



It Goes On The Shelf

24

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*"And departing, leave behind us
Toothprints in the hands of time."*

Cover art by Steve Stiles

Back cover by Taral

✓ The day IGOTS 23 was picked up at the printer (10/23/01), I got in the mail a postcard from Ditto 14 in Bloomington Indiana - signed by Mary Kay Kare, Rich Lynch, Nicki Lynch, Joyce Scrivner, Sam Long, Pat Molloy, Roger Sims, Pat Sims, Judy Bemis, Joe Siclari, Hope Leibowitz, George Flynn, Murray Moore, Dick and Leah Smith - and last but not least, Bob Tucker. There also seems to be a **4E** monogram in bright green which would be Forry Ackerman, and several scribbles I can't decipher - many thanks to all for thinking of me! Wish I could have been there.

The House of Life by George A. Rubissow, Ricardo Press, New York 1951, 383pp, illus b&w & photos.

Seems to be signed (rather illegibly), but the artwork is not credited. According to the dedication, the author was a friend of P. D. Ouspensky. And the content does seem to run to that sort of mystical psychobabble, with subheadings such as *What about the Eternity Museum?*, *The Great Council of Twelve Bifacial Executives*, *Technical Details of Materialization*, and *F. D. Roosevelt - Um*. Not to mention *The Back-Smacking - Is It Possible?*. Alas, these headings do not actually appear in the text - you have to find the place by counting down from the beginning of a section.

As far as I can make out, the central idea of the book is to promote the "Eternity Museum", something similar to the "Hall of Records" in Rachel Maddux's **The Green Kingdom**. One of the photos is of a collection of letters of support received in 1936 when the idea was first proposed. This structure would have to be very large, as it is apparently meant to contain everything - Rubissow would have been delighted with Asimov's data storage on *nudged quanta*! But he does not limit himself to promoting the Museum - there is also a page of music by his brother Nicolas, and a section on the Tunguska (he calls it *Toongoosk*) incident in Siberia in 1908, in which something exploded at ground level, leaving no crater or debris but leveling all the trees for 100 miles - their trunks lie there still, pointing towards the center of the force that toppled them. Most experts seem to think that a meteor exploded at ground level, though of course the UFO people say it was an alien spaceship. The Dec'01 issue of *Fortean Times* carries a speculation that it might have been a natural gas explosion.

Such grandiose ideas seem to recur independently, from the pyramids to Stonehenge to

our own fastpaced civilization - see <http://www.longnow.org/about/about.htm>.

I found this book in a thrift store, and will probably recycle some of the artwork into apazines.

The Girl Green as Elderflower by Randolph Stow, Viking, New York 1980, 150pp, \$9.95.

Found in the local thrift store - one of those novels without much regard for continuity or anachronisms, but has some interesting characters and is based on the old British legends of the Green Man, the Green Children, a merman captured by fishers, etc. And it's short - I like short novels. The author is said to be Australian, but no notice of an Australian edition appears. The copyright notice itself is odd. It's on a sticker that is placed over the original printed notice - which appears, as far as I can tell, to say the same thing!

Science Fiction Five-Yearly 11, Geri Sullivan, Jeff Schalles, Terry Hughes, and Lee Hoffman as Editor Emeritus.

Probably unavailable by the time you get this, but you can e-mail SFFY@toad-hall.com and ask. All eleven issues are available on CD-ROM for \$10! Art by Steve Stiles, Dan Steffan, ATom, Stu Shiffman, Ken Fletcher; words by Lee Hoffman, Dave Langford, Arthur C Clarke (just a few), Denny Lien, Kip Williams, Greg Benford, Halrah Nosille and others - all impeccably mimeoed in four colors.

This is not exactly a fanzine - the response cycle is too long. It's more like the Platonic Ideal of the Fannish Mimeoed Fanzine. Great cover by Stiles shows reptiles in spacesuits at the Slab on the moon - and in the background the Earth still has the continents in the Pangaea configuration! Dave Langford explains *Ansible*. Denny Lien explains the purple polka-dot bikini and the Purple People Eater. The closest we get to sercon is where Nosille threatens Bush and Ashcroft with the dread *Bloat-Suckers of Magma IV*.

Diane Fox down in Oz sends five antipodean tomes:

The Vicar of Morbing Vyle by Richard Harland, Karl Evans 1993

This was mentioned in IGOTS 16 - anyone interested in the duplicate?

Splashdance Silver by Tansy Rayner Roberts, Bantam 1998, 386pp, wraps.

No price on this mass-market pb, which although Bantam is a multinational seems to have been published only in Australia and New Zealand. The back cover says it is Book One of *The Mocklore Chronicles*, but the first-page blurb says that 12-volume (projected) set was abandoned and chopped into the published volume. There is a silver sticker on the cover saying that the book is a winner of the George Turner Prize - closer examination shows that this is a picture of a sticker printed on the cover!

Seems to be a light fantasy about pirates.

Dark Streets by Huw Merlin, S.T.W. Publishing, Windsor (NSW) 1992, 169pp, wraps.

"Wholly Australian" it says on the back cover, along with a notice that it is printed on *environmentally safe Hydrogen Peroxide treated mechanical paper*. Like the Harland book, about 1/8-inch larger than a mass-market pb, and on whiter paper.

An odd book - a sort of police-procedural/horror/political thriller. New South Wales is an

independent country ruled by a dictator and Sydney is torn by riots and stalked by a monster. Short chapters and street language - could have done with more poorfraeding!

The Art of Arrow-Cutting by Stephen Dedman, Tor, New York 1999, 285pp, glossary, \$13.95. A trade pb of a 1997 fantasy based on Japanese myth - that's why we need the glossary. The *arrow-cutting* of the title is the ability Kwai Chang Kane displayed in the old *Kung Fu* TV series of being able to knock an arrow or spear out of the air with his hand.

In the Heart or in The Head *An Essay in Time Travel* by George Turner, Norstrilia Press, Carlton (Vic.) 1984, 239pp, bibliography, index.

And dedicated to Bruce Gillespie, with credits to John Foyster and John Bangsund. Part literary criticism and part autobiography - looks excellent, I really must drop a couple of Net lists and make time to read it!

Denny Lien sent me photocopies of Tom Cockcroft's *Index to Fiction in Gernsback's Radio News* and these three odd volumes in trade for some duplicate issues of *Castle of Frankenstein*:

A Planet of Riddles by E. Novikov, MIR Publishers, Moscow 1972, 256pp, illus., wraps.

This was translated into English by David Sobolev. A curious sort of chatty eclectic discussion of Earth sciences, opening with nasty remarks about Napoleon and invented conversations between scientists of his time. There is even poetry about radium mining.

They Had Stores...We Had Chores, *A Town-Country Lexicon* by Janet Letnes Martin and Suzann (Johnson) Nelson, Caragana Press, Hasting (MN) 1995, 260pp, illus., wraps.

Bound on the short edge. A production of two of Garrison Keillor's Norwegian Lutherans, showing the language difference between the town and country people. Most of the examples make more sense than the one chosen as the title: pharmacy / drug-store, comforters / quilts, sun rooms / porches, etc. Not as long as the page-count would indicate, there are only 3-4 entries per page.

Fresh Rabbit by Ray Puxley, Robson Books, London 1998, 134pp, illus., wraps.

A glossary of "contemporary rhyming slang" - a follow-on to the 1992 **Cockney Rabbit** by the same author. I had no idea that rhyming slang was still being invented! I will file it with the dictionaries in case I ever need to know that *John Cleese* means "cheese" - I have read that Cleese's father changed the family name from "Cheese" to "Cleese" because he thought "Cheese" sounded silly!

Beijing Diary by Charlton Heston, Simon & Schuster 1990, 175pp, illus photos, \$18.95.

His account of how he directed a Chinese cast in a production of Herman Wouk's play *The Caine Mutiny Courtmartial* in 1988. Of the b&w photos (all taken by his wife Lydia), 23 are of his smug smirk and other grimaces, while most of the cast photos are unflattering.

In spite of a fairly large font in a relatively small volume, the text is divided into four "Books", and varies between plain and bold with no indication of what this is supposed to mean.

This was done as part of a cultural exchange program, no doubt paid for out of our taxes - I

doubt if we will ever know whether it was worth the expense!

The Aloe by Katherine Mansfield, Constable, London 1930, 162pp, 1/750.

I found this at a local antique market - the only book they had that looked at all interesting. I paid about \$7 for it, but the dealers on abebooks seem to think it's worth about ten times that. The style looks older than 1930 - a heavily sized gold-stamped linen binding and beautifully typeset on laid paper. It has lost the d/w and the boards are slightly bowed, otherwise it's in excellent condition.

It is a curious thing to read - at first it seems as devoid of conflict as Blackwood's "Uncle Paul" novels. A man and his wife and children (and his mother and her sister) move to a new and larger house. There is a lot of descriptive material, mostly from the point of view of the youngest child. But by the end it appears that the wife is suffering from what we now call clinical depression, and the sister from an identity crisis. The husband and the mother seem oblivious. The story was never finished, so there is no resolution.

Unlike most of the books I mention here, this one will be for sale.

Aphorism of the All-too-Human by Mason Cooley, Ragged Edge Press, New York 2000, 50pp, illus Thomas Kerr, wraps.

No price noted, but see www.RaggedEdgePress.com. The illustrations are just little vignettes in the text, and a surreal cover. Jack Palmer sent this booklet by a man said to be the "Shotgun Shaman of Truth or Consequences". I never heard of him myself, but some of these (printed quite large and spaced out) are pretty good - *Good deeds do not always glow in the dark; Will New York someday be considered cute?*

Uncle Petros & Goldbach's Conjecture by Apostolos Doxiadis, Bloomsbury 2000, 213pp, \$23.95

Apparently published in Greek in 1992. No translator is given but the author has a math degree from Columbia. This is the first new novel I have seen in a long time that has a ribbon bound in for a place marker!

I greatly enjoyed this novel about a Greek boy whose eccentric uncle spent his life obsessed with the attempt to prove Goldbach's Conjecture. This mathematical notion is easily stated and still unproven: that every even number can be represented as the sum of two prime numbers.

Obviously no example of an even number that cannot be represented the sum of two prime numbers has been found - but that is not the same as a formal proof. The great Indian mathematician Ramanujan thought that the conjecture might fail for some very large number.

When the uncle hears of Godel's Theorem, and realizes that it implies that Goldbach's Conjecture might be true but unprovable, he gives up in despair and becomes a hermit.

A google search of the WWW reveals that several people have written computer programs to generate in order all the Prime pairs that sum to each even number - a plot of this data shows a slowly expanding cloud of points and is called Goldbach's Comet. Various functions have been fitted to the lower edge of the comet, and they all indicate that no even number would ever fail to be the sum of two Primes. But that isn't quite the same as a formal proof....

Wolfgang von Krahe by Ilya Murometz, 15pp.

The title character is a crow. This is a lot shorter than the same author's **Congregation of the Damned** mentioned lastish, but just as mad a rant.

Voices by Ilya Murometz, 8pp.

This one has a nice Albrecht Durer plate for a frontispiece - the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, I think.

The Scarlet Empire by David M. Parry, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis 1906, 400pp, 9 plates in color by Hermann C. Wall.

I had heard of this lost-race fantasy for years, finally got around to reading it. Our hero tries to commit suicide by jumping off a New York pier and instead winds up in sunken Atlantis. Much of the text is political commentary against what we would now call radical communism, though it is called "social democracy" here. The inhabitants of Atlantis not only dress alike (all wear red robes) but eat precisely the same amount of the same food and have their mates assigned on a scheme where ugly and beautiful people are paired so as to average out the pulchritude of the race. The realm is lighted with radium, but none of the other physics is very good either!

Aside from the political ranting and the bad science, the plot is a pretty good pulp thriller, and the characters are fairly well done. The prose is plain and easy to read. It would make a better movie than most of those that have included a giant octopus!

Finger Poems by Robert MacLean, Yorkshire 1994, 16pp, illus, photo of author, wraps, 30¢. Alan Hunter sent this 3x4-inch booklet of very minimalist verse - each poem consists of just five ill-chosen words! MacLean is the author of a novel, **Foreign Matter**, said to be a Wodehouse-style comedy.

Faunus 8, Autumn 2001, edited by Mark Valentine & Ray Russell for the *Friends of Arthur Machen*, 58pp, illus photo, #85/250.

These beautiful little hardcover magazines are from Ray Russell's Tartarus Press. This issue collects 13 of Machen's "Dreads & Drolls" columns for *The London Graphic* that didn't appear in the old volume **Dreads & Drolls**.

A Little Book of Coincidence by John Martineau, Wooden Books, Powys Wales 2001, 58pp, illustrated in line, wraps, £4.99.

A little book about the harmonic patterns of the Solar System, beautifully written and illustrated. The unlikely relation of the orbits of Earth, Mars, and Venus to Platonic solids is explained - also the alchemical symbols of the planets and the Music of the Spheres.

Coup de Grace and Other Stories by Jack Vance, Vance Integral Edition, Oakland 2001, 256pp, illus.

There is neither d/w nor price, and I forget what I paid for it, but the enterprise can easily be accessed over the Net at www.vanceintegral.com.

This operation, founded in 1998, has a large staff - a Paul Rhoads is Editor-in-Chief - and an even larger number of volunteer proofreaders. Not one of them is a fan I ever heard of before, and many seem to have Dutch names. Their object is to publish all 60 of Vance's books (they list 44 titles besides this one, but some contain more than one novel) in a uniform edition

in 2002. The website gives the estimated price of the set.

This volume is meant to serve as a preview of what the books will look like - the first thing that came to my mind was the old *McGuffey Reader*. About 5x8 inches, black-stamped paper-covered boards with a gold-stamped plasticized spine. The paper seems excellent. The text is in a font called *Amiante*, which was designed for the project - it is neither exotic nor archaic, and quite readable. There is one uncredited illustration, quite good but printed with slightly too coarse a screen. There is a note (required by law, I think) that the book was printed and bound in Milan Italy.

Besides the long introduction, there are seven stories here - *Alfred's Ark*, *The Moon Moth*, *Coup de Grace*, *Flutic*, *Dodkin's Job*, *Green Magic*, and *The Murthe*. There is no attempt to credit the original publications. As far as I can tell the proofreaders have missed nothing!

Notes on Australian Science Fiction by Graham Stone, Sydney 2001, 210pp, index, \$20.

That's \$20 US cash (not check) and includes postage to the US - Graham is not online but can be reached at GPO Box 4440, Sydney 1004, Australia. This is a standard hardcover, issued without d/w.

I had some awareness of Australian SF from having been there for the first worldcon in 1975, and correspondence and zine trades since, but had never heard of many of the writers mentioned here. I have a decrepit copy of Erle Cox's *Out of the Silence* and knew he was Australian. And I had read some of A. Bertram Chandler's stories and seen him at a con or two. But here we get many others; and also letters from Australia to the early SF pulps. An interesting look at a distant corner of SF.

Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings by Zora Neale Hurston, Library of America, 1995, 1000 pages, chronology and notes, illus. b&w and photos.

This book looks older - it's bound in actual green cloth and printed on india paper, and has a ribbon bookmark! The Library of America books are distributed by Penguin. This is an omnibus of titles by the author, *Mules and Men*, *Tell My Horse*, *Dust Tracks on a Road* (a restored text), and *Selected Articles*.

The fantasy interest here is the in the details of folk beliefs and spells in the first section and the details on Haitian voodoo in the second. There is also a great deal of music given. There is a list in the back of the 76 Library of America volumes - odd that this is the first I recall seeing. Perhaps they are sold mostly to libraries.

Limericks: Too Gross or Two Dozen Dirty Dozen Stanzas - A Duel between Isaac Asimov & John Ciardi, Norton, New York 1978, 101pp, \$7.95.

Two gross is 288, but there are actually 299 limericks here, as Ciardi cheated and did three extra - but then Asimov put three about Ciardi in his foreword, while Ciardi quotes five old ones in his. The d/w blurb notes that this was Asimov's 198th book.

The limericks are only mildly gross.

Contact! ed. by Dick & Leah Zeldes Smith, 2001, 100pp, illustrated, wraps, \$10.

This is also *Spirit of Things Past* #4, the fanzine for Ditto 4. The Smiths got 72 fans - not necessarily members of Ditto - to write a short piece each on how they came to be fans. Ackerman and Tucker are in there, but then so am I. I even get thanked in the colophon for

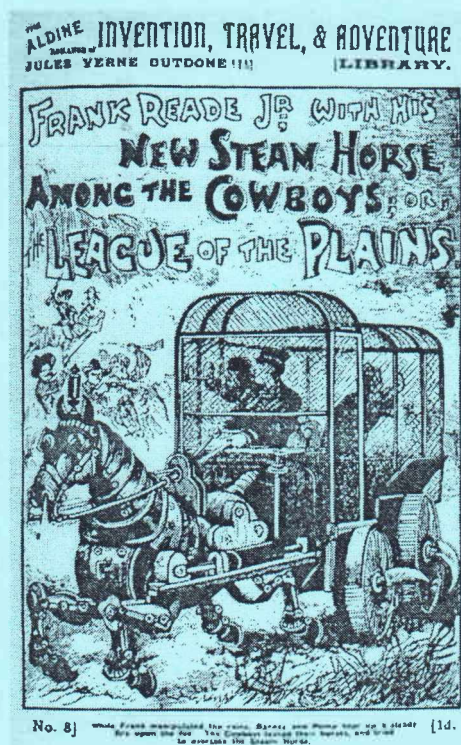
research assistance.

Beautifully printed, with a color cover and art by 11 fan-artists. The contents page not only reveals when each participant became a fan, but his street address and e-mail. I see I was careless in my half-page and mentioned only 1963 as the year I first went to a worldcon - I actually became a fan in 1962, when I met Phil Harrell and went to a DisClave.

Copies may be available - enquire at lazs@enteract.com.

British Story Paper Encyclopedia compiled by Steve Holland (steve@uworldst.demon.co.uk), CD-ROM, \$10.

This is Version 1.1, and is offered as incomplete. It does contain quite a lot of data on a type of cheap popular literature published in England from the late 1800s on - something like the US pulp magazines, except that they are aimed at juveniles and contain little explicit sex. Violence, however, is rife - the heroes of the Frank Reade *edisonades* (SF adventures named in honor of the inventor) even commit torture and lynchings. The CD contains quite a lot of cover art from these magazines:



The street address is Underworld Studios, 105 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3RB, England.

Owen Thomas of the *Ten Page News* sent a list of errors in the HTML coding in the online version of *It Goes On The Shelf* that is hosted at www.fanac.org. I was surprised, as neither my Netscape Composer nor Netscape Navigator could see these errors. But when I looked at the raw code, sure enough, there they were - failures to complete the conversion from FancyFont typesetting to HTML, consisting for the most part of book titles set in **bold** with the correct `` before the title but an incorrect `</I>` after the title. Somehow this idiocy looks correct to Netscape 4.77.

I appreciate Owen taking the trouble to note these errors, and have corrected many of them, I think.

Hardican's Hollow by J. S. Fletcher, Herbert Jenkins, London "reprinted 1933", 256pp.

Odd to see only the reprint date given. This is melodramatic pulp adventure with no supernatural elements, but interesting to read for the locale and peculiar characters. The protagonist/narrator is a painter who becomes an amateur detective for the occasion and has no personal involvement with the bizarre plot. I found it rather annoying that no one attempts to explain where the villainous Pharaoh Greek got such an unlikely name!

Crypt of Cthulhu 104, 105, 106, ed. Robert M. Price, Mythos Books, 40pp, illus, wraps, \$4.50, 6.00.

These review copies were from Mythos Books. No.105, the Lammas 2000 issue of "A Pulp Thriller and Theological Journal" is copyright 2002 - but then the times are out of joint. No.104 seems to lack any copyright notice at all.

Subscriptions are available through www.mythosbooks.com, or if you are still a Luddite, Mythos Books, 351 Lake Ridge Road, Poplar Bluff MO 63901.

An interesting mix of fiction, commentary, and verse in the Lovecraftian genre. In No.104, the editor realizes he is the same age that HPL was when he died. Ross Bagby points out that most of the "Cthulhu Mythos" was not by HPL - the Cult appears only twice and Great Cthulhu himself only once. Excellent poem by Darrell Schweitzer. Joseph Pulver's pseudo-orientalist spookery seems a bit overdone to me, but Rawlik's *History of the Miskatonic Valley* is beautifully done, references and all.

In No.105 C. J. Henderson uses Robert E. Howard's Solomon Kane in a tale of Tsathoggua - no hint of what REH may have contributed to the tale other than the name. The editorial is about the concept of collecting Cthulloid icons. The other short story is translated from the Portuguese of Carlos Orsi Martinho and is extremely gruesome. I liked the article about Leon Stone by Tom Cockcroft. L. Sprague DeCamp contributes a poem, *Xeroxing the Necronimicon*, which seems more poetic to me than the other verse in the issue, but I am not much of a poetry fan. I do think that the use of the word "humane" in a poem title (*Of Humane Dust*), apparently as an archaic spelling of "human", is a mistake!

The excellent cover art is uncredited and there are too many typos in the text, which is set double-column in a very plain sanserif font. Since the pages of a digest-size are less than 5 inches across, this strains the justification capability of the typesetting software, leading to wasted space - I think I would use single-column and a more efficient and attractive font, say Goudy Old Style.

No.106, the Hallowmass 2000 issue, appeared in September 2002, and contains a 6-part reprint by six authors of further adventures of HPL's Dr. Herbert West, Reanimator. These seem to be more an attempt to out-gross the movie version than properly reverent pastiches. There is also Tom Cockcroft's column, a commentary on Paul Cook's *In Memoriam*.... And a review of the *Quatermass II* laserdisk - I never got into laserdisk, and have never seen one, or the player. They want \$50 for this one! Full-page ad for a man in Tennessee who will carve you a Cthulhu cane for \$75! Also some verse; and this time the cover artist, D. L. Hutchinson, is credited.

With regard to Dainis Bisenieks question about the catch-phrase "Home, James", (my parents used it) I had an e-mail from Charles Taylor (instruction2000@optushome.com.au) pointing out the following entry in the **Oxford English Dictionary** (in my elderly edition, under *home, adv.* in the Supplement):

d. With ellipsis of go, drive, esp. in home, James (and don't spare the horses)!

1927 E. WALLACE Mixer viii. 114 'All right, Paul,' returned Mr. Sparkes... 'Home, James.' 'James' grinned in the darkness, and the car moved forward. 1934 F. HILLEBRAND (song title) Home James, and don't spare the horses. 1964 WODEHOUSE Frozen Assets xi. 213 Okay, Watson, drive on. Home, James, and don't spare the horses.

Prize Science Fiction ed. by Donald A. Wollheim, McBride, New York 1953, 230pp

I found this anthology in an antique store in Athens GA. The stories were selected by the "Jules Verne Prize Committee", a triumvirate appointed by the publisher - Wollheim, Forrest J. Ackerman, and Otto v. St. Whitelock (who?).

The twelve winners (all of whose stories appeared in magazines in 1952 or early 1953) received a bronze medallion. And there are some famous stories here - Leigh Brackett's *The Last Days of Shandakor*, Mark Clifton's *Star, Bright*, C. M. Kornbluth's *The Altar at Midnight*. Also some not-so-famous, such as Robert Donald Locke's *Demotion*.

The unlikely *Fender Tucker* at Ramble House sends some advertising material noting that he has branched out from reprinting Harry Stephen Keeler novels and also offers Vols. I & II (of three projected) of the *Anthony Boucher Chronicles* - his reviews of mystery and suspense novels from the *San Francisco Chronicle* from 1942 to 1947, edited by Francis M. Nevins, at \$21.95 each (S&H \$2 the first book, \$0.50 each additional). Address 443 Gladstone Blvd, Shreveport LA 71104 or www.ramblehouse.bigstep.com.

The Hidden Library of Tanith Lee by Mavis Hunt, McFarland, Jefferson NC and London 2001, 216pp, notes, bibliography, index, wraps.

No price on this trade pb, but the publisher has a website at:
www.mcfarlandpub.com

The dense academic subtitle *Themes and Subtexts from Dionysos to the Immortal Gene* may be blamed on the author being a retired college instructor.... The cover is an excellent photograph and there is a good interview. The bibliography covers the novels only.

A title that, as a Tanith Lee fan and collector, I could hardly resist. How much of the literit I will ever get through is another matter, but the layout and typography are excellent.

Industry of Identity Deficit and Cannibalization of Time Matrices by Betsy U. Chang, Trafford, Victoria BC Canada 2001, 403pp, appendices, bibliography, references, wraps, \$19.78

I stumbled across the website www.id-deficit.org which offered a review copy of this publish-on-demand trade pb - which came with a nice inscription by the author. I do not imagine that I understand the title - the press release that came with the book says it is "a perspective on globalization and anti-Americanism". I was attracted by the curious diagrams that appear on both the website and the book cover, but find no explanation of them.

What is this all about? The first reference is to Issac (sic) Asimov's **Robots and Empire**;

and the appendices include the Abner Louima and Amidou Diallo atrocities (and in fact the book itself is said to be a reaction to the dragging-death murder of James Byrd Jr in Texas), and "Taoism and Parallel Universes". But I'm not sure the author and I are anywhere near the same wavelength - the book opens with a poem by Ben Jonson that praises lilies in comparison to oak trees.... There is a picture of her on the back cover, she looks sane enough. She was born in Korea in 1954 and came to the US in 1964, so of course our backgrounds are considerably different.

A lot of the analysis seems to be based on the enormous difference between the Korean and English languages, and the corresponding difference in cultures. I rather wish Mae Strelkov was still with us, she could have done this book justice.

The Ifs of History by Joseph Edgar Chamberlin, Henry Altemus Company, Philadelphia 1907, 203pp.

The date is from the copyright notice, which is to Howard E. Altemus. The book was given to the Newport News public library in 1930 by a Mrs. Ferguson, and has a curious flaw in the printed label used to put the title on the spine of the red cloth binding - some of the black letters are missing, so that the title appears to be "he / fs /of / istory". This must have been a bindery error, as black ink of that vintage neither fades nor falls off - Altemus was a popular publisher and a book like this probably sold for less new than the \$1 I paid for it at a library sale.

There are twenty-two essays on suggested deviations from known history, many of which involve history that I never heard of - who was Admiral Penn, and would it really have mattered if he had persisted in disowning his son? Perhaps - the son was William Penn. His father was angry at him for becoming a Quaker, but in the end left him his fortune anyway. Pennsylvania, according to this account, was named for the Admiral, not the son.

Pennsylvania was a royal grant by Charles I. Another speculation is what would have happened if Charles II had accepted the kingship of Virginia. I thought he was "king of" Virginia until the Revolution of 1776, but this has to do with Virginia having no sympathy with Cromwell, who beheaded Charles I - the General Assembly declared Charles II "King of Virginia" and sent an ambassador to Holland to invite the exiled prince to come and reign in the New World.

An odd speculation is the effect of the Philharmonia not giving concerts at Vicenza. Probably very little - a group that formed and called itself the Philharmonia in the Italian town in the mid-16th century is said to be the first to give public concerts, but it would have happened soon enough anyway, I would guess.

The Civil War gets the last two entries - what if the Confederate Army had marched on Washington after the Battle of Bull Run? And what if the Confederates had purchased the East India Company fleet in 1861?

The Web of the Magi by Richard Cowper, Gollancz, London 1980, 160pp, £5.50 This was given to me by Ian Covell on the *fictionmags* Net list. I remembered liking **The Road to Corlay** a lot.

The copyright in this book is to Colin Murry, the author's real name - or closer to it anyway. He was actually John Middleton Murry Jr, the son of a noted literary critic, and wrote as Richard Cowper, Colin Murry, and Colin Middleton Murry - this last on his autobiography, **I At the Keyhole**.

These four science-fiction tales are subtle and atmospheric. They all appeared in *F&SF* 1978-80, so I must have read them before, but they did not seem familiar on rereading, though I seemed to recall the story title *Out Where the Big Ships Go*. The title story, *The Web of the Magi* takes up nearly the last half of the book, and is the best to my taste.

A Book of Anecdotes ed. by Daniel George, Hulton Press, 1957, 445pp, indices, 18s.

I think this was from a tent sale of books held annually in a large shopping-center parking lot for the benefit of Brandeis University. I have gone to this sale several times over the years - the pickings seem to have fallen off as the old novels and genre books were replaced by modern fiction and psychobabble rubbish. This book is not that old, but books from England always seem older somehow. Odd that the Hulton Press seems to have no place of publication - there is a note that the book was printed at Bath by the Pitman Press.

These brief tales - few run as much as a page - are mostly from British and ancient history. I thought they were well-chosen, and read the book at bedtime over a period of several weeks. The entries are arranged alphabetically by subject matter with the name of the person involved as part of the running header; and then has two indices, one by subject and one by person. I am not sure this is altogether useful - certainly it is a benefit to be able to look for entries about a specific person, but how likely are you to think of the same name for a "subject" as the compiler?

There is an entry, for example, under "Fatal Experiment" - but the fatality is only indirectly and rather doubtfully related to the experiment. Frances Bacon (1561-1626) is said to have died after participating in an impromptu experiment to determine whether meat might be preserved by cold. It being winter, he and a friend bought a live chicken from a "poore woman", had the woman *exenterate* it, and stuffed it with snow. Bacon is said to have taken a chill and died soon after of what sounds like pneumonia.

But since I was not looking for anything specifically, I read the book straight through and enjoyed it very much.

The Amazing Dreams of Andrew Latter by Harold Begbie, ed. by Jack Adrian for the Ash-Tree Press Occult Detectives series, Ashcroft BC 2002, 65pp, illus, notes.

I don't generally buy these expensive little books, but I had to have this one because of my interest in Arthur Machen - Begbie was also author of **On the Side of the Angels**, a vituperative rant against Machen for his insistence that his story *The Bowmen* was pure fiction. Adrian's introduction gives a long account of Begbie's peculiar career and voluminous writings.

The six occult detective stories all appeared in *London Magazine* in 1904. It is competently composed, but without much style beyond conventional Victorian potboilers - "eyes that rolled horribly" and so forth. The last story is an extremely gruesome mystery with a ridiculous resolution.

If I were publishing a fancy book like this and wanted artwork, I think I could find, just among my friends in fandom, something better than the curious oval daub by Ms McMillion-Nering that appears on the front of the d/w and at the back of the text.

The Broecker Sampler, ed. Robert T. Garcia, American Fantasy, Woodstock IL 2002, 24pp, wraps, \$10

A sample of the pen and ink artwork of Randy Broecker, an artist I had not consciously been

aware of - though I see that he did the drawings for Galad Elflandsson's **The Black Wolf** and I have that. Most of the rest of the samples here are for specialty publications I never saw; and two are for a Tanith Lee book that was never published.

The introduction by Garcia mentions no influences, but I can see that Broecker must have studied the work of Sidney Sime and Harry Clarke, and probably Mervyn Peake and Wallace Smith as well. Beautiful stuff - if I wanted weird illustrations for something I would certainly try to get hold of Randy Broecker.

Strictly Science Fiction, Diana Tixier Herald and Bonnie Kunzel, Greenwood, Greenwood (CO) 2002, 297pp, indexes, appendices, \$35.

Review copies were offered online, and they kindly (or ignorantly) sent me one for an e-mail. Obviously aimed at the library market, it is subtitled "A Guide to Reading Interests" and, according to the back cover (it's a hardcover without d/w, well bound in boards covered with slick paper) is part of the *Genreflecting Advisory Series*. This series includes parallel guides to fantasy, horror, Christian, romance, and mainstream fiction.

The editorial presence here is impartial to the point of indifference - you will not discover whether the editors liked any of these books. But as far as it goes the book is extremely useful for the library patron, or for collectors like myself with a bad memory - there are indices by author/title, subject, and *character*; and each book receives a good thumbnail summary of the plot.

Chapter Degrees by Edmond Ronayne, Ezra A. Cook, Chicago 1901, 312+pp, illus b&w.

This small old book, bound in red cloth (stained and worn) is subtitled *Chapter Masonry / Being / The Opening, Closing, Secret Work and Lectures of the Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master and Royal Arch Degrees*. It bears across the title page the odd stamp "For Sale by / National Christian Association / 850 W. Madison St., Chicago, Ill." - fortunately the stamp ink is not dark enough to obscure the printed matter. Why would the Association deface a book they were selling? The publisher Ezra Cook, judging from the catalog in the back, specialized in books about secret societies - without regard for whether or not they were in fact authorized by the society involved. This may be a valuable book - a check with the book dealers of the WWW finds only expensive reprints of it.

Ronayne was an ex-Mason, and Cook published a lot of his anti-Masonic books. He apparently turned against them both as being "un-Christian" and as being a "gigantic trust" - there was a lot of concern in the US in the late 1800s about "trusts", consortiums of commodity dealers who tried to corner a market, and the OED's first cite of "trust-busting" is dated 1903. Ronayne must have thought that the Masons had cornered the market in credulity - the rituals described here are unbelievably complex and idiotic.

The real purposes of such organizations were more practical - they were a "good old boy" network for political and commercial enterprises, they sold their members cheap insurance - and they provided a place for men with no hobbies to go off together and act silly.

The King of Elfland's Daughter, Bob Johnson & Pete Knight, Edsel 342, Demon Records 1991. Ever so often I manage to upgrade one of my favorite old LPs to CD - this was a 1977 Chrysalis LP. The liner notes here are minimized - although they thank a John Child-Villiers for his aid in "adapting the book", there is no mention that the production is based on the 1924 book of

the same title by Lord Dunsany.

The nine songs here are a curious mixture of folk, folk-rock, and Broadway show-tune styles. Christopher Lee is the narrator and the King of Elfland, and Mary Hopkin is his daughter Lirazel.

This CD was not easy to get - it took me several tries at various Net sites that would list it, and then reply that it wasn't actually available. I think I finally ordered it as a cassette, and was surprised to get the CD.

City of Saints and Madmen, Jeff VanderMeer, Prime, Canton (OH) 2002, eccentrically paginated, illustrated, \$40.

This large hardcover, in a jacket with the title only on the spine, is the stated 1st edition - even though the trade paper edition came out last year. But there is additional material here, including an excerpt from the magazine *Burning Leaves* and 18 pages of numbers in murky typescript, an extensive glossary of words needed only in Ambergris (the city of the title), and quite a bit of excellent artwork.

The pages of typescript are not quite right - the typeface is appropriately hideous, but it should have been fixed-width, not proportional.

I think there has been some sort of slippage across the lines of the nearest adjacent probability universe - I remembered the name of the main drag in Ambergris being "Albemuth" Boulevard, but now everywhere I look for it, it's "Albumuth".

Tom Cockcroft sent a book from down in New Zealand:

The Sheikh and the Dustbin and Other McAuslan Stories by George MacDonald Fraser, Fontana, 1989, 189pp, wraps, £2.95.

This is said to be the third book of "McAuslan" stories, following **The General Danced at Dawn** and **McAuslan in the Rough**. There is so much obscure British army jargon that a glossary is required. But while I could never get into the Flashman books, I found this one quite interesting and funny and read the whole thing in a couple of evenings in spite of the horrible Scots dialect. McAuslan comes into many of them only peripherally - he is famed as the most slovenly soldier in the British army. The period seems to be mostly North Africa and the Near East just after WWII.

UFO's and the Complete Evidence from Space / The Truth About Venus, Mars, and the Moon by Daniel Ross, Pintado, Walnut Creek (CA) 1987, 249pp, notes, bibliography, illus photos (color and b&w)), wraps, \$9.95.

Ross is a disciple of George Adamski, and a true believer in flying saucers. According to him, the "truth" is that they come from other inhabited planets of our solar system, and our government has known this for some time.

And the moon is habitable too, with a 6 psi atmosphere, water, and vegetation, according to Mr. Ross; and a surface gravity half that of Earth (rather than about 1/6, as given in standard references). Well, neither he nor I have been there - but the effect of a 6 psi atmosphere would be visible from Earth with a good telescope as stars passed behind the moon.

One thing noted in the book has been confirmed in my own experience - the "red" planet Mars is actually about the color of butterscotch pudding. I looked at it on the recent close

approach. Did it used to be red?

Fuh-kar-wee Indians and the Christian Year 2000 by Kurt Vonnegut, Ragged Edge Press, New York 1999, 8pp, wraps.

This nicely printed digest-size booklet was given to me by Dale Speirs. It is autographed and #168/250. A funny piece on the millennial numerology of the time. I see that the publisher has a website - www.RaggedEdgePress.com; and the design is attributed to Joel "Sticker Dude" Cohen.

Occasionally I spot something in an old book that looks as though it might have influenced Tolkien. Here is a folktale involving a magic ring:

Traditions of Lancashire, by John Roby, George Routledge and Sons, London 1882, Fifth edition, 468pp, illus.

from: "The Goblin Builders"

[The protagonist has hidden to catch whoever is moving building materials from the intended site to the top of a nearby hill.]

"Pulling off his bonnet, with a grave and beseeching aspect, he craved help to accomplish the ascent. Not then dreaming of goblins and their deceitful glamour, I put my shoulder to the work with a right good will; and truly it were a marvel to watch the tough beam, how it seemed to obey the impulse. I worked with all the might I could muster, but it appeared as though little were needful; and in a trice we scrambled to the top, when the whole party scampered off, leaving me to follow or not, as I chose. I saw something tossed towards me, which glistened as it lay at my feet. Stooping, I found a silver ring, beauteously bedecked with one glowing crystal. Round the rim is formed a quaint legend, bearing a fair device, which some learned clerk may perchance decipher."

The stranger drew from his finger a massy ring. A little ferret-eyed monk, a transcriber of saints' legends and Saxon chronicles, was immediately called. He pronounced the writing heathenish, and of the Runic form. A sort of free translation may be given as follows:

"The Norman shall tread on the Saxon's heel,
And the stranger shall rule o'er England's weal;
Through castle and hall, by night or by day,
The stranger shall thrive for ever and aye;
But in Rached, above the rest,
The stranger shall thrive best."

Gamel was troubled and perplexed. The words were prophetic, evidently pointing to his own and his country's fate, as well as to the destiny of the stranger. He knit his brows, and his very beard coiled upwards with the conflict. He appeared loth to allow of a supernatural agency in the affair, and yet the testimony and its witness were not to be gainsayed.

"I had not believed the tale, stranger, if this token had not confirmed thy speech - verily thou hast a better witness than a fool's tongue to thy story. That ill-omened losel may depart. See thou fall not hastily into the like offence, else shalt thou smart from Childermas to

All-hallowtide. Hence! to thy place."

Barnulf awaited not further dismissal, glad to escape the scrutiny of Nicholas with a whole skin. A loud shriek was heard from the courtyard, "My boy - Oh, my boy!" cried the almost frantic mother, as she rushed into the chamber, leading in Uctred. He had been discovered on removing some of the huge piles of timber again from the hill, where, under a curiously-supported covering of beams and other rude materials, he lay, seemingly asleep. The urchin looked as malicious and froward as ever, even when standing before his chief. "And where hast thou been, my pretty bird?" said the old woman, as she began her vocabulary of signs. But the boy looked surly and would not answer to the signal: he drew down his black swarthy brows, looking eagerly and fiercely from behind their bushy curtains. Suddenly, and with a fearful yell, he sprang forward, snatching the ring which Gamel was then giving back to the stranger. With a wild and hideous laugh, which sent a shudder through the assembly, he drew it on his finger. At this moment the expression of his countenance began to change, and some of the bystanders, over whom fear had probably waved the wand of the enchanter, saw his form dilate, and his whole figure expand into almost gigantic proportions. A thick haze rolled through the apartment; then was heard a wild unearthly shout, and the vision had disappeared. "Seize him!" cried Gamel. The guards, trembling, prepared to execute his commands, but on gaining the outworks of the castle, no vestige remained of his appearance, save a slight whirlwind of dust, like a mistwreath, curling down the valley, which, to their terrified apprehensions, became the chariot of the departing demon. Nothing could shake this belief; and in after ages the boy was spoken of as a changeling, left by some fairy, whose appointed sojourn had been then accomplished, the means for his release being fulfilled. Old Cicely became nigh crazed with the loss of her son; but Gamel, seriously pondering on these events, sought counsel from the "Holy Church".

Perhaps Tolkien read this and so found the idea of Gollum and his "Precious".

The Blind Man's Rainbow v.VII#4, Summer 2002, ed. Melody Sherosky - a quarterly poetry publication that appeared in the mail. Attractive layout and art, 8.5x11, 32pp, \$10/year - address Box 1557, Erie PA 16507-0557 or www.bmrpoetry.com.

Midnight House / Darkside Press / Silver Salamander Press - all at 4128 Woodland Park Ave N., Seattle WA 98103 or www.darksidepress.com sends colorful flyers saying "Subscribe now... or else" - not to a magazine, but to their books. These are fantasy and horror reprints - including two Fritz Leiber books I never heard of - at \$35 or \$40 each. I have their **Feesters in the Lake** by Bob Leman and a sub to the 5-volume Manly Wade Wellman set.

Mark Valentine e-mails to confirm my appointment as ambassador from the Republic of Upware to the Republic of Franklin. See <http://freepages.pavilion.net/users/tartarus/upware.html>.

A mysterious PEF Productions (196 High Road, London N22 8HH) sent two issues of a rather nonlinear zinelet - from Belgium. The editing technique seems to consist of pasting up anything, any which way, and then reproducing the mess on rather nice coated paper. The word "poetry" appears a lot. The issue numbers and date are elusive. The title may include "84". There is a website, of course:
<http://84spythere.freehosting.net>

Songs compiled by Yohann Anderson, Songs and Creations, San Anselmo CA "Refined 1984 Printing", 215+pp, spiral bound.

This is a "No Note Lyrichord Book" - the technical meaning of which eludes me - the instructions insist "DO NOT PLAY THE TUNE"! What impressed me was the large number of songs - there are several per page - and the eclectic selection. Nursery songs, Beatle songs, hymns, old folk songs - even *House of the Rising Sun* (though bowlderized). There are indexes by title and by category, but in an odd manner - *A Little Help From My Friends* is listed under "A"! Julia Ward Howe's *Battle Hymn of the Republic* appears as just "Battle Hymn" with the second verse revised; and Malvina Reynolds' *Little Boxes* gets a religious verse added - but just as cynical as the others.

A useful reference, as it does give copyright dates.

Caliban's Guide to Letter's / Lambkin's Remains by H. Belloc, Dutton, New York, 269pp.

Undated, but apparently c.1900. The title of the first part on the title page is "The Aftermath, Or Gleanings from a Busy Life". This copy belonged to Wylly Folk St.John and has her Beardsley-designed bookplate. The author must be Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953), though none of my old references list it among his books - one does list the **Lambkin's Remains** as having been published by Methuen in 1908.

I bought this book long ago, and recently got around to reading it because Dainis Bisenieks recommended it. It is massively and laboriously silly. Facing the title page are supposed reviews from the press - while this was often done in reprint books, these are all fake, ending with one from *The Notion*, "the principal organ of well-bred men in New York, U.S.A.". More such appear on the back of the Contents page, including a very short one from "The Banner of Israel" set in Hebrew. The dedication is to "Mrs Caliban", and on the back of that are fake *errata and addenda* (referring to non-existent page numbers), and a "Direction to Printer: Please print hard, strong, clear, straight, neat, clean, and well. Try and avoid those little black smudges!".

Much of the satire here is lost on me, as the objects of scorn are long forgotten! The chapter titled "The Interview" is clearly an attack on Rudyard Kipling; and the Appendix entry "On Remainders and Pulping" is funny.

Doubloons by Charles B. Driscoll, Farrar & Rinehart, New York 1930, 319pp, illus. Harry Cimino, index, bibliography.

The opening chapter in this book about buried treasure is on the peculiar business of the supposed money pit on Oak Island, Nova Scotia - a great deal of money has been poured into digging there since 1930, from what I've read, but if anyone found any treasure or even any clue to what the treasure was, they have kept it to themselves.

Cobalt 60 by Vaughn Bodé and Mark Bodé, 1984, about 60 pages, color cartoon strips, \$7.95.

George Beahm sent me this, autographed by Mark Bodé. It is based on the old Vaughn Bodé (Vaughn died in 1975) cartoon character, with artwork by Mark and the story by Larry Todd. The publisher is something of a conundrum - the spine says "Whitford Press", the back of the title page says "Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., West Chester PA", and the back cover says "Donning/Starblaze"! There is also a credit on the back cover to Henry Irgang for "etching",

though what was etched is not explained.

Gory and cynical, much in the spirit of the original Cobalt 60 stories, and Mark captures his father's style very well.

With this were two continuations of the Cobalt 60 saga:

Cobalt 60 Book Three and Book Four, Tundra, Northampton MA 1992, about 48 pages each, color cartoon strips, \$4.95 each.

Not surprisingly, after eight years the style has drifted a bit, but the spirit is much the same.

The Wolf Boy of China by William Dalton, J B Lippincott, Philadelphia 1884, 339pp, illus in line.

A book from Lippincott's "Juvenile Library" line, one of the four volumes of the "Dalton Library of Adventure" - no mention of the fact that it originally appeared in England in the 1850s. The paper is dark with age, and as it was given to someone by their grandmother in 1912, and some of the text looks as though it was printed from worn stereotype plates, I suspect it is a reprint on cheaper paper. The illustrations are quite competent. The chapter headings are all Chinese proverbs - chapters XXXIII and XXXV use the same one - "A hunter's dog will at last die a violent death"! The header of each page is not the chapter title, but a phrase concerning the action on that page.

Is this fantasy? What was a "wolf boy" in Dalton's China? It turns out - the text is long on facts and short on plot - that the *Miao-tse* or "wolf people" of the province of *Kwei-chou* were merely mountain people who had escaped the Tartar conquest - according to Dalton the shaved heads and pigtails of the Chinese of the time were imposed on them by the Tartar conquerors. The boy hero Lyu Payo, who has become a Christian, is kidnapped by a "holy bonze" (a Buddhist priest). At the end the aged king of the *Miao-tse* is rescued from a cage with his "yellow robe which had given such terror to the government, and which in mockery he was still permitted to wear, but cut into a thousand strips, which hung from him like ribbons" - an inspiration of the tattered robe of Robert W. Chamber's *King in Yellow*?

Turquoise Days by Alastair Reynolds, Golden Gryphon Press, Urbana IL, 2002, 80pp, wraps, one of 500, \$15.95.

A complimentary copy from the editor, Marty Halpern. The technical and background detail in this novella might have supported a long novel, and hardly leaves room for the characters to swing a plot. Turquoise is a complex and well imagined planet, long settled by human colonists. The science seems plausible except for the airships and cities supported by "vacuum bladders". The wraparound color cover by Bob Eggleton features one of these ships, but it does not match the description in the text.

Still, in the gaps between descriptions of the gizmos, scenery, clothing, architecture and vehicles, there is an interesting story of the interaction between the various human groups and the very alien ocean creatures of Turquoise. Only the central character is at all well developed. The style is very good, if not in the league of Vance or Zindell - I missed any attempt to vary from standard English dialog.

Available through www.goldengryphon.com.

No Man's Land by Neil Lee Thompsett, Noggin, Beverly Hills 2002, 514pp, illus by the author, wraps, \$13.

Forry Ackerman sent me the first of Thompsett's books, written when he was 13. Thompsett is now 17, and this trade paperback is the first of a set of three, the *Atlantis Trilogy*.

It is a fresh take on the Atlantis legend, and although it badly wants an editor and a proofreader and better typesetting, and the line art (while certainly much better than I could do!) is very amateurish, the story does move along. It is told by a refugee from Atlantis - conceived as the Americas, with amazons in the north and technocrats in the south - who escaped to the coast of Spain c.13,000 BC. I'm not sure the Europeans of that era had ships for trading around the Mediterranean - but I wasn't there!

Vergil in Averno by Avram Davidson, Doubleday, New York 1987, 184pp, \$12.95.

And inscribed to me by the author. I suppose I should have read it at the time, but my correspondence with Avram was never about his books. I enjoyed it a lot - it seemed very like his **Adventures in Unhistory**, full of dreams and mysteries and odd bits of ancient history, but with a plot imposed. I was prompted to pick it up by the commentary by Gregory Feeley in Henry Wessell's excellent Davidson website and newsletter, *Nutmeg Point District Mail*: <http://www.avramdavidson.org/nutmeg34.htm>

Writers of the Future XVIII, ed. by Algis Budrys, Galaxy Press 2002, 462+pp, illus b&w by divers hands, \$7.99.

I had not had a review copy from this anthology series for some time. This fat mass-market pb with a 1972 Frazetta cover contains 17 stories by new writers that you never heard of, illustrated by artists that you never heard of - that's the whole point.

The art, as art, can be evaluated fairly quickly. Most of it would have benefited from better reproduction than is possible at this size on pulp paper. It was selected from the work submitted by Edd Cartier, Leo & Diane Dillon, Will Eisner, Kelly Freas, H. R. Van Dongen, Frazetta, and several other artists, but to me none of it has the *wow!* effect that Cartier, Eisner, and Freas are capable of.

The stories, as would be expected, are a mixed lot. Some pretty good fantasy, and some pretty bad SF. But there are a few that really are good, the sort of thing I liked in *F&SF* in the 50s and 60s.

Set in between stories are non-fiction pieces - L. Ron Hubbard with an undated memoir of writing for the pulps, H. R. Van Dongen on the craft of illustration, Andre Norton with advice for the new writer, and Tim Powers and Budry on the mechanics of the contest and anthology.

Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung by Lester Bangs, Knopf, New York 1987, 386+pp, frontis photo, index, \$19.95.

The loud cover also credits Greil Marcus as editor. I know nothing about rock music and never heard of Lester Bangs, but could not resist the explosive cover and asinine title at a thrift store price. The subtitle seems to indicate that the author, said to be a "legendary critic", will explain rock'n'roll as literature and *vice versa*. The text seems to have been composed in something like English but under the influence of mind-altering substances.

Ain't Nobody's Business if You Do by Peter McWilliams, Prelude Press, Los Angeles 1993, 815+pp, illus b&w, bibliography, index, \$22.95.

Another thrift store find, subtitled *The Absurdity of Consensual Crimes in a Free Society*. In spite

of the price listed in the usual place on the d/w flap, the back of the d/w also carries the legend *Complimentary Reading Copy - Not For Sale*.

A detailed rant against the assorted legal sanctions against having fun - whether with unapproved books or films or drugs or clothes or styles of sexual activity. The interior artwork is all public domain and only vaguely relevant, but the imbedded quotes are excellent.

I also heard from:

Peter Allen at Robert Temple Books, who notes that the book about the demon *Tittivulus* that I mentioned in IGOTS 23 in the review of *At the Sign of Sagittarius* (where it is spelled "Tittivillus") is, of course, Michael Ayrton's *Tittivulus, the Verbiage Collector*.

Dave & Su Bates, who send a Christmas card.

Doris Beetem, who sent me several issues of the annual worldcon apa W.O.O.F. and several old issues of *Yandro*. And a clipping with a picture of the first typewriter ever made for sale, the 1867 Malling Hansen Writing Ball.

James Bennett from Down Under, who read IGOTS online from the *Ansible* link, and says he thinks the Lindsay/Finlay evidence in IGOTS 22 is conclusive.

John Berry, who sends a Christmas card and a 23-credit Interplanetary Postage stamp. Reminds me of the old filk song *The Universal Beanie* - "He'll come from Venus and from Mars / And someday from the stars..."



Sheryl Birkhead, who sends a Christmas card.

Dainis Bisenieks, who notes the appearance of the Lithuanian edition of *The Return of the King*, and says he will send me the Talbot Mundy *Queen Cleopatra* I am somehow missing.

Stven Carlberg, who gave me ten cartons of fanzines (mostly apazines) rather than move them to his new residence!

Ron Clarke, who notes that he has the manuscript that Mae Strelkov sent to Buck Coulson, and has been using the chapters of it for the columns in *Mentor*. He has sent the details of title and length for the inventory of her manuscripts in IGOTS 22 - I have been editing the online version to reflect new data. Ron also notes that his *Mentor* and *Watt's Out* are both up at www.efanzines.com.

Tom Cockcroft, who is planning a couple more *Weird Tales* booklets; and says that in 1970 he sent me an index to the fiction in the Gernsback radio and science magazines - wish I could find it! But I now have a photocopy anyway, from Denny Lien. Tom also sends a lot of newspaper clippings on the *Lord of the Rings* excitement in New Zealand; and asks that I get him the new Howard Wandrei book *The Eerie Mr. Murphy* (Fedogan & Bremer).

Tom also sends a 24-page draft of an index to the letters in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* and *Fantastic Novels*.

Andrew Convery, who just got around to reading IGOTS 7 (Nov'90!) and wants the strange

Bruno Furst **Number Dictionary**. I told him that if he could explain what the thing was for I would make him a facsimile!

Kevin Cook, who sent me copies of his PEAPS zine *Sons of the Blue Wolf*; and tells me that Richard Minter is still living - I thought I had been told otherwise. I recently ran across an 8x10 b&w photo-print of myself and Minter - but I have no idea why it was made.

Margaret & Norman Cubberly, who send a Christmas letter.

Keith Curtis - in a negative sort of way. Ken Ozanne had given me a new address for him in Tasmania and said I should write him - but it bounced, though the "Return to Sender" sticker is unmarked as to reason.

Frank Denton, who got in the first loc on IGOTS 23 and says it's not fair for me to have three copies of Avram Davidson's **Adventures in Unhistory** when he can't find even one. Odd for such a relatively recent book to be that rare - I guess it's the sort of thing people keep.

Philip Ehrens, who notes that I erred in 1992 in referring to the *late* Carlos Amantea is a review of one of his books - I still have the book, and find Amantea described as "the late" on the last page. Apparently this was meant as a joke - Phil says he is alive, writes for Salon Magazine, and can be reached at poo@cts.com.

Al Fitzpatrick, who sends a Christmas card.

Diane Fox, who sends a homemade Christmas card, in addition to the books mentioned above.

Dick Geis, who has resumed his *Geis Letter* with #72 in spite of his health problems - online. Address RERWINGEIS@cs.com.

Jim Goldfrank, who sends lots of e-mail jokes and a photo card showing him and his wife with Jerusalem in the background. And a long illustrated article from the *Washington Post* on Philip K. Dick, by Vincent Bzdek.

Mary & Terry Gray, who send a Christmas card.

John Haines, who sends a Christmas card and a clipping from the *Daily Telegraph* about British typewriter collectors, by a Ben Travers, who still uses an Imperial "Good Companion" portable.

Dag Haslemo, who sends \$1 from Norway for a copy after seeing the mention in *Dreamberry Wine* !

John Howard, who (as have many others) notes that the "James Vogh" listed as the author of **Arachne Rising** was really John Sladek. Howard says that Sladek's best novels are **Roderick** and **Roderick at Random** - I don't have these, and know him mostly from the collaborations with Tom Disch.

Steve & Suzanne Hughes, who send a fancy hand-made photo-card from their new house in Ellijay.

Alan Hunter, who sends a Happy New Year card with his own great art, and incloses a tiny book, **Finger Poems** by Robert MacLean - see above.

Laura Hutchison, who sent a story for publication - not the first time this misunderstanding has come up. IGOTS is non-fiction except perhaps for the occasional editorial prevarication just to see if the readers are awake.

Herman Stowell King, who sends a Christmas card and a couple of Maxfield Parrish postcards from the current Pomegranate Press set.

Ken Lake, who is a marathon correspondent - his letters always take me half a day to answer. I am reading the **Banvard's Folly** he recommended and may get it in here.

Fred Lerner, who sends a postcard to suggest that the Vincent Starrett **Seaports in the Moon** mentioned last time might have inspired **Silverlock**, which appeared about 20 years later. Yes -

or it might have been inspired by John Kendrick Bangs' **The Houseboat on the Styx**, which appeared about 20 years earlier - all of these books involve a mixture of historical characters and characters borrowed from earlier fiction.

Denny Lien, who notes that in addition to **Arachne Rising** (aka **The Thirteenth Zodiac**) as James Vogh, John Sladek also wrote **The Cosmic Factor** (1978) and, as Richard Tilms, **The Judgement of Jupiter** (1980).

Eric Lindsay, who liked the idea of the book on the 385 ways to tie a tie, even though he never wears one.

Joseph Major, who notes that besides the **Space Winners** that I mentioned, Gordon Dickson also wrote **The Space Swimmers**; and that F.Anstey's **The Brass Bottle** was filmed in 1914, 1923, and 1964.

Jack Palmer, who sends a weighty and soporific pb **Pearls and Coconuts** (1980) by Frances Engel, probably paid for by the taxpayers, as she was the wife of the ambassador to the Philippines. Jack also sent **Aphorisms of the All-too-Human** - see above. And a copy of the *mail-art* fanzine *Farrago*, with strange bits of vegetable matter falling off of it - I have preserved these for posterity in a plastic baggie.

Derek Pickles, who is also derek.pickles@cwcom.net, and says he liked the mention of Ian Macauley and the ASFO.

Charlotte Proctor, who sends a Christmas card, and thanks for a print of the photo I took of her with the life-size foam plastic bear Jerry set up in the yard to shoot arrows into.

Darrell Schweitzer, who says that the Avram Davidson **Adventures in Unhistory** is very rare in the book market because only 500 were made, and they have apparently all reached people (like me) who will keep them indefinitely. Darrell also notes that the "James Vogh" listed last time as the author of the silly **Arachne Rising** is really John Sladek, tongue firmly in cheek. Darrell asks if it is verifiable that Hans Heins Ewers did help Jews escape the Holocaust even though, as noted lastish, he was also a member of the Weird Wing of the Nazi Party - this information is in the long introduction by Stephen E. Flowers to the Runa-Raven Press edition of **Strange Tales**. I have no way to verify it independently - and someone on the Net said that Runa-Raven Press is itself a neo-nazi publishing house. You will have to look at their website <http://www.geocities.com/runegildusa/RunaRaven/>

and judge for yourself. I see that the second issue of their magazine *Runa* has a LotR article.

A Langley Searles, who among others noted that not only is "Ilya Murometz" (listed last time as the author of a rant) the name of a Russian folk-hero, but also the subtitle of Reinhold Gliere's 1911 *3rd Symphony*. Langley also sends a clipping from the Feb'01 *New Yorker* about the collections of the mad millionaire Michael Zinman. And some clippings about old typewriters, including an article by Bruce McCall on the very rare Russian Glab-Porkovnyka, the Canadian Dremex, the Hobart Gladiator, the Gladstroke Suberba, not to mention Clumbards and Spavines - the collectors on the *typewriters* Net list would kill for these!

Roger Sheppard, who sends the same typewriter clipping as John Haines!

Gavin Smith, who asks about Avram Davidson's unavailable **Adventures in Unhistory**. I was able to send him a copy of Hannes Bok's *A Psalm of Frustration* from the 1948 fanzine *Nonce*.

Sam Smith, Chairman of the 2002 DeepSouthCon in Huntsville, who kindly sent me the Program Book when I was unable to attend.

Geri Sullivan, who kindly sent me electronic stencils to try on the old Gestefax 451, and paid the postage for the parts salvaged from it when I discovered that the mechanical traverse drive

in it was rusted beyond any hope of repair.

Owen Thomas, who sends several issues of his zine *The Ten Page News*.

Mark Valentine, who says that after seeing all my mentions of Avram Davidson, he read **The Adventures of Dr. Ezsterhazy** and thought it was excellent; and asks if Davidson wrote any other such stories. Nothing quite like that comes to mind, though I am just starting to read **The Other Nineteenth Century**, just out at the end of 2001.

Toni Weisskopf, who sends a Christmas card.

Fred Woodworth, who sends a postcard to say he is *not* the author of the "Paul Roasberry" fiction in *The Match* - this is apparently a factor in the question of whether *The Match* should be entered into the humongous cyber-list of magazines containing fiction that I have contributed to through the *fictionmags* Net list.

* * *

I occasionally refer to past issues - if you don't have them or can't find them, all issues back to the first are online at the website listed in the colophon, in my crude homemade HTML. I suppose the day may come that I will just put the issues there without the intermediate step of producing a paper copy. In a way the Net version is more useful - it can be searched with your browser. I have made for my own use a file that contains the text of all the issues, as an aid to memory - anything I published in the zine can be retrieved by searching this file with a simple editor like WordPad.

Horripilating Halloween Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to All

And may an Angel illuminate Boy George Dubya from ear to ear
and keep us out of war!

U.S. to aid hunt for stolen kids

NEW YORK TIMES

Buenos Aires, Argentina — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright pledged Wednesday to work to declassify U.S. government documents that may shed light on kidnappings of hundreds of children believed stolen from dissidents arrested by the Argentine military during the country's 1976-83 dictatorship.

"This is a matter of conscience," she said.

Albright, who is touring five South American countries, met with representatives of the rights groups Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo on Wednesday.

Suspension upheld in anarchy lawsuit

A West Virginia high school was wrong to ban an anarchy club, but was right to suspend the student who proposed it in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, a jury decided Friday in Charleston. Principal Forrest Mann had ordered Katie Sierra not to wear T-shirts with handwritten messages that included, "When I saw the dead and dying Afghani children on TV, I felt a newly recovered sense of national security. God Bless America."

We'll hear no more
about those stories!

-- New Ten Commandments --

- 1) It's just a place. I don't give a fig about it. Anywhere else is just as good. If you don't stop fighting over the Holy Land, I'm turning it into a lake.
- 2) Prayer is for man. I don't need your grovelling. It's supposed make you feel better. If it doesn't -- stop doing it.
- 3) The past is over. Don't carry on about what your fathers did. They'll be held to book for it, and what happens to them in the hereafter is none of your affair. I care what you do now.
- 4) I gave you minds and eyes to use them. Observe. Think. If it seems I want you to do something senseless, you probably haven't heard me right. If I wanted robots who would commit suicide over a typo, I wouldn't have given you reason.
- 5) The world is not evil, it's not a distraction from higher things, or a code, or a symbol of something else, or a test. It's something I created to put things in that I like. I had rather hoped you'd like the world too, and add good things to it.
- 6) It's only a book. And I didn't write it. The authors had axes to grind like any other writers. Don't believe everything you read.
- 7) Nobody has my ear more than anyone else. If I want you to know something, you won't hear it from a third party.
- 8) I make the judgements around here. Not you. Not him. Me. Don't put words in my mouth.
- 9) If you kill someone who disagrees with you, you only make sure they won't change their mind. If they live, they might eventually see your point.
- 10) You don't know as much as you think you do. When in doubt forgive. When certain, use reason or set example.
- ...
- 11) If you screw up this time, people, the cats get the next saviour I send.