half years before that. It was bi-monthly and the editorship rotated among the members who wanted to do it. Why was it dropped? I assume it was successful until the members began to taper off their fanac, particularly in the field of pubbing. Has this system been tried with TNFF or TB since? This system might appeal to members who wanted to see what it was like and wouldn't have to drop it if they couldn't handle it. But even then, you might not be able to find enough fans with enough time and/or initiative to do it. And other ideas?

Stan Woolston: I agree 100% with your statement that "to build N3F we need experienced fans." Then you say TNFF can distribute more info on that. But what if you run into a situation like we've had? With no experienced fans pubbing a zine for us inexperienced fans to find things to do to get experience -- Gads! A vicious circle.

Ed Krieg: Where did you get the info on the possibility of someone making a movie of Stranger in a Strange Land, etc? Most interesting. Can you give us any more little tidbits about them?

//There's always, and primarily, the newszines in fandom: Locus, from Charlie Brown, 2078 Anthony Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10457 and Focal Point, from Rich Brown, 410 61st St. Apt. D4, Brooklyn, N. Y. 11220. ghl//

After being in for six months, I can see that this will really be a lot of fun. From the Welcome I've received from the Wc and the various other things I've gotten into because of the welcome, it can be nothing but good!

Dave Lewton

735 E. Kessler Blvd., Indianapolis, Ind. 46220

Re Captain Future: Well, I got what I deserved for jumping to conclusions. I mean, I do not know Edmond Hamilton, and have never discussed the matter with him. Legally, Popular DOES have him dead to rights (I had assumed that there was an element of illegality involved) -- and all of my ire went for naught.

However, deep down, underneath all of that absurd outrage there WAS a point. It was small, and opinionated; it couldn't be proved or disproved, and as such, shall certainly prove excellent meat for those of you who like pointless arguments.

The selfish feeling that the reader comes first and the writer comes last was epitomized in George Wells's letter in the edition of Tightbeam that I reacted to. It irritated me that in his eyes the writer was merely there for his amusement. Again, I am hasty to jump to conclusions, I have never known or corresponded with George Wells. He may in fact be quite a lovable and talented person. When I get emotional -- please remember -- through your ire -- that I am reacting to his letter, and not him.

I did a dumb thing by jumping around without making sure that there was a place to jump.

//But at least you're jumping! Some people don't give a dam about anything. ghl//

Re Ray Nelson's ST letter: I'd be interested in hearing what Ray Nelson had to say concerning sets, casting, etc. as I have many opinions on such subjects and would be interested to find out whether or not his agreed with mine/or where HE went wrong.../ I have a feeling that others would be interested. I could be wrong (and am, frequently). Who knows, perhaps only two people out of 260 are interested....

//You're the only person to mention it. So far. ghl//

Re Stan Woolston's "fanbooks" idea: It would seem to me that making "new fanbooks" would be a waste of time when there are so many perfect ones that merely need to be printed regularly. The Fancyclopedia would be a tremendous help to

the incoming fan, and it hasn't been printed since (I believe) the late fifties. True, it could do with minimal updating, but that is less of a hassle (and hence something more likely to get done) than building a new institution from scratch. Buck Coulson periodically runs off copies of Bob Tucker's "Neofans Guide To Science Fiction Fandom." It would seem to me that this invaluable aid could be constantly advertised in Tightbeam and TNFF. Or better yet, a good many copies could be purchased for the express purpose of sending out to new members who might find out about it otherwise much later, when the humor value would be greater, but the educational value lessened.

Mike O'Brien

676 LeMoyné Ave. Ext., Washington, Pa. 15301

Your little insertion in Ed Ludwig's letter sounds like one of the best ideas I've heard of in a long time. A sort of centralized fanzine selection Bureau, working somewhat like a book club, could give a good, representative selection of fanzines which would be useful to many fans (especially neos). Even now, after several years in fandom, I'd join such a subscription service in a minute, if I knew that the person chosen to select the mailing knew what he was about. The only problem would be in the possible duplication of fanzines, if the OE of the service chose a fanzine to which I had already subbed. Of course, we'll assume that the OE wouldn't change the roster every month, but would keep to the same zines as long as they were published and of high quality. If the editors were willing to look out for duplication, and if some poor chap who knows the fanzine field well would volunteer for the job of OE, it just might work. Come to think of it, there shouldn't be that much duplication, because anyone who's subbing could be avoided, too, if the OE gave notice to the subscribers when he was planning to drop or add a zine to the list.

I'm also glad, if not surprised, that SFWA is catering more to the in-between, semi-pro writers. My friend, who has had exactly one story published, went to Lunacon with me (his first con), and when I introduced him to Anne McCaffrey, she instantly collared him. Within fifteen minutes he was a member of SFWA and had met several other writers similar to himself. As long as Anne's influence stays around SFWA (I hear she may not), young in-betweens will have no problem. Apparently there's a block in SFWA which is stumping for stricter requirements, but I don't agree with them. Young writers need all the help they can get.

I've never gotten into the Old Wave-New Wave argument because I think it's ridiculous, but the more I read of and by J. J. Pierce, the less I'm able to credit his existence. He isn't a fan, he's a natural force, like George Wallace. His article in Amazing, free of polemic, was at least competent and somewhat well-reasoned, but most of this stuff is unbelievable. What is he trying to do? No, don't answer that, I think I already know. He wants to eliminate the New Wave trash from the literature. I'd like to see that. The attempt, I mean. His criticism is his own, and he has every right to it, but his attempts to "correct" the present state of affairs are laughable. Doesn't he realize that the only critic who even has a chance materially to influence an author is an editor? Authors split half and half between writing what they damn well please, and writing what will sell. An editor's job is even easier: he prints what sells. Within that (limited) category, his personal tastes make a selection, but you can be fairly sure that if a given type of story will sell, an editor can be found to buy it, no matter who screams. I

see Darrell Schweitzer has a sane, calm letter in the May TB, citing his divisions and definitions of New Wave - well and good. The only thing he says about changing the field, though, is that what he considers to be the worst elements of New Wave will "soon die away" ... a statement which may or may not be true in itself, but which at least admits that there's not much he can do about it, unless he convinces the government to introduce censorship - in which case most of the publications in which either he or Pierce appear will probably be zapped along with the New Wave.

Pierce, on the other hand, seems to feel that there is something which he not only can do, but must do - for the good of the field and the mind of the country, and Gloria in excelsis Old Wave, I guess. If there's something constructive he's planning to do, I'd like to know what it is. I've yet to hear of it. So far all I've seen is several tons of self-reproducing garbage. Harlan came out with Dangerous Visions, written by nearly everybody. Next come s Again, Dangerous Visions, written by everybody else. Pierce has Renaissance, written by himself. Dangerous Visions, I take note in passing, had about half the Hugo nominations in the applicable categories the year it appeared. Where's Pierce? He's the closest phenomenon to Claude Degler I've ever seen. Lester del Rey I agree with completely - especially with his speech at Disclave '69 (I believe). He pointed out that a whale of a lot of the New Wave is really super-Old Wave - it appeared in German literature ages ago, with Kafka as a chief example. He's perfectly right. All this stuff has been tried in other languages. Now it's our turn. It's that simple. Styles will undoubtedly change, and New Wave will leave behind a few gems and tons of unmitigated garbage - just like any other movement in literature. Lester's objection was to the New Wavicles who want New Wave exclusively - and there we have grounds for a fight. Harlan is crazy if he thinks he can turn sf upside down with a wave of his magic anthology. He can create, and in fact has created, a considerable critical stir (I thought most of those nominations were well-deserved, myself), but he cannot, simply cannot, alter the face of science fiction to exclude anything, for whatever noble purposes. He cannot do it ... and neither can J. J. Pierce. The readers, fans and non-fans, won't stand for it. Variety is the keynote, and it'll show up where it counts - in sales.

Last, I wish to make it clear that I'm aware of how ridiculous the terms "Old Wave" and "New Wave" are. They are nebulous almost to the point of uselessness. But then again, no one has ever given "Science Fiction" a good definition either, so we'll just have to make do.

Tex Cooper

S.F.S.A. 1208 Carter Ave., Queenswood,
Pretoria, South Africa

In South Africa, organized SF fen has only been on the go for just over a year. Also, being rather cut off, the fen are still rather naive as regards SF. We, the Committee, of SFSA are trying to educate them slowly. There is a second problem that we have to overcome and that is the problem of our second official language, Afrikaans. Quite a few of our members are Afrikaans and at the moment, there is very little, good SF published in Afrikaans.

Also, in being, as you might say, out of the limelight, we do not get very much information about SF. As a result, I would like to ask members of NZF who publish Fanzines, whether they would be prepared to let us have a copy or two. In exchange, all I am able to offer at the moment, is a copy of our official newsletter, which is published every six weeks. Well, any takers?

Ed Finkelstein

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Enjoyed Tightbeam 60, et. al. Seems to me that TB is a minipaper with no requirements. Couldn't letters be put in TNFF, in fact combine them into one club organ? TNFF could have a good cover, a letter section, a bureau section, a news section, etc. It's logical to assume that it would be easier for the club to put out one zine rather than two, though it wouldn't be very easy on the editor/publisher. Comments, suggestions?

//Ah, yes; but suppose, just suppose that TNFF didn't get published for some catastrophic reason -- what then, ha? I know it's unlikely..... ghl//

Bob Vardeman

P.O.Box 11352, Albuquerque, N.M. 87112

Got TB today. *cough*cough* Maybe I should just say I got tight on Beam. And then maybe I should just vent forth a few comments.

Like on Darrell's letter. I vacillate. Last time I panned his views. This time I must commend him on the most concise and to the point analysis I've seen on the New Wave. In just four paragraphs he does what most of fandom has been trying to do for the last four years. All I can say, Darrell, is why didn't you do it sooner? Look at all the room there'd have been in fanzines for discussion of other things!

To JJP: I am probably the least well read individual extant. I've never even heard of "Philoctetes" much less read it. And yet I managed to find Man in the Maze to be quite engrossing and far and away better than, say, 75% of the stuff hitting the newsstands. Since I am in the dark as to "Philoctetes" and thought the book MitM to be understandable (i.e. able to stand on its own without knowledge of some previous reference), it has to, in my mind at least, "have a totality of its own."

I do agree though, that books with 20 obscure references per page which seem to abound in the New Wave, variety 1 and 2, Schweitzer definition, are rather boring. About the only exception would be a book like Silverlock where the idea was not to write a serious novel but to write one in which the primary enjoyment would be ferreting out all the references (though there weren't all that many obscure ones).

Ed Krieg: I'm afraid you've lost me in a tangle of Gordian knot logic. You don't object to people voting for sf books they like, but you do object if 20 people vote for a book which they like. Apparently you consider more than one person voting for anything to be bloc voting. I find that approach to be patently ridiculous. So what if 20 people vote for their favorite book? Even if all 20 got together in the proverbial smoke-filled room and decided to back novel X instead of novel Y, so what? They have the right to vote any way they choose and if they are willing to do this, that's their business.

What I object to most violently would be someone out trying to buy votes. Whether it is on the level, "Say, you vote for book Z/fanzine GP/fanwriter A and

I'll give you two extra issues to Bheer Ghuzzler's Ghazette/\$50 in small, unmarked bills/a moldy walrus flipper," or on the level "Vote for me this year and I'll vote for you next year." Both would imply to me that something/one is not good enough to win on its own merit and support has to be bought. However, there is a world of difference between this and "20 or so hippies" voting for Butterfly Kid(which I found to be enjoyable but very light weight compared to Lord of Light) or Yellow Submarine.

By the way, Ed, what is your definition of "hippie?" If I'd've voted for BK instead of LoL, would I then be a hippie?

Noting Robert Sabella's poll, I begin to wonder if such madness is descending upon us once again. I just received a letter from the U. of Wisconsin concerning a poll someone in the English Dept. (I think - either there or in the School of Medicine, Abnormal Behavior Dept.) has launched. Basically they wanted (1) those authors and works which are most influential in shaping sf (2) the most influential and important authors and works since WW2 (3) a definition of sf. Normally I wouldn't have tried to cope with such a dire task as actually trying to define the undefinable but the letter pushed the right button (straight on top of my vanity control). Has anyone else been the recipient of this poll? Is anyone else (besides Tackett, of course) "exceptionally knowledgeable and well read in the field"?

Back to Ed Krieg: I just loved your description of Andromeda Strain as one of the Analog school with "scientists working around the clock. The End." I bet you'd also say Gone with the Wind is nothing but another war story and "Romeo and Juliet" is simply a gushy love story.

So why can't sf be a warning (We All Die Naked, Make Room Make Room!, Stand on Zanzibar, Space Merchants) or allegories (Lord of Light, Stranger in a Strange Land, Perelandra) or fable? (Granted, you could easily win on the latter - anything that's a fable is automatically fantasy and not sf - Lord of the Rings, The Incomplete Enchanter, Weirwoods).

And once again, your logic eludes me. Repent Jellybean is a classic, apparently because everything is neatly tied up. And yet Andromeda Strain is bad because it ties up everything at the end. Your criteria for what you consider good and bad is getting all mixed together. (As to Repent Jellybean being neatly tied up, where did the Harlequin get the jellybeans? How did he know he had \$150,000 worth if no one had ever seen a jellybean before?)

Robert Weinberg: Okay, Hamilton's a big boy and can't rightfully kick about his treatment at Popular. Okay, Cohen's a skinflint and won't (or didn't) give reprint royalties. But what do you think of Cohen launching a brand new magazine entitled Astounding? I'd say that's treading on thin ice. I can forgive his trespasses on the royalty payments but I don't think I can really forgive his blatant and knowing use of such a title just to sell a couple crummy reprints. I don't doubt that it's legal -- and I don't doubt that it is just about the slimiest Madison Avenue trick I've seen in sf prodom.

Cohen should be tarred and wallpapered with every single copy of his "Astounding." Barring this, how about refusing to buy a single copy of Amazing, Fantastic or any other Ultimate pub until the "Astoundings" are taken off the market?

//But Amazing and Fantastic are getting good. Now I should stop buying them? ghl//

Chester Cuthbert

1104 Mulvey Ave., Winnipeg 9, Manitoba,
Canada

Thanks very much for Tightbeam 60 and the material which accompanied it, including Roster NFFF 1970. Everything is so expertly typewritten and reproduced that it is a pleasure to read.

The letters from your correspondents continue to show familiarity with recent developments in the field superior to mine, and I am happy to learn from them.

My want list, which Art Hayes published on the last page of TNFF, June, 1970, relates to my research for a Checklist of Fantasy and Science Fiction Books by Canadian Authors. I hope the members will cooperate in trying to find these books for me; in return I shall be delighted to watch for any books or magazines they need. Since I received TNFF for June, I realize that I should write Irvin Koch about my project, so I am doing so. A copy of my letter to him will be enclosed for your information.

//Chester's letter includes the following general interest information: he has over 200 titles in his confirmed list at the present time. A particularly interesting paragraph reads://

I am always interested in learning about books which may qualify for my Checklist. If anyone should learn about the actual publication of a science fiction novel by James S. H. Willer, a Vancouverer, B. C. sculptor, about Canada's future, any details forwarded to me will be gratefully received. Mr. Willer was announced as one of three finalists who shared a prize of \$30,000 offered by the Imperial Tobacco Company of Canada for the best description of Canada in 2000 A.D. This announcement was made on October 30th, 1967; a year later a news release indicated that Mr. Willer was re-writing parts of the novel to improve it; but I have heard nothing since. This is an important development in the science fiction field, and also in connection with my Checklist.

Bob Sabella

32 Cortright Road, Whippany, N.J. 07981

If in Spring everyone's thoughts turn to love, then in summer everyone's thoughts turn to Hugo nominations.

//It's not everyone's; it's only young men. And it isn't thoughts; it's "fancy." //

Jerry Lapidus is right when he says that big name writers have a much better chance to win a Hugo. The best example of this is Robert Heinlein's 1967 victory for The Moon is a Harsh Mistress over then-relatively unknowns Samuel Delany and Daniel Keyes. I can't help but think that last year's victory for "The Beast That Shouted Love" was also a name-victory.

This year's choices? I was hoping that the nominees would have been announced before I got around to writing this letter, but if they have been then I haven't heard about it. So at the risk of being dated, I will discuss my choices:

Best Novel: I agree with Jerry that The Left Hand of Darkness definitely lacks something. It tends to be too clinical and becomes very tedious. My personal favorite is Silverberg's To Live Again, but at this stage it seems to have little chance of being nominated. My choice then has to be Bug Jack Barron which, if nothing else, is a novel that really gets you involved in it. Forget the sex in it; it's vastly exaggerated and can't even compare with, say, Up The Line. Darrell Schweitzer said somewhere that BJB didn't even get nominated. If this is true, then I'm completely lost for a favorite.

Best Novella: It's gotta be Silverberg's "To Jorslem," the conclusion to his Nightwings trilogy. Another good story was Leiber's "Ship of Shadows;" although I confess that I didn't read Anne McCaffrey's "Dramatic Mission." Forget "A Boy and His Dog." Rather than my going into that story here, I'll just recommend that you read my review of it in my own fanzine Gradient. You can send for it at my address. It's free if you promise to loc.

Short Fiction: Again I agree with Jerry Lapidus that it is about time Delany wins a Hugo. He has run into the most amazing string of bad luck: Babel-17 ran into the popularity of Heinlein, TEI had the bad luck to be nominated along with Lord of Light, The Star Pit was almost ignored in Worlds of Tomorrow, "Aye and Gommorah," "Lines of Power" and "Driftglass" all either ran up against popular stories, or, in the case of the latter, didn't even get nominated. It is well nigh that Delany win. Other should-be nominees include Simak's "I Am Crying All Inside" and Koontz's "Muse."

I don't think that a Best Anthology award would be as good as a Best Editor award. Jerry says that most fans wouldn't know who edits what. That could be worked out though. On the nominating ballot they could just list the book-series-magazine that they want and the Hugo committee could figure out who edits what. Then on the final ballot they could list the editors and their works. The only problem would be in the case of magazines like Galaxy/If that had two editors last year.

Locus recently reported that Galaxy is going back to bi-monthly and 192 pages. They are doing this for circulation reasons (get the magazine out on the newsstands longer), but I am content with the change since it will enable Galaxy to print more of the longer fiction that has always been its specialty. It has also gone bi-monthly which should help eliminate much of the poorer stuff in that magazine.

One last note: Galaxy recently printed two Silverberg novels. The first one, Downward to the Earth was very good and a potential Hugo-contender; the other, The Tower of Glass started out well, but at the end it degenerated into a commercial revision of all the old man-versus-robot novels of the past. It is the most disappointing Silverberg novel that I've read.

Darrell Schweitzer 113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford, Pa. 19087

Alex Krislov's letter interests me plusmuchly. First of all Alex, about the Spinrad novel. The characters that seemed to be convincing were Barron, Howards, and Gerald (as much as can be with such a minor character). None of the women are real people at all, just sexual machines. Sara performs a necessary part in the story but is more like the cardboard character of the pulps than a well developed one supposedly typical of the New Wave and this age of

enlightenment in SF. Maybe Spinrad thinks all women are nymphomaniacs. Maybe he made all the women in the book that way in order to stir up a little extra controversy (which would of course mean more money). The sex scenes (except for the first one) are just thrown in and the one about chapter 15 (as Barron is deciding whether to fight Howards) is a simple interruption of the narrative. They also do damage Barron's character a bit. Sara seems a simple slut, yet Barron loves her. That I find hard to believe.

Still BJB is a good novel. Ignore the sex, the language, the pseudo-experimental prose, the general pretentiousness of the thing and pay attention to the actual story itself and you have one of the finest treatments of the sociological effects of immortality ever done. It's a good book despite the author's attempts to make it otherwise.

I'm surprised to see you mentioning A Cure for Cancer. It's a strange novel structurally. I started to read the third installment thinking it the first since there was no synopsis and wasn't really lost. I found out about the first two and sent for them but as of this writing they haven't come and I haven't read the thing. Screamingly funny in parts though. I might consider it for a Hugo another year but not the same year that we have the likes of Isle of the Dead and The Left Hand of Darkness. (This impression gathered from the third installment alone if that is enough to get a good idea.) However, as the Hugo rules now stand it cannot possibly win. The rules desperately need a revision. (Jerry Lapidus pay attention please.) There should be a minimum circulation requirement for any candidate. 15,000 in the country in which the convention is held strikes me as a reasonable figure. (Also, you'll notice, three times the circulation of New Worlds.) If a story fails to achieve this mark it will never be eligible but nothing is lost since it couldn't win anyway. A Cure for Cancer could not even make the final ballot (and I'm told that Butterfly Kid made it the other year with 12 votes) because only a very small fraction of the people nominating could have seen it. Only subscribers to New Worlds and people who know where to get it. (Their back issue department or Richard Witter, the only American importer that I know of.) If Cure were not eligible for best of 1969 due to lack of circulation it could be eligible whenever the Avon edition comes out. Right now there is a way for an author to solve the problem of having a story published in NW but he shouldn't have to go through the trouble. Isn't fair. All he has to do is revise it (i.e. change the word order a little) and it can become eligible. Harlan Ellison did this for "A Boy and His Dog" and Sam Delany did it with "Time Considered As A Helix of Semi Precious Stones" and both won Nebulas. (This minimum circulation requirement should apply to Nebulas too.) But some stories are best the way they were originally.

This doesn't only apply to New Worlds (it may not apply there at all since NW may have collapsed. The letter in Amazing was a bit premature, or so informed sources tell me.) but to anything with a small circulation, especially foreign. Suppose a miracle happened and something in Vision of Tomorrow (quick! how many people out there have ever seen a copy of that?) was of Hugo quality. We'd be back in the same situation as New Worlds. This is unlikely since VoT is such a damned cruddy magazine, but I think the rules should allow for all possibilities.

Jerry Lapidus: Either you are mistaken, or Beneath the Planet of the Apes has been released because there are four stills from it in the June ERBdom. Maybe Caz has spies or he sent a herd of elephants in to steal a couple photos.

Another thing, Jerry. I believe Sam Delany deserves a special Hugo for being the biggest loser of all time. He has had more stories nominated without a single win than anyone else. Let's see: Babel 17, The Einstein Intersection, Nova,

"Lines of Power," "Aye and Gommorah," "The Star Pit." Did I forget any? He's also the most talented loser of all time. Yes, he certainly deserves one for "Time, etc." He did all those other times too.

Distribution of prozines: Funny, around my way the things with the best distribution are the Ultimate reprint rags. I was in the newstand the other day and saw six different titles (several copies of each) and one If. The things don't sell; they just sit there and take up space from the other prozines. Analog is easy to find. If is pretty easy. Amazing and Fantastic are easy if you check a set of about five large newstands. In any given month at least one of them will have them. Galaxy is hard to find. The stands get only one or two copies and they are usually gone in a day. F&SF is nearly impossible. Venture is quite easy. Mag of Horror etc. aren't hard though occasionally an issue will be missed. Naturally New Worlds and Vision of Tomorrow are not available. What does this prove? Garish reprints outnumber quality mags six to one. Worst foot forward, as Robert Bloch once put it. If distribution like this is commonplace, it could be harmful to the field.

re: Thunderball. I distinctly recall orange peel segments in the volcano under the phoney lake-plate. When they opened up slowly it looked dramatic, you see. I think perhaps you're right about it not being the lunar base in 2001 now that I think of it. I wonder if they ever auctioned off the mountain?

Interesting that John Shirley should mention the manuscript bureau. I've always thought that the one major flaw with the thing is that the contributors don't really know where their material is going. I've always preferred to send my material directly to the faneds, and if I see a review or ad for a promising looking zine I send for a copy first. I never send blindly to zines I am unfamiliar with. Maybe other people feel the same. Maybe this is why there are not more things sent to the mss. bureau.

Gary Mattingly: I run fillos by tracing or drawing them directly onto the stencil with an empty ballpoint pen. This makes clear wide lines. The method works ok, or at least my readers seem to think so, but there are a few drawbacks. No shading, no thin lines, no large amounts of lines close together. About all you can do is very simple, crude, cartoony stuff. If you can afford it, get electrostencilling. You can have a whole page done for around \$2.00 if you can find a place to get it done.

Gary: Ghod! There is a terrible typo in my letter thish. Change that statement to "New Worlds #173-79 were perhaps the finest SF mags of all time." 180 was awful, one of the very worst. The only readable thing in it was part three of Bug Jack Barron. The rest was a long boring bit of incoherence by Langdon Jones and a short lump of style with nothing under it by Carol Emshwiller (who usually writes well, so it was more disappointing).

New Worlds was never distributed over here at all, except for a short-lived reprint edition in 1960.

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Publications bureau has in stock the following items which are free to members for the asking (new members receive automatically)

Constitution of the NFFF
Bylaws of the NFFF
TB's 59, 60, 61
Roster of NFFF 1970
Roster update, July 1970

Coming: Introduction to N3F
Fanspeak, a short dictionary of the Argot of Fandom
(contributions sought)

July, 1970