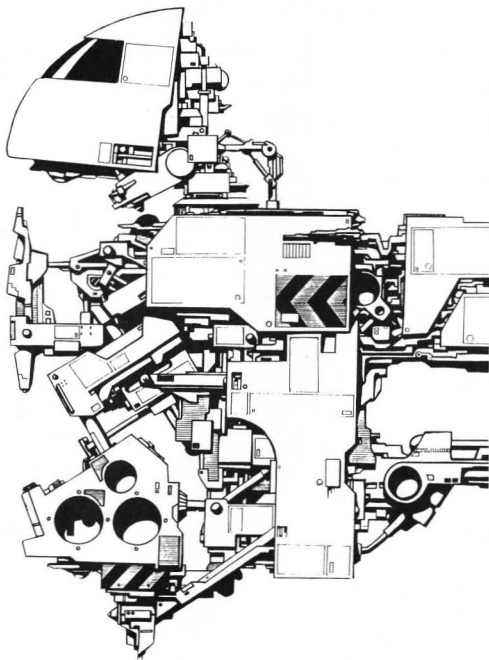


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# *Matrix*

*The Newsletter of the British Science Fiction Association*

£1.25



*December 1992 – January 1993*

## Information &amp; Contacts

## BSFA Membership

Now costs £15 (EC). Please enquire for overseas rates.

## New Members

Jo Raine, 29 Thornville Road, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS26 8EW

## Membership Renewals

Keith Freeman, 269 Wykeham Road, Reading RG6 1PL

## USA Memberships

Cy Chauvin, 14248 Wilfred Street, Detroit, MI 48213, USA

## Matrix

Jenny & Steve Glover, 16 Avary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP (tel: 0532 791264)

## Media

Ian Mundell, 21 Radford House, 1 Pembridge Gardens, Notting Hill Gate, London W2 4EE

## Competitions

Roger Robinson, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 0RG

## Information

Phil Nichols, 57 Grange Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands B70 8PB

## Vector

Editor: Catie Cary, 224 Southway, Park Barn, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6DN

## Focus

Temporarily suspended. See article.

## BSFA Officials

## Treasurer

Elizabeth Billinger, 82 Kelvin Road, New Cumbington, Leamington Spa CV32 7TQ

## Coordinator

Kev McVeigh, 37 Firs Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7QF (tel: 05395 62883)

## Useful Contacts

## Orbiters

Carol Ann Green, 5 Raglan Avenue, Raglan Street, Hull HU5 2JB

## BSFA Awards

Nic Mahoney, 276 Lonsdale Avenue, Intake, Doncaster DN2 6HJ

## Foreign Liaison

Bridget Wilkinson, 17 Mimosa, 29 Avenue Road, London N15

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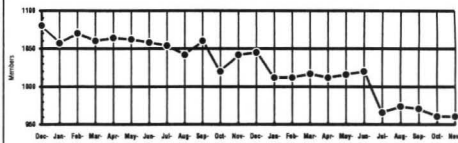
## In &amp; Out

Here are the BSFA membership trends over the last couple of years:- the figures are preliminary, but there is enough information to give us pause for thought. The first graph shows total membership against time. The second graph shows numbers of new members joining whenever there were more than ten in a month.

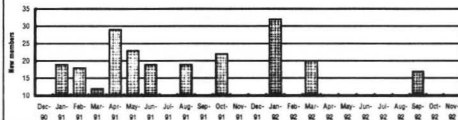
## Determinants

Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow said Macbeth in one of the few passages not cut in the animated Shakespeare, currently being shown in 26 minute segments on tv. He was caught in a trap and saw no way out except a succession of days devoid of hope and, as far as his knowledge went, even without any chance of being killed in battle. At the last minute, Shakespeare relented and as

Membership Statistics 1981-1992



1981-1992: The Good Months



## Change of Address

JC Grosvenor (to JC Venner). Simon H Le G Bissin. David I Bruce, 26 Moorlands Rd, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 2UA. Daniel Buck, Kincardine Croft, Boat-of-Garten, Invernesshire PH24 3BY. J.M. Edwards. Kieran Hagan. Graham Joyce. Phil Nichols, 17 Allsops Close, Rowley Regis, Warley, W. Midlands B65 8JB. Neil A Pithouse. Ben Roimola, Puistokatu 15 b A 5, SF-20100 Turku, FINLAND. Ben Staveley-Taylor, 1468 Adams, Apt 16, Denver, Colorado 80206, U.S.A. Paul A Thorley, 40 Normanton Grove, Adderley Green, Longton, Stoke on Trent ST3 5B/V. Bernard Towler. Howard Wadman. G Madawc Williams, 26 Gloucester Rd, Fletton, Peterborough, Cambs. PE2 8BJ.

## New and Rejoined Members

Lynn Ann Morse & Roelof Goudriann, Caan van Necklaan 63, 2281 Rijswijk, The Netherlands. Jamie Inglis, 79 Bruntsfield Place, Edinburgh EH10 4HG. Lyn C & Clive Newall. Adrian T Soames, The Croft, Cheney's Lane, Farnett St Mary, Norwich, Norfolk NR16 1JT. Neil Summerfield, 10 Beech Close, Colsterworth, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG33 5NG. Bruce A Taylor.

**Deadline**  
**January 12th 1993**

Macbeth and Macduff battled, Macduff unilaterally divulged his gynaecological history, one of the more bizarre of military stratagems.

The trap I come most into contact with at work is poverty driven. People get into debt and then hesitate in the hope that it will suddenly and magically dissipate. The debt swells, the utility company reminds, cajoles, threatens and then disconnects. The victim then finds that repaying back debts involves a lifetime of giving up all the small pleasures that make life tolerable and reneging is a solution which only makes things worse. Life becomes a long dark tunnel, totally dark and negative. There's no way out.

But traps don't come singly. The stress caused by worry often spills over on any handy relatives. And the victim, old before their time, looks at their partner and realises that they are totally unappreciated and, perhaps, also unwanted. This situation arises at work as well. The women who have let their lives pass now find themselves old, stuck with unresponsive or dull husbands. They are torn between established feelings of getting the tea ready and sitting in front of the box every evening and thinking that there must be more to life than this.

To recognise a trap is the first step to getting out or making the best of the situation. Some traps can actually be quite comfortable, in a padded sort of way, and if the pet jumps it can be to a position guaranteed to produce nostalgia for the undemanding past. Nora found that in *The Doll's House*, and though she leaves comfort for the unknown, she can still keep the seeds of hope that the situation will get better. She thinks. Ibsen knows better and the play shows what Nora will become and only she can decide if her freedom is bought at too high a price.

## News

from: Jim Mann, Chuq von Rospach, Peter Tennant for the magazine listing, K V Bailey, Philip Muldowney, Jim Trash, Jessica Yates, Mark Bernstein, Vonda N Macintyre and your editors.

## Awards

The 1991 Mythopoeic Awards were announced at the Tolkien Centenary Conference in August to the following:

Fantasy Award for Adult Literature: *A Woman of the Iron People* by Eleanor Arnason

Fantasy Award for Children's Literature: *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie

Scholarship Award for Inklings Studies: *Word and Story in C S Lewis* edited by Peter J Schakel and Charles A Hutter

Scholarship Award for Myth and Fantasy Studies (excluding Inklings studies): *The Victorian Fantasists: Essays on Culture, Society and Belief in the Mythopoeic Fiction of the Victorian Age* edited by Kath Filmer.

The 1992 Readercon Small Press Awards were announced for 1991 as:

Collection: Aphelion, for *Wormwood* by Terry Dowling

Anthology: Dedalus for *Tales of the Wandering Jew* edited by Brian Stableford

Nonfiction Magazine: *SF Eye* edited by Stephen Brown

Nonfiction Book: Mirage Press for *The Science Fantasy Publishers: A Critical and Bibliographic History* by Chalker and Owens

Cover illustration: WSFA Press, *The Edges of Things*, artwork by Alicia Austin

Value in Bookcraft: Charnel House for *New Neighbor* by Ray Garton.

## Pegasus Awards

(awarded at the Ohio Valley Filk Festival)

Best Filk Song: "God Lives on Terra" by Julia Ecklar. Best Writer/Composer: Dr. Jane Robinson. Best Performer: Michael (Moon-wulf) Longcor. Best Tribute: "Madame Curie's Hands" by Duane Elms. Best Crossover: "Return of the King" by Tom Smith.

The OVFF Songwriting Contest was tied between "I Will Walk With You" by Cynthia J McQuillan & "The Eternity Waltz" by Michael Longcor.

## Present suggestions

Stephen W Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* (Bantam £14.99) is still in the bestselling lists, though it is more difficult finding someone who has actually read it; *Genius: Richard Feynman and Modern Physics* by James Gleick (Little, Brown £18.99) is likely to be more readable or, failing that, Jared Diamond's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Chimpanzee* (66.99 Vintage) which details how the human species became top dog - and how easily this can be reversed. This book won the 1992 Science Book Prize. If the world survives, Steven Weinberg's *Dreams of a Final Theory* will be recommended reading - he's a Nobel prize winning physicist presenting his own theory of matter.

A new book has come from Terre Haute and Greencastle: *On Philip K Dick: 40 articles from "Science Fiction Studies"* which includes Brian W Aldiss "Dick's Maledictory Web: About and Around *Martian Time-Slip*"; Stanislaw Lem "Philip K Dick: A Visionary Among the Charlatans"; Ian Watson "Le Guin's *Lathe of Heaven* and the Role of Dick: The False Reality as Mediator and Emmanuel Joanne's "How "Dickian" is the New French Science Fiction?"

Away from science, there's David Eddings' *Domes of Fire*, first of a new trilogy (£14.99 HarperCollins) or even James Herbert's *Portent* which concentrates on world disasters (£14.99 Hodder & Stoughton). There's likely to be little SF, but much entertainment, in John Mortimer's anthology *The Oxford Book of Villains* (£16.95 OUP) and the same goes for Angela Carter's anthology *The Second Virago Book of Fairy Tales* (£14.99 Virago). This collection, a celebration of strong mind, black arts and low cunning, is a necessary counterbalance to the numbing festive food.

For anyone who has not yet celebrated Tolkien's centenary, there is *After the King*, edited by Martin H Greenberg (Pan fantasy pb £6.99). In the introduction, Jane Yolen describes how she read Tolkien first on a cross-Atlantic crossing so was unsurprised to find English homes not at all unlike hobbit burrows, though she managed not to ask publishers to remove their shoes, so she could examine the degree of hairiness of their feet. The stories included are: "Reave the Just" Stephen Donaldson; "Troll Bridge" Terry Pratchett; "A Long Night's Vigil at the Temple Robert Silverberg"; "The Dragon of Tollin" Elizabeth Ann Scarborough; "Faith, Paul and Karen Anderson"; "In the Season of the Dressing of the Wells" John Brunner; "The Fellowship of the Dragon" Patricia McKillop; "The Decoy Duck" Harry Turtle dove; "Nine Threads of Gold" Andre Norton; "The Conjure Man" Charles de Lint; "The Halfling House" Dennis R McKiernan; "Silver or Gold" Emma Bull; "Up on the Side of the Air" Karen Haber; "The Naga" Peter S Beagle; "Revolt of the Sugar Plum Fairies" Mike Resnick; "Winter's King" Jane Yolen; "Gottterdammerung" Barry N Malzberg; "Down the River Road" Gregory Benford; "Death and the Lady" Judith Tarr.

## Forthcoming SF

Millennium have announced their new publications, under the headline "The Brits Are Coming". Coming in 1993 will be Sarah Ash's *Moths to a Flame*, sexy lush Byzantine high fantasy (and there will be two more Sarah Ash books to follow); Mary Corran's *Imperial Light*, a compelling empire-wide adventure, a moving quest against an evil monastic order and a rite of passage tale (and, hopefully, a bit more than ye usual queste to fill lotsa pages); Alison Sinclair's *Legacy*, described as "the power..." of history, explored in alien worlds of awesome inventiveness. This is the debut of genius" and, at last, Charles Stross's *Scratch Monkey* which will bring space opera kicking and screaming into the 21st century and beyond - "ultra fast, video bright", Millennium think it is the best of Brit SF imagination and they are probably right there. Phil Jones will bring humour with *The Galaxy Game* which is a "tear-makingly funny book" in the great tradition of *Red Dwarf* and *HHGTTG*.

As if that's not enough, the rest of 1993 will bring more fantasy from Kristine Kathryn Rusch with *Heart Readers* (March £14.99pb),

£7.99 tpb). It's fantasy plus as twin sons of a dying emperor have to decide whether to just split the desert lands or fight for it and Stashie, a heart reader who works in the market place, gets caught up, together with her tragic sisters, Kristine Kathryn Rusch will be on a British signing tour and is well worth meeting. In May, there are two Lucius Shepard publications, *The Golden* (£14.99 hb, £7.99 tpb) a vampire gothic mystery set initially in Castle Banat and his collection *The Ends of the Earth* (£14.99 hb, £8.99 tpb) which really needs no description, only the strong suggestion to read the stories. Lucius Shepard has endorsed Tony Daniels' *Warpath*, which is coming in April (£14.99 hb, £7.99 tpb), a SF first novel of a newspaperman and his friend who travel across worlds in search of a lost guardian spirit.

Goodies to come include books by Robert Asprin, Michael Swanwick, Kathe Koja, Angus Wells and John Barnes...

Pan have a strong forthcoming SF/F list for 1993 as well. Joan D Vinge's *The Summer Queen*, sequel to *The Snow Queen*, where the inexperienced young Moon Dawntreater Summer takes up the reins of power will come in January together with a paperback edition of Brian Stableford's *The Angel of Pain*, sequel to *The Werewolves of London*. Another "Starship Troupers" book is coming in February from Christopher Stasheff, this time with the optimistic title *We Open On Venus*. It's particularly optimistic, considering that the Troupers are rehearsing *Macbeth*, but they are the first galactic travellers to fall foul of the curse of this play which shouldn't be mentioned. For example, when they arrive on New Venus, they find that art has been banned, since it makes people think, and that the stage is a giant gasoline plant and that they are pawns in a potential rebellion. In the circumstances, there is little to say save *The show must go on!* In March, there is a paperback edition of Julian May's *Jack the Bodiless*. It's 2051 and Earth is about to be accepted as a full member of the Galactic Milieu. That's all too smooth for somebody or something known as Fury. Julian May's backlist (all four parts of *The Saga of the Exiles*) will also be reissued with new covers together with *Mindstar Rising*, debut by Peter F Hamilton, a high tech detective thriller in mid twenty-first England ravaged, apparently, by Global Warming, political instability and the uncontrolled expansion of the big corporations. He is hailed as "the most exciting young talent in British SF" and his stories have appeared in *Fear* and *Interzone*. Melanie Rawn is coming in April with *The Dragon Token* (hardback and C format paperback, plus the A format of *Stronghold*) and another William Shatner "Tek" series, this one is *Tek Vengeance* and *TekLab* is coming as a companion in A format.

The rest of the year with Pan is likely to produce a new Freda Warrington book, another Asimov/Silverberg collaboration, a new Charles de Lint and look out especially for *The Community* by Ben Leech, horror, but rather mind wrenching. Ben Leech has written several juvenile supernatural/horror books under the name Stephen Bowkett. A new Eric Brown novel, *The Engineman*, will come some time in '93, again developing themes from some of his short fiction. Pamela Belle is more known for historical writing, but she's nimbly leaped over into fantasy territory, as also has Douglas Hill, with *The Lightless Dome*. More fantasy will come from Lois McMaster Bujold, better

known for her Miles Vorkosigan SF, with *The Spirit King* (her three novellas in one, *Borders of Infinity*, comes out in December) and, finally, Kate Elliott's *Jaran* is recommended, though it's not quite clear what for.

Continuing with paperbacks, Jack Vance's *Ecce and Old Earth* (£5.99) comes from New English Library in February.

## Magazines

"Peeping Tom #8" A5, 48pp, £1.95 or £7.25 for 4 issues, from David Bell, Yew Tree House, 15 Nottingham Road, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 1DJ. Stories by Nicholas Royle, Noel McCann, Martin Feakins, Jack Pavey, Fred Brooks, D F Lewis and P F Jeffery, Owen St John, Margaret Johnson and Shane Greenaway. Illustrations by Alfred Klosterman, Claire Herschell, Julie Bell, Philip Rowlands, Kerry Earl and Dallas Goffin.

"Onion #1" A magazine of speculative fiction. A5, 44pp, £1.75 or £4.50 for 3 issues, from Alan Garside, 3 Bower Street, Reddish, Stockport, Cheshire SK5 6NW. Stories by Andrew C Ferguson, Mark Haw, Enda Scott, Laura Jacobsen, Tony Marsden, Robert Frost, Todd Mecklem and Jonathan Falk. Illustrations by Philip Rowlands, Stephen Walker and Keith Garside. A cartoon strip by Stephen Walker and book reviews by Ade Hodges.

"Strange Attractor #2" Publishes Horror, Fantasy and Slipstream fiction. A5, 36pp, £2 or £7.75 for 4 issues, from Rick Gadd, 111 Sanderson Road, Houghton Regis, Beds LU5 5NL (cheques payable to "Strange Attractor"). Stories by Mike O'Driscoll, Shaun Jeffrey, Lawrence Dyer, P J L Hinder, Paul E Pinn, P G McCormack and Frank I Swannack. Full colour cover by Dave McHugh, but no interior illustrations this issue due to deadline problems. Poetry by J C Hartley and a cartoon strip by Noel Hannon and Jeff Mason.

"Phantasy Province" Publishes Horror and Dark Fantasy and especially keen to print Science Fiction. A5, 40pp, £2.50 per issue of £12 for a full year's subscription from Wolfe at Phantasy Province, PO Box 6, Fraserburgh AB43 5ZX. Stories by Ievie Callow, Roy Young, Karl A Russell, Derek B Stewart, Leighton Phillips and Eric Ellicock, plus a profile on R E Howard, letters and details of the charts. Kerry Earl illustrates. This aims to be bi-monthly and is showing great promise: the Kerry Earl illustrations are superb.

"Popes and Phantoms" A5, 36pp, £2.30, available from Rosemary Pardoe, Flat One, 36 Hamilton Street, Hooile, Chester CH2 3JQ. Two long ghost stories, written by John Whitbourn and illustrated by Alan Hunter, recounting the adventures of Admiral Slove, a 15th/16th century papal trouble shooter.

"R.E.M. #2" Science Fiction and Fantasy magazine. A4, 36pp, £2.35 or £7 for 4 issues, from R.E.M. publications, 19 Sandringham Road, London NW2 5EP. Featuring a novella by Storm Constantine, plus stories by Andrew Darlington, Colin Greenland, Simon Ings, Garry Kilworth, Marc Laidlaw, John Shirley, Julie Travis, Andrew J Wilson and David Wingrove. Illustrated throughout by Al Straker, Tony Hough and Barbara Hills. Book reviews and recommendations by Liz Holliday and Arthur Straker. Includes a small press overview by Dave "W" Hughes, an interview with Anne McCaffrey, articles on

James P Blaylock by K V Bailey and Virtual Reality by Arthur Straker.

## Writing

### Clarion West Writers' Workshop

Clarion West, an intensive six-week workshop for those preparing for professional science fiction and fantasy writing careers, will be held from 20/6/93 to 30/7/93 at Seattle Central Community College in Seattle, Washington.

Instructors will be Pat Murphy, currently working on an historical feminist werewolf novel, *Traveling West: An American Story*; Geoff Ryman; Connie Willis, nominated in every short fiction category for the 1992 Hugos; Lucius Shepard (1980 Clarion alumnus), whose new novel, *The Golden* will soon be published by Mark Zeising; Alice K. Turner, fiction editor of *Playboy* and author of *The History Of Hell* and *Greg Bear*, currently working on *Moving Mars*.

### Applications

Submit 20 to 30 pages of original manuscript (one or two short stories, or a novel portion with outline), typed and double-spaced along with a \$25 application fee, payable to Clarion West (non-refundable; applicable to tuition if accepted). The cover letter should include details of your background and reasons for wanting to attend as well as a valid phone number and address for April, May, and June.

Send applications to: Clarion West, 340 15th Ave. E., Suite 350, Seattle, WA 98112

### Costs and Deadlines

Tuition is \$1095. April 1st is the deadline for applications. Applications received by March 1st will receive a \$100 tuition reduction. Housing is available for approximately \$700, not including meals.

For additional information write to Clarion West or call 206-322-9083.

## SF scene

Margaret Atwood shows the influence of her entomologist father in *Good Bones*. "Bodily life, male and female, is inspected with jaunty acumen" writes Peter Kemp in *TLN* "and a cool eye is sent playing over its representations in fiction, sculpture and painting".

Mike Resnick has sold "The Summer of my Discontent" to Katherine Kerr's *Weird Tales* from *Shakespeare* and "Ghosts" written by Barry Malzberg to *Bolas at War*, edited by Bill Fawcett. He's completed the hat trick by selling "Stanley the 19 percent" to himself for the DAW anthology *Deals with the Devil*.

Gregory Benford wrote about his anthology *What Might Have Been #4: Alternate Americas* that he and co-editor Marty Greenberg picked a different theme for each book. "This one is perhaps the most powerful, because the opening of the New World was arguably the signal event of modern times. Interpreting it remains a hot political potato. While my introductions to all these books have been somewhat scholarly, the blunt truth is that we edited these for the sheer fun of it. Alternative History has long been a fascination for both Marty and myself".

P D James continues to protest that her new book *The Children of Men* is not SF. England is ruled by a "benevolent" dictator, an ex-

army high flyer whose dictum is *Good order, comfort and protection*. Children are non-existent and sex has become devoid of pleasure, even the landscape is loveless: "the asphalt playgrounds have been sown with flowers, like small mass graves". But then, P D James concludes that "it's not Utopian, it's a bleak view of human nature, but there's hope at the end".

Jessica Yates turned up in *The Sunday Times* letter column commenting that SF/F is one of the most flourishing current genres and that, through their magazines, SF/F readers can indulge in a lively discussion forum "where one can engage in high-brow literary criticism, discuss Star Trek or buy a Pratchett-inspired T-shirt".

Ellen Gunn has co-authored *Freedom Flight* with Mercedes Lackey - set in the universe of the Wing Commander game series.

Norman Spinrad used his system of "Method Writing" when writing *Russian Spring*. In order to write a successful novel set outside the States and with an international cast, he felt he had to tour through Europe and Russia, especially to Paris. He writes "the novel grew as the history around it exfoliated, it took two years to write, not one, and by the time the work was over, Paris had become, for [my wife] Lee and myself, as for Jerry Reed and Sonia Gagarin, the home it seemed unnatural to leave".

Pat Cadigan talked recently about the book she is currently working on, tentatively called *Parasite*, which involves a teenage girl who kills her mother and attempts to kill her father for a perfectly plausible SF reason. When that's finished, she's going to write a fantasy novel. She got the idea from listening to Stephen King being interviewed about *Salem's Lot* and she began thinking "What happens if you could actually use something of the supernatural to help yourself, to get an edge. Everybody wants an edge. I'm not a believer in the supernatural, so naturally I think about it a lot. If I believed in it and it really was real, what would it say about me?" The working title for it so far is *Rites*.

Kim Stanley Robinson discussed his love of travel in a recent interview with Andy Sawyer. "I like to travel where I can get on to new wildernesses and new mountain ranges. I suppose the two urges are somewhat intertwined, this travel urge and writing Science Fiction, because they have to do with other cultures and other landscapes. I go down into Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, for instance, those truly enormous and spectacular caverns and I just 'travel to other planets' and the same is true of many other different places. It also turns out to be time travel in a way: if you get off the electric net in Asia and many other parts of the world, you could easily imagine yourself in the year 1500".

Robin Bailey will be continuing the stories of Fritz Leiber's "Fafrid and the Grey Mouser", which will be published soonish by Tor.

Anne McCaffrey and SM Stirling have apparently collaborated on *The Ship Who Fought* which will come from Baen in April 1993. Other collaborations forthcoming are Frederik Pohl/Thomas T Thomas for *Mars Plus* (sequel to *Man Plus*); Piers Anthony and Mercedes Lackey for *If I Pay Thee Not in Gold*, which has also been sold to Baen and Marion Zimmer Bradley with the very busy Mercedes Lackey who have written two more "Darkover" novels which will come from DAW.



Stephen Baxter's new book *Timelike Infinity* (December) will be followed by the publication of his alternate-Victorian novel *Anti-Ice* in July and the second Xee-lee book, *Flux* will come in December (all from HarperCollins).

Terry Pratchett quotes G K Chesterton as one of his heroes in a recent profile in *The Observer*. After quoting Chesterton's defence of occultism and devil worship in fairy tales that "The point about fairy stories is that dragons can be killed", he says that his Discworld "encourages a healthy scepticism about the occult". On being accused of being funny, Terry Pratchett protests that "funny is not the opposite of serious, in the way that black is not the opposite of triangular. Benny Hill was funny and not serious. Ben Elton is serious and not funny. John Major is not serious and not funny. I try to be serious and funny". Readers who fear that he might not keep up his punishing schedule (21 titles in 10 years, 3 books published recently in one week), may relax as he says "If more than two days go by when I don't write, I get jittery".

Douglas Adams said while on a recent author tour that he was inspired to write the new installment of *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Paul McCartney who, when asked why he was setting out to play Beatles songs on tour, replied "Why can't I? Everyone else does. Adams recognised that there was such a demand for his material that the old stuff was simply being regurgitated and perhaps he was being a trifle churlish in refusing to write any more of them. Despite the massive *Hitch-hiker* ... sales, he would prefer to be remembered for his *Last Chance to See*. "That was my road to Damascus," he said. "There's so much of the world I'd like to experience properly: Australia, for instance".

Pat Cadigan (yes, she's got a separate entry above that: she's been very busy) is hurrying to finish her latest book, but in the meantime has sold stories to several anthologies including Mike Resnick's *Deals with the Devil* and Aladdin: *Master of the Lamp*.

Angus Wells considers that the second volume of a trilogy is the easy one - he's thinking in particular of his own trilogy "The Godwars". "I mean" he writes "when you write book one you have to introduce and establish your characters, set out the parameters of the story and get the whole thing underway. In the third book you've got to tie up the loose ends and bring matters to a suitably dramatic conclusion that'll leave you, your readers, and your editor happy. Now, in the second volume what you're really doing is carrying the narrative on from the first book and building it up ready for book three: it's the linking volume".

John Brunner hasn't had the pleasantest of years, but is working on an informal series of horror stories with unusual settings, look out for one in the *Dark Voices*, a story called "They Take", set in an Etruscan necropolis. He's also sold a near-future thriller *Fear Cruelty* to Avon, but there's no firm publishing date as yet.

Joe Haldeman considers Robert A Heinlein to be a seminal influence. He says "Heinlein and I are very alike in some ways. That's because I grew up reading and re-reading Heinlein. He was my favourite writer, bar none, from about the time I was 11 until I was in my early 20's. It's funny I should end up a left-wing anarchist hippie. I loved the direct way he told stories. When it first came

out, *Stranger in a Strange Land* was a thunderclap. I could hardly study. I was reading towards finals week, and I just couldn't stay away from it. Everybody was talking about it in the dorm. I learned how to type by re-typing *The Green Hills of Earth* in the ninth grade. I typed story after story. I re-wrote it as I typed. Heinlein is one person who I wasn't disappointed by when I met him. He was every bit the hero I thought he was going to be. Very courtly and slightly larger than life". Haldeman's future plans include a first contact novel, probably called *The Turning* which will cover one year of the town of Gainesville, Florida in the near future when Earth makes contact with an alien intelligence. He admits that it will be very much influenced by James Gunn's *The Listeners*, but says that his book will be more devious.

Michael Kube-McDowell is working hard to complete his new novel, *Vectors*, for Bantam.

Robert Silverberg used the words of Joseph Conrad prefacing his own novel *The Nigger of the Narcissus* as his inspiration for *The Face of the Waters*. "By the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel... before all, to make you see! That - and no more: and it is everything! If I succeed, you shall find there according to your deserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm - all you demand: and perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask".

Jack Chalker has a new book *Echoes from the Well of Souls* coming in June '93 from Del Rey and says that he is "intent on delivering the second new *Well* book this month, but will then do a fifth and possibly final *Dancing Gods* book for the same publisher before completing the three book *Well* series".

David Wingrove's "Chung Kuo" series is now being published by Susan Odout who has already handled Christopher Priest, Rob Holdstock, Garry Kilworth and Chris Evans while at Faber & Faber in addition to working for Angus & Robertson in Australia. There's at least another four volumes to come in this saga, but the decade he spent working on the immensely ambitious concept has paid off, since nine other countries have bought the rights to read this alternate history.

## Science

Steinn Sigurdsson of the Lick Observatory reports that the sky may indeed be about to fall on our heads, for a sufficiently loose definition of "sky" and "about to".

An IAU circular reports that the best orbit for Swift-Tuttle is for close approach in 2126 AD.... The errors allow for an Earth impact on 14th August 2126 - with very low a priori probability - speed relative to Earth is high at close approach, figure 40-50 km/sec.

Swift-Tuttle presents a very serious long term problem. In its current orbit it is more likely than not to hit in the next 10<sup>4</sup> years; the orbit is orthogonal to the plane of the Earth's orbit and goes nowhere near any other planet. The problem is, nothing will systematically perturb it away from us and outgassing is random walking it around our orbit, the probability of collision at each pass is getting higher and unlike most short period comets Jupiter is not going to perturb it away. It is almost certain to hit eventually. Deflecting it is not a long term solution, as it is "easiest" to deflect it along the orbit trajectory, but that still leaves it on Earth crossing orbit and a

threat. A small deflection away from Earth orbit can save us on any one orbit but unless  $\Delta v$  is large, on the order of 5-10 km/s, outgassing and perturbations can still put it back in collision orbit. There is a small chance the comet will be deflected into a longer period orbit by a close Earth encounter but all that does is delay collision as it will still be in Earth crossing orbit.

S-T's size is uncertain, but it is likely to be more of a civilization killer than a dinosaur killer. However, it really does look like we're looking at a major long term problem.

As the most likely date for a potential collision is August 14th, 2126, we would like to take this opportunity to warn contributors that the copy deadline for Matrix 906 will be a fortnight early on 1st August 2126. - Eds.

## Exceptional Individuals Honoured

On 1st October, the Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony was held at MIT. These are awarded to individuals whose achievements cannot or should not be reproduced. The Prizes are a legacy from the legendary Ignatius ("Ig") Nobel, inventor of excelsior packing material and co-inventor of soda pop. The first Ig Nobel Prizes were awarded by The Journal of Irreproducible Results in 1968; the winners' names have been misplaced. The first public ceremony was held in 1991.

### The 1992 Ig Nobel Prize Winners:

**Medicine:** F. Kanda, E. Yagi, M. Fukuda, K. Nakajima, T. Ohta and O. Nakata of the Shisido Research Center in Yokohama, for their pioneering research study "Elucidation of Chemical Compounds Responsible for Foot Malodour," especially for their conclusion that people who think they have foot odour do, and those who don't don't.

**Archaeology:** *Eclaireurs de France*, the Fundamentalist youth group whose name means "those who show the way," for erasing the ancient paintings from the walls of the Meyrieres Cave near the French village of Brunquiel.

**Biology:** Dr. Cecil Jacobson, relentlessly generous sperm donor, and prolific patriarch of sperm banking, for devising a simple, single-handed method of quality control. (Dr. Jacobson could not be present at the ceremony, as he had a previous 15-20 year engagement. Accepting on his behalf: Bob Cecil Turner and Larry Cecil Wilson.)

**Physics:** David Chorley and Doug Bowen, lions of low-energy physics, for their circular contributions to field theory based on the geometrical destruction of English crops. (Accepting on behalf of Mr. Chorley and Mr. Wilson: Frank Laughton of the Shave N' Spell Crop Circle Corporation.)

**Peace:** Daryl Gates, former Police Chief of Los Angeles, for his uniquely compelling methods of bringing people together. (Accepting on behalf of Mr. Gates: Stang Goldberg of Crimston Tech Camera Store.)

**Literature:** Yuri Struchkov, unstoppable author from the Institute of Organoelemental Compounds in Moscow, for the 948 scientific papers he published between the years 1981 and 1990, averaging more than one every 3.9 days. (Accepting for Professor Struchkov: Yulia Govorushko.)

**Art:** Presented jointly to Jim Knowlton, modern Renaissance man, for his classic anatomy poster "Penises of the Animal Kingdom," and to the National Endowment

for the Arts for encouraging Mr. Knowlton to extend his, *et. seminar* work in the form of a pop-up book.

#### The 1991 Ig Nobel Laureates included:

**Chemistry:** Jacques Benveniste, dedicated correspondent of *Nature*, for his persistent discovery that water,  $H_2O$ , is an intelligent liquid, and for demonstrating to his own total satisfaction that water is able to remember events long after all trace of those events has vanished.

**Interdisciplinary Research:** Josiah Carberry of Brown University, for his pioneering work in the field of psychoceramics, the study of cracked pots.

**Education Prize:** Dan Quayle, consumer of time and occupier of space, for demonstrating, better than anyone else, the need for science education.

**Peace:** Edward Teller, father of the hydrogen bomb and first champion of the Star Wars weapons system, for his lifelong efforts to change the meaning of peace as we know it.

#### Nature red in tooth and... silicon?

An "artificial life" experiment set up at Aston University by David Bounds and Bryn Williams used an artificial model world with sources of "food" and then released a collection of simulated creatures called animats to forage. Despite Robert Matthews, Science Correspondent of the *Times Educational Supplement* describing the experiment as "like a scene from a science fiction novel", the preliminary findings echoed Darwin's grim theories of evolution. Animats which could not find the food died: Bryn Williams summed it up by saying darkly "What you see is that even after just a few generations, you get animats emerging with apparently purposeful behaviour".

#### Exhibitions

In Manchester, the Museum of Science and Industry has an "Out of this World" exhibition which explores the powerful influence that space SF has had on space fact and our attitudes to "aliens" including British daleks, triffids, Welian Martians and even an imported vulcan, reports Lawrence Fitzgerald, curator (air and space) of the above.

Another exhibition, slightly further afield, is on Russian space art, held at the House of Elsewhere until January 1993. That will be replaced by another exhibition entitled "Caza: Fictions" (Maison d'Ailleurs, Place Pestalozzi 14, 1401 Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland). One further exhibition which is great on entertainment, but slightly less so on scientific accuracy, is Alien Wars, a recreation of the world of *Alien* underneath Glasgow Central Station. Each visitor has perhaps 15 minutes (which often seems considerably longer) in pitch dark lifts, grim badly lit tunnels and plenty of air ducts, essential for happy alien life. An estimated 50,000 people have paid £3 each since April to be roared at, scared or just plain irritated by a dressed up 28 year old called Kelvin Hendry who does it, he says, because it pays the rent and gets him noticed. Look out also for the Jorvik events at York in February, with Patrick Moore giving a lecture on "Travelling in Time and Space" on February 18 (Tempest Anderson Hall, tickets £4.75, 7pm) and a special screening of *Things to Come*, the 1936 version starring Raymond Massey and Ralph Richardson based on H G Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come* (February 18, 9pm, Tempest Anderson Hall, tickets £2.80).

## Empire Dreams

### Key McVeigh

The BSFA has struggled through another year, and might struggle through another, maybe two if we are lucky. Or we can act and the BSFA will eventually become stable, perhaps even thrive. I hope you agree that the choice is obvious. So we act.

Some of it is already in progress. You have already seen the *Pl/Vector* merger and the consequent design changes (some of which are still evolving, of course). Behind the scenes various people have been investigating ways of getting this new improved *Vector* into shops; overseas recruitment; and advertising.

The next stage is to determine exactly what the BSFA is, and should be. The formative documents were set up 25 years ago, and are needlessly complex in most areas. There are also areas which are hopelessly naive and idealistic. We are seeking advice on simplifying these documents and bringing them up to date in 1993. The results of this will be published in a future *Matrix* prior to approval at an AGM.

Meanwhile, a few thoughts about what the BSFA is, and is not. We are, at our simplest, a literary society providing news, reviews and criticism. This is what we do best, but occasionally we suffer through spreading our energies too widely. Anything beyond the role of a literary society must be considered a luxury at best, an irrelevance at worst. The literary society brief applies easily to *Vector*, but *Matrix* covers at least four distinct functions at present: news, media reviews, fanzine and convention reports and the letters and competitions section. The news and letters are clearly within the literary society remit, a fair case may be made for incorporating media within our coverage, but the fanzine side - conventions and fanzines - is something that remains from the early BSFA. It is a luxury within the literary BSFA, of minority interest only (and I write as part of the minority), and therefore deserves less space and prominence than other features.

In addition, as a literary society we ought to undertake to provide accurate and detailed information as required. To achieve this aim, we are investigating closer links with the Science Fiction Foundation. As you may know, the Foundation hosts the BSFA library, and has access to far greater resources than the BSFA alone. If we come to another potential role of the BSFA as literary society, the production of critical bibliographies as small pamphlets, then it may be that a BSFA/Foundation link-up is a means of achieving this. (Of course, both groups would remain independent what we are considering is akin to full diplomatic links rather than a complete union).

What the BSFA is not is any form of film production or book publishing company. The economics are simply untenable. Nor are we any form of union or pressure group. Our constitution actively forbids this.

We must also avoid being a place where unpublishable writers dump their work, but we are committed to helping writers develop. The Orbiter network is going well, but people continue to ask about *Focus*. I have made it clear in the past that *Focus* would return when two conditions were met: a) we have sufficient financial stability and b) the editor(s) provide a clear direction for the magazine. Contrary to the assertion in *Matrix*

102 that "ditching *Focus* was perhaps the worst single mistake... since Maureen Speller resigned" *Focus* was suspended because our treasurer told us that finances were very low, and nobody seemed all that bothered about *Focus* until I made an unavoidable decision. *Focus* will be back and will feature the material David R Smith talks about (unlike its recent incarnations which were frequently of little use to serious writers). For further details on the return of *Focus*, see Carol Ann Green's article below.

Finally, none of this means anything unless we get the magazines out to you. Unfortunately, the last mailing was a disaster. Planning errors (mine, mostly) were compounded by computer failure, extra printing time to include collation, and, finally, a major Post Office foul-up. We apologise, and are looking into alternative mailing methods for future issues. It may take a little while, please bear with us. I'm sure the results will be worth it. [All being well, the BSFA achieves professional fulfilment with this mailing.]

At the end of the year, I would like to thank all the BSFA's reviewers, columnists and contributors. I don't recall there being so many before. I'd also like to thank the production assistants whose help is often unnoticed. Most especially, however, my deep and personal thanks go out to Elizabeth Billinger for resolving too many crises inherited from her predecessor; to Cattie Cary and her team for making *Vector* something I am proud of; to Jenny and Steve Glover for sterling work on *Matrix*; to Keith Freeman for all those years on the mailing sections; and to Maureen Speller, John D Rickett, Mark Plummer, Paul Kincaid, Alison Cook and Brian Stovold for help, advice and support.

To all of you out there, may you have a peaceful holiday and a prosperous New Year.

## The Ayes have it - Focusing on writing

### Carol Ann Green

As a part of the BSFA's continuing support for writers of SF, we believe that there is a need for a writers' magazine within the BSFA - namely *Focus*, and it is our intention to revive that magazine - financial circumstances permitting.

It is our intention to use *Focus* as a focal point to draw the interest of writers and non-writers alike to the writing scene. It will supply information relevant and helpful to new and established writers, and also be an important link with other writers.

We would like to revive the original aims of *Focus* as set out in the editorial of the first issue, ie:

- 1) To bring alive the behind-the-scenes happenings of SF
- 2) To be a forum for discussion, disseminate information, etc.
- 3) To encourage developing writers by showcasing their work.

We see *Focus* as being aimed not just at writers of fiction, but also at writers of non-fiction, artists and readers alike - those people who are interested in the creative process, and in connected activities such as publishing. We intend returning fiction to the pages of *Focus*, but it will have to be of a very good quality. Fiction will be published in its own right, writers who want stories workshopped should contact the Orbiter co-

ordinator - *Focus* will not be a workshop magazine.

We hope to publish articles on all aspects of writing: writers (published or not), agents, editors, you are all invited to share your experience and ideas with the rest of us. We'd like to continue the idea of a forum on common concerns: bringing together a few brief pieces from various contributors on a specific aspect of writing in each issue. For next summer's issue, we want to look at characters: how they are created, how far they 'take over' the story, how we perceive our characters. We are also looking for feedback - if you like *Focus*, or even if you dislike it, write and let us know.

A couple of things that are frequently called for in *Focus*, namely market reports and 'How to...' hints on preparing typescripts, will be available as separate booklets for a SAE and not in *Focus* itself.

It is our intention to publish *Focus* twice a year, in June and December. If you would like to contribute to *Focus*, either with a piece of fiction (up to 5,000 words), a contribution to the Forum (around 600-800 words), articles on any aspect of writing SF&F (including non-fiction writing), poetry or artwork, please contact:

Carol Ann Green, 5 Raglan Avenue, Raglan St, Hull HU5 2JB or Julie Venner, 42 Walgrave St, Newland Ave, Hull HU5 2LT.

## Special Competition

HarperCollins have generously offered five copies of *Hidden Echoes*, the new novel by Mike Jeffries, and one limited edition t-shirt designed by Mike Jeffries to promote the book. The person responsible for organising this, and other such events as speakers at BSFA meetings and *Vector* interviews as well as news supply to both magazines is Carole Jones, so all the questions have something to do with Jones'.

1. Name the Jones who wrote *Fly by Night*.
2. Name the author of the *Circo Jones* series.
3. Name the Jones who wrote *The Hidden Ones*.

Answers to Kev McVeigh, 37 Firs Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7QF by January 10, 1993.

## Accounts

### The British Science Fiction Association Limited

(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

#### Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 September 1991

#### Directors' Report

The Directors submit their Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 1991.

#### Results and Dividends

The loss for the year, after taxation, amounted to £147 against the Profit and Loss Account below. The Directors do not propose the payment of a dividend.

#### Review of the Business

The principal activities of the Company during the year were the promotion of science fiction and the publication and distribution of science fiction magazines. The level of turnover achieved is consistent with the previous year, but the Company fell into loss during the year as the policy of decentralisation of responsibilities incurred greater losses and as a result of the cessation of sales to the Forbidden Planet Group. The Directors have proposed an increase in the subscription to £15 to compensate for the loss of income and increased expenses. As in previous years the Directors have not been remunerated for their services which are provided on a voluntary basis.

#### Status of the Company

The Company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital.

#### Fixed Assets

The movements on fixed assets are shown in Note 5 to the Financial Statements.

#### Directors

The Directors who have held office since 1 October 1990 are as follows:-

A C Clarke

J White

M J Edwards

D R Langford

S Ounsley

A Sawyer (Resigned 31 December 1991)

M S Porter (Resigned as co-ordinator 31 March 1991)

P Kincaid (Resigned 31 March 1991)

J Raine

B Cockrell

K McVeigh (Appointed co-ordinator 31 March 1991)

B Parkinson (Resigned on 30 June 1991)

C E Nurse (co-opted 19 November 1989)

J Glover

S Glover (appointed 31 March 1991)

M J Edwards, J Glover, S Ounsley and J Raine retire by rotation and offer themselves by rotation and being eligible offer themselves for re-election.

#### Taxation Status

Given the mutual trading status of the Company it is not subject to Corporation Tax on its trading profits.

#### Auditors

Messrs William Hinton, Chartered Accountants, having indicated their willingness, a resolution to reappoint will be put to the Members at the Annual General Meeting.

By Order of the Board

(signed)

B Cockrell,

Secretary, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent

16 July 1992.

### Report of the Auditors to the Members of the British Science Fiction Association Limited

We have audited the financial statements in accordance with Auditing Standards.

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs at 30 September 1991 and of its loss for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985.

(signed)

William Hinton, Chartered Accountants, Registered Auditors,

Ross House, The Square, Stow on the Wold, Gloucestershire.

16 July 1992.

### Profit and Loss Account For the Year Ended 30 September 1991

	Notes	1991	1990
		£	£
Turnover		11 214	11 428
Cost of Sales		7 022	7 090
Gross Profit		4 192	4 338
Other Operating Expenses	1	4 339	4 008
Operating (Loss)/Profit		(147)	330
(Loss)/Profit On Ordinary Activities Before Taxation	2	(147)	330
Taxation	4	-	-
Retained (Loss)/Profit For The Year	9	(147)	330

The Notes below form part of these Financial Statements.

### Balance Sheet as at 30 September 1991

	Notes	1991	1990
		£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Tangible Fixed Assets	5	66	71
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	6	710	496
Cash at Bank		4464	4270
		5174	4766
<b>Creditors:</b>			
Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	7	1328	778
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		3846	3988
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>		3912	4059
<b>Capital And Reserves</b>			
Other Reserves	8	27	
Profit and Loss Account	9	3885	4032
		3912	4059

These Financial Statements were approved by the Directors on 16 July 1992.

(signed) Brett Cockrell, Director

## Accounting Policies

1. The Financial Statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

2. Depreciation is provided to write-off the cost of tangible fixed assets over their estimated useful lives using the reducing balance method at the following annual rates: Library - 10%.

No depreciation is provided on the awards fixed asset as the cost was provided by the Members by request and was posted to an undistributable reserve.

3. Turnover represents income from subscriptions, publications, advertising and associated sales.

## Notes To The Accounts

### For the Year Ended 30 September 1991

1. Other Operating Expenses	1991	1990
Distribution Expenses	3469	3260
Administrative Expenses	870	748
	<u>4339</u>	<u>4008</u>
2. (Loss)/Profit On Ordinary Activities Before Taxation		
(Loss)/Profit on ordinary activities before taxation is stated after charging:		
Depreciation On Tangible Fixed Assets	5	5
Auditors Remuneration	<u>176</u>	<u>125</u>
3. Employees		
The average number of employees of the Company during the year was:		
Directors	12	15
4. Taxation		
Corporation tax at 25% on bank deposit interest received by the Company	—	—
Overprovision in previous years	—	—

### 5. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Library £	Awards £	Total £
Cost at 1 October 1990	913	27	940
Disposals	—	—	—
At 30 September 1991	913	27	940
Depreciation at 1 October 1990	869	—	869
Charge for the year	5	—	5
At 30 September 1991	<u>874</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>874</u>
Net Book Value:			
At 30 September 1991	39	27	66
At 30 September 1990	<u>44</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>71</u>

### 6. Debtors

	1991 £	1990 £
Due Within One Year:		
Trade Debtors	—	467
Prepayments And Accrued Income	710	29
	<u>710</u>	<u>496</u>

### 7. Creditors

	1991 £	1990 £
Amounts Falling Due Within One Year:		
Trade Creditors	1133	589
Corporation Tax	19	19
Accruals	<u>176</u>	<u>170</u>
	<u>1328</u>	<u>778</u>

### 8. Other Reserves

Balance as at 31 September 1991 and 30 September 1990

	1991 £	1990 £
9. Profit And Loss Account		
Balance At 31 September 1990	4032	3702
Profit For The Year	<u>(147)</u>	<u>330</u>
	<u>3885</u>	<u>4032</u>

10. The Company does not have a share capital as it is a Company limited by guarantee.

**It is a legal obligation to publish the accounts of the Association.**

## The Philosophy of Voting

### Nicholas Mahoney

When you see the Award Nominations Form (and please let it have been printed without mishap) don't fall into the perennial trap of thinking you haven't read enough to vote... unless of course you've read nothing eligible and don't intend to. You can't expect to read everything unless you organise your life around it. There are ways of discounting books and stories by other means than actually reading them. Many of those who vote, I'm sure, already have this realist philosophy. The Arthur C Clarke Award is inherently superior at completist reading in its constituency (of six) whereas the BSFA Award has to be content with being a reflection of what a larger constituency is actually reading. Books that are, in practice, invisible in the year of their first publication, either because the publishers don't spend a penny on promotion or that the book is in the periphery of the genre, don't stand much chance. Whilst I am taking steps to point up the best books and stories of the year through the new suggestion stage, for this year, with this reform in its infancy, I just want to know what the best new books and stories you've read this year (or will be reading between now and mid-January) are.

It's not unusual for people to say to me "Well, I just never got round to it" or the perennial "I didn't think I'd read enough". Sometimes you know that the person you're

talking to has probably read more than 90% of the other voters.

So why not put the deadline for the forms on your calendar, take a trip to the library, pick out/order some likely looking books, read reviews, avoid any authors you know you can't stick and you'll be that much closer to being a model voter. Then vote.

## Clubs Scene

The BSFA London meetings are now organised by Maureen Speller, Catie Cary and Mark Plummer and take place on the 3rd Wednesday evening of each month (except December) at the Victoria and Albert pub on the concourse of Marylebone station.

There's a spotlight on foreign clubs this time, courtesy of Pete Arien and Richard W Gombert. This list is gradually getting updated.

**Japan:** Takumi Shibano, 700 Ninomiya, Ninomiyamachi, Naka-guu, Kanagawa-ken, Japan

**Canada:** Winnipeg SF Society, Chester D Cuthbert, 1104 Mulvey Ave, Winnipeg R3M 1J5, Canada

**Sweden:** Michael Svenson, Elinsborgsbacken 40, S-163 64 Spanga, Sweden

**New Zealand:** SF Association of New Zealand, c/o Imperial Trans-Science Society, University of Auckland, Private Bag, Auckland, New Zealand

**Bulgaria:** Klub Prognostika Fantastika, U1 Dimitar Polyakov 2A, Sofia, Bulgaria

**Italy:** Club Fantascienza Padova, del Livello 60, 35100 Padova, Italy

**Norway:** Heidi Lyshol, Sandakervn 81, N-0483 Oslo 4, Norway

We would like to cover British clubs and societies for the next issue. We'd be very grateful for any information people can send us about clubs (or the lack thereof) in their area. This listing should also include the University/College SF clubs held over from this issue.

[And now a bit closer to home, it's SF, it's GB, it's...]

## SF Doom Strikes Thames Valley Town

### John Bark

Think of a SF setting. What springs to mind? A landscape, lit by two suns? The red sands of Mars?

Reading, Berkshire?

You may find it surprising, but in fact this very average town on the Thames, today largely famous for its traffic problems and empty office blocks, has featured in a number of SF works over the last century.

The earliest example I have to hand is *Nevens from Nowhere* by William Morris. First published in 1890, it gives a Utopian picture of a green and pleasant England freed of industrial blight by the powers of pure

communism. There is, however, something faintly ambiguous about the presentation of Reading:

"O, a nice town enough in its way; mostly rebuilt within the last hundred years; and there are a good many houses, as you can see by the lights just down under the hills yonder".

A dark auctorial veil is cast over just how - and to what extent - the forces of socialism managed to get rid of "the sprawling mess with which commercialism had littered the banks of the wide stream about Reading and Caversham".

Later authors were more specific about their methods of urban re-structuring. In "The Thames Valley Catastrophe" (1897), a short story by Grant Allen, a volcanic eruption floods the Thames Valley with molten lava:

"... it spread in a vast glowing sheet towards Reading and beyond. I did not then know that this gigantic natural dam was later to fill up the whole low lying level between the twin expanses of Lake Newbury and Lake Oxford".

M P Shiel turned to pharmacological methods in *The Purple Cloud* (1901). After the eponymous toxic cloud has engulfed the earth, the sole survivor visits Reading to discover the true horror of his creator's ultraviolet prose-style:

"I went into the County Gaol, from which, as I had read, the prisoners had been set free, and there found the same crowdedness, cells occupied by ten, corridors rough-paved with faces and old-clothes-shops of robes; and, in the parade ground, against one wall, a mass of stuff, like grey clay mixed with rags and trickles of gore ..."

H G Wells was a little more restrained and merely afflicted nearly Pangbourne with giant ants in "The Food of the Gods" (1904).

For the next 80 years, Reading seems to have passed into SF obscurity. Scurrilous rumours that Robinson Heath in David Langford's *The Leaky Establishment* (1984) is based upon AWE Aldermaston are, of course, too security-sensitive to be believed.

Reading returned to the fringes of the SF map with J G Ballard's novella "Running Wild" (1988). In surroundings where "... even the drifting leaves look as if they have too much freedom ..." the entire population of an estate in Pangbourne is slaughtered by its over-protected and pampered children.

The most recent appearance of Reading in SF is in Langford's "Leaks" in the shared-world anthology "Temps" (1991). His view of the town will be only too familiar to rail commuters:

"Gasmeters bulged like fungi outside the carriage window, succeeded by plastic-faced office blocks in contrasting shades of liver, lights and spam".

This is the real SF landscape of Reading, for it is here that the Reading SF Group meets at 9.00pm every Monday (except during conventions and Bank Holidays) in the ICL Club, 53 Blagrove Street, opposite the station.

**Remember, We Want  
YOUR Clubs Information  
for Matrix 104**

## Fire and Hemlock

These fanzines get listed in no particular order, to show the range available - or at least the sample of it which arrives at the editorial address. Sometimes there is a price quoted, if not, then write and ask for a copy. The editor - any editor - would appreciate some sort of feedback. Try one: you might find it fun.

### Mimosa

Dick and Nicki Lynch, PO Box 1350, Germantown, Maryland 20875, USA

I went immediately for Dave Kyle's appreciation of Isaac Asimov, then passed on to Terry Jeeves's Wonders of Science, forced myself to skip the fan history and got caught by another of Sharon Farber's series of medical anecdotes. This fanzine is excellent and, more to the point, it contains SF and it's interesting to read.

### Aquae Sulis - No Parking

Bath SF Discussion Group, 2 Windrush Close, Twerton, Bath, Avon BA2 1PL

The highlight here is a moderately honest and non spiteful account of the rise and fall of Kerosina publishing and there are two hurried articles on cover design and Philip Jose Farmer, both introductions just longing for a discussion to follow in the letter column. There's an underlying theme of censorship.

### Slubberdegullion 5

Nigel E Richardson, c/o 8 Windsor Green, East Garforth, Leeds LS25 2LG

This could be very interesting - anyone who can make Redcar sound interesting must be a good writer, though that may be the point. There's a succinct fanzine review which touches on each editor's weaknesses) with unerring accuracy.

### Eyeballs in the Sky 6

Tony Berry, 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B66 4EP

This might seem a trifle dated, as it includes reactions from his previous theme on obsessions. Interesting, though. And do people's obsessions change with time?

### Folly 15

Arnie Katz, 330 S Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107, USA

Now that Pulp appears to have gone into hibernation, this is the place to find the equivalent articles, like Chuck Harris giving a leisurely and kindly scan over a past Novacon and Vinc Clarke, Walt Willis and Lloyd Penney in the letter column. (See also issues 16 and 17, more of the same heartening mixture).

### Balloons over Bristol 3

Christina Lake and Peter Fred Thompson, 47 Wessex Avenue, Horfield, Bristol BS7 0DE

After a quick update on what the Bristol group has been up to since the last issue (socialising, moving to different venues and having a good time), there is a good selection of articles, a Greek holiday told in a genuine Star Trek style, an account of the horrors of the Marsh Street Transmitter, such a malignant and evil thing that it must be true, noone could have the nerve to invent it - though the article is really funny.

## What about my cover for Bob?

Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton ML3 7HU - illustrations by Jim Barker

The famous fannish moments in SF illustrations by D West are fantastic, ranging from the stars of "The Nine Billion Names of God" by Arthur C Clarke to a macho Gor hero, standing on a mass of corpses and cynically supposing that the manacled lady in the corner is going to say she's got a headache. Otherwise, there's a lack of conversational hooks, unless people want to produce anecdotes of when they were famous for fifteen minutes. Or less.

## The Amazing Sentient House Eight

Tommy Ferguson, Flat 1, 16 Wellesley Ave, Belfast BT9 6DG

Trek warning here: there are a couple of anti-Star Trek articles which are unfortunately lacking in reasoned argument or tolerance. They're ok to read, I just hope Tommy doesn't have any vulnerable places for some other fanzine editor to prod.

## Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness

### Dave Bell

For some obscure reason, perhaps some regular convention where fanzine editors can congregate, exchange insults, and generally feed their egos, there is a sudden burst of fanzines hitting my floor in late October and early November. With any luck, the pressure of farm work eases off, and I have time to read and savour them. Otherwise, they tend to get lost in what passes for a filing system.

**Saliromania #8**, from TAFF candidate Michael Ashley, is supposed to be one of the more ultra-fannish fanzines around. Personally, I think it is all a con. There are a couple of good writers in this issue, Jeanne Bowman describing her encounter with the Leeds Group and Haze Ashworth on women's self-defence, a piece that I can only describe as ending with "A Modest Proposal". Michael Ashley himself writes with only the virtue of honesty. He has, by his own account, a lot to feel guilty about. Sometimes it works, but I can never quite understand his motives. He reveals a sustained loathing of fandom, as well as of himself, and yet here he is trying to win a TAFF ballot.

**Eyeballs in the Sky #6** comes from another TAFF candidate, Tony Berry. It has been several years since his last issue, which had a theme of obsessions. The letter column is filled with responses to this, including rival accounts by two fans of how to cope with alcoholism. Unlike Michael Ashley, they both evoke sympathy for their problems. Meanwhile, Tony Berry describes the events that have affected his life since the last issue of his zine, though there isn't a lot of room for that. The letters are so much more intriguing, perhaps because of the strong themes that link them.

But what has all this to do with SF, you may ask. In these cases, very little. Ashley Watkins, a third TAFF candidate, has written an article for **Ragnarok #4**, which is the newsletter for The Society of Fantasy and Science Fiction Wargamers, and while some people might not count it as a fanzine, since it is only available to members of the society, it does have quite a bit of SF-related material. The article is about painting 6mm figures for wargaming, which is a pretty general topic,

not just limited to *F&SF*. If your view of *SF* wargaming is based on the products of Games Workshop, you will find a very different view in this group.

Chuck Connor, after writing the last *fanzine* review column, has left the country. This is why *Thingumbob* #6.5 seems to have been produced by several figments of his warped imagination. It's a lettercolumn, reader, but not as we know it. This is seriously weird, and if you want something well-written, this is the place to look. The letters, scattered through a half-cyberpunk, half *film noir* framework are variable, of course. Chuck, I know, is at heart a shy and sensitive soul, and I expect him to be embarrassed by this praise. He has no reason to be.

Meanwhile, Ken Cheslin has produced another issue of *The Olaf Alternative*, the second of what is essentially a re-launch of *A Child's Garden of Olaf*. In other words, you still get the hand-colored cover and the occasionally laboured humour of a *Sommes* and *Flotsam* story. What is unusual is that there isn't a background article about the real setting of the story. That appeared several issues ago. There are the usual mass of *Olaf* cartoons of course, and I particularly like the one of the hopeful Vikings at the gates of St Trinian's School for Young Ladies. There are a lot of *fanzine* reviews, John D Rickett on Brazilian politicians (You know Brazil, surely, it's where the nuts come from) and an account of the Worldcon. By an American. British fans don't seem so inclined to report on cons, perhaps in the belief that in this small island everybody gets to every con. And there is the letter column. Other *fanzine* editors type in the text, Ken uses a copier and often adds illustrations. Some people are starting to try to beat him to it, but *Olaf* strikes back.

There is also a calendar, illustrated by Alan Hunter.

Ian Sorensen is having trouble with artists, it seems for *What About My Cover for Bob?* He may have other problems since, after reporting on another Scottish fan's tussles with the libel laws, he proceeds to libel all and sundry. "Alf" includes Pat Wells and Dave Langford. I suppose that Michael Ashley, Pat Silver and myself must be included as "sundry". It could even be funny, if he didn't suggest I was professionally incompetent. On the other hand, there is a cluster of D West cartoons, though I am not sure if I am smiling at the visual allusions to well-known fans, or at the revelations of what books D West reads.

Finally, for those of you who wish to take *SF* seriously, there is *Riverside Quarterly* #32. Quite how I got on their mailing list, I am not sure. It may be that I offloaded some guilders at Confection in The Hague rather than let the bank take a second bite. I'm also not sure of the timing, but this issue includes the first part of an article on Fritz Leiber, by his son Justin. Accident of timing or not, it sticks in my mind because of Fritz Leiber's recent death. It sets me wondering about characters in his other stories, and the theatrical element of *The Big Time* and *No Great Magic*. Other contributors risk being too serious for their own good, but for me they are not important, not this time.

**Salirmania 8:** Michael Ashley, 9 Blakeley House, Kelmore Grove, Woodside, Bradford BD6 2RF

**Eyeballs in the Sky 6:** Tony Berry, 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 4EP

**Ragnarok** is the Journal of the Society of Fantasy and Science Fiction Wargamers. Contact the Secretary, James Clay, The Copse, Shiplake Road, Bleadon, Weston super Mare BS24 0NX for details of the society and of membership

**Thingumbob:** Chuck Connor, Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wissett, near Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 0NF (he's off to the West Indies, but mail gets forwarded regularly)

**The Olaf Alternative:** Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1LY

**Bob?** Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Way, Hamilton ML3 7HY

**Riverside Quarterly:** Leland Shapiro, 807 Walters #107, Lake Charles, LA 70605, USA (subscription \$6 for 4 issues)

Unless noted otherwise, all are available for trade and the fanish usual.

## Nova voting

The Nova awards are awarded annually at Novacon, run by the Brum group in or around Birmingham (Stephen Baxter is to be the Guest of Honour at the 1993 one). The 1992 winners were **Michael Ashley** for best fanwriter; **Ian Sorensen's Bob?** for best *fanzine* and **Dave Mooring** as best fan artist.

More detailed figures follow. Michael Ashley had 29 points. Second was Nigel E Richardson with 18, joint third were Dave Langford and Ian Sorensen with 17, joint fifth were Simon Ounsley and Abigail Frost with 11. Other people who received votes in descending order were Avedon Carol; Paul Skelton; Alan Dorey; Chuck Connor and Judith Hanna; John D Rickett, Helen Bland (the well known *nom de plume*), John Richards, Steve Green, D West and Joseph Nicholas; Geoff Hill, Hazel Ashworth, Rob Hansen and Rhodri James; Pete Presford and Chuch Harris.

For best *fanzine*, Ian Sorensen won with 32 points. Second was Michael Ashley's *Salirmania* with 25 points, joint third were Nigel E Richardson's *Slubberdegullion* and the fictional *Blackbird's Egg* from Richard Hewison. Other *fanzines* receiving votes were Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas' *FTT*, Simon Ounsley's *Black Lagoon*, ... Dave Langford's *Ansible*, Rhodri James's *The Light Ship* and Alan Dorey's *Grass Encounters* in joint fifth position, then, in descending order, Chuck Connor's *Thingumbob*, Steve Green's *Gaijin*, Paul and Cas Skelton's *Alison Wonderland* and Tibb's *Reading Matters*; Ken Cheslin's *The Olaf Alternative*; Pulp from Rob Hansen, Avedon Carol and John Harvey and John D Owen's *Shipyard Blues*; D West's *Daisnoid*; Eddie Trenchcoat's *Horrorshow*; Harry Bell's *Pie in the Sky* and Ian Sorensen's *Conrunner*.

Dave Mooring was easily voted best artist with 40 votes. D West came second with 23 votes, Jim Barker third with 18 votes. Other artists were Shep Kirkbride, Sue Mason, Alan Hunter, Harry Bell, Sylvia Sharshine and Lesley Ward, Dave Carson, Ken Cheslin, April Lee, Tim Groomer, Colin Johnson and James Steele, Colin Langeveld, Jackie Duckhawk, Jim Porter and Graham Higgins.

## Media File

The following piece was produced for use in *Matrix* 100, while Ben Wharton was in the States. However, none of the other articles solicited for *Matrix* 200 actually arrived, so we held it over.

Here, then, as a sort of a festive lollipop is a 21st Century...

## Tales From Tinseltown

### Ben Wharton

Technology can be a wonderful thing, but when it becomes your master it's time to pull the power. After over two decades of mixing massive debts with massive special effects budgets and star salaries to match, Carolco, the US independent infamous for starting the \$100 million production trend, has finally crashed and burned like so many of the futuristic sets it has built in the past. Reeling from the disastrous performances of its latest release - Cameron's *Virtuality* - Light and Finch's *Judgment Call* - Carolco filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on July 29 after its loan agreement extension plan fell through. To readers of perhaps the largest obituary published in Hollywood's trade paper *Variety*, Carolco's demise might appear to be just another case of excess catching up with a very real credit limit, but to those inside the still rubble strewn landscape of studio city, the death of one of the industry's big boys is a sign that an era has come to an end.

Century Fox a.k.a. Robert Murdoch's ego trip is also on the front page this month. Having lost a great deal of interest in his HDTV venture, Murdoch is fighting against a negative credit rating and Fox is the unlucky recipient of his woes. Through a strange set of circumstances, the artistic rights to many of Fox's most lucrative properties have ended up in the hands of the European Central Bank. In one fell swoop, Fox has lost much of its ability to buffer its more risky ventures and Europe has found a back door to the US film industry.

Writing novels isn't usually associated with risk, unless you're a fan of the late William Burroughs, but Steven King's *CrossMatch* certainly generated a little more trouble than is normally attributed to film adaptations. Recalling the fever of "moral" demonstrations of the last century, King's complex tale of genetic experimentation, sexual orientation, and the abuse of science seen through the eyes of one of its young victims, has brought to the surface the hatred and disbelief of several communities who view King's work, soon to start production on location in Cambodia, as nothing short of evil. King has so far narrowly escaped two attempts on his life and Castle Rock Pictures are beginning to wonder if a single film is ever worth such a potentially dangerous production period.

In a small-minded town where difficult ideas and thought-provoking artistic expression is given short shrift, it is those very concepts which are making people hide in their offices and hope that the basis for real horror over King's work - the application of scientific knowledge - will in the end also restore the peace via the gun. Hollywood has never been very good at irony.

Science maketh man - and it does so literally in the recently completed *Personality*. Inc. Three years in production, the cinema's first wholly computer generated character hits our screen with the telling line "Who Am I?".

Who she used to be was British actress Alison Doody, chosen for among other things her well-defined bone structure, but re-creating her face was only one of the many problems computer effects house Pixar had to struggle with to provide a realistic simulation of a total human form in an otherwise very real environment. Raped and killed by a gang, Doody's character becomes the subject of her own experimental research when she is effectively brought back to life in a hybrid of advanced cybernetics and computer illusion.

Starting out as a detective piece, the film quickly develops into an examination of self and what it is to be alive. It is the film that *RoboCop* might have been.

Though computer illusion is becoming commonplace in our everyday lives, the impact on the language of cinema has to date been minimal. Cyberware of Sacramento, California are, however, going to be giving the art establishment a run for its money with their new virtual reality cinema in all places, Ireland.

Given the ability to move around a story and interact with it instead of being forced to view events from the director's point of view, the audience changes its whole relationship to visual story telling. Theories of composition, lighting, empathy with any of a story's characters, and much more beside all crumble when you give the camera to the viewer. Still very much in development, Cyberware are planning to open the landmark theatre sometime next year when it is hoped commissions by noted filmmakers (surely among them Wim Wenders) will have found their way into the hugely expensive data banks that lie at the heart of the venture.

Traditional cinema theatres are also looking towards a radical change in presenting films, but the technology doesn't promise such an immediate impact on the type of tales it presents or an audience's relationship to them. Since the beginning of the last century, films have been called films because that has been its form. Tradition will mean the term film is one that will stick for some time but the reality as applied to screening the object in question will blur as Very High Definition Projection (VHDP) becomes increasingly used in existing cinema complexes. An outgrowth of cable tv, VHDP dispenses with the need for producing thousands of prints for a film's release by sending a duplicate of the master print down fibre optics to the theatres in question. Received by communication hardware at the cinema end, the image is then amplified and projected as if from a section of celluloid onto a screen. What was feared to be an invasion of television technology into the world of light, has become a compromise. Light remains the medium of expression, but film will soon cease to be its conduit when displayed. VHDP will certainly have its own "signature", similar in nature to the differences between compact discs, mini discs, and compact digital tape, but regardless of any squabbles over visual quality that are bound to ensue in the change to VHDP, it is the studios who will have most to smile about. Without high costs on print runs a factor in the financing of a project, there is more money to spend on the special effects...

It's a shame technology can't operate itself, because then we could really remove the biggest cost of all: people.

## Skywatching

Mark Ogler

Oh, the joys of owning a satellite system!

While my terrestrial tv owning friends sit and ponder if the proposed Channel 5 will ever appear, if it will cause interference with their existing sets and whether it will screen anything remotely interesting, those of us with satellite can enjoy new channels appearing out of the ether more regularly than the BBC repeat of *Star Trek*.

In the last couple of months, for example, two new English channels have graced the Astra satellite, one aimed at movie fans and the other looking to compete with the "general entertainment" channel, Sky One. The former has replaced Sky's Comedy Channel - the only problem with the programmes on the Comedy Channel was that they weren't funny. Sky Movies Gold is the prestigious sounding label under which Sky can happily foist its entire back catalogue of movies upon us, while assuring us that these are "classics".

It shows only two or three movies a day, and many of them seem to come from the 1970's and 80's, with the odd 60's film thrown in. A pity, because I was hoping for lots of black and white gems from the 40's and 50's. Still, there's plenty of time. As yet, there has been nothing of interest to SF fans, although an article in *What Satellite* magazine stated that the channel would soon be screening the "unedited" version of *Blade Runner* (?) More on this as and when it appears.

Meanwhile, the unthinkable has happened - the BBC, a channel so entrenched in terrestrial broadcasting that it seems to have taken root there, has (gasp!) joined forces with Thames and (shock!) taken over an Astra transponder! So what delights are we being treated to on this new channel, called - somewhat confusingly, given the above mentioned channel - UK Gold? Repeats. Lots of repeats. So many repeats, in fact, that it is enough to make one write and complain to *Points of View*.

Think of any programme that has been remotely popular in the last 20-25 years, and the chances are that it will surface again on UK Gold. *Bergerac*, *Shoestring*, *Duchess of Duke Street*, *The Brothers*, the list goes on and on and on. And soap addicts should have a whale of a time, catching up on all those missed episodes of *Neighbours*, *The Bill* and *EastEnders*. There are also lots of comedies, but the really good ones aren't on often enough and the really naff ones (*Terry and June*) are on daily.

However, this column is about SF tv and the only SF programme to have resurfaced so far on UK Gold is *Dr Who*. Watching this has, for me, been a revelation. The channel started with the very first episode, *An Unearthly Child*, starring William Hartnell as the good doctor, and I was astounded at the quality of the programme. Oh yes, it looks rough; the special effects are pretty hopeless and occasionally the actors fluff their lines, but the overall tone of that first series was so much more adult than the programme became in the 1980's that it made me wonder how it managed to survive so long.

The episode introduced the Doctor as a cantankerous old man, with a selfish streak which - at one point - almost leads him to kill for no reason other than to make things easier. This made for some first rate drama between the Doctor and his companions -

two of whom were remarkably well-written (for the time) women characters. There was action, several moments of violence, and an approach to the material that suggested that this was not a programme for kids. Compare it to the puerile drivel that it was when last screened, and the BBC's idea of giving the series a rest (that's what they say) seems eminently sensible. If *Dr Who* does come back, the writers would do us all a great favour if they could view a few 60's episodes first.

Just enough room to rave about one of the films I saw on The Movie Channel recently - a well made tv movie, of all things.

*High Desert Kill* is the unlikely title of this film, which stars Chuck Connors of all people (remember him from *Thrillseekers*?) and Marc Singer (of *V* fame, or infamy). It's a simple enough story - a group of pals go into the New Mexico hills for a spot of male bonding and hunting - only to find all the animals gone, and their tempers start to get frayed very quickly.

The odd behaviour and goings on escalate, and when they encounter a couple of girls camping in the same area, things take a decided turn for the nasty.

Eventually, the ghost of a dead chum starts turning up, leading the hunters to decide to cut their losses and head back for the city - but in stopping at an abandoned house *en route* they find themselves trapped inside a force field, and soon realise that whatever is causing the mental and physical disturbances is in there with them.

In fact, it's all down to an alien who has chosen this spot as an area in which to experiment upon humanity in the same way that we experiment upon white mice - and with as much cold detachment. The film has a faint taste of *Predator* about it, with a nice amount of tension thrown in. But there is no gore to speak of, and the threat at first is hidden and seems to come more from the paranoia of the group.

The ending, where the "monster" is revealed, is weak, which is a pity. Had the producers managed to resist the temptation to show their hand quite so explicitly, the film would have been a true jewel in the crown of US tv movies. But, given its origins, I suppose one ought to be grateful that it is as good as it is for the best part of its running time.

## Anime

Geoff Cowie

November release (23/11/92): Urotsuki Doji (aka *Legend of the Overfiend* aka *Wandering Kid*) Island World Communications Manga Video, MANV 1008, 106 mins, PAL, English dialogue, £12.99, Cert 18

Preview: Legend has it that every three thousand years the Superfiend CHOJIN attempts to unite the three worlds of Humans, Man-Beasts and Monster Demons into the Land of Eternity. But this legendary land turns out to be a sickening place of horrendous violence, uncontrollable lusts and supernatural forces beyond the imagination.

This is a gripping and well-made piece of animation. It is made with disregard for any restriction of what may be shown in a piece of art, and exploits its theme of largely sexual violence about as far as it is possible to do within the constraints of a 18 certification. It is likely to challenge the viewer in terms of what he or she feels comfortable watching. In

this case the cert. 18 really means what it says. This movie is entirely unsuitable for juveniles. [Editorial note: And, having seen about five seconds of it, I'd confirm that it is definitely for adults only.] If you are not sure of your response to *Urotsuki Doji*, you may be well advised not to watch it. On the other hand, if you are a fan of such material, you're probably on your way to the video shop already.

In place of December/January releases, I'll repeat the titles of previous Manga Video releases which you can buy with your Christmas gift vouchers or whatever: *Akira*, *Fist of the North Star* (if you dislike someone), *Project A-Ko*, *Dominion*. There's also *Warriors of the Wind* (Vestron VA 11451), cert U, PAL, £7.99, known to anime fans as a cut and dubbed version of the superb *Nausicaä*. For those with a bit more to spend, there's *Vampire Princess Miyu* (aka *Vampire Girl Miyu*) pts #1, #2 (60 mins, subtitled, NTSC), approx. £28 and *Vampire Princess Miyu* pts #3, #4 ditto.

In contrast to much popular anime, this is a lovely, quiet, sophisticated anime series that is strongly influenced by traditional Japanese art and music. It's about an unusual sort of vampire who banishes bad spirits (*shinma*) to a netherworld. The cassettes come in beautiful boxes that make you want to own one especially if you know what's inside.

For the wealthy, what about a Philips 16-9 widescreen tv (£1300) which will show those widescreen anime movies to advantage? As an anime for Christmas, it's hard to resist mentioning *Night on the Galactic Railroad* (Japanese), even though you can't buy it here. This is another quiet anime about anthropomorphic cats, about two hours long, definitely no sex or violence, and it seems to have Christian religious overtones.

Island World are reportedly negotiating for the rights to *Crying Freeman*, *Midnight Eye Gaku*, *Doomed Metropolis*, *Laputa*, *Nausicaä* (2 hour version), *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Kiki's Delivery Service*, *3x3 Eyes*, *Area 88*, *Lum-Beautiful*, *Dreamer*, *Tombstone for Fireflies*, *Vampire Hunter D*, *Nadia* (movie), *Aria*, *Dirty Park*, *Gundam* and *Cy Hunter*. This list includes four anime classics and several other excellent movies, but it is only a minute fraction of the anime potentially available.

In case you are wondering where you can watch this stuff in the UK, I should point out that there have been two anime conventions this year, plus a special season at the ICA in London. Another convention is planned for Spring 1993.

A lot more anime has been given licensed release in the USA recently (some now on laserdisc) so if you have some disposable income, you can rent or buy a PAL/NTSC dual standard VCR, order the tapes from the USA or a few special UK outlets and watch them now. *Dominion Acts 1-4*, *Bubblegum Crisis I-III*, *Bubblegum Crash I-II*, *Project A-Ko I*, *Madox-01*, *Riding Bean*, *Gunbuster*, *Dango*, *Appleseed*, *Black Magic M-66*, *Robot Carnival*, *Urusei Yatsura*, *Vampire Princess Miyu* and other titles are all available for about \$35. (The laserdiscs cost about \$65 but some are equivalent to two tapes). Most are subtitled rather than dubbed. My advice is to buy while the dollar was weak was remarkably prescient, as the rise in the dollar has put about £4 on the price of imported NTSC videos. In Japan, much recent anime is available on laser disc (*rasha-disku*). A suitable player costs £499.

## Contact addresses for anime enthusiasts:

Anime UK newsletter, Helen McCarthy, 147 Francis Road, London E10 6NT

Anime Kyo UK (club), c/o Carlo Bernhardt, 4 St. Peter's Street, Syston, LE7 8HJ, Leicestershire

Anime UK magazine (£3.50) if not available from shops, write to 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF

## Information Service

All those difficult questions, that story you can't quite remember some vital detail for, another book on the same subject, some query about a character - all you need do is write in. At the very least your query will get discussed, at the best it will get solved (preferably instantly). There's a large pool of expertise in the BSFA membership not to mention a group of experts/volunteers/scripts, call them what you like, who know more than they ought to on specific subjects. Phil Nichols is moving house this issue and can now be contacted at: 17 Allsors Close, Rowley Regis, Warley, West Midlands B65 8JB.

In the meantime, here are some problems from the pages of Clare Raygun...

*I have seen references to the works of William Ashbless in books by James Blacklock and Timothy Powers, but I can't find any reference to him in the standard sources. Can you help? -- "Polly Naray"*

Dear Polly,

"William Ashbless" appears in *The Digging Leviathan* by Blacklock and *The Anubis Gates* by Powers. Actually he was created when both authors were at college. Ashbless then cropped up in Blacklock's 1972 version of *The Digging Leviathan*, but it wasn't until both books had been accepted by Beth Meacham at Ace that she thought of him as a character. He then cropped up in Blacklock's *The Elf Ship* and *The Disappearing Dwarf* and in Powers's two "Laser" books, probably because both authors got together, did a bit of brainstorming, and decided to make at least one gesture toward continuity. By this time he should have been at least two hundred years old but they didn't really want him going quite the same way as Lazarus Long. Then he appeared in *Homunculus* and *Deviant's Palace* and if he crops up again, it could be as the alternate driver of Keesey's Magic Bus or anywhere in a hundred plus years of history, so that he can filter in wherever he (or the authors) want.

*Why do children's fantasy endings so often reject the magic which has made the preceding story possible and close out the possibility of a recurrence? Often the rejection extends to giving the children heroes amnesia about what they have done and experienced. In particular, the ending of The Dark is Rising series by Susan Cooper rang rather false. Why do authors do this? -- "Lucy Pevensey"*

Dear Lucy,

Most of my friends had the same reaction: I doubt that authors do this because it's what their audience wants. There may be some misbegotten desire not to let "escapism" have the last word. Authors may feel that parents will accept the books better if they don't leave the possibility of magic open ... One of

the things that delights me about Roald Dahl's writing is that he never produces "respectable" standard endings - in fact, a lot of his stuff seems calculated to outrage parental censors, and it's all the more fun for that. (I love the chapter in *The Witches* about how to tell if the adults around you are witches).

*My friend Dick tells me aren't any Canadian fantasy or SF authors. Can you tell me of any, please? -- "Mexican Pete"*

Dear Pete,

That friend of yours must be half-blind. There's lots... Michael C. Conney, Dave Duncan, William Gibson, Guy Gavriel Kay, Judith Merril and Spider Robinson, whom I believe are all immigrants.

"Natives" include: Margaret Atwood, J Brian Clarke, Barbara Delaplace, Candas Jane Dorsey, Wayland Drew, Leslie Gadalaha, Phyllis Gottlieb, Terence M Green, Don Hildebrand, Tanya Hugg, Monica Hughes, Sansoucy Kathener, Eileen Kernaghan, Crawford Killian, Donald Kingsbury, Charles de Lint, Alice Major, Yves Meynard, Robert O'Riordan, Judith and Garfield Reeves-Stevens, Michelle Sagara, Robert J Sawyer, Daniel Serinne, Sam Stirling, Antony Swithin, Jean-Louis Trudel, Elisabeth Vonarburg, Andrew Weiner, Robert Charles Wilson and finally there's James De Mille, who died in 1880 at the age of 46 from the combined effects of teaching full-time while writing pulpstories for the US market. Eight years after his death, his best work finally got into print, and it is still available if you look round. It's called *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* and it is a wicked little gem. Supposedly the account of a sailor shipwrecked in a volcanically warmed Antarctica, *Strange Mss...* is full of good stuff: humour, dinosaurs, lost tribes, hairbreadth escapes, and satire that hasn't lost its edge in over a century. De Mille was one of the very first Canadian professional authors, and most of his stuff was quick and sloppy. But *Strange Mss...* redeems all his other work.

[Clare Raygun] would like to thank: TS Davies, Mary Kuhner, Aaron V Humphrey and Crawford Killian for information gleaned for this column. The editors will send a book to the first person to correctly track down all the pseudonyms used in this piece.]

## SF in Cyberia

British Telecom kindly permitted telephone calls from 3pm on Sundays in November and December until midnight to be charged at local rates: not bad for people wanting to telephone bulletin boards. Unfortunately, the list given in the last issue had one or two errors. For example, the number quoted for "Kestrel Ridge" is actually that of Diane Duane's fax machine. We aren't quite sure what it was doing on a list of BBSs, but we'd like to apologise to anyone who phoned it on our recommendation and especially to Diane Duane and Peter Morwood for the intrusion.

On the plus side, though, bulletin boards even got into soap operas, with a teenage "genius" falling in love over the net. Via a bit of deduction and a couple of telephone calls to Hong Kong, thereby mortgaging his pocket money for the next two centuries, even though it was an Australian soap opera, he eventually found out the truth about Fred: as she dies from leukaemia. OK, that's a pretty extreme case. But bulletin boards



provide a chance to meet other SF readers (and games players, and amateur radio enthusiasts, and vegetarians, if you wish, and people who are all of these, and more) and simultaneously you have the opportunity to create your own persona. You'll be assessed only on your words, so bulletin boards are ideal if you are house bound - with young children, perhaps - or deaf or shy or ultra self-conscious.

Anyway, you're in the position of having a telephone, a modem and a computer. Dial the number of your choice. There will then be some sort of high pitched whine, so connect the phone to the modem (there's various ways of doing this, depending on the modem) and adjust your computer. Some variation of "Hi" will come up on the screen after a short pause. Then the questions will start. The system operator at the other end has to have some form of guarantee that you're not a mad axe murderer who will burst through his screen and murder his pet mice: so he (or, moderately often) she will want some information, name, address, phone number, age - this is all kept confidential, so there's no need to claim to be 21 unless, of course, you are. You will probably have to provide some form of pass word in addition to your name: something not too obvious, not more than 8 letters, usually not all characters, preferably with a punctuation mark or two. If you log onto more than one bulletin board, it's advisable to have different passwords for each to keep temptation away from the system operators. They are in the position of priests, or perhaps doctors, regarding confidentiality, but just as they demand trust, so you must hope for some too.

The actual subject matter on the bulletin board will depend very much on the pet interests of the system operator and, to an extent, on the interests of the users. My local bulletin board is "earnestly" discussing the merits of eleven soldiery ("Over paid, over tall and over here") in Tolkien alternating with SF authors who write both juvenile and adult books. *Terminator* crops up quite often, as do vampires, Philip K Dick, Asimov and cartoons. As a new user, you're like the person who comes in a room when everyone else is talking. You could skulk in a corner, having the equivalent of a dry martini, chomping the olive to death. Or you could join in. Most people are friendly, perhaps a little curious, but they won't shout you down when you timidly express some opinion.

Most bulletin boards are menu driven, so once you get on, you will probably be able to work out what to do - besides, there's a lot of fun in exploring new areas. There should always be an option to return to the main menu and then log off - it might be "Goodbye" or "Quit" and there is usually the opportunity to leave a message for the sysop, who has probably been sitting at his side of the screen watching your meanderings and quite curious about him (this "him" is for convenience, not sexism), what you are going to do next.

When the new user logs on again, there may be mail waiting, together with an option to immediately reply. And before you know it, there's a new discussion going. And before you know it, you're not a new user any more, and you're meeting up with some of the other users in person at a comms meeting. And before you know it ....?

## WriteBack

If you have anything you want to say, following on from the topics here or on SF generally, or on anything you feel strongly about, this is the place to send it. Please write to: Jenny and Steve Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP by the deadline 15 January 1993. Happy New Year to all readers!

## Media In The Shallows

[More on the media, but as these letters have been held over from last issue, there is a chance for Ian Mundell, the Media Editor, and Mark Ogier, the satellite specialist to comment afterwards. Chris Baker kicks off by continuing his attack on SF film:]

Chris Baker 22 Byron Road, Penenden Heath, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2HA

Whether a film is fun or not is nothing to do with the issue that I was trying to raise. I was simply observing that since *Star Wars* the SF film industry seems to be wholeheartedly aimed at children. I was not only complaining about the lack of intellectually stimulating films, but the lack of ANY adult SF. Most of the major SF films in recent years have been children's films: *E.T.*, *Short Circuit*, *The Last Starfighter*, *Heartbeeps*, *Tron*, *Cocoon*, *Back to the Future*, *The Black Hole*, *Explorers*, *Flight of the Navigator* and all the sequels involved.

This leads to a poor image of SF assisted by the high profile of "Star Trek", which is not really very good, and everything associated with it.

The only adult SF films that are being made are expensive blockbusters, in which the fact that they are SF merely allows the use of lots of special effects.

Martin Potts says he enjoys these children's films. But surely even he would like to see some decent adult SF.

Incidentally, both Martin Potts and Geoff Cowie (writing in *Matrix* 101) seem to be under the impression that a film cannot be both intellectually stimulating and "fun". This is certainly not the case. *Dr Strangelove* comes readily to mind!

Secondly, I want to bring up the point of scientific accuracy. I highlighted this point with the roar of spaceships. Martin says that he could probably pick numerous scientific holes in my favourite works. I'm sure I could too. The point is that noise in the vacuum of space is not a minor little scientific aberration. It is tantamount to having a spaceship take off on earth with no sound.

Geoff Cowie says: "What does Chris Baker expect the movie producers to do - kill the sound-track every time they do an exterior shot of a spaceship?" Well, actually, yes. Lack of sound can produce very atmospheric sequences, as in 2001. This is not the only solution. Music can be used, as again in 2001.

Major scientific facts cannot just be ignored.

Finally, as to the future of SF. Martin Potts believes that serious adult SF films are more likely to appear in a climate where SF/F films are commonplace, even if they are children's films. I think that he is being a bit too naive. Hollywood has hit upon a formula that works and makes money. When a SF film is made they are likely to want to use this formula to ensure financial success. Why risk

an adult intelligent SF film when a proven SF film has already been shown to pull in money?

[Following on, Susan Booth approaches Chris Baker's point from the tv angle:]

Susan Booth, 500 Ley Street, Ilford, Essex IG2 7DB

If mad scientists and evil aliens make a show "anti-science", then we lump *Quatermass*, *A For Andromeda*, *The Champions*, *The Avengers* and even "Star Trek" into this category. No, they're just hackneyed plot devices. What is interesting about *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, particularly the first black and white season, is that, in 1964, communists can be good guys, industrialists and military men good or bad according to the cut of their job, and that no one, not even the heroes, has a monopoly on being right. Even more interesting is the number of first season episodes where the villain is either not particularly villainous (noticeably the one alien in first season), or redeems himself by his actions. Now, if you'd attacked its religious and sexual prejudices ... but, again, they were of their time and "Star Trek" suffers from them as badly.

At least US shows in those days had plots. "Star Trek: The Next Generation" seems to have forgotten that such things exist.

Then there was Chris Baker's complaint about the shallowness of SF film. Well, of course it's shallow. So is most film. So is much modern written SF. It doesn't help when BSFA reviews are much more concerned with the FX than the basics of drama. *Terminator* was actually better than *Terminator II* because it engaged emotions, made you care for the characters. In other words, it was good drama. There are SF films that are good films, good drama and good SF. *Brazil* springs to mind as a wonderful evocation of nightmare and oppression, far more frightening than, say, *Total Recall*. I'm no expert on film, so I worry when I conclude that I have a wider knowledge than your reviewers.

What really bugs me about your TV coverage is that it misses all the really good stuff. The only decent SF and Fantasy nowadays is found on children's TV. Don't you have VCRs? (As a matter of fact, no - Eds) The last year has seen the amazing *Time Riders*, the highly original *Wail of the Banshee* (I will never be able to think of the Lady of the Lake as anything but the "blonde in the pond" after it), the beautifully realised adaptations of Jenny Nimmo's *The Chestnut Soldier* and Diana Wynne Jones' *Archer's Goon* and, above all, the complex and mysterious *Dark Season* which is, in this person's humble opinion, the best SF of any brand seen on TV for over a decade. Maybe two. Sure, the "prestige" productions - the *Narnia* stuff (full of changes that reduced the impact), and *Merlin* and *the Crystal Cave* were awful ... but why did no one say so? Was I the only person who wanted to stamp on that soft-focus filter?

Finally, there is the radio. *Journey into Space* was repeated and is (at least 2 parts of the trilogy) available on cassette. There have been half a dozen SF and Fantasy radio plays/serials/readings recently, and there might have been more for all we heard.

Okay, okay. I know. Why don't I do it?

Well, like many people, I'm trying to write fiction ... But if no one else will ...

[But before you take up the cudgels, here is Jean Sheward with some cogent points about media coverage:]

Jean Sheward, 500 Ley Street, Ilford, Essex IG2 7DB

I've been concerned for some time about the quality of the *Matrix* coverage of TV and, to a lesser extent, film. There seems to be a general assumption that, (a) everyone should have satellite TV and (b) only programmes screened after the 9pm watershed are worth watching. In the past year, both BBC and ITV have produced some superb fantasy and SF programmes, in the 4.30-6pm slot. Close scrutiny of *The Radio Times* and some deft work with the VCR timer can throw up some gems in most weeks, but there's nary a mention in *Matrix*.

VCRs bring me to the other point - if there is a shortage of adult fantasy on the box, it's not matched by what's available in the stores. Most of the British companies are putting out their fantasy back-catalogues at a rate of knots and, while there are still some mysterious gaps on the shelves (no early *Attergers* for instance) the video market is running awfully close to the book publishing market in output. Again, can anyone supply *Matrix* with a list of what's due out in video (both TV and feature films)?

By the way, this isn't another example of expecting the BSFA to do things while I just sit back and wait - I'd do it myself if I had the industry contacts, but I don't. Which in part answers Chuck Connor's points about BSFA deadwood (in *Matrix* 100). The fact is that, for the most part, the BSFA is run by 'fandom' for SF readers. This is true of all forms of fandom. Pick up the newsletter of any organisation from *Aprioris's Monthly* to the *Zoroastrian Times* and you'll find heartfelt pleas from the editor for some submissions (or any feedback at all).

[And now the case for the defence. Ian Mundell has been analysing the London Anime Festival and also attended a SEGA sponsored day of SF films in London in between reporting for *Nature*. The reviews of *Flaming Ears* and *Tetsuo II* may have to wait for next issue, but Ian wrote this reply the morning of his departure to Botswana to see the progress of their National Conservation Strategy].

Ian Mundell, 21 Radford House, 1 Pembridge Gardens, Notting Hill Gate, London W2 4EE

Most of what I have to say hinges on the two month cycle time of *Matrix* and the point raised by Jean Sheward about industry contacts. If we had the contacts, then we would have the information on what is coming up, be it on TV, video, radio or in the cinemas. Not only that, but we would have access to the material in advance through press screenings and preview tapes, which opens up the possibility of reviews appearing just before or just after the event. Bliss! There is nothing I would like better, and I am trying to make those contacts (some self-interest here, but I hope it's all mutually beneficial) but there are problems, notably with duplicitous press officers who say you're in just to get rid of you. Another problem is the long lead period - sometimes it discourages the press people, since they want contemporaneous rather than posthumous publicity, and because often people have not finalised what they are doing two months in advance. The NFT/BSFA is a notable case - we are on their press list,

but schedules are only confirmed a month in advance which means we cannot trail the SF films they show and the excellent archive TV stuff. An advance mention is often the currency with which you buy into screenings, etc. Anyway, I'm persevering.

OK, next point is what to do with this material, which if it all comes in would inflate the media section significantly. Full coverage is impractical, and in some cases unwarranted, but I agree that we could do more. A few suggestions:

**Film:** I think this is OK at present, since the SF output is slim enough to be handled in reviews.

**Video:** Given the information - as near comprehensive as possible, otherwise we end up pushing the loudest voices - we could certainly run a list of new rental and sales releases, although I have doubts about drawing the line there ... it is vaguely informative, but hardly entertaining. If we can organise preview tapes, I think running a regular column with two or three short or linked reviews would be a good thing. Depending on the volume and supply, TV and film could be combined or run separately. In particular, I think it would be good to look into the sort of material that is going straight onto video, either because it has failed to find a distributor or was made for video. I predict interesting dross with a couple of gems.

**TV and Radio:** The problem I would have here is with the lifetime of the material - any review would be posthumous, and the reader is unlikely to remember it let alone have any opportunity to go back and judge for themselves. Preview tapes would help, but I think we would still have a problem, particularly with series - to be fair a review would have to encompass several, if not all, the programmes. Repeats, such as *The Prisoner* or *The Invaders* are worthy of comment either because they are still good or have suffered through age, but the handling is tricky - better suited to previews by someone who saw the programmes the first time around. Perhaps the TV companies lay on advance screenings - I'll find out. I'm not against TV and radio reviews (my stuff from the BFI's TV unit suffers from some of the same criticisms, but I think was worth doing because the programming was often of unseen, lost or controversial programmes and was chosen to represent particular eras in TV history), but I think these questions need to be considered. If you don't think they are important, we can go on and do something - a column either on one prog. or the prevailing scene outside cable and satellite. (Public access SF?)

**Games, calendars, comic, theatre, music, etc.:** Not in the media section.

Right, the big question - who gets to do all this? Naturally, the more people we have writing stuff the better, but I think that we need to have some sort of commitment. Not a huge commitment ('I (state your name) confess that my eyes are bigger than my head, and I would like to sign my soul and deteriorating eyesight over to the editor of *Matrix*') but enough to know that if we send someone a preview tape, they will watch and review it, or if they say they will cover a TV programme, they will do it. Perhaps people like Susan Booth ("... But if no one else will ...") are just being coy and waiting to be asked ... perhaps it is just a response to the pointing finger ... but it does not inspire confidence.

Following through - whether positive or negative - plays a large part in hooking media PRs. If you do not use the material they send you, they may write you off. Or, to put it more bluntly, if I am making the contacts I have to trust the people who get the fruits. I don't know any other reviewer/writers within the BSFA. The new London meetings might help networking - do you know anyone who would be interested? (I'm expecting the response "If I knew of anyone they would be doing it already ...").

Jean Sheward hits the nail on the head when she mentions industry contacts. In order to give the media the sort of coverage that *Vector* gives to books we need to raise our profile in the film/TV/radio world and start to get more information and preview tapes in advance. Not only will this improve our coverage, but it will mean the reviews appear closer to the events they describe. While the time lag is more an irritant than a serious problem with film and video, it is a major disadvantage with TV and radio. With only one showing, memory may fade and the readers have less chance to go back and judge a piece for themselves. For this reason, I do not think TV reviewing by video is such a great idea.

But we are persevering with making contacts and will be adding new spots to the media section. I am particularly keen on covering video releases, especially those films (such as the anime reviewed by Geoff Cowie) that have not had cinematic releases. We could do with some more (willing) regular reviewers though.

Susan Booth's comment that the film reviews are over concerned with special effects is interesting (I also think it is untrue, but let's not quibble) in its implication that they are not worthy of attention over, say, drama. SF film is practically unique in that it has special effects - effects that draw attention to themselves by being clever, spectacular or whatever, often to the point that the viewer is forced to step back out of the context of the film and admire them. In *Terminator 2*, for instance, there are so many sfx that it is often difficult to get inside the drama without being kicked out again by the next visual wonder.

Michael Stern has written about this phenomenon in *Alien Zone* (edited by Annette Kuhn (1990)), a great book if you want a quick look at academic SF film criticism), pointing out that while 2001: A Space Odyssey won the 1968 Academy Award for Special Visual Effects, it was not even nominated for the make up and costume work that produced the simian protohumans at the beginning of the film. Stern says: "The unofficial explanation (plausible in the light of the attention and awards lavished on the far inferior work in *Planet of the Apes* [also 1968]) was that the Academy members did not realise that Kubrick's hominids were actors, not monkeys".

In other films - even many horror films - the sfx blend with the reality on screen. They are meant to fool the viewer, not show off in themselves. Reviewers of westerns are often drawn to talk about cowboys - sfx are no less a defining characteristic of SF films. Having said that, I don't watch westerns just to see cowboys, and I sure don't want to read about them every time I pick up a film review.

Now for Chris Baker and the appliance of science. Well, the major scientific facts can be ignored in SF - there is a great tradition of it -

and I'm sure if anyone cared enough, rationalisations could be made for the space rumble in the same way that they have been composed for exceeding the speed of light. What matters is the intelligence with which the excuses are made - if artful or stylish enough, the viewer lets the transgressed fact pass. Everyone has different tolerance levels and bringing scientific deviance into an assessment of a film (or whatever) carries the same problems as bringing in violence or sex - just complaining about it is pointless. Discuss it, put it in context, ask whether it works or is worth the trouble - fine, but otherwise why should we, the readers, care?

End of statement.

[Not quite. Ben Wharton, who writes the "Tales from Tinseltown" was in the States over the summer, so it is up to Mark Ogier to sum it all up].

Mark Ogier, Laurelin, Clos de Sept,  
Rue Jacques, St Sampson's, Guernsey

Chris Baker makes a valid point in his assault on SF cinema today, and frankly what he says is difficult to gainsay. In fact, if one looks at some of the so-called "adult" SF movies of recent years, they are little more than children's films dressed up with flashy effects and lots of violent action. The Terminator movies are a good example - and it's interesting to note that while Terminator 2 was a 18 rating when it appeared on our cinema screens, a few bits have been trimmed and it has been released on video as a 15 certificate, presumably to help the marketing men sell 72 toys.

Chris argues that 2001 is a good example of adult theme SF with scientific accuracy (at least where the lack of sound in space is concerned). But I, for one, cannot imagine Star Wars without the sound of explosions, TIE fighters whooshing by, and the heavy throb of massive engines as Imperial battleships glide into view. And how many members of the audience are going to complain if there is no sound at such moments? The point, I am afraid, is that films like Star Wars are not designed to be enjoyed solely by SF fans.

If real accuracy is wanted, then surely we should also lose all the music in films? After all, when you are in space, you are not going to hear "The Blue Danube" play as a ship flies by, are you? I'm probably being facetious, in which case I apologise, but like the music, the sound in all movies, not just SF, is added for effect. Without music, the film would be a thinner experience and would be hard work to watch.

Think of the Rocky movies, if you can bear it. Have you ever heard a real boxing glove blow land with the same bone crunching sound? But if the sounds were repeated in the films exactly as they were in reality, they would lessen the impact and make the scenes less exciting. The same is true of the space battles in Star Wars and the dynamic "bang" as the Enterprise enters hyperspace: it's all done for effect and to heighten the drama, and nobody is going to deny that. Kubrick got away with it in 2001 because of the deliberate pacing of the story, but even he had to cover it with music.

The trouble with wanting "decent adult SF" is that most cinema goes would not want to see it. Today's SF action films are made for a mass audience and geared to make people want to see them again and again. Imagine the impact a serious SF movie like Solaris

would have if released today. I would go and see it, as would my SF fan friends, but it would not take long for the multitudes to realise that this film contains no punch ups or car chases, and has few flashy FX to speak of. They would stay away in droves.

For a classic example of the sort of thinking that goes on in Hollywood when faced with a potentially "difficult" film that has cost a lot of money, one has only to look at the mauling of Blade Runner. Thankfully, we should all soon have a chance to judge the REAL Blade Runner for ourselves, when Ridley Scott's original cut of the film is issued.

But while the Hollywood game is firmly based around making money (I doubt there will come a time when it is not), we are going to have to put up with the fact that SF is regarded as a genre where flashy FX, action and big budgets take precedence over making good SF. It's going to be a long time before the climate is such that someone could make a movie of, say, Geoff Ryman's The Child Garden and make money out of it.

Now to Susan Booth and Jean Sheward, both of whom have a point in their criticism of the lack of coverage of children's SF in Matrix. Yes, I have a VCR - and it spends most of its time taping movies off satellite so I can inform Matrix readers of what is being screened there. I have heard that there are rich pickings to be found in children's TV and I would love to be able to see some of them for myself - but half of the problem is finding the time to watch the videos, and the other half is spotting the programmes as they come on.

I see my "mission" in life to be to inform BSFA members of what is being screened on English satellite channels. Occasionally I will dip into the general entertainment channels to see what is of interest, but most of the time I review films because there is a chance that either a) the reader will already have seen it or b) the film will eventually surface on the terrestrial channels. I make it a priority to find as many obscure films as I can, because - as those who are kind enough to read my column will know - sometimes you can find some real gems among the garbage, and I want to let people know about them.

I also have a soft spot for the really awful, but that's my problem and I have to deal with it - but I do my best to send out warnings. Of course, I am bound to miss out on some SF that is screened, simply because of the enormous amount of TV available on satellite.

As a general observation, it's encouraging to see that people do take notice of the media section, and the points raised certainly open the door for more input from other contributors...

## The Sex of Letters

This discussion rumbles on with passionate fervour, uninterrupted by Ken Lake who writes from Khajuraho that "weather oppressive, lum upset, but worth the trip". First on the stage is an academic's reasoned view:

Norman W Beswick, 21 Churchill Rd,  
Church Stretton, Shropshire SY6 6EP

It seems to me there's no reason at all why users of English shouldn't try to be as courteous and precise as possible, whatever

the problems in other tongues (which speakers must solve in other ways).

I remember the useful shock it was for teachers when some researchers tried dropping the term "less able" for children and substituted "low achieving" - emphasising what was actually known - the level of achievement - rather than what was guessed - one possible reason for it.

Whatever John Madracki may bluster, there can be no doubt that for many people "mankind" conjures up a picture of a lot of men, being served by a fringe of subsidiary and ignorable women. "Humankind", an addition of only one easy syllable, gives a useful corrective nudge.

Of course, one can go to absurd extremes, like inventing awkward new words or calling short people "vertically challenged"; but sexism is an offence that goes to the heart of human relationships and we should avoid it.

However, for every anti-John Madracki comment, there's a pro, this particular one from Herve Hauck who comments on David Wingrove's supposed pornography, but who cannot comment much as he hasn't read them and on Czech female writers whose feminism strikes him as being somewhat strident, before he gets to the point of non-sexist language.

Herve Hauck, Bat 4, Residence la  
Mulotiere, 16 Rue Georges Meynieu,  
44300 Nantes, France

First of all, a warning: I'm surely a vile sexist pig. That's why I'd like to say that I agree completely with John Madracki about the increasingly creeping feminism in the BSFA publications.

I am fed up with all this noise around non-sexist language. It seems to me that, excepting a few books who will benefit from a neuter pronoun when portraying ET's (ex: "The Crucible of Time"), all this controversy is quite futile. In French, the word "day" is masculine (le jour) and night is feminine (la nuit), does it really show the triumph of a degrading masculinist view of the world? I don't think so and it's not one of my main concerns, so I will still use "history" and not "herstory" and think that mankind refers to all humans whatever their gender.

I find the very frequent mentions to certain books and collections very annoying. I mean there is always somewhere in a BSFA publication, a mention of the following: The Female Man Joanna Russ; The Left Hand of Darkness or The Dispossessed; The Women's Press (wondered why there isn't a men's press?); Ursula K LeGuin. The overall effect is a bit tiring and tedious. But the main thing I dislike is the too frequently used equation which reads:

```
if (author = feminist) then
    work := good
else
    work := bad
endif;
```

I think that's a too light way to assert the qualities of a book. I'm being only half-serious, and I'm aware that the social equality of men and women is not complete by now, but the systematic bias towards radical feminism found in some of the BSFA publications is really too important not to comment on.

From sexual connotations of language to radical feminism is rather too large a leap to

be comfortable with, so back to language with another reaction to John Madracki.

Steve Palmer, 31 Edward Street,  
Luton, Beds. LU2 0NF

M Cowen thinks that the use of 'he/her' and the debate over the language issue is irrelevant and depressing. I would say the opposite. There is ample evidence to show that our use of language determines to a large degree our thoughts and attitudes. For example, groups of children asked to draw pictures from written descriptions of people did the following: when 'he' was used to mean a person, as is most common these days, the vast majority of people drawn by boys and girls were men; when 'he or she' was used, the majority of men was less, and when 'they' or 'humanity' was used, equal numbers of men and women were drawn.

Enough of the science; a simple thought experiment shows how words shape our mental attitudes. Take two sentences: 'A jaanica person' - walked down the street' and 'A n... - walked down the street'. What do these say about the person in question? More to the point, what do they say about someone who uses 'jaanica person' and someone who uses 'nigger'? All words are loaded with cultural meanings, and thus they shape our deepest attitudes.

The fact that this is an Anglocentric bias is hardly any reason to stop it. M Cowen and I did, after all, learn English through no fault of our own. Yes, German and Welsh are languages with masculine and feminine senses, but so what? German, French, Welsh and Russian are sexist languages in a different way to English. They are sexist because they evolved in a sexist culture. But they are here to stay. The mere fact that we know all this and are discussing it is surely a step forward?

There is no non-sexist word in German for 'Chairman', but that is a sad thing, not a terminal one. It is not a reason for ignoring the relationship between language, culture and thought. Similarly, there is, at the moment, no non-sexist House of Parliament; but is that a reason for not encouraging women in their struggle to become MPs? No.

John Madracki has a point when he notes that, while there are two women-only Orbiter style groups, there are none for men. This is perhaps because of the implicit point that men are the norm and women are not: a mixed group is in a very real sense a men-only group.

Regrettably, as has been pointed out, 'mankind' and 'humankind' do not mean the same thing at all. It is not condescending to use words like people, humanity, human beings, *et al*, when the use of 'he', 'mankind' and so on are implicitly loaded against women. It is just common sense, I think. As for being a dimwit for thinking that 'mankind' refers to the male of the species, that is, of course, exactly what people think, and that is why generic words like 'he' and 'mankind' have appeared in English.

I would agree with anyone who says the current growth of Politically Correct language, especially in America where it is taken to ridiculous extremes, has bad points. But P.C. is not in itself a Good Thing, it is on balance a Good Thing. As Andrea Dworkin pointed out in a recent televised Cambridge Union debate, P.C. is a step on the way, a

part of cultural progress, and not an end in itself.

The whole upshot of all this is that we are still convinced that there are two irreconcilably different types of people: men and women. This biological view forgets that we long ago became social creatures. Only when that is realised (a hell of a long way off) will the generic use of 'mankind' and 'he' be seen as thought control from a rather pathetic, selfish, male culture.

Mike White, 62 Goodmoor Crescent,  
Churchdown, Glos. GL3 2DL

Is it really too much to expect our Great Lake to actually read properly any letters he might find critical to his point of view rather than descending into invective? His lack of reasoned response to my letter only points to the paucity of his argument and, more importantly, is hardly likely to encourage anyone thinking of contributing to the Matrix letter column. If that's raising the level of debate then I'm a banana!

## Janus on the Hugos

Accompanying a clipping concerning comics from the 'Antiques Trade Gazette' and a whimsical suggestion that there should be a competition to find the most esoteric source of news comes some reasoned criticism of the Hugos. Look elsewhere, in the stop press section, for a list of Hugo recommendations.

Philip Muldowney, Golden Harvest,  
Tamerton Foliot Rd, Looseleigh Cross,  
Plymouth PL6 5ES

Seeing the Hugo winners struck me how very curiously conservative they are this year. The most intriguing (not to say weird) choice must be *Barragar* for the Hugo. This is not to say that it is necessarily bad, but is it the best SF novel of 1991??? I, for one, am not too sure. Of its kind, the *Analog* type fast paced, junior space adventure opera, with counts, kings and all, it is a good, light read. Yet it is the sort of story that could easily have come out of an issue of *Analog* thirty or even forty years ago. As a choice for best novel, it is clearly a regression to the 'wish things were like they used to be' brigade. Granted that 1991 was not a year when one book stood head and shoulders above the rest, but I am sure that all of us could probably mention several other books that deserved it better. Stylistically, thematically *Barragar* is a very sadly reactionary choice.

Even the short awards tend to support the conservative argument. 'Gold' by Isaac Asimov: this, I suspect, is more an award for Asimov's memory than anything else. While entertaining, it was again a style and theme of yesteryear. Asimov had not changed his fiction writing style since 1930, and it certainly showed here. Again, the story was good, but no more than a dozen different novelettes, but it was just so old fashioned. 'A Walk in the Sun' by Geoffrey Landis, again straight old hard SF that could have been written any time in the past thirty years. Good story, but again that *déjà vu* feeling. The only story that feels right, straight out of the 1990s, is 'Beggars in Spain' by Nancy Kress. Yet even here, the traditional values of strong storytelling and plot dominate any stylistic advances.

Dozis wins again, so does *Locust*. This is really one of the most depressing and dispiriting set of Hugo awards I have seen in

years. They are all looking back, yet it is so very curious, there is a lot of newer talent that is totally and significantly ignored. Why? Is it that in times of depression the Worldcons are getting too expensive to participate in for younger people? Because this is a set of awards dominated by an older generation view. If this is state of the art SF, then God help it. ConFrancisco in '93 costs \$85 to register, InterSection in Glasgow in '95 costs £40 - and that is at the moment. These are expensive figures for the right to vote for a Hugo. If this ageism in selection is going to continue, then future Hugo ballots will make sad reading.

## BSFA matters

The latest in the 'Save Focus' campaign came from one of the more remote BSFA members.

Daniel Buck, Croft of Kincardine, Boat of Garten, Invernesshire PH24 3BY

Well, sub renewal time came round again and despite recent decisions to the contrary, I sent away my cheque. What possessed me, I don't know. It must be something to do with the distance I am from anything that happens - Matrix is one of the few ways I keep in touch.

I have now to pass comment on some of the letters in Matrix 102. I commiserate wholly with 'Dead Wood'. Despite being a budding writer myself, I assure him that he's not alone in basically feeling too intimidated to contribute, neither is Leigh Barlow alone in just plain not having the time to do anything - terribly selfish that, to put one's own enjoyment before that of an organisation one pays for the privilege to belong to!

But what really excited me was your comment after Stuart Falconer's letter about the rushing through of a temporary suspension of Focus.

You suggest that it was partly because there were no potential candidates for editor. At the end of April, I wrote to Kev and offered my services, giving half a page of potential ideas and open to any further suggestions. Maybe I'm not a worthy candidate for editorship, but was I the only one to write with such an offer? If not, surely the pool of ideas could have been sifted and a group of us could have got together and produced something acceptable. In 'Empire Dreams' (Matrix 101), Kev says many people have written in about Focus - if the interest is that high, shouldn't great efforts be made to continue with it?

It's not that I expect Kev to answer every letter he receives, but in June I wrote to him again with a host more ideas regarding the BSFA and expanding membership. If he could at least mention the input of ideas during his column it would make those who send them in feel less like we're talking to a brick wall. My suggestions might well be rubbish, but I won't bother to make the effort again if I might as well be burning the letter with my Christmas list to Santa!

So you don't think I'm against change altogether, I'm pleased to see *Vector* and *Paperback Inferno* merge into one and the new layout for Matrix is wonderful.

In his 'Empire Dreams' column, Kev mentions the suggestions he received. By now, you'll have seen the piece elsewhere in this magazine concerning the future of Focus.

## The Periodic Table

This title refers obliquely to the delight Primo Levi got from life, and provides information on forthcoming SF conventions, the ideal chance to meet a favourite author and/or meet other SF readers plus feedback from other conventions which mention the perceived highlights. To kind off, here is a pair of inside accounts of two very different con "workshops".

### "First Contact" at Scone

**John Bray**

The scenario was that a message had been received from Epsilon Indi (11.2 ly away), initially just prime numbers, but eventually followed up by a ship with a computer AI speaking on behalf of the aliens. A Game Master passed information from the aliens (me) to the Humans, split into teams of Scientists, Politicians, Military, Media, and Religious, each carefully briefed in their role.

I had prepared the aliens in rather a hurry, starting from the planet, where I'm on strong ground, onto the rather shaky biology, and well out of my depth with the culture.

The interesting point was that virtually no information about the aliens was needed. The initial prime number sequence generated a good hour of fervent debate between the teams, and the extra information about the alien ship coming to the Moon and landing at Tranquility Base was only revealed to try and speed the game along. Virtually no information was requested from the aliens until I admitted the computer spoke English, at which point every group clamoured for information.

The only need for the aliens' culture to be revealed was after various surveying probes had been sent out, and the paranoid military formed a world Junta (exiling the recalcitrant scientists) and demanded the withdrawal of the missiles. I assumed the aliens would not know the concept of lying, and replied in baffled terms, only to confuse the Earth teams even more.

Still trying to force the pace of the game, I landed the alien ship on Hawaii, to close off the 2 1/2 hour game, leaving nearly all the biology and culture of the aliens unrevealed...

All the attendees enjoyed themselves, and various human traits were revealed, but very little was achieved in testing out the alien concepts. This might be fun, but isn't a good way to test the physics and biology speculation that I consider to be the best parts of the First Contact idea.

*It all sounds rather like Carl Sagan was right to view CETI/SETI (Communication with/Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligences) as a psychological projective test...*

### Saturday? 9AM?? This must be the writer's workshop!

**Sally Ann Melia**

I'm glad to report that the writer's workshop at Novacon 22 was a success. The Royal Angus Hotel, which did the Brum group proud with its warm welcome, was also generous to us apprentice scribblers. We came together, blinking in delight, in the red velvet and dark wood board room. Room service was on hand to provide tea, a gorgeous Italian porter did our photo-copying, carried messages, and most other things required by the creative process.

The only misgivings I had were with the timings of our sessions. When organising the workshop, I was well aware of the many star-studded panels and platinum films on offer in other parts of the con. I also remembered how I had missed Jack Cohen's 'How to create an Alien' speech at the Eastercon. So I planned the workshop for 9am on Saturday, 10am on Sunday, well before the main programme began.

This was a wonderful idea in theory, but with the fruits of Friday night's madness still fogging my senses, the practical implementation was somewhat different. I was hanging hard to the sides of the lift at 0855, as I surged upwards to the board room, where six equally shaky but admirably eager writers awaited me.

Saturday was Instant Writing, with 30 minutes to pass whilst our Italian porter wrestled with the photocopyer, we touched on broken relationships, freedom, collecting mania and death by poison. Sunday, we reviewed each other's work, assessing shortcomings, highlighting strengths and pointing to possible markets. It was fun to take time to consider one's own work, as well as delighting in other's imaginary worlds and poignant heroics.

We made a date for our next meeting at Helicon on Jersey at Easter and perhaps even Mexican next May in Scarborough. If you missed this workshop, I will look forward to seeing you at another in '93!

Participants at the Novacon 22 Writer's Workshop were: Mike Ibeji, Steve Jones, Carol Ann Green, Roy Gray, Justina Robson, Richard James, Steve Grover, chaired by myself. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Novacon 22 committee and in particular Bernie Evans for her unending support.

If you want to know more about future writer's workshops, please write to me, Sally-Ann Melia, 11 Spinney Drive, Solihull B90 4HB.

*Ireland is a highly suitable site for conventions, with a plethora of native authors and even more domiciled. There's rumours of more NICons being planned in the North and here is an account of the latest Octocon in the South:*

### Octocon at Dun Laoghaire

**Tommy Ferguson**

I really enjoyed Octocon 3 (Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, October 16-18 1992) for three reasons. Not the usual good guests, great atmosphere or innovative programming, although it had all those features. These were all brand new reasons for me, things I had not experienced before at a convention and which made the whole event memorable and satisfying.

The first reason was being a gopher. Having run a couple of conventions myself, I knew what this involved, hence the fact that I was co-opted (by my friends). As security gophers in the video room over Friday night to Saturday morning, we had to make sure that noone without a badge got in. I have to say I enjoyed it. I got to watch the videos I would normally not see, I got somewhere to sleep for a few hours and there was the great satisfaction of holding over the rewards of gophering until needed - and, boy, did I need those pints later.

The second reason for my enjoyment of the con was attending programme items. As a die-hard fan, I didn't anticipate attending many items, if any, as per normal. I had promised, though, to get an Orson Scott Card book signed and so went along to his speech as Guest of Honour. I was very impressed. I'd read most of his books until he started to insert a lot of his Mormon beliefs and then gave up. His speech, though, was well thought out, structured and extremely articulate. His opening remarks were that after the speech you would go away thinking he was a prat or just go away thinking. He surprised me, I must say. The other programme items included the SF quiz. We had entered a team from Belfast with the sure knowledge that the quizmaster, Graham Andrews, an old time Belfast fan, would swing things our way. But it soon became clear that his obvious bias was over-compensated for by coming down hard on us in split decisions. The fun of the event was remonstrating with him, the audience and other teams: "We wuz robbed" and "fix, fix" were heard through the event.

The third reason for being satisfied by Octocon '92 was taking part in a few panels. I was deeply interested in the subjects concerned. One was "Star Trek: The Final Panel" and consisted of myself (an avid anti-Trekkie), a supposedly unbiased chairman and someone from the Cork Star Trek Group on the other side. Massed in front of the panel were a good forty to fifty Trek fans. It would not be an understatement to say I was apprehensive about the thing, especially when the chairman read out an article I had written on Trekkies. As the panel developed and I got further and further in trouble, it became clear that the view of Trekkies I had was not being invalidated by anything the audience or the panel members had to say. If anything, I would say that a few members of that audience reinforced some of my views. I did get out alive to tell the tale, though.

Given these events, it was difficult to see how anything could mar my enjoyment of the con (and it didn't ... brief gap here while Tommy goes to Macdonalds, out for a meal and to the con disco). The crucial period of judging whether a con was successful is the day after effect. I was completely out of it on Monday, tired and on auto-pilot for what passed for doing some work. On that basis alone and the amount of sleep I managed to avoid over the weekend, it was a truly excellent con. And I'd like to thank the con committee and the Royal Marine Hotel, plus the Queen's University of Belfast who sponsored the trip.

The next Irish con will be March 6-7 at The Grand, Malahide, Co Dublin. George Takei, Diane Duane and Peter Morwood will be guests at Time warp and the con will be loosely themed around a "United Federation of Planets" conference including a Starfleet Academy entrance exam and an Ambassadors' Ball. Membership is £25, with a hotel rate of £25 per person per night (double/twin), £36 single, details from 178 Woodfield, Scholarstown Road, Dublin 16, Ireland.

## Novacon 22

6-8th November 1992, Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham

### Barry Traish

Novacons have the impression of being very comfortable and relaxed, each one cruising along, no one having any doubts or worries about its success. To a large extent that image fits well, but perhaps it can be misleading because everyone assumes that everything is alright. My first problem was attending. I heard a few days before I was due to go that there was a membership limit that had been reached. I had only just mailed my cheque! A couple of phone calls and days later and I knew that I could leave the next morning. It would have been nice, as a member of Novacon 21, if someone could have written to me with a warning months earlier.

Arriving at the con, everything was a lot better. The membership limit was avoided by selling day memberships and people seemed happy, probably glad to be in the centre of Birmingham and not stuck out on the motorway miles from anywhere, like last year. I still don't think that the hotel is a great choice. The bar prices are high, the staff object to people sleeping in the video room (*Are you surprised?*) and the dealer room was through the restaurant. With the high price of the con (£18-£25) with 350 members, surely a bigger, better laid out hotel could be found.

Having said all that, it was still a very enjoyable convention. The people were generally friendly, the atmosphere relaxed, with a good mix of famous (and infamous) faces. Even on Sunday evening, when there were only about a dozen fans left awake, everyone came together for informal chat and drinking with what remained of the bar staff (one was fired and frog marched out, one was ill, one just never turned up and another was on for about 48 hours with only short breaks).

Storm Constantine was the guest of honour, and she was very open and entertaining. The theme of writing is one which I think holds genuine appeal for fans and Storm herself was perfectly suited to take part in it. I may have even been convinced to buy or read some more of her work. The disco was another aspect of the programme where Storm and the Constantines (as her 'groupies' became known) were to be found, although I wonder why Novacon bothers with a disco; few people dance and more complain about the noise (*Well, it wasn't at the ceilidh!*).

Fanzines are a part of what Novacon is about and this year's seemed to produce more than last, or at least people discussing fanzines rather than just discussing other fanzines (perhaps I have missed the point here). As usual a couple of Novas ended up going back on the train to Leeds. One very nice point about Novacons is the fanzine table, where fans leave old copies of their zines for anyone to pick up, although it didn't seem to be particularly used, either by editors or readers (*It would have helped if the hotel cleaners hadn't binned a large selection, along with the Nova ballot box on the Saturday morning*). The con publications were professionally produced with some interesting articles. (Jenny and Steve will definitely print this conrep now!)

It is the people that make Novacons nice, and the fact that they are left alone to do their own thing if they want, rather than what the con gives. Definitely not value for money if you go expecting to be passively amused, but worth going for the company that can be found.

### Contour Mapping

Less than a thousand days to Glasgow in '95. The last time a Worldcon was in the British Isles was Conspiracy in 1987. The committee consists of Vince Docherty, Tim Illingworth, John Fairley, John Stewart, Theresa Renner, KIM Campbell, Karen Naylor, Henry Balen, Martin Easterbrook and Kathy Westhead and the twin themes will echo time and space with an overriding desire to make this Worldcon really international. It costs £40 to register until the end of the year (assuming you haven't already pre-supported in some form): write to Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4SH or Theresa Renner, Box 15430, Washington, DC 20003, USA.

**Starbase 93** is a "Star Trek" con (January 29-31, The Hilton International, Leeds, £30 attending membership from Miss Carol Looby, 152 Otley Road, Headingley, Leeds LS16 5JX). The special guest is scheduled to be James Doohan - subject, as ever, to work commitments and there will be three days of "fascinating" entertainment with even non-Trek videos.

**Pentatonic** is the fifth British film con and runs over the weekend 5-7th Feb 1993 at the Rozel Hotel, Weston-Super-Mare.

The room rate is now fixed: £24 per person per night in the "family" rooms, sharing three to the room; £25 pppn for twin and double rooms; £26 for single rooms, £10 per night for children aged between 9 and 14 years sharing a room with an adult, no charge for under 9 sharing.

In addition, those who wish to extend their stay for Sunday night will be charged only £15 for bed & breakfast on that night, provided that they were at the hotel for the previous two.

Membership is now £18, payable to "Pentatonic", with Children under 9 £1.

Contact: Pentatonic, 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ, UK, Email: dholladay@cx.compulink.co.uk

Lucon will not be running this February. Instead, the Lucon mob are running next year's Union.

**Helicon** is the 1993 Eastercon (April 8-12, Hotel de France, St Helier, Jersey, £28 attending membership from 63 Drake Road, Chessington, Surrey KT9 1LQ). John Brunner and George R R Martin are the Guests of Honour, with Larry van der Putte as Fan Guest. Programme items will range from serious literary discussion of SF to more frivolous items like "Should chocolate be a prescribed drug" and "L5, Freedom and Mir".

**Mexicon V** (May 28-31, Hotel St Nicholas, Scarborough, have announced revised membership rates: £18 (current rate) until 10th January 1993, £20 pounds until 15th May (no postal memberships after this date). Postal memberships are available from Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 4SH. Membership on the door will be £25. Mexicon V already had Pat Cadigan and Norman Spinrad as Special Guests, but they will now be joined by Ian McDonald and Ken Campbell who will give a performance of *Pigsport*.

**Novacon 23** (November 5-7, probably the Royal Angus Hotel, Birmingham, £20 attending membership from Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, B66 4SH). The Guest of Honour will be Stephen Baxter and it will be chaired by Carol Morton with Richard Standage, Bernie Evans, Tony Morton, Andy Wright and Helena Bowles as other committee members.

**Sou'Wester** is the 1994 Eastercon (April 1-4, Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, £25 attending membership from 3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol BS6 6SZ). The Guests of Honour are Barbara Hambly, who has been a model and a karate instructor and is into historical and fantasy costume, Diane Duane, Neil Gaiman and Peter Morwood. From the beginning, this con has intended to be a "good, solid, traditional Eastercon", but the progress report points out, sensibly, that if people have good ideas, or any ideas at all about what they want, they should let the committee (who aren't psychic) know. "Basically, it's up to you. Yes, we're running the con, but it's your con we're running". The areas Sou'Wester particularly intends to cover are SF/Horror, serious SF, children's fiction, media, comics, costume, filk, real ale, cuddly toys and how to make people new to con feel at home and encourage them to want to come to another. The recent PR has also allayed fears about the potential crime level at the Adelphi, although the methods used may seem a little draconian to some.

### Profile: Jenny Glover, Matrix Editor

Turning left at the War Memorial, the kids and I walked slowly down the long thin road, turned a corner and saw a centaur. It stood proud, framed by the sky, stone leaping from a rugged base. Further on was a huge bust in white marble, a pensive face beautifully modelled from neck to eyes. The rest was missing - no hair, no forehead, no eyebrows, though my mind tried to sketch them in as I stood stunned by the sight of these statues free in the open. Down by the lake was a Henry Moore with a seagull perched on it; up on the hill were some abstract Barbara Hepworths. It was the sheer audacity of having a sculpture park which took my breath away; and that's the reaction I'm looking for with SF.

Most of the SF I'm reading right now is precautionary to assess the suitability for the kids. My nine year daughter graduated from Brian Ball to Fritz Leiber, taking a gigantic chomp at Terry Pratchett on the way and sinking beyond trace in *The Two Towers*; the son, aged six, devoured *The Illustrated Hobbit* on several trains while on holiday and is now getting *The Other Side of the Sky* for bedtime reading. I'm staying one book ahead with the early Heinleins, having just finished *Poikayne* of Mars and now just about to start *Hare Spacesuit*, *Will Travel*. And I took time off for good behaviour and re-read *Tiger!* Tiger! last weekend: it was still amazingly mind-blowing.

There are only two major rules in this household: don't touch my glasses, don't disturb me after 9pm. That's the magic witching hour

when I can slough off the petty household chores and the kids and become an individual in my own right. I started this way back when I did my Open University degree. Sure, it's possible to feed a baby and write notes; many of the lullabies I sang were chemical formulae fitting into nursery rhyme tunes, but it was easier all round to have a no-children zone for serious essay writing. Now, it's the time when I can read my choice of SF, play guitar, write letters, listen to the World Service on the radio plus, greatest luxury of all, think and be alone at peace.

The work on *Matrix* is roughly split half and half between Steve and I. My part is to word process everything (last issue was about 35,000 words give or take a hundred words, so it is quite time consuming), to proof read from screen and to do the administrative work, things like writing letters, finding articles and/or authors, acquiring artists. That can take a couple of hours a day, though I take Sundays off. The last few days before laser printing get more than a bit hectic, with Steve working all night for a couple of days and both the SF and letter writing have to give way while I proof read and word process any items of last minute news. It's an absorbing hobby, getting *Matrix* together, moderately fun filled. I enjoy it and I'm an optimist.

## The Man of the Future

The Ecology of Human Development and Science Fiction

### Yuri Shcherbatiykh

Human beings have always tried to catch a glimpse of the future from the time of the ancient pharaohs to the present. There have always been fortune tellers and prophets, astrologists and palm readers. But the questions about the future change to suit each period in history. People can try to forecast changes in the Earth's climate, changes in political systems, or predict technological progress.

Let's try to imagine what human beings will be like in the distant future - let's guess how their bodies and souls will develop.

People are children of nature: they are the product of the laws of evolution of living creatures on our planet. But after having always been an organic part of the biosphere, they are now becoming more and more alien to it. This has to do with the fact that humankind has persistently been creating its own technological living environment: a "technosphere" that greatly differs from the environment out of which it was created.

In order to better understand possible directions of human development, I would like to present a hypothesis of the three stages of humans' adaptation to their environment.

In the first stage of development, when people were only thinking primates, they reacted passively to changes in their environment and adapted to them. For example, in the cold, all mammals' blood vessels contract, regulating the organism's heating reflexes.

When people acquired reason, they found another way to react to natural factors. Rather than passively adapting to natural factors, they started changing their environment, altering it to conform to their needs and desires.

Thus began the second stage of the evolution of living creatures on Earth. What do people do when it gets cold? They put on clothes, build shelters, turn on electric appliances. In other words, they create around them a micro-environment with comfortable living conditions.

Most of the problems that human beings today have to do with the fact that our living environment has changed drastically in the past century, while biologically speaking human beings themselves have freed themselves have remained just as they were a thousand years ago.

The core of my hypothesis is that humankind will be forced to make another step of evolution. In this stage humans will learn to chance their organisms to meet a desired goal, that is, to be flexible and adjust to their environments, consciously changing their bodies as it becomes necessary. Indian yogas were the first to start doing this: they can change their own body temperature, metabolism, heart beat, etc. Today, biofeedback machines help people control their own autonomic systems. This is only the beginning of the process of human beings' release from the rigid genetic programs that are established in them by nature.

What can humans expect in the future? Let's turn to science for an exact answer. But, unfortunately, today's science doesn't look more than two or three decades into the future. Here are the reasons why: absence of funding of long-term projects; the impossibility to properly test on existing models, since only time can tell what the future will really be like; the narrow specialisation of contemporary science discourages the collaboration of experts from different branches of

science like biologists working with physiologists, which is critical to distant predictions.

So if science won't tell the future for us, we'll turn to Science Fiction. Science Fiction bravely creates images of a new world. Constant invention of new images is vital to Science Fiction, since it is what arouses readers' interest. However, Science Fiction is more than fruitless dressing - it often turns out to be valid prediction.

Remember that lasers, holograms, the atom bomb, robots, television and space flight appeared first in Science Fiction literature, and only later in real life. Science Fiction presents us with a wide variety of alternatives for the future, and at least a small number of them will be realised. Today, Science Fiction is the only way to get a clear concrete look at the future.

How does Science Fiction present human beings of a distant future, though? There are general three different kinds of predictions, each of which has its own branches and variations.

The first is that human beings will not change. This is the most popular view, and is presented by authors like Isaac Asimov in *The End of Eternity* and Stanislaw Lem in *Solaris*. Humans can come up with amazing machines, change the planet's climate and conquer the Galaxy, but their own souls remain just as perplexing and their bodies just as powerless as ours are for us today.

The second sort of literature looks at the constant process of evolution: a race of "new people" who will take the place of human beings as they know them. Examples of this include H G Wells' *The Time Machine* or Edmund Hamilton's *The Evolution of Doctor Pollard*. This kind of fantasy, in which humans change passively, is probably unlikely.

In his book *The Past, Present and Future of Humanity*, the Russian Professor, Bystrov, wrote: "In order for man's biological evolution to continue, it is necessary to place people in life-threatening conditions in which they need certain biological traits in order to survive". But this probably is not possible in our humane and civilised world, where weak and strong, ignorant and intelligent, have practically even chances to reproduce.

The third group of Science Fiction prediction is that humans change actively, by their own will and according to their own plan. The probability of this kind of development is greater. Some authors expect drastic changes in human beings, who in future will gain entirely new capabilities: telepathy, levitation and telekinetics. Other authors concentrate on technological perfection of people: artificial gills, mechanical brains and so forth.

The general symbol of this approach to evolution is the concept of a "cybernetic organism" - a human machine that combines the advantages of both people and robots. However, the human body and human emotions are too alien to machines' logic to successfully combine the two. But a person doesn't need to insert a computer into his or her brain in order to learn to control his or her body and consciousness.

Many Science Fiction writers predict that in the future human beings will acquire many useful abilities if they make a conscious effort to develop their own organism.

We don't know which direction human development will really take, and can only make suggestions. Right now, Science Fiction writers are faced with the problem of people's psychological preparation for surprises and unprecedented changes that will arise throughout the development of human civilisation on Earth. Science Fiction literature serves as a gradual adaptation to the future.

## Hugo Recommendations

### Jim Mann

Every year, NESFA (the New England SF Association) has a series of discussion groups on the Hugos. We sit around and tell one another what we think is good, what is worth reading and worth at least considering at Hugo time, etc. This year, we decided to take notes, to try to pass our recommendations along to others who might be looking for something good to read. Besides, it's always a good way to start a discussion.

### NESFA 1992 Hugo Recommendations

The purpose of this list is to provide tips on Good Stuff to read. (The initials in the last column refer to those people who recommended the books listed. The key is at the end of this listing.)

## Novels

Conrad Geiger's Blues  
Anvil of Stars  
Naked Landing  
Servant of the Empire  
Jumper  
Worlds Enough and Time  
Fatherland  
Resurrection  
Jack the Bodiless  
Class Houses  
Flying in Place  
Last Call  
Dreamships  
Cold as Ice  
The Grail of Hearts  
Guns of the South  
A Fire Upon the Deep

Aristoi  
Briar Rose

Michael Bishop jam  
Greg Bear mlo  
Algis Budrys by  
Raymond Feist pv  
Steve Gould ca daa jam  
Joe Haldeman gf  
Robert Harris rk ec daa ca  
Katherine Kerr ec  
Julian May mlo  
Laura Mixon ca jam by po  
Susan Palwick lm jam gf  
Tim Powers po ged  
Melissa Scott ec  
Charles Sheffield ged  
Susan Schwartz lm pal  
Harry Turtledove ec  
Vernor Vine mlo rk kp jam po  
Walter Jon Williams arl mh gf daa  
Jane Yolen po mlo  
lm po

## Short Fiction

Faith (atk)  
Silver or Gold (atk)  
The Winterberry (ak)  
Stopping at Slowway  
A Long Night's Vigil at the Temple (atk)  
The Seven Swans

Poul & Karen Anderson mlo  
Emma Bull mlo po  
Nicholas DiChario rk im gf  
Fred Pohl ec  
Robert Silverberg mlo  
Lois Tilton po

atk = After the King; ak = Alternate Kennedys

## Non Fiction

Let's Hear It for the Deaf Man  
Dinotopia  
A Wealth of Fable

Dave Langford mlo sls jam  
Jim Gurney pf ss ged  
Harry Warner mlo po ged

Recommendations by: ca: Claire Anderson, daa: Dave Anderson, ec: Elisabeth Carey, ged: Gay Ellen Dennett, gf: George Flynn, pf: Pam Fremont, mh: Mark Hertel, rk: Rick Katze, pal: Paula Leiberman, arl: Tony Lewis, jam: Jim Mann, lm: Laurie Mann, mlo: Mark Olson, po: Priscilla Olson, kp: Kelly Persons, sls: Sharon Sbarsky, pav: Pat Vandenberg, by: Ben Yalow

## FactSheet Five-Electric

### A brief history

#### Jerod Pore

FactSheet Five was the zine of zines, the central clearinghouse of information about the small press. Mike Gunderloy produced 44 issues of it before having enough of the thankless task. There is a book in this, somewhere. Somebody should write about it. Not me, though, as I am too cynical.

Hudson Luce took over, put out issue 45, and was similarly overwhelmed. Overwhelmed by the quantity of stuff, overwhelmed by life in general but mostly overwhelmed by unrelenting criticism of his efforts. Some of that criticism was justified, but most of it was mean-spirited and counter-productive. Hudson has since bailed out of the magazine business and a printed version of FactSheet Five, produced from a central location, was no longer happening. I get at least one email note a day suggesting that I can make a lot of money by printing zine information on paper. *Hah!* But more on that later.

Between the time issue #45 hit the streets and Hudson gave up, I opened my big mouth (or, more precisely, let my uncensored fingers post this wild idea) about distributed reviewing over the Net. We all get zines, right? You, yes you wouldn't be reading this unless you were the slightest bit interested in small press publications. We have opinions about these zines, many of us produce our own and write about these other zines. Why not share all that data? We could collect reviews of zines from around the world, Hudson could use the reviews he needs and that would take some of the load off of his shoulders.

Two weeks later I got 350 pounds of paper in ten big boxes from Hudson. I sorted the zines into categories and started reviewing. FactSheet Five - Electric was born.

#### Where are we now?

We've been reviewing those zines, and zines are still being sent to Mike and Hudson. Hudson has another 500 pounds of zines to send to me. Publicity about this project is spreading, albeit slowly, through

the clogged bandwidth of the great, unwashed, anarchistic network of zines.

As we got started, the Armpit Gallery of San Francisco produced a two week long show entitled "Irrigate the Media Wasteland" that included zines among the examples of alternative media. Paper Tiger TV, Klub Komotion and Artists for Television Access had two zine and video fairs.

Out of the roundtable discussions, networking over too-loud muzak, beers at lower Haight street bars and slacking at cafes came the San Francisco Zine collective. Like all good anarchists we want to work (but not too hard) together (but retaining our individuality) to promote and distribute information about zines (and other alternative media). The San Francisco Bay Area is becoming a nexus of sorts for small press and other alternative media. One of many (I hope).

We're also attempting to revive the printed version of FactSheet Five. Paper has its advantages and disadvantages, and currently the disadvantages and problems are numerous. BUT only about 10% of the producers and 35% of the consumers of zines have access to The Net.

Plus paper lets us print ads, publish columns and artwork, and it can sit on a newsstand for a couple of months. The paper version will also carry reviews of music and perhaps video and some other artifacts. If we involve ourselves in any way with Mail Art, it will be through a third party. **Do Not Send Us Your Mail Art!!!** Questions, comments, donations and subscription business for the printed version of FactSheet Five should be sent to: Seth Friedman, PO Box 170099, San Francisco CA 94117-0099.

#### Answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

(Most of these relate to the electronic mail version of FS5 so this is a slightly diluted version. If you want more information than is listed here, please write to us - paper or email - and we'll send you what we can. However, postage is lower for diskettes than great wadges of fading printout, and email is cheapest of all...)

How does one obtain the reviews of zines?

The files that comprise FS-Electric are available via ftp from [src.doc.ic.ac.uk](http://src.doc.ic.ac.uk) in the directory [literary/newsletters/factsheet-five](http://literary/newsletters/factsheet-five). (We list some of the SF zine reviews below, but there are many other areas covered).

May the files be reprinted or posted elsewhere?

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Including pertinent parts of this file, and giving credit to the reviewers is especially good for your karma, but not absolutely required to use what you wish of the review files. We're more interested in the widespread dissemination of the information. BBS operators are especially encouraged to make whatever files you deem appropriate available to your users. (We're especially interested in the latter: if you know a BBS person who'd like to carry these reviews, please let us know)

How does one submit reviews?

For now, email the reviews to me. This could be subject to change, once we work out everything. Each file will have reviews of one or more zines that are somehow categorized together by subject matter or by reviewer. (Yes, we can pass on reviews - if they're on disk.)

If you want your reviews to be considered for the printed version of FS5, then you had better do them to the format below. One of the things we are doing as part of the printed version is an entry program for reviews. Please keep all reviews in vanilla ASCII format. Also keep them shareright. We are especially in need of reviews of zines that are published outside of North America. Now, I get zines from Australia and, since I used to live there, I understand the dialect and cultural references. I sort of understand the zines from Britain. But the zines I get from other parts of the world...it's all I can do to list the title, the address and take a guess at the subject matter. We'd love to get Flemish reviews of Flemish zines. After all, if somebody wants to read a zine then they have to be able to read the language. FS-Electric should not be an English only publication!

How does one get the zines?

When ordering zines, cash is the best medium of exchange. Forget what your mother told you about evil thieves stealing one dollar bills



out of mail boxes. If you absolutely must send a check or money order (and a money order is preferred over a check), then make it out to the name in %Info: which may or may not be the name of the publisher or the zine.

Many zines, especially personal zines, science fiction fanzines and anarchist zines are available for what is quaintly known as "The Usual."

"The Usual" is your zine or tape or record or calendar in trade, or a well-written Letter of Comment on the subject of the zine, or \$2.00.

Be warned about a few things. There are no guarantees. Checks are likely to be thrown away. Some zine names with especially offensive titles have often had their mail thrown away by self-righteous born-again postal workers. I kid you not! If the name of the zine is apt to offend your third-grade teacher, don't put it on the envelope. Some zines published in rather provincial parts of the world won't get their mail if the publisher's name isn't on the envelope, so whatever the name is in %Info, that's the name that should go on the envelope. I can work only with what information is provided me. I'll post any special requirements that are conveyed to me. If a zine is free, you may want to help out with some stamps. Free often translates as "The Usual," and many anarchists will accept food stamps.

What's this Zine Exchange stuff?

Now "I" don't have a hell of a lot of room for zines, so here's the deal: along with your zine, send an SASE, the bigger and more postage-packed the better. And we'll send you some of the zines we get. That's right, not only will we review them, but we're doing a zine exchange. Don't ask for specific titles, as you won't get them. Types of zines can be requested, but are subject to availability and what has been reviewed when we get your envelope and what is on the top of the pile of zines that have been reviewed. So it's pretty random. How much you get depends upon such factors as what you send, how many copies of your zine you include, how big the envelope is, how much postage is on it, what we have available and what we're feeling like at the time. Some people, who are either greedy or stupid, have sent the postage-paid envelopes, BUT NO ZINES. I know all of us computer types aren't stupid, so don't be greedy. You have to send zines (not catalogs, not ads, not long whining letters about being in jail) to participate in the zine exchange.

Gary Pattillo is running the Zine Exchange Network. Send zines and an envelope, get zines back. What you get depends upon what you send. Send your zines to: Gary Pattillo, 5920 Victor Street, Dallas TX 75214

The primary email address for FactSheet Five - Electric is: [jerod23@well.sf.ca.us](mailto:jerod23@well.sf.ca.us)

For anything that can't be sent electronically, which is most of the stuff we deal with; comments, questions, feedback, donations, zines and other contributions to the defense of free expression rights around the world should be sent to: FactSheet Five, 1800 Market St., San Francisco CA 94102.

## FS 5 SF Sampler

SF and fantasy zines reviewed by Jerod Pore. Send your fanzines to Jerod Pore 1800 Market St. #141 San Francisco CA 94102-6227. email [jerod23@well.sf.ca.us](mailto:jerod23@well.sf.ca.us)

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Printing the Shareright notice and the source would be exceptionally nice.

### SF Review Zines

%Title: Samizdat Number 19 %Descr: Interview avec Nicole Hibert. Le Retour du Megalecteur. Reviews of French-language SF books and zines. The ads are in English. %Info: \$2.50 each, Publications Ianus 33 rue Prince #243 Montreal PQ H3C 2M7. 36 pages, digest.

%Title: Interciter Number 3 %Descr: Another French-language zine, this one focusing on stuff in France. Reviews of movies, books, role-playing games, comics and models. %Info: 220 francs a year, Science-Fiction Alliance BP 39 13883 Gemecons Cedex France. 52 pages, digest.

%Title: Fantasy Commentator Volume 7 Issue 2 %Descr: For those living in the Gernsback Continuum. This issue is dedicated to Stanley Weinbaum, who was the first author to write a sympathetic story from an alien's perspective, one that is truly alien and not just a human with a funny haircut and makeup. Interview with Weinbaum's

widow, letters from Gernsback, notes on his college days and unpublished poetry. Also, part 12 of a history of science fiction up to H. G. Wells. %Info: \$5.00 each to A. Langley Searles 48 Highland Circle Bronxville NY 10708-5909. 82 pages, standard.

%Title: Interference on the Brain Screen Number 3 %Descr: Science Fiction sucks, except for Paul DiFilippo, who is interviewed. Plus a Processed World-like look at the corporate wetdream that is the information age. %Info: \$2.00 each to Patrick Clark PO Box 2761 St. Paul MN 55102. 28 pages, half legal. (regrettably, this is only a page format description)

%Title: Sector 9737 Issue 4 %Descr: Reviews of the latest and greatest cyberpunk books and role playing games, also new network software. %Info: \$5.00 each to Tim Mayer PO Box 78213 Wichita KS 67278. 12 pages, standard.

### Fannish Fanzines.

%Title: The Lavender Dragon Volume 2 Number 1 %Descr: SF from a gay/lesbian perspective. As most SF and Fantasy is blind to, if not outright hostile to, homosexuality, there ain't a lot to review outside of Vampire genre and slipstream. Simon LeVay's so-called research on 'gay' brains being 'different.' Worldcon vs. Chicon. %Info: \$1.00 each to Kindered Spirits P.O. Box 160225 St. Louis MO 63116-0225. 8 pages, standard.

%Title: Radio Free Thulucandra Number 26 %Descr: SF from a Christian perspective, for fans interested in "the courteous and accurate representation of Christian viewpoints in the fannish community." with 64 pages of letters debating just how to go about it. Plus results of the novel-in-progress everyone was to pray for. %Info: \$3.00 each (or the usual) to Marty Helgesen 11 Lawrence Avenue Malverne NY 11565-1406 email [mnhcc@cunynm.cuny.edu](mailto:mnhcc@cunynm.cuny.edu) 74 pages, standard.

%Title: BCSFAzine Number 222 %Descr: A lighthearted and entertaining report of fandom in & around British Columbia. Leather Goddesses of Phobos Advice. Ultraman's 25th anniversary. Availability of mainstream SF books in Ukraine. Imaginary aircraft through the decades. Tons of letters, of course. %Info: \$15.00 a year or the usual to BCSFA P.O. Box 35577 Station E Vancouver BC V6M 4G9 32 pages, half legal.

%Title: FOSFAX Number 158 %Descr: Road trips to distant and obscure conventions. Detailed and capsule reviews of books. Letters, letters, letters. %Info: \$2.00 each or \$18.00 a year to FOSFA PO Box 37281 Louisville Kentucky 40233-7281. 66 pages, standard.

%Title: Ethel the Aardvark Number 39 %Descr: The sfanscene in Melbourne. Reviews of horrendously overpriced books, and the ones available for \$10.00 ("Or would you be better off reading the phone book?") Doings of the MSFC. Convention reports, letters. All done in this witty tone that kinda makes me miss Melbourne. %Info: \$15.00 a year, or the usual to Melbourne Science Fiction Club PO Box 212 Melbourne Victoria 3005 Australia. 24 pages, A4.

%Title: The Texas SF Inquirer Number 39 %Descr: Interview with Pat Cadigan. Rated book reviews (from Waste of Trees to Orgasmic). Art at the cons. Letters. %Info: \$1.00 each to FACT PO Box 9612 Austin TX 78766 or the usual to Dale Denton 2016 Ravinia Circle Arlington TX 76012 16 pages, standard.

%Title: SFSS Shuttle Number 81 %Descr: How to get a pass to a shuttle launching (email your Congressman on Compuserve). Convention reports. Letters. Aliens land in the wild West. Occasional reviews. %Info: \$1.00 each or \$15.00 a year to SFSS PO Box 70143 Fort Lauderdale FL 33307-0143 email [Compuserve 761373645](mailto:Compuserve 761373645) 14 pages, standard.

%Title: Cleveland ANSIBLE Number 15 %Descr: Funny, albeit brief interview with Gates McFadden. Local conventions. Book & movie reviews. A visit to L. Frank Baum's birthplace. %Info: \$12.00 a year to Cleveland ANSIBLE P.O. Box 14841 Cleveland OH 44114. 16 pages, standard.

%Title: STET Number 4 %Descr: Coca-Cola and the collapse of communism. Chicon: letting young fans down and electronic zines. Letters. %Info: The usual to Leah Leeds Smith 17 Kerry Lane Wheeling IL 60090-6415 email [leah@smith.chi.il.us](mailto:leah@smith.chi.il.us) 22 pages, standard sized oddly textured paper that doesn't hold the printing too well. Leah says: "The paper, by the way, is twiltone, and once nearly all fanzines were printed on it. That is because once nearly all fanzines were mimeographed, as Stet still is. What the medium lacks in crispness, it more than makes up for in economy..."

## Zines About One Author.

%Title: A Checklist of Samuel R. Delany %Descr: Brief bio and list of all of Delany's work with synopses. %Info: \$1.00 each to Rusty Crump PO Box 620 Saltillo MS 38866. 12 pages standard.

%Title: Resnick at Zenith Number 2 %Descr: "I'm making a concerted effort not to be a fan-boy geek about this whole business. I don't think of Mike Resnick as a god. Nor do I want him to adopt me." Oh, go on, be a geek! Letters (including one with Resnick about another fan), interview with Resnick, six hour road trip to an obscure convention, Resnick fiction. %Info: \$2.00 each to Doug Roemer 674 Newbridge Ct. Arnold MD 21012. 32 pages standard.

%Title: For Dickheads Only Number 1 %Descr: Guess who it's about? Favorite PKD stories. Critique of Barry Malzberg's *afterword* to *Clans of the Alpha Moon*. PKD crossword puzzle. Visit to Dick's grave. %Info: \$1.00 each, or the usual, to Dave Hyde Box 112 New Haven IN 46774. 32 pages standard.

## SF TV Zines

%Title: Quantum Quarterly %Descr: How to demand more Quantum Leap products from MCA. Interview with the costume designer. %Info: \$1.50 each to Jim Rondeau 1853 Fallbrook Ave San Jose CA 95130. 12 pages standard.

%Title: The Frame Number 19 %Descr: Dr. Who fanzine, most upst with the BBC's indecision on continuing production of their beloved TV show. Interviews with the costume designer for incarnation number six, and the set designer. Compares Dr. Who to Adam Adamant and reviews Whovian merchandise. %Info: £2.50 each to The Frame 61 Elgar Avenue Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey KT5 9JP. 32 pages, A4.

%Title: Whovian Times Volume 20 %Descr: American version of the above. Rumors regarding the BBC and possible 'novelization' of Dr. Who plots and characters. Interview with Doctor #5 Jon Pertwee and John Levine. %Info: \$7.50 a year to Whovian Times P.O. Box 6024 Cherry Creek Station Denver CO 80206. 20 pages, standard.

%Title: Agonizer Volume 3 Number 2 %Descr: Klingon fanzine. That's right, forgot those wimpy Trekkies, here's the real stuff. People who want to rape all those 'sensitive' characters on ST:TNG before stuffing them into an airlock. Twenty-eight pages of letters. Often exposing the DUH factor in scripts (TV & movie) and books. Rating Roman Alas. Lotsa background data for ST RPGs. Pictures of a wedding done in Klingon garb. Beyond the SCA. Even if you hate ST, you would find this zine amusing. %Info: \$6.00 each to Len & Sue Frank 2506 Pine St. Philadelphia PA 19103. 88 pages, standard.

%Title: COMLINK Number 48 %Descr: Mostly (15 of 20 pages) letters about ST, ST:TNG and ST fandom. Some ads, plot synopses and such. %Info: \$2.00 each to Allyson M Dyar PSC 1013 Box 73 APO AE 09725-0073 20 pages, standard.

%Title: The Picardian Volume 3 Number 11 %Descr: For those who lust after Patrick Stewart's shiny bald head. Sightings, newscasts, the Duh factor. Serialized and funny ST satire, "Attack of the Stupid Science." %Info: \$10.00 a year to Marilyn Wilkerson 829 S. E. Riverside Drive Evansville IN 47713 18 pages, standard. email Compuserve 72371,2517

%Title: Blue Lights #39 / Baby Blue Lights / Best Buddies %Descr: For fans of the defunct, and mostly unknown TV series Starman. Repetitive news on zines, fans, cons. The zines come attached to each other, and have this Big Mail feel to them. %Info: \$1.00 each to Victoria Onstine 2405 Togo Street Eureka CA 95501. 8 to 22 pages, standard.

## Fan Fiction Zines

%Title: Lost Worlds Science Fiction & Fantasy Forum Volume 4 Number 4 %Descr: "For beginning writers and artists" and pretty entertaining stuff for beginners. Fantasy in the D&D vein, SF in the Twilight Zone tradition. %Info: \$1.00 each or \$15.00 a year to Holley Drye PO Box 605 Concord NC 28025 24 pages, standard.

%Title: Neophyte Volume 2 Number 1 %Descr: Another zine for SF beginners. This with an interesting format. Two to four sf stories of 2,000 to 7,000 words, along with a criticism/self-criticism letters section. Be beaten up by other failed writers! What a blast. The writing is no worse than much of the crap published by so-called professionals. %Info: \$2.00 each or \$10.00 a year to Jeff Behrns 11220 Hooper Road Baton Rouge LA 70818 32 pages, digest.

%Title: Notes from the Retarded Cafe and The Further Adventures of Andy the Android %Descr: Two pieces of sfiction sliced'n'diced like

Burroughs. Artful presentations, but often hard to read. Sometimes worth the effort. %Info: \$4.50 to Lanny Quarles 4905 Reginald Wichita Falls TX 76308 16 and 20 pages, standard.

%Title: Forbidden Nights Number 6 %Descr: Most notable for the truly strange cover photos. Interview with Lisa Cantrell. "Experimental" fiction that crosses genres: from CyberPunk to executive toilet training. Highest price/performance ratio I've seen so far. %Info: \$2.50 each to PO Box 23 Chapel Hill NC 27514 64 pages, standard.

%Title: The Dwarves of Dahlstrom Number 1 %Descr: Classic Amanita Muscaria cover to go with classic northern-European medieval fantasy tales and poems involving leprechauns, faeries, trolls, nymphs and other stuff I read to my kid at bedtime. %Info: \$4.00 each to Michael White 805 Applegate St. NW Apt. #1002 North Canton OH 44720-8618 28 pages, standard.

## Miscellaneous Stuff

%Title: The Hardcore Number 5 %Descr: CyberPunk fiction and comic from England. Plus reviews of bookstores, comic, zines, movies and California. Interesting shit. %Info: £1.80 each or to Scott Dordard PO Box 1893 London N9 8JT 36 pages, A4.

%Title: Ozone Number 16/17 %Descr: Sfiction and sfandom APA, with some poetry, collage and politics thrown in. The fiction is, depending upon which part of the zine you're at, interesting but serialized, complete but trite, or illegible. Perhaps worth investigating. %Info: Write for membership details to E. Owen DuBose 4516 Randolph Rd #92 Charlotte NC 28210-2964 141 pages, standard.

%Title: Planetary Previews Volume 2 Number 3 %Descr: Interview with a vampire (one with Congenital Erythropoietic Porphyria and a claimed descendant of Valmir Tepps). Space opera and quasi-religious fiction. NASA notes and local politics. %Info: \$2.00 to Triad Press PO Box 49562 Atlanta GA 30359 48 pages, digest.

%Title: Illiterate Number 5 %Descr: Maybe the whole damn thing ties together in some Illuminatus type way. Then again, maybe it's just an excuse to print fragments that pass as stories. %Info: \$1.50 to Brian Grimm 10950 E. 14th St. #206 Oakland CA 94603 20 pages, digest.

%Title: It Goes on the Shelf Number 8 %Descr: Thoughtful book reviews of the strange and fantastic. Primarily, but not exclusively SF, fantasy, UFO, mysticism and such. Interspersed with news and oddities that came in the mail. %Info: \$1.00 (or trade?) to Ned Brooks 713 Paul Street Newport News VA 23605 14 pages, standard.

%Title: Horizon Number 74 %Descr: Flemish language zine, so I'm guessing at the contents other than that three pages of English which cover how to be a paperback book collector. Hell, you should write to John Marr about that. Anyway: Essay on the cult of Sherlock Holmes. Something about Antoon Van Dyck (1599-1641). Reviews of books of various fiction and non-fiction persuasions. Included here as the only titles I recognize belong. %Info: \$3.50 to Johnny Haelterman Stationsstraat 232A 1770 Liedekerke Belgium 36 pages, A4.

%Title: Scavenger's Newsletter Number 92 %Descr: Probably the best source of markets for cheap SF/F/H magazines. Not exclusively small press, nor exclusively Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror. Updates on where some zines are at, who pays what and how much stuff costs. Plus letters, reviews, average response time from magazines and tips on writing ("I Don't go for the grossout with your opening short. I saw Francis Bonifazi yesterday," she said between mouthfuls of calf's brains."). %Info: \$1.50 each to Janet Fox 519 Ellinwood Osage City KS 66523-1329 32 pages, half-legal.

## Noticeboard

Help: I need an inexpensive copy of CS Lewis' *Dark Tower*. I am planning a project for a course and will probably destroy the integrity of the book during the scanning process. I have not found a copy locally in my used book stores, nor my specialty SF pusher. Your help would be greatly appreciated in finding a copy for this project. The use is for a literary style analysis and will not involve copyright problems. The authorship of this particular book is apparently of some interest to CSL scholars. Bob Stearns, University of Georgia (is@grouchu.dev.uga.edu / 010-1-(404)-542-5110)

Dmitry Bender <dima@blits.udmurtia.su> says: "Hi, folks. Anybody studying Russian? Maybe a friend? I have an offer for you. I like SF, especially such author as R. Zelazny. But there aren't his original books in the city and in the country, only Russian translations. So how about an exchange: you'll send me to original Amber story and I'll send to you the Russian variant. Or other books."

**The Filksongs.** Swedish sf fandom songs by David Nessel, Erik Andersson, Åhrvid Engholm & others. **The Filksongs** is a collection of Swedish filksonging from its golden age in the late 70's and early 80's. This special edition includes a booklet with English translations of the texts. The tape tracks are the originals and earplugs are provided for those who may suffer from Swedish vowels. Enjoy 45 minutes of the swedest sounds there are, including: *When I Hate Gafjaf/The Paper Feed Is Broken/Charming Child of Our Time/Red Cor-fu/Stencil, Stencil/Give Me a Fanzine/The Femme-Fan in Bonas/Gosh Wow O'Boy O'Boy.* Order by mailing \$5, \$3 or 25 Swedish Crowns to the address below. Price includes cassette, booklet, postage and earplugs: **The Filksongs**, Åhrvid Engholm, Renstiernas Gata 29, S-116 31 Stockholm, Sweden.

**Books for Sale:** I have the following books for sale: John Crowley *Agrippa*, P. K. Dick *Gollancz Complete Works* (5 hardback volumes); William Gibson and Bruce Sterling *The Difference Engine* (Gollancz hardback); P. Haining *The Jules Verne Companion*; Robert Holdstock *The Fetch, Elite and The Bone Forest*; William Horwood *Dunston Found* (signed); William Morris *The Well at the World's End*; *The Wood Beyond the World and The Roots of the Mountains*; Keith Roberts *Ladies from Hell* (Gollancz yellow cover); Bruce Sterling *Islands in the Net*. I also have about 1200 paperbacks for sale. Send a sae for list: L. S. McKnight, 21b Lansdowne Parade, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 2LH (tel: 0242 510036).

**Basement Full of Books** is a list of new books available by mail directly from their authors. It exists mostly in electronic form, on internet (by email or anonymous ftp), Compuserve (SF forum, Library 3), CEnie (SFRT, library), and whatever other services people upload it to. It's mostly SF books, mainly because the other writers the administrator knows are mostly SF writers, but it isn't limited to SF by any means. There's no charge to writers to list their books in BfOB, nor is it necessary to have an email account of any sort.

New listings are welcome. It's a very low-key operation; writers should not expect (or fear) a flood of orders. My perception is that a short paragraph of description for each book is more effective than the minimalist "Title / publisher / pages" approach.

Readers who download the list are encouraged to pass it around either electronically or by printout. The administrator can be persuaded to print out a hard copy of the list, though it's getting awfully long and she appreciates SASE and \$1 for a hard copy.

Authors participating at present include: William Barton & Michael Capobianco, Bruce Boston, John Brunner, Jeff Carver, Valerie Nieman Colander, Gene DeWeese, Harlan Ellison, Sheila Finch, James Gunn, Joe Haldeman, Gwenyth Hood, Eileen Kernaghan, Edward M. Lerner, Vonda N. McIntyre, Thom Metzger, Hank Nuwer, Alexei & Cory Panshin, Bill Ransom, Robert J. Sawyer, Dave Smeds, John E. Stith, L.A. Taylor, Gene Wolfe, Jane Yolen, and George Zebrowski.

A stamped return envelope (SASE) or International Reply Coupon is very much appreciated and often allows a quicker response.

Vonda N. McIntyre, P.O. Box 31041, Seattle, WA 98103-1041

## Stop Press

This is a place for news which arrives too long after the deadline to be included, but which I consider is interesting and worth putting in.

SF on tv will start with a bang in '93. *Horizon* will show a programme on terraforming Mars, probably including Kim Stanley Robinson. It is scheduled for February 8. However, in January, BBC2 is showing *Cyberzone*, a VR show which will be included with *DEFIL*. It will be presented by **Craig Charles** and is described as being "a cross between the industrial zone of *Crystal Maze* and *Knightmare* - same producer, and designer and loads of original stuff". Ten short shows have been made so far.

The Science Museum in London has got a special programme of SF events over Christmas, entitled "Science Fiction, Science Fact". Each item will take place in the Lecture Theatre at 12.30 and 14.30 and is suitable for a family audience, with tickets available on the day. The programme is:

Sunday December 27: **Brian Stableford** examines the question of what science is there in science fiction stories.

Monday December 28: **Irving Rappaport** links Science Fiction with real projects like the Biosphere when he considers what plants and animals people would take with them if they needed to stay alive (as they inevitably would) in space.

Tuesday December 29: **Mat Irvine**, BBC special effects designer, talks about what you would need before venturing into space and why some famous fictional spaceships could never actually work.

Wednesday December 30: **Sam** and **Dean Madden** ponder the accuracy of Science Fiction stories from the biological standpoint, using the working title *Frankenstein's monster is alive and well*.

Thursday December 31: **Jack Cohen**, another biologist, explains why real extra-terrestrials would not be a) little b) green and c) people.

Friday January 1: **Jim Potter** looks at the prerequisites which a planet must have before supporting life as we know it, under the working title *The Good Planet Guide - for the Armchair Astronaut*.

Saturday January 2: **John Gribbin** tells the secrets of time machines and will sign books afterwards in Dillons Book Shop in the Museum.

Also on Saturday, there is a chance to contribute to a special children's Science Fiction mural and state what you think might be on display in the Science Museum one hundred years from now.

Sunday January 3: **Dave Langford** illustrates the links between Science Fiction and science fact using actual examples.

There is also a special evening showing of H G Wells' classic film *The Shape of Things to Come* (unconfirmed but hopeful).

As if that is now enough, daily at 13.30 and 15.30, also in the Lecture Theatre is a memorable Science Fiction drama presentation, *Science Fiction comes alive* on what a Science Fiction author might write about 50 years from now and what lessons we can learn from Science Fiction.

Plus there is a special **Science Fiction Trail** to discover objects in the Museum that were predicted by Science Fiction (December 27-January 3, chance to win an exciting prize).

And finally, there is a great opportunity for Star Trek readers to see an actual Star Trek communicator and phaser, as well as the model of the *Starship Enterprise* in a special exhibition (December 27-January 3).

## Stop The Cutting Of Rocks

### Just Say No To Lithosection

Lithosection is widespread at UCLA where it is practised by a group of largely government-funded geologists. This group of pseudo-scientific researchers regularly *slice, grind, polish, and sputter* lithologic materials that have been forcefully removed (sometimes violently) from the familiarity of their natural habitats and stored in crowded, small, dark cabinets where they may reside for poly-annic periods while serving a quest of interest to only a small group of rock-bashing pseudo-intellectual candidates for lithodomosy.

### End the Production of Instruments that Destroy Rocks

The following descriptions of lithosectionist techniques were extracted from literature accounts contained in journals of lithosectionists: "Fluorination was preceded by partial digestion in boiling sulphuric acid followed by rinsing with fluoroboric acid. The material was then subjected to a heat of 1050° F at 2 lbs. pressure of ClF<sub>3</sub>. Extracted matter was then converted to CO<sub>2</sub> in a platinum furnace." What practical purpose can this subjection of lithologic materials to these grievous stresses yield?

The anti-Lithosectionist movement is one of the fastest growing movements in the USA. Support the effort to liberate lithologic materials! We urge you to write your NSF reviewers and demand that they refuse to continue to fund the perpetration of these atrocities against rocks by pseudo-scientific geochemists and geophysicists.

Don't you think

**You'll Sleep Better Tonight**

knowing that you've taken a stand.

Join the League for the Liberation of Laboratory Lithologic Specimens

## Competition Corner

### Results of Matrix 102 Competitions

A very meagre postbag this time, probably caused by a very limited time between publication and the competition deadline.

#### Answers: "Dino-Soaring"

- 18 Dec 1939
- "Peace on Earth" co-written with Barrington J Bayley as by Michael Barrington
- "Somewhere in the Night" and "Printer's Devil"
- The Deep Fix
- Joseph Conrad and Benjamin Disraeli
- "Gloriana" was inspired by "The Fairie Queen" by Edmund Spenser
- Norman Spinrad in *New Worlds* 192
- James Colvin, a pseudonym of MM, had his obituary published in *New Worlds* 197.

The winner (Nigel Parsons) was sent a copy of Michael Moorcock: Death is no obstacle, kindly donated by Colin Greenland and Savoy Books.

#### Answers: Crossword #3

**Across:** 1 Neuromancer, 9 Asimov, 10 Gnu, 1 Pohl, 12 Eclipse, 14 Macrame, 16 Foundation, 18 Rork, 19 Aids, 21 Positronic, 23 Starers, 24 Tribune, 27 Brin, 28 Ice, 29 Trepan, 31 The Naked Sun.

**Down:** 2 Elm, 3 Raves, 4 Mage, 5 Neural Net, 6 Emperor, 7 Psychohistory, 8 The Martian Way, 13 Ion, 15 Kinse, 17 Aspersions, 20 Scrunch, 22 Orb, 25 Rated, 26 Deck, 30 Eimu.

The winner (Peter Tennant) also receives a copy of Michael Moorcock: Death is no obstacle, kindly donated by Colin Greenland and Savoy Books.

#### Matrix Competition 103 "Xmas Presents"

A seasonal contest this time, which I hope will give you plenty of scope for satirical and/or scurrilous thoughts. All you have to do is select two Christmas presents for each of five people, three from the list below and two more characters of your own choosing. One present should be the most fitting possible and the other should be the most useless or in the worst possible taste.

As an example I give you -

For Paul Atreides: A Spice Rack and some bubble bath.

The list for you to choose three characters from is:

Louis Wu	Gully Foyle	Marvin the Paranoid Android	Jender Wiggins
Tarzan	Bilbo Baggins	James Bolivar Di Griz	Kaeti
DEATH	Thomas Covenant	Darth Vader	Dr Who.

Don't forget to add two more characters of your own choosing.

The prizes are a proof of White Queen, kindly signed and donated by Gwyneth Jones; a copy of Total Eclipse, kindly signed and donated by John Brunner and a signed copy of The Stone Within and a "Chung Kuo" t-shirt kindly donated by Dave Wingrove and Susan Oudot.

#### "Everyfan" Crossword #4

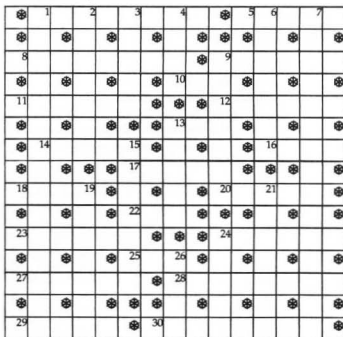
Across

- 12's communicators can be a mixed blessing with the back taken off (8)
- Bash monkey trapped from behind, partly (5)
- Kept in, kept from Isaac Asimov at first — left fandom as a result (8)
- 27, most excellent monarch! (6)
- Disease dies out — this could be red or black, for example (3)
- Bird captured by church for 27 (6)

- The French weapon takes one for 27 (6)
- Zero or one in the Netherlands? (3)
- Covered bet with note, dead confusing! (5)
- Drains vital fluids (4)
- Break right into this world found in 24A's 29 (5)
- 27 initially boils eggs (4)
- Genovese magistrates confuse Genovese lacking even 500 at first (5)
- Nearest star takes students aback (3)
- 27 with books manufactures gold bars (6)
- Limb encased in iron, right 27 (6)
- Tree creature seen in garden, truly! (3)
- Gold Norse god produces 29s (6)
- Place of refreshment created when Loki's daughter turned into a river (8)
- Relation found in street or yard (5)
- Ghost surrounded by undead (not half!) is exposed to light (8)

Down

- Found a small foot, turned to 11's 29 (1,4,2,8)
- Turn radiation measure into 27 (7)
- Suffuse vampire perhaps with helium (5)
- Goals initially defined in printer's measures (4)
- Transfers when portents appear (7)
- 12's 29 — model hides confusion on being controlled by demon (3,12)
- Poet holds every 27 (7)
- Roughly 9 holding 5 for 27 (5)
- What could be Welsh perhaps — doctor has actual existence, right? (7)
- One gold article is inside a different one (7)
- Make mistake when clad in metal 27 (7)
- Fairy must be raised by sinister hag at first for 24A's 29 (5)
- Volunteers needed to service mountain lake (4)



The prizes for this are kindly signed and donated by Dave Langford.

All entries and comments to Roger Robinson, 75  
Rosslyn Ave, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 0RG by  
January 10, 1993.