



SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

"The Beadouin Fanzine"

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THE MAD BLINK OF MOULTONBORO

NIEKAS continues to evolve as we experiment with format and frequency. We have decided to go for broke with a quarterly schedule with publication dates of February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15. Deadline for material, other than LoC's and reviews, is two months before publication; LoC's and reviews 45 days before publication. Of course we would appreciate getting everything in as early as possible. Why don't you use your ESP and include, with your LoC on this issue, one on N25 so that we can get a good headstart?

George Lallas, a good friend of Mike's, is a professional in graphic design and has made a number of suggestions in regard to the appearance of NIEKAS. For instance, he has recommended wider margins and the 3-column format which you see in this issue. It is a little more work and we lose 11% of our word count per page which adds to the expense of printing and mailing. Of course I cannot see to tell whether there is a real improvement or not. If we were typeset or at least had justified [even] left margins, then the 3-columns would definitely look better. I will be interested in hearing your reaction. [Another major change will be the coated wrap-around cover we hope to use this time around. mike]

Since the last issue I have been busy. There was Noreascon II, which was a lot of fun despite its size, a conference on modern technology for the handicapped, and the state convention of the NFB. Just before publication, I am going to NY for ten days and plan to take in several SF meetings.

A week before Labor Day, a small amateur theatrical company in the town of Center Sandwich put on Gilbert and Sullivan's *IOLANTHE*. They do one production a year, always at the same time, and they are very good. Last year they did *PATIENCE*, as I mentioned in a previous issue.

One problem with Gilbert and Sullivan is that some of the jokes are getting dated and are no longer funny. Near the opening of the second act, the peers and fairies are arguing about Strephen's accomplishments in reforming Parliament. With the Fairy Queen's help, every bill he introduces passes. At one point a lord says, "he is a Parliamentary Pickford...he carries everything". Of course Pickford was a major shipping company in London at the time this play was written. In Center Harbor, a man named E.M. Heath has a set of three stores: a supermarket, a hardware store, and a clothing store. His motto is 'Dealer in most everything'. The director therefore replaced 'Pickford' with 'Heath' at this point. Purists might bitch, but I feel it added to the play. Unfortunately it was in the middle of some very rapid dialogue and there was no time for the audience to react.

Later in the second act, the Fairy Queen laments that she has a crush on the guard on duty outside of Parliament. When the other fairies, not knowing of her feelings, accuse her of being cold, she replies that she has a fire burning in her heart. Here, a joke is inserted which was meaningful ONLY on the opening night of the play, a century ago. A member of London's high society who came to every opening night was Captain

Shaw, head of London's Fire Brigade. On opening night she sang, "Oh Captain Shaw, with your cold cascade...[put out this fire in my heart]". At that point, a spotlight focused on Captain Shaw in the audience. The line has stayed in the play ever since. At this performance, the name of Center Sandwich's fire chief was substituted. The name is mentioned 3 times: twice by the Fairy Queen and once by the chorus. Each time, more of the audience laughed. It really worked well.

A few weeks earlier the New Hampshire Music Festival, a professional company of the first caliber, put on Donazetti's *DON PASQUALE* in English. It was a beautiful performance; well sung. And the translation and diction were very clear for I understood virtually every word. But I notice one big difference between comic opera and GandS. Gilbert wrote countless great lines which are witty and funny. Many have a sharp bite to them tho Gilbert, like George Bernard Shaw, is sometimes shrill and acid.

But the plot of *DON PASQUALE* is bland and the dialogue is nothing. Don Pasquale, an old man, is tricked into what he thinks is a marriage with a bitchy young woman who proceeds to give him a hard time. In the end, she accomplishes her goal of getting his permission to really marry his nephew and heir. The comedy is akin to that of *I LOVE LUCY* on TV. The only point I was amused at was when the nephew is lamenting being disinherited at the beginning of Act I while Don Pasquale gloats, over and over: "It isn't very funny when you lose a lot of money". But the music, with a full symphonic orchestra and the beautiful singing, left GandS in the dust. (I must say that I really do find much of the music in GandS very enjoyable, for the dialogue alone does not make the operettas.)

Heinlein makes a very good point in his novel *Double Star* (issued as Talking Book #RC 13118). The opposition candidate for prime minister of the solar system must make an appearance at a certain ceremony and, because of a cultural ideosyncratic feature of the Martian psychology, no excuse is acceptable. Opponents kidnap him secretly. An egotistical minor actor of considerable talent is brought in to substitute. The day is carried, but the original dies so that the actor lives out the remainder of his life. Most of the

novel deals with the tensions surrounding the initial impersonation, but the final chapter is a retrospective many years later.

The party's goal is the complete integration, on an equal footing, of Martians and Venusians into the government of the solar system. The other side wants to exclude them. Some progress had been made before the opening of the story, and the hero wins the election and carries several major reforms at the dramatic climax. In the retrospective, he reminisces about how he was in and out of office several times because the population can only take a certain amount of reform at a time. They need rests and reactionary governments prevail during these interregnums. I remember when taking American History, 10 these many decades ago, noting something similar which I had forgotten in the interim. Various movements, like that of the right for labor to organize, made progress in a stepwise fashion. Progress would be made, to a point, and the reaction would set in. A few issues might be lost but, on the whole, people would be better off than they were before. Then, a decade or generation later, another step would be taken.

This gives me some consolation when I look at the political situation today; especially on the national scene. New Hampshire is a lost cause. By when you read this, we will probably have for governor-- for a 4th time, a man who is national director of the Birch Society and was, for a while, their national candidate for president. He has made a fool of himself on a national scale with his flag lowerings and other such antics. This really says something about the intelligence of the average voter in New Hampshire.

Another book I just finished reading is a translation of the Koran (Penguin Books, Talking Book #RC7789). The differences between it and the Old and New Testaments are interesting. It reads like one of the more vitriolic prophets; condemning everyone to hellfire. It repeats a number of the Old Testament tales, only replacing the name of Yahveh with that of Allah. Also, we know that, until the time of Christ, virtually no Jews had a vision of immortality, and then it was a matter of a raging controversy between two factions. Here the claim is made that Allah has always revealed to Man his immortality; and those who don't believe in it WILL BE SORRY.

Christ is pictured as a prophet whose message was distorted by the Christians. There are many entreaties for the other "People of the Book" to come over to the true faith, and many threats of damnation for those who don't. I saw very little of the love and forgiveness of the New Testament. On the other hand, this same love and forgiveness is rarely found in Christianity as it is preached.

Incidentally, while my mailing address is in Center Harbor, I actually live over the town line in Moultonboro.

DOGS, STICKS, AND LASERS - II

From time to time I plan to devote part of Bumbejimas to explaining some aspects of blindness and the techniques of compensating for it. Last issue I started this piece because it is this area I am most asked about. The discussion took longer than I had anticipated so I have left the second half until this issue. In the last issue I described the history, function, and capabilities of the long cane in the hands of an experienced user. I also got into the history of the dog guide, some of its functions, and why many blind people do not elect to use it.

One last problem with using the dog is the difficulties encountered in trans-oceanic travel. Islands where rabies is unknown are paranoid about the possible introduction of the disease and make travel by blind people with dog guides extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Blind people visiting Hawaii are placed in segregated, isolated housing far from transportation and are required to return to it each night and place their dogs in special kennels. Even worse; England, Australia, and New Zealand require that the dogs be taken away and kept in total isolation for six months. By then they would have lost all their training and would be useless as working animals. At this point few blind people engage in international travel and those whose work requires it, find it impossible to elect the dog guide as their primary mobility tool. There is an international Federation of the Blind and other international organizations; officers and committee members of these are harassed by such international regulations.

This is one factor which is causing me to lean towards voting for Copenhagen over Melbourne for

the 1983 Worldcon site.

Some blind dog guide users are beginning to agitate for a more liberal attitude. Unfortunately not all dog guide users take proper care of their animals. The dogs are supposed to get regular inoculations and should NOT be allowed to run free outdoors. The latter is for reasons of dog psychology but it has the side benefit of just about eliminating any chance of infection by a wild animal. The users are recommending a certification of inoculation one year and just before a trip. Weekly health examinations would also be carried out by specialized veterinary doctors just before the trip and while on the host island. This is a rare case where the American Council of the Blind has been leading a move for a real reform.



Advantages of using the dog include being able to walk at a very brisk pace--up to 10 km per hour when the dog is young--over any type of terrain. When I was working at Belknap College this was very important as all of the walkways were very-broken-up asphalt with many potholes. I was always catching my cane tip and breaking stride. When you repeatedly travel the same route, the dog learns it and will automatically follow it without further guidance. At Belknap College I only had to start Ned in the general direction of the physics lab, main classroom building, administration building, or the library and he would automatically take me to the door. When I get out of a car and wish to enter a building I just have to point him in the general direction and he will find the door. When trying to enter an unfamiliar store or office, when using only a long cane, this could prove difficult. A dog judges your height and width, even when you are carrying packages, and takes you around low tree limbs, awnings, protruding mailboxes, and other obstacles.

There are a number of fringe benefits unrelated to the dog's primary function which must be considered. For instance: if you are a dog lover, which I am not, you can keep your dog guide in an apartment house which excludes pets. The dog will act as an icebreaker at social events; people often come up and will have something to talk about. If you have a large dog, like mine, it might act as a psychological deterrent to muggers and house breakers. The dogs are trained to be non-protecting and non-territorial. For instance: Ned has barked only twice in the eight years that I have had him and I disciplined him for it both times. But someone looking at you walking with the dog, or seeing the dog through the window of your home, will probably have second thoughts.

Incidentally, I have heard of dogs being trained to be both guard dogs and dog guides simultaneously. This must be very difficult to do as the two functions call for diametrically opposed personalities in the dog. The guide dog must be unobtrusive and quiet; not barking or growling at everyone who comes near you. The guard dog must be ready to leap to your defense after giving warning.

In the early days of the Seeing Eye, before all of the current techniques had been developed, the



blind person used the dog and the short cane at the same time. He had the harness in his left hand and the cane in his right; leaving nothing for a briefcase, purse, or package. If the user dropped the cane the dog was trained to retrieve it for him. After a short time, the cane was found to be superfluous and was abandoned (though for many years dogs continued to be trained to fetch a cane on demand). Occasionally other animals have been tried as guides for the blind. I know of cat guides and bird guides. (What would happen if the two were in the same room?)

Incidentally, both the term "dog guide" and "guide dog" are used. Professionals tend to use the term dog guide which lead to a humorous go-around in the letter column of the JOURNAL OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AND BLINDNESS a few years ago. The term dog guide was originally invented as a parallel to "sighted (person) guide": the use of a sighted companion by blind people who had to travel before modern mobility techniques were developed.

About 8 years ago somebody showed me a magazine article about a "seeing eye cat". It was from a magazine like READERS DIGEST or a Sunday newspaper supplement. A

blind woman had rigged up a harness for her pet cat and trained it to lead her around the house and to the mailbox at the end of her walkway.

First of all, knowing the independence of cats, I cannot imagine the effectiveness of this. Cats are solitary animals; dogs are pack animals with a strong instinct to follow a recognised authority within the pack. A human can replace the pack leader. This is why dogs do make such good work animals and cats such poor ones.

Secondly, having an animal that can only help one get around the house seems superfluous. Can't you find your way to the bathroom at night without turning on the light? And, with a little practice, couldn't you find your mailbox if you live in the suburbs or country? A cane or "facial vision" might help you locate it exactly if it is more than a couple meters from a landmark like the edge of your walk.

One problem with dogs is their relatively short lifespan. Ned is now 9 years old and probably has 2 or 3 useful years left--five at most.

Ray D. Burwick, a Hollywood animal trainer, has gotten the idea of picking an animal with a much

longer lifespan (50-70 years), color vision, and high intelligence. For this he has picked a member of the parrot family: the macaw, and is now training two for use as bird guides.

The current apparatus, to be used in conjunction with the bird guides, appears to be impractical. It is a large complex metal frame containing the bird and is held with both hands. The bird signals travel instructions by ringing bells and buzzers and pulling on straps. Descriptions in the popular press might be distorted but I doubt that this Rube Goldberg-type contraption will ever be practical. I must admit, however, that I might be surprised one day.

Of course the most useful animal is another human being. Before other techniques had been developed, many blind people travelled with sighted guides. Thus railroads at one time let the sighted guide ride at half fare or even free; today this is totally unnecessary. Even the deaf-blind travel independently. But there are times when a sighted guide is preferable to a dog or cane, as when trying to keep up with friends leaving a ball game or concert. Also, this is useful for the newly-blinded adult who has not yet learned the techniques of independent travel.

Sighted people trying to help a blind person often make the mistake of grabbing him by the arm and propelling him in front of the guide. This can cause a blind person to lose his balance, and to fear what is ahead of him in case the guide forgets to warn of steps, awnings, and other obstacles. The proper method is for the potential guide to ask if assistance is needed, and if it is, then offering his elbow for the blind person to grasp. Now the guidee is a half step BEHIND the guider and feels him go up and down steps a moment before he has to do likewise. The blind tell many horror stories of people deciding the blind person NEEDS help and grabbing him and shoving him across a street he did not even WANT to cross. Some have even been picked up and carried across, kicking and screaming. See the very amusing incident in the book version of To Race the Wind. (I do not know whether it was included in the TV movie.)

A number of new electronic devices have been developed in order to help detect and avoid obstacles and find places the user might want to reach.

Several sonar gadgets or varying complexity have been developed over the years. One of the first was a small hand-held flashlight-shaped device developed by Dr. Kay in England. It was called "The Torch". An earphone gave an audible indication of obstacles picked up by the ultrasonic beam. The project was cancelled after a number of these were built and the devices became surplus. These were acquired at little cost and are still being distributed and used with some success.

Dr. Kay moved to Australia where he developed an improved sonar item call "The Kay Device". This consists of a pair of dark glasses with ultrasonic transducers mounted on the bridge of the nose and hearing aid-type earphones at the ends of the temple pieces. A quarter inch thick cable leads to a cigarette pack sized battery and circuit box which is worn in a shirt pocket or clipped to the belt.

There are three transducers. The one in the center transmits an ultrasonic signal which sweeps from 30-45 khz in about a tenth of a second. To either side are microphones canted outward by a small amount. Each incoming signal is beat against the outgoing one, amplified, and fed back to the appropriate earphone. The canting is adjusted so that the stereo effect indicates the true direction of the obstacle up to 20 degrees to either side.

The frequency sweep by the transmitter is at a steady rate, so for an obstacle at a given distance, the echo would have a constant frequency difference from the transmitted sound. The further the target, the greater the delay time and the higher the beat frequency, which is in the audible range. Thus the tone will indicate the distance, up to about 6 meters. When walking down a corridor or along a wall with doorways, the near and far doorjams will combine to form a readily identifiable chord. Loudness and mix of frequencies give a good clue to the size and nature of the obstacle. There are special techniques to distinguish between the signal of an object directly in front of the user, and two objects equidistant and slightly to either side.

I was given a prototype when they were field testing the device in 1972 and it took many hours of very intensive practice. Only after that was I able to instinctually interpret the signals and move freely with their aid.

The device warns of obstacles and steps up, but not steps down. Thus it supplants but does not replace another mobility aid.

My original device died about 3 years after I got it. I saw my mobility teacher a few months later and he was able to replace it with a spare he had in his possession. Unfortunately the spare is a little too small for me and is painful to wear, so I have gotten out of the habit of using it regularly.

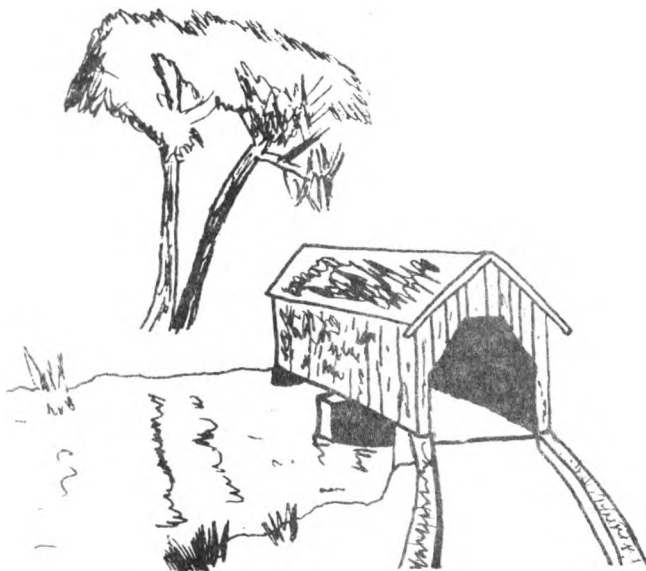
About the same time, I got to try the production model; now called the Sonicguide. It is lighter weight, has several new convenience features, and gives a much cleaner, easier to interpret signal. The Sonicguide has been particularly useful for blind infants. Special versions mounted on headbands help teach the infant how to interpret the direction a sound comes from. Infants are born with the ability but blind ones with no visual feedback lose the ability in a few months. Experiments have shown that infants equipped with a Sonicguide retain the ability. If the price were not \$2000, I would be tempted to buy one.

Wormald International Ltd., which makes and markets the Sonicguide, has introduced a small hand-held sensor which is about the size of two cigarette packs stuck end to end. The Mowat Sensor is primarily for the deaf-blind as it conveys information about obstacles by vibrating in the user's hand. The higher the frequency, the closer the object. This again works on sonar and costs about a half-thousand dollars.

Recently, Dr. Kay has disassociated himself from Wormald and explained that the devices which he developed and and they are marketing are too complex to be practical. He has indicated that he will continue research on mobility aids.

Recently, engineers at MIT have developed a new chest mounted sonar device that looks like a reflex camera on a strap. They claim that it is the most practical device to date but I have no further details on it.

[continued after Laikai]



ACROSS THE RIVER

FRED LERNER

THOUGHTS OF A BOARD MEMBER

Because I was in the right place at the right time, I was chosen to five years ago to sit on the Board of Directors of Vermont Public Radio. Like the other Board members, I have given a good deal of thought to public broadcasting--to what it does, what it can do, and what it should (and shouldn't) do. For the first two years, our ideas served to inspire us as we made our slow progress through the thicket of paperwork that surrounds any enterprise in broadcasting. Then, on 13 August 1977, Vermont Public Radio changed from dream to reality, as our Windsor station signed on the air. Fittingly, the first program we broadcast was "The Goon Show."

As I write this, airdate for VPR's second transmitter is only days away. From Mount Mansfield, a few miles east of Burlington, it will combine with our Windsor station to cover almost all of Vermont, as well as significant portions of western New Hampshire, New York's Adirondacks, and most of English-speaking Quebec. The new audiences we will be reaching, and the much larger sums of money we will have to raise to reach them, have made us all even more conscious of our obligations to the public we claim to be serving.

Just what are these obligations?

As the corporate entity which is, in fact and in law, Vermont Public Radio, the VPR Board has two pri-

mary responsibilities: to administer the finances of Vermont Public Radio, and to appoint and supervise those who manage its day-to-day operations. It is our duty to adopt a prudent budget, to ensure that income will be sufficient to meet expenses and to retire debt, and to safeguard the resources of the corporation. And it is equally our duty to establish the technical, administrative, and programming policies which will govern VPR's operation, to select competent people to run the system --and to stay the hell out of their way.

Adopting a budget is hardly the most exciting activity in the world, but I recommend it highly to anyone who suspects that he doesn't know as much as he should about how the world actually works. A teacher of mine once said, "If you want to know what really goes on in an organisation, look at its budget." For it is in the process of making a budget that the true priorities of an organisation emerge: it is there that compromises between ideals and realities are forced into being. My duty, as a Board member, to help assure that Vermont Public Radio's budget realistically projects both the income we can expect to receive and the expenditures we will have to make, has forced me to support policies which I, as a radio listener, would tend to oppose. I don't really approve of on-the-air fund raising, nor of a dependence upon government grants; but without these sources of money, Vermont Public Radio

would not be able to exist. So I vote in favour of them, and I support them to the best of my ability.

Participating in policymaking offers more scope for pushing my ideas of what public radio should do. It is not the proper business of the Board to second-guess the administrative or technical decisions of the station management: if we haven't confidence in the ability of our Chief Engineer to select the proper type of transmitting equipment, or the ability of our General Manager to plan the workflow in the station offices, then it's our job to fire them and replace them with people whose judgement we do trust. (This does not preclude a Board member from offering advice on a subject within his area of special competence. I would have no hesitation about making suggestions about the organisation of VPR's record library. But these suggestions would come from Fred Lerner the librarian, not Fred Lerner the Board member.)

The entire reason for Vermont Public Radio's existence is to provide high-quality noncommercial radio programming to Vermonters and their neighbours. Our listeners cannot see our studio equipment, nor can they experience what goes on in our offices. But they can hear what goes out over the air. And so it is the Board's most important responsibility to set programming possibilities--to decide what VPR intends to do, and what approach it will take to doing it.

As with any gathering of people, there are differences of opinion among Board members; and compromises are made. I felt that VPR's policy of not broadcasting sectarian religious programs should extend to the weekly "Public Access" segments. A majority of the Board's Programming Committee felt otherwise, and the rant of the preacher may now and again be heard on "Public Access." So long as I am on the Board, I shall support its decisions even when I initially disagreed with them, or at least maintain a public silence. When I cannot do so, it will be my obligation to resign from the Board. Should I ever do so, it will not be in a fit of pique over some minor disagreement.

I have some pretty firm ideas about public broadcasting. Some of these are more matters of Philosophy than of Policy, and for them NIEKAS is a more appropriate than a Board meeting would be.

Whom should public radio attempt to reach?

There are those who feel that it should shape its programming so as to attract as large an audience as possible--were it not to do so, they reason, it would hardly be "public," and would not justify support from the public purse. Others want public radio to dedicate itself to "fine arts" and public affairs, and bridle at any suggestion that it pander to a mass audience: if this restricts its listenership to a small minority of those living within the reach of its signal, so be it.

My sympathies lie almost exactly in between. Public radio should serve minority audiences--not one, but many. I would feel that Vermont Public Radio was doing its job superlatively well if almost every Vermonter found that, sometime during the week, there was a program on VPR that he very much wanted to hear. And I would measure program quality not so much by the subject matter as by its treatment. I despise punk rock: but I would be delighted if VPR were to devote an hour or two each week to punk rock, and do it well. I would not want to see Vermont Public Radio become some sort of classical music jukebox; and I am very pleased at the variety of programming, both in music and in the spoken word, that we have been able to broadcast. I think that we do manage to serve most of the people at least some of the time; and if we manage as well to please some of the people most of the time, that's an extra satisfaction.

To what extent should our program-

ming be locally produced, and to what extent brought in from outside? That question should be answered differently for each public radio station. A large metropolitan area might need extensive attention paid to local problems and local talent, while affording considerable opportunity to see and hear, in the flesh, some of the world's finest minds and greatest performers. But Vermont is a state of small communities and rural households, far from any major cities. Local problems can be discussed at town meetings, and there are abundant opportunities to watch local performers and politicians. Our greater need is to make available to Vermonters the best of the world's thinkers, the finest of the world's performers. So I feel that we should carry a limited amount of local programming, and a great deal of what National Public Radio and the regional networks have to offer. One of the great strengths of NPR is its realization that America is not merely the sum of Hollywood, New York, and Washington. It's surprising how much Montana has in common with Vermont, how much Minneapolis can share with Montpelier. And by limiting our undertaking to produce local programming, we can devote a greater share of our limited resources to each broadcast.

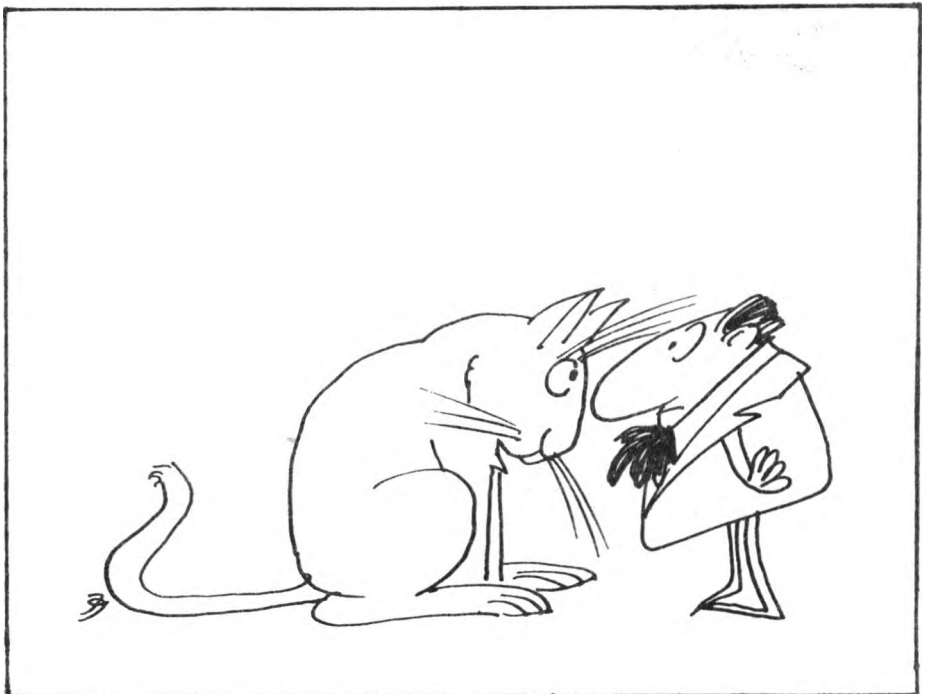
I've always been distressed at the misuse of broadcast time and resources that results from the attempt to do on television what should be done on radio, and on radio what should be done in print.

Given the tremendous cost difference in television and radio production, there's no real excuse for televising the conversations among talking heads that characterize so much of public television's coverage of political and economic affairs. It would be better to do those programs on radio, and to reserve television's public affairs budget for two or three first-rate documentaries that would make real use of man's ability to transmit moving pictures at a distance.

Similarly, there's no reason to devote radio time to matter that can more conveniently be disseminated in printed form. Lectures and readings, unless there is some particular timeliness about them, or some real use of the possibilities of sound, should be relegated to the magazines. A lecture about music, with aural illustrations, or a poet reading from his own works, are obvious examples of what public radio should include in its spoken word programming; and a skilled, trained voice can bring new meaning to any text. But I would like to see more attention devoted to developing forms uniquely suited to radio, like the hörspiel or the radio-ballad.

But for all my complaints and dissatisfactions, I enjoy one magnificent consolation. As a member of the Board of Directors of Vermont Public Radio, I have the opportunity and the responsibility to help nudge public radio a little closer to what I think it should be.

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Raphael Folch-pi

The Observer

1980's have arrived, computer hardware is getting cheaper, the population explosion of the Third World is out of hand, "ecology" is almost dead, God--who was supposed to be dead--is safe and living in Middle America, and Americans have discovered kids again. We're heading into 1981 with a 4% hike in the birth rate and 6% expected for next year.

Sounds like the 50's, doesn't it? Yes, but not quite. In the 50's we had apple pie, motherhood, Ike, and pizza. We also thought we could do it all. We had a sense of innocence. In the 1980's we have apple pie, motherhood, God Knows Who for President (although by the time this seen, it will be Carter, Reagan, Anderson, or Armageddon), and pizza. However, we have no excuse for innocence.

Twenty years have shown us that our options are neither simple nor easy. We have arrived at a point where we can no longer "win" even in the short term. Innocence is no longer an excuse.

How can we make better, or at least, more intelligent decisions? If you managed to get through college in the 60's or 70's, either to get an education or to stay out of Viet Nam, hark back to your old philosophy prof. Q.: How do you make intelligent decisions? A.: Gather all the information available, review it, and then decide what's best.

How many times have you been so flooded with information that decisions boil down to mentally flipping a nickel to decide what's relevant and what's garbage? Usually most decisions, even important one's, come down to half a dozen simple "Yes/No" choices.

Example: Do I buy the little white Rabbitt at the VW dealer in town?

Answer: Does it cost too much?
Yes! OK, go back to sleep.
No. Is it new or used?
New. OK, does it cost too much?
Used. Is it too old?
Yes. OK, keep looking.
No! OK, does it cost too much?

Except for going back to sleep, there is no escape because we always come back to "does it cost too much?" The only other way out is to keep looking. So far we have stepped through what is referred to as a decision matrix. This can be high tech talk: "Chemist if I know, I haven't decided yet!"

If we follow:

Q.: Does it cost too much?

No. Is it new or used?

New. Does it cost too much?

It is possible for our decision matrix to put us into a tight loop. There's now no way out until a) we run out of paper, b) we run out of patience, or c) we quit. This is the equivalent of a computer crash.

Another example with a built in escape route is sometimes called the "Where's the beer?" loop. You go to a party and the beer runs out. Some poor clown, either the host or the guy who got paid last, gets elected to go get more beer. Soon this poor Bozo's got orders for a case of Schlitz, two bottles of Ripples, 4 subs, 5 extra large pizzas with a stellar variety of condiments (some of which haven't been invented yet), and a copy of NIEKAS.

It's off to the package store and the rest of the revelers sit back and wait for Bozo to come back with the booze, etc. Then, in about two minutes, some big-mouth asks--



Some Bozo! What you have just walked through is a flow chart of a programmed event.

Remember that even asking somebody what time it is, assumes an enormous number of conventions. If the answer is "It's ten past four". You have to know if it's local time or G.M.T. (Greenwich Mean Time). Is it sidereal, unusual, or Earth time? Is it A.M. or P.M.? Is the precision of the response good enough? Would month, day, year, seconds, and/or fractions of a second be better for you? Whether the time-piece is digital, analog (a dial with hands), or even that the experimental error of the

watch is. If this last point is important, what use is it to you and, compared to what is the device in error? So even "simple" questions are always hiding implied questions.

While it often takes people a long time to waddle through a decision matrix even about "simple things", the computer can walk through much faster, particularly where "Yes/No" decisions are involved.

While most people, as adults, have been programmed to give the "most universally useful" answer to "form questions", if you ask the computer what time it is, unless the computer time-telling program takes into account correctly all the assumptions we've listed above, and a great many we haven't, the answer the computer gives is meaningless.

If there is a mistake in the program, the error will persist. This has led to the assertion that the purpose of computers is to generate mistakes faster and more accurately than ever before. Error can creep in from the damndest places. Error, or "bugs" come in all shapes and degrees of subtlety.

A few truths about computers are nicely summed up by Murphy's Law:

"What can go wrong, will go wrong."

A corollary of this law covers the situation that if you have a tire on your car, it will go flat on the first snowy day on the way to work, especially if you're in a hurry.

The real application of Murphy's Law to computers shows some truths about these overgrown adding machines. Mind you, there's no scientific proof to Murphy's Law, but we all know that it's true. Some of these truths include:

"No software is bug-free, we're just too stupid to find the error."

"Once we resolve a bug, there's another one just itching to crash the system at three o'clock in the morning."

"Solution of one error creates room for at least two more to express themselves."

"If everything is going well, you've forgotten something."

and

"Be careful what you wish for, you just might get it."

The problem faced by most people in real "decision-making positions" is the flood of information made available, mainly by computer. A

simple question generates a twenty page report, including statistical analysis which adds up to: "I'm not sure, and that's final." It's up to you or HUMAN DECISION REQUIRED.

So, take into account all the parameters, balance the big factors, temper with mercy, and make the best possible decision for the greatest number. Right? HORSE PUCKY!

Chances are that most decisions are made while sitting and contemplating the call of nature, out jogging and watching the better-looking members of the opposite sex, while eating a particularly good lunch, or at the end of mentally picking the petals off a daisy. Where complex factors complicate a simple decision, particularly where more than one or two options are involved, "Eeeney, meaney, miney, moe..." is a good place to start.

The problem of intelligent decision-making has to be addressed on the basis of what really constitutes valid, relevant, important information. People who are in the unenviable position of supervising other people's work, have to know how to get their subordinates to key in on the kind of information that is considered worth bothering about. If left to their own devices, most subordinates end up in one of two categories: Mr. Spock or Joseph Conrad.

The Mr. Spock is the one who condenses information to terse, short, to-the-point format. This is often the most useful. The one disadvantage is that you are depending on their judgement completely. This can isolate the supervisor from the raw material of the "best possible decision", i.e. get down in the ditch and have a look for yourself. This is necessary from time to time to perform a quality control check on the information that you as the decision-maker are getting.

The reborn Joseph Conrad delivers not only all the information you need, but every opinion, every shade and nuance in every consultation. This person has just the opposite approach from the Mr. Spock. The Joseph Conrad exercises no judgment at all and is pushing the entire decision and filtering process off onto you. This is the kind of information flow that nickels and dimes you to death. The solution here may be to take them down into the ditch with you, ask them to look, and while they're writing their next novel,

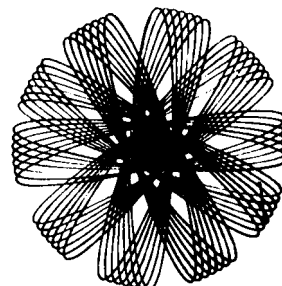
bury 'em where they stand.

Fortunately, most people fall into the middle somewhere.

The computer, now that it's finally on the scene, represents both a unique problem and an unparalleled opportunity.

- - (more next time)

Dear Reader: I did not intend this to start in as a series on computers, modern society, or "where do we go from here", but it seems to be going in that direction. I suspect that I will have to introduce myself at some point, in the more conventional sense. Please be advised that this wandering is a chance for me to escape the bonds of normal discipline and to play in the water until supper time. If I stray too far afield, I hope you good folks will keep me honest.



Another Feghoot

When Mt. St. Helens erupted, President Carter decided to go see the damage for himself. Arriving by helicopter, the President was confronted by a devastated forest scene; all grey due to the ash kicked up when the volcano literally "blew its top".

The President was moved to prayer by the destruction before him. Suddenly the mountain shook and a great chasm opened at the President's feet. A plug of molten lava poured forth, steam rose, and sulfur fumes filled the air. Jimmy fell to his knees and cried to the Almighty to spare him.

All at once the mountain stilled, the smoke cleared, and the sky turned blue. The advancing molten rock stopped short and slowly began to harden. Jimmy was so moved by this sign from Heaven that he grabbed a nearby stick and began tracing his name in the still-hardening rock.

And that is how Jimmy came to sign the magma "Carter".

This is an unofficial, and probably unauthorized, history of the L-5 Society, Boston Chapter or "Boston L-5".

For me, it all started in the fall of 1978. I had recently been hired by APPLICON, a computer graphics manufacturer, as a programmer. This job change also gave me my weekends back. Prior to APPLICON, I had worked for the ARPANET Network Control Center (or "NCC" to you ARPANET freaks) for the previous three and a half years as a weekend coordinator. The ARPANET is a "packet switching" computer data telecommunications network, a data railway, if you will. Computers can "talk" to each other on this system.

During the summer of 1978 I met, for the first time, a number of people--all of whom you will be introduced to later in this article or in a later installment if this turns into a series. The point of contact was my younger brother, Frederic, who has been and remains active in the AIAA: American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics.

The first person I met was Bill Rudow, a senior at Tufts University in mechanical engineering. Bill, who hails from Rockport, Massachusetts, has been active in the space movement in the Boston area for many years. Incidentally, Bill finished his Master in Engineering at Tufts in the Spring of 1980 and is now working at GTE in human factors involving command and control systems for the even newer MX missile system, along with the Minuteman.

Through Fred and Bill I was introduced to the MIT "Space Habitat Study Group", an informal group of Space freaks from the Boston area who met about once a month at the Center for Space Studies at MIT. Let's meet some of the people involved in this Cosmic Sewing Circle.

One of the leaders was K. Eric Drexler, a graduate student in either "Aero-Astro" or "Space Studies" at MIT, and promoter of light sail propulsion systems. Hitch something that looks like a silvered Chinese pagoda to a vehicle in earth orbit, unfurl and watch the sun's light pressure push it off into space. Not very fast, but dirt cheap and, according to Eric, technically feasible. I have no reason to disbelieve him on this score.

Eric worked on the original mass

driver project with Gerard O'Neil when he was visiting Professor at MIT in the mid-70's. Eric, O'Neil, and Harry Colm of MIT's National Magnet Lab, all worked together then, and ending in 1975 in the NASA/AMES summer study on Space Colonization.

Although she was less directly involved, another player in this saga is Christine Peterson, Eric's girlfriend. Her contribution was a hard-headed good sense and a view of life which was a good deal more "real world" than Eric's. Not much gets past this lady. Eric's technical background, and her practical talents compliment each other so well that they are the exception that proves the rule. She and Eric are a team which, where motivated, is highly effective.

Marcia Allen. That's a complete sentence.

Marcia was a secretary for the good folks at MIT Space Systems Lab. Being MIT staff and centrally located, rendered her a contact point for most of the Space Habitat Group. Marcia, a rather imposing lady in her early thirties, was one of the instrumental people in the Space Movement in the Boston area.

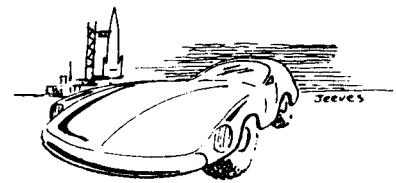
She, along with a number of other people you will meet here, founded New England L-5 and MIT L-5.

At the very least, Marcia was a hard worker who took on the thankless tasks nobody else wanted. While her organizational style boiled down on many occasions to "You, do this!", her often frantically voiced observations contained useful information. This was especially true after one had a chance to "filter" the data gathered after an exchange with Marcia.

Marcia, like most people, was cool, calm, and collected except while under the pressure of an emergency. Marcia tended to have a lot of emergencies.

Incidentally, Marcia was and remains a good, close friend of Carolyn Henson, who we shall introduce later.

Charlie Wood was an engineering student on the cooperative education program at Northeastern University in Boston, and was one of a number of people working for an organization called SPACE. Charlie, Bill Rudow, and others you will meet, were involved with SPACE as far back as 1976. SPACE was probably neither the best known, nor the most highly regarded organization promoting the utilization of Space.



Charlie hails from Virginia and has a tinge of Southern accent which becomes very pronounced when he's upset or angry. Charlie is putting himself through school the hard way and, as such, deserves nothing but respect.

Another, more irregular participant was Bill Lane. Bill has tried his hand at many things, all demanding and all related in some way to Space Science and technology. Bill is a capable young man who, once he's set his sights on what really interests him, will be a force to reckon with in the Space Movement.

The next player is Robert Audley, Jr. Bob, a bright, young psychology graduate from Suffolk University, another "School of Hard Knocks" in Boston, is carving himself a career in certified commodities as a broker. Since 1978, Bob has worked his way up in the company he works for, to a position in upper-middle management. Bob is one of these people in the "take over" generation who bear watching. Bob, while he comes across as the Playboy of Eastern Massachusetts, is a man of unlimited hard sense and real savvy for humankind. Below all this resides a strong sense of ethics and a real sense of propriety. Bob can also be tough minded and his mettle has proved its worth many times.

If Bob Audley is the first horseman of the Apocalypse, surely Bob Nichols is the second. Nichols and Audley founded the Boston L-5 Chapter. This organization worked hand and hand with SPACE to promote the civilian uses of outer space.

All you had to do to join L-5 in those days, was to send a letter naming offices and locations, and you got a letter back saying something adding up to "OK, you're in!" The lucky soul who had that thankless task was the then-President of National L-5, Carolyn Henson. There seemed to be no clear cut rules as to how you

became a chapter, except: "Let National Know".

Bob Nichols, in the meantime, left the Boston area for Houston. Bob, for lack of windmills to tilt at, decided to take on NASA instead. He figured he had 'em surrounded merely by being there. After a vigorous job campaign, he ended up in a position in NASA, reporting to Chris Craft. Not bad for an up-country boy from New England.

One of the technical and political heavies was Dr. Phillip Chapman. Phil is a former astronaut who originally comes from Australia. His accent has disappeared for the most part but occasionally shines through in full glory after a few beers. Since its beginning, Phil has been an active member of the board of directors of the National L-5 Society. Professionally, Phil works in Peter Glazer's group at Arthur D. Little, a high tech/consulting/R&D firm near Boston. His area is Solar Power Sattelites (SPS). He has been a man of infinite patience with the tussles of an amateur political action group like the L-5 Society. Both National and Boston L-5 continue to have growing pains. Phil has a broad interest in the new Space Movement as well as real political know-how.

Another member of this cosmic

therapy group was Beverley. She was involved in International Relations of some description and was available to act as a coordinator for many activities of the MIT Space Habitat Group.

Mind you, while this was not the entire cast, it represents a fair tabulation of those whom I first met in the Boston area Space Movement in SHSG. People like Dave Smith who was connected with the Space Systems Lab, were active both in SPACE and SHSG. My main goal, here, is to set out the history of the L-5 Society, Boston Chapter.

Incidentally, meetings of the SHSG were often missed, postponed, or ended up in a Chinese Restaurant.

Oh, yes. One other player is involved: WADE NIVISON. Another complete sentence. Wade originally came to Boston from Rochester, NY, to attend MIT. He left without completing degree requirements. When I met him, he was "co-director" of SPACE with K. Eric Drexler. Nivison had had a falling out with almost everyone who was active in the Boston area Space Movement during the late summer of 1978.

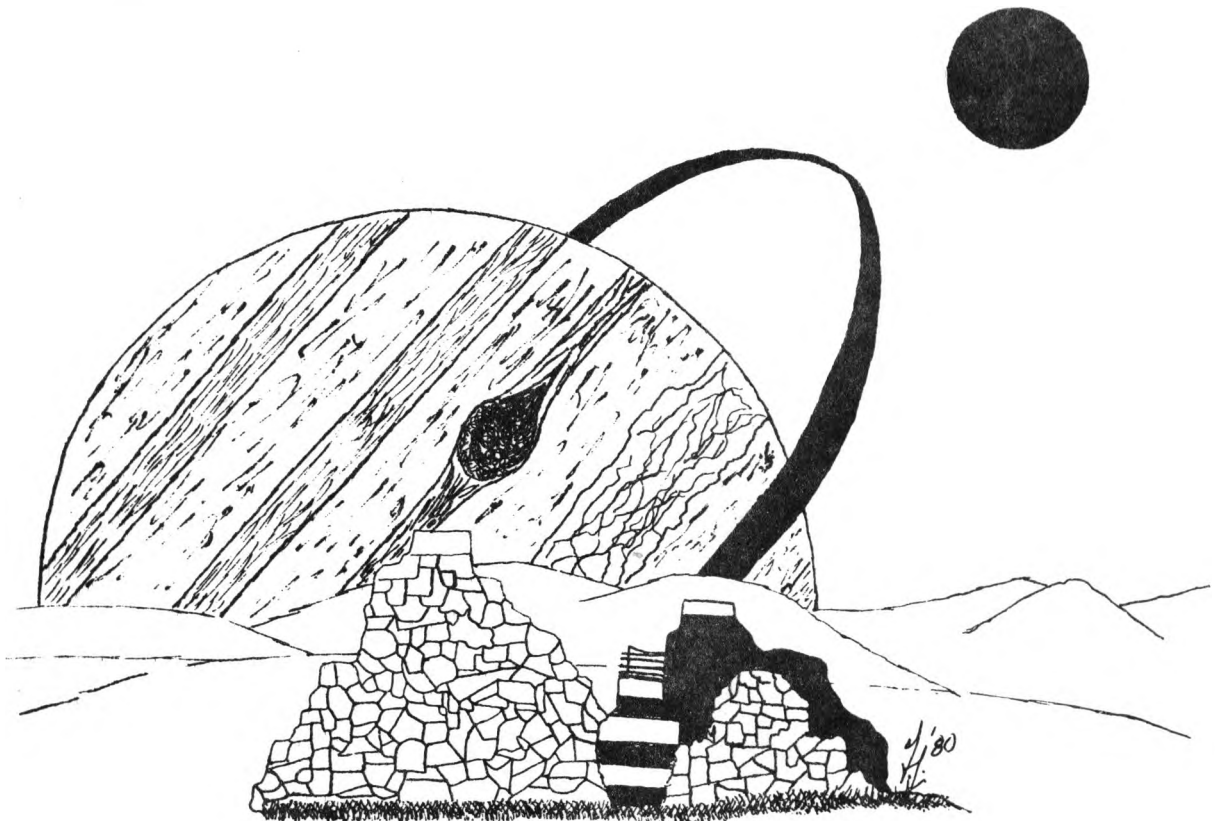
SPACE occupied offices on the third floor of the 500 block of Boylston Street, overlooking

Copley Square in midtown Boston. My best information is that Wade Nivison, K. Eric Drexler, and Marcia Allen had the leadership responsibility in SPACE since 1977.

SPACE, itself, was the brainchild of one Wayne Jefferson. Wayne is, I believe, a transplanted southerner. He runs an operation called Test Prep Services, a high pressure coaching school for students preparing for multiple choice step and barrier exams as the SAT's, the GPE's, etc. SPACE is an acronym for the Society for the Promotion And the exploitation of the Cosmic Environment. SPACE had a fund raiser during the winter session of 1977-78 at the Boston Museum of Science. This was the famous Cosmic Masked Ball. Rumor has it that while the evening was a remarkable social success, financially it was a flop.

Wayne Jefferson has to be given credit for setting the precedent in 1977 of getting the then-Governor of Massachusetts, Mike Dukakis, to declare July 20, 1977, as Massachusetts Space Day in celebration of the Apollo Lunar landing in 1969. He had had a hand in obtaining a similar proclamation every year since; including 1980.

(- - more next time!)



Notes from Elfhill: the Institute for Transtemporal Studies and the Search for Realities...

When I was in college, anything except the literature of social realism was considered to be escapist trash. Meanwhile, unnoticed by the literary establishment, the "real world" outside was being transformed. One of the many things I learned from my experience starting and running the Society for Creative Anachronism was that it is possible to change the world. Quite unexpectedly, the SCA developed from what I had intended to be a one-time event (chronicled in a column I wrote for NIEKAS 14 years ago), into a culture complete with social and economic networks, literature, folkways, and history. Suddenly, "living" in the Middle Ages was a viable choice.

Fandom can have the same effect. I've always thought that much of the frenetic atmosphere of conventions results from the fact that people are trying to cram a year's worth of living--the only kind of life that really matters to them--into four days. The rest of the year may go by in a blur, but con events remain in a vivid memory.

Comparison of witnesses accounts of crimes proves that reality is subjective, but few of us consider the implications of this fact. Instead of feeling guilty about our daydreams, we should use them, for when enough people share a vision, it can become real.

Not that I want to impose any particular version of reality--I can't choose among my own inventions, much less confine myself to anyone else's. Instead, I propose the adoption of an egalitarian attitude towards all realities--past, present, future, or imaginary worlds.

The INSTITUTE FOR TRANSTEMPORAL STUDIES is one way of pursuing this idea.

The ITTS is an idea, an organization, or sometimes a state of mind. It exists at the intersection of all realities, and its members are those who realize that the views of reality they have derived from their

Diana L. Paxson

personal, cultural, and planetary environments are no more (or less) valid than those of other beings. The ITTS does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, gender preference, species, or temporal/dimensional origin.

In this timeframe, it exists for a number of known purposes, and probably for several which have not yet become apparent.

One of these purposes is to facilitate time travel. Many people who have joined organizations like the Society for Creative Anachronism are not so much interested in the Middle Ages as in the exploration of other times. The ITTS would like to serve as a clearinghouse for information on organizations such as the SCA, the Friends of the English Regency, and others which offer people an opportunity to participate in the cultures of various historical periods.

In addition, there are numerous sub-fandoms devoted to the study (and sometimes the simulation) of what we call secondary worlds like Darkover or Middle-earth. These organizations are likely to be just as interesting to the type of person who joins the ITTS as the historically-orientated kind.

Another purpose which the ITTS can address is the publication of materials discussing "worlds" for which no fandoms have been yet formed, or for studies which draw on two or more realities which are usually considered mutually exclusive. The Lord Darcy Costume Book is an example of this sort of thing.

Finally, the ITTS seems to provide a useful psychological balance point for the sort of person whose convention wardrobe includes medievales, Regency ball-gowns, and perhaps an outfit from STAR WARS or LOGAN'S RUN. Especially on the West Coast, where many of our members work, the Renaissance Faire and the Dickens Faire and attend SCA events, Regency teas, and SF cons in between. Effective participation in these activities depends on belief in their reality, and too much time-hopping can lead to culture shock. They can't all

be real, or can they?

The ITTS has only one rule--members must be willing to accept all times and dimensions, from Oz to Babylon, on equal terms.

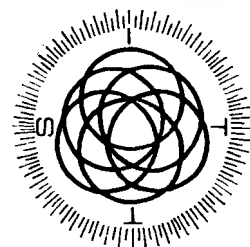
Just for the fun of it, this intellectual structure is supported by a staff organization and the design of some natty uniforms. Members have the option of seeking a "position" in Administration, Research & Operations, Arts & Artifacts, Security, Transit, or Training, at a level depending on what one wants to do. A technician, for instance, is someone who contributes to ITTS activities and participates in one or more interest areas, such as Darkover or the SCA. A Coordinator, on the other hand, is responsible for running a branch of the ITTS, or representing an interest group within it.

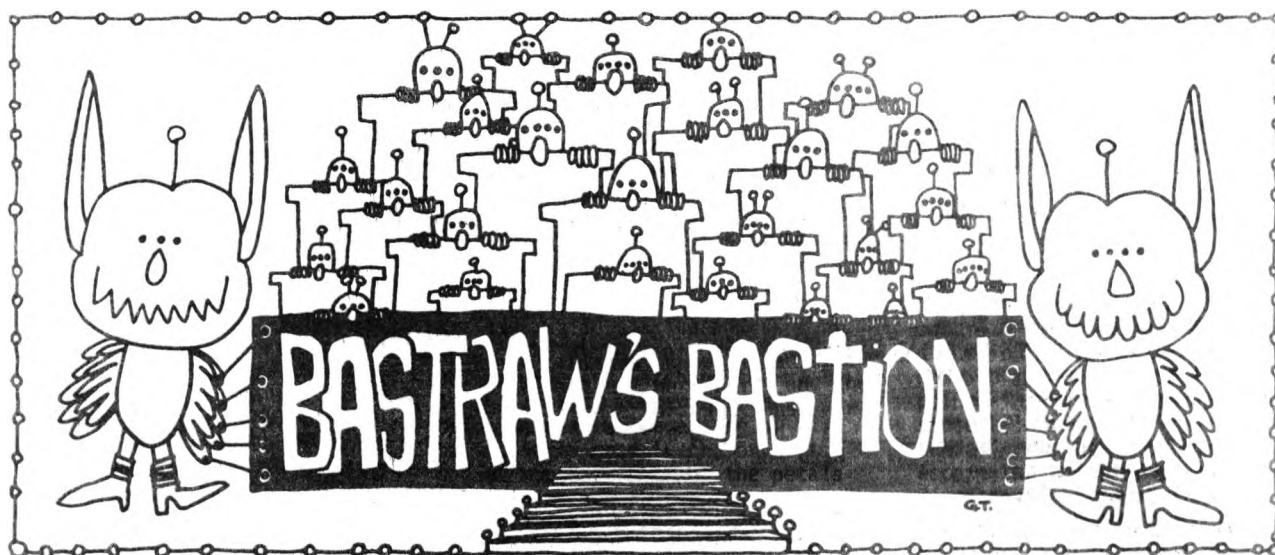
Field uniform for the ITTS consists of authentic dress for whatever time-frame you are working in. Dress uniform is a black jumpsuit, caftan, or other simple style piped in the color of the ITTS branch within which one is working. The emblem for the organization consists of six interlocked circles, which as Mr. Heinlein has so obligingly pointed out, represents the mathematics of intertemporal travel.

When all this got started, I thought it was just a sort of mental fiction--an intellectual device to provide a setting for some things I and some other people wanted to do. But in the movie XANADU, the 1940's and the 1980's intersect, and Heinlein, in The Number of the Beast, has presented a very impressive theory of multiple realities. If anyone else gratuitously comes up with something of the sort, I shall seriously begin to wonder just what is going on.

If you're wondering too, or would like uniform specifications, an application form, or just more information on the ITTS, let me know...

Write the ITTS at: 90 El Camino Real, Berkeley, CA 94705 (SASE appreciated)





LIKE unwashed lepers in the night,
we move on . . .

With this issue of NIEKAS, we
continue the tradition of never
printing the magazine in the sam-
ple place twice.

N20 was printed in NYC by Charlie
Brown and Co.

N21 at Dick Harter's manse in MA.

N22 in the Flynt's cellar in
Gilford, NH.

N23 at R.J.&D. Screenprinting in
Laconia, NH.

N24 will be rendered at my Folks'
house.

N25 - Who knows?

This nomadic existence is a pain
in the rump, to put it bluntly. At
this writing, NIEKAS Publications
is a conglomerate in more ways
than one. Ed's house is being used
for filing and as a mail drop for
general correspondence. Sherwood
has most of the layout material
and all mailing information. I
shuttle copy typing between home
and the office. This means that
any given piece of material in
this magazine usually ends up
travelling about 50 miles (this
doesn't even include the original
distance from the contributor.

And you KNOW how things can get
lost In Transit. We live with the
constant fear that someone's LoC,
sub, or article might end up in
the land where all lost things go.

Someday we hope to consolidate to
the point where we have one
location where we can receive mail,
compile the magazine, and run the
press.

The main problem is with the Press.
This finicky beast has to be run
in an ambient temperature between
65 and 75 degrees to work best.
Even allowing an extra 5 degrees
at either end, this still demands
an environment controlled beyond
what the typical cellar, garage,
or attic is.

So, we pack our duffle and
continue the search.

Would YOU like to be the home of
the next issue? We will take a
three-month lease.

β β β β β β β

JOHN Geisel asked me the other day,
"Is SF growing?" Taking a firm
stand I replied: "Yes and No".

There are a myriad factors
involved in so unspecific a
question; but I assumed he meant
growth as far as quantity of
material presented to the public
goes. If recent accounts in LOCUS
and SF CHRONICLES are any
indication, the answer would have
to be that sales are not
increasing at the same rate they
were immediately post-STAR WARS.

As to the quality of material
available; as always, everything
is in proportion. Except now, with
more SF than ever being published,
there is a mess of chafe floating
around the grain.

We all know what is good SF and
what is bad: "good" being what I
think is good and "bad" what
anyone who disagrees with me
thinks is good. For every A Case
of Conscience (James Blish) there
is X, Y, Z, and Theta of dubious
quality. With the coming of STAR
WARS and other media blockbusters,
SF was viewed by many publishers

as a "New" Hot Commercial
Commodity. This even prompted the
Big Two--Ace and Ballantine--to
increase their already large SF
output. Everyone was looking
everywhere for saleable (i.e.
completed) material. Unfortunately
some of what they found is barely-
readable junk. That didn't stop
them from shoving some words
behind fancy cover art,
emblazoning "Potential Hugo
Winner" across the top, and
charging arm-and-leg for it.

The other side of the coin is the
fact that more succulent SF is
being published. This allows a
little more latitude as far as
what the publisher can print.
Robert Silverberg explained this
idea during a panel as being like
a bell-curve graph. This demands
that each publisher puts out a
certain amount of commercially
viable product which then allows
him to take a chance on more
artistic (potentially counter-
profit) material. Look at this as
the Sistine Chapel Syndrome.

The extra pages which were made
available also provided an even
larger market outside of the
usual pulp trade. This is very
important. Believe me, not
everyone has a subscription to
ANALOG or F&SF. A lot of good
stories can go by the boards--
especially shorter pieces--because
they are restricted to the pulps.

If you look at SF as a whole,
including both written and filmic
media, then the dollar sign would
indicate there is undeniable
growth in the field.

Of quantity that is.

Quality is another question best left to the individual to make the final decision.

B B B B B B

IT was Friday.

I was working day watch out of Bunko. My partner Gill Bannon.

The phone rang; once, twice, thrice, frice...

I picked it up.

Evidently an oriental gentleman of particularly Fu Manchurian aspect was selling wooden coins in front of the local Burger Joint for five cents apiece. The avowed destination of the proceeds from these sales was a fund dedicated to the eventual cloning of Mao Tse-Tung, famous communist.

On one side of the coin was a bust of the dead-Chairman and on the other, a crow in flight with a Caucasian baby in its claws. (H.B.- The crow is a ubiquitous bird which can be found almost anywhere in the world. The symbolism is apparent.)

When we arrived at the scene, two men were hustling Mr. X away in handcuffs. They explained that they were FBI agents and that they had had this subject under surveillance for quite some time. They had information which indicated that, in actuality, Mr. X was keeping the money to further his own personal interests--reading/buying old science fiction books and magazines.

So ends the Case of the Mao Sham Crow Nickles.

EPILOGUE

Several weeks later, two boys found Mr. X's stash of wooden coinage hidden near Lake Winnepesaukee. They decided, rather than split them up, to hide them somewhere for a later unveiling. One of the boys cried joyfully to his friend, after the hole had been dug to hide them in, "Hooray, Brad! Bury them!"

(Fred Lerner read this and advised me that it needs more work. I maintain that it doesn't deserve any.)

B B B B B B B

WAS there any significance to the spattering of boo's I heard when it was announced that LOCUS had won the Hugo for best amateur publication at the 38th World Science Fiction Convention? Evidently there were some present who did not approve of the way the vote went. This is not unusual. Someone must have voted for some

other magazine and some of these people were probably just voicing their general displeasure that their vote did not decide the issue.

I do realize, however, that there is a fair-sized controversy over exactly what an amateur publication is. Such a dilemma would not exist but for the fact that there is no working definition which governs the award. Being of a legal bent, I find this strange and bordering on anarchy.

Let's look at this year's winner: LOCUS. Is it an amateur publication?

I would say "no". Webster's says that an amateur is one who engages in a certain pastime without any direct expectation or receipt of remuneration. It is my understanding that the editor of LOCUS, Charles Brown, derives an income from the magazine. This appears to indicate that he is a professional.

Does this mean that anytime a 'zine goes from the red into the black it becomes professional? Clearly a better guideline is required.

The WSFA took a stab at the problem and even passed a resolution to the effect that if a magazine generates living expenses (whatever that is) for someone, their magazine is no longer an amateur publication. What a can of worms! Fortunately the can is still sealed as the WSFA did not designate any enabling legislation to administer, or even set, guidelines.

It seems to me that if it is the intention of the WSFA to bounce LOCUS-like magazines from the category, they might have been better advised to try another route. Obviously there is a faction out there that feels these Chosen Few have been monopolizing the proceedings. Maybe so, but don't blame the award and you certainly shouldn't blame Brown.

I don't.

Would YOU pass up a Hugo? Don't be silly.

The only thing that does bother me is the fact that Charlie accepted the Hugo after he said that he would not in one of his editorials. I can't quote the piece but he did indicate that, while he could not decline the nomination, he would sidestep the award.

What would happen when/if he does? That is still unknown to this writer. I am sure there is a provision

somewhere; or is this wishful thinking on my part?

Now, Andy Porter of STARSHIP/ALGOL fame appears to further confuse the issue. Mike Glyer, in FILE 770, advises that Porter has renounced his former stand of wanting to be considered a professional publication. He feels that this simply allows other prozines to slip in and take the award. I assume that he still feels, at least in principle, that this is still not proper (but would still like the award).

Let's look at some other possible criteria for determining the status of any given magazine.

How about circulation? I personally would hate to be the one to set the number of subscribers at which NIEKAS stops being a fanzine. What do you do when you reach that figure; refuse subs? And how would you enforce such a rule? Have audits? (This is also a major consideration as far as the new WSFA rule goes.)

How about quality? Of printing? Of artwork? Don't be silly.

I would like nothing better than to see LOCUS, STARSHIP, and whatever else bounced into another category. It would make things a whole lot easier for NIEKAS to win another Hugo. But I cannot see where it is possible, under the present rules, to ethically exclude these publications from the running. In a way, they provide a very great service (outside of their intrinsic value as magazines) by setting a goal for other fanzines to aspire to.

This would seem a better way to spend one's time. Rather than lower the standard, why don't we just try to do our best and may the better 'zine win.

Gauntlet tossed, end of sermon.

(I feel like I've just poisoned my own well.)

B B B B B B B

I received a newsletter from the U.P.X.A.S. the other day. What is that, you ask? Why, the United Planets Xenoarcheological Society, of course.

This is an organization administered by Joel Hagen (graphics, sculpture, and modelmaking his specialties). He brings these skills to bear in his re-creations, two and three dimensional, of various extinct species from various extraterrestrial locations.

This particular issue (#5) deals with the fossilized evidence of a lifeform from 4 Tau Ceti.

Pliocryptus, "an extinct pelagic forager", is a "tridexterous creature of considerable brain capacity". You wouldn't want to find one swimming in your Jacuzzi, believe me.

If you are interested in receiving these illustrated newsletters, send an SASE to Joel at 10512 Sawyer, Oakdale, CA 95361.

I'm glad someone has at last taken a healthy interest in these species-of-yor from beyond the Great Beyond.

(Sagan has yet to mention anything in this area on COSMOS.)

B B B B B B B

I can't decide what would be better theme music for Harlan Ellison; Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer" or a matador's fanfare. Both seem appropriate somehow.

Harlan Ellison has been called many things by many people. Some of these would blister paint on a subway wall. He is often singled out as a belittler, an undisciplined child, or a meglomaniacal misanthrope who shouts things at the edge of the world. To say that he keeps a high profile is like saying that the Pope is Catholic. Maybe what makes Ellison particularly appealing to me (as a celebrity--not a writer) is that I am a long-time fan of Don Rickles.

I, for one, get a vicarious thrill when someone like Ellison starts spewing forth at some poor schlepp who happens to be in his line of sight/fire. It probably has something to do with that facet of human nature which thinks "Better Him than Me".

Harlan Ellison appears to speak with reckless abandon. Whether or not this is truly the case is immaterial; the effect is there. (When is the liontamer going to get his head chewed off?)

(It never happens.)

"He's a sonuvabitch, but..."

"He's a shitheaded liberal

feminist, but..."

"He's short, but..."

All these statements end "he's a damn fine writer." Ellison maintains that he is very serious about his writing; not so much about himself. The point is, he could not get away with the things he says in public if it weren't for the things he writes in private.

Harlan Ellison strikes me as a fan who has made it and, in achieving such eminence as a writer, now feels obligated to shield himself

from gratuitous praise by going on the attack. The best defense is to be strongly offensive?

One of the first things he said when he got on stage at Noreascon II was that he was there for one reason only: to sell his newest book.

If you believe that, I have some IBM stock to show you.

Other's opinions notwithstanding, I believe Harlan Ellison is human.

[sounds of incredulous disbelief]

What homo sap can possibly resist an opportunity to orate? bambuzzle? pallaver?

Now, to his writing, which he cares so much about.

All I can say is that I like most of his stuff and his sales are definitely not hurting. SF isn't always spaceships and blasters. Ellison's stories are about people and situations rather than hardware and events. Not everyone writes like Ellison. They can't. It looks easy at first; just stream of consciousness transferred to paper. Try to write something like that. I dare you.

It ain't that easy.

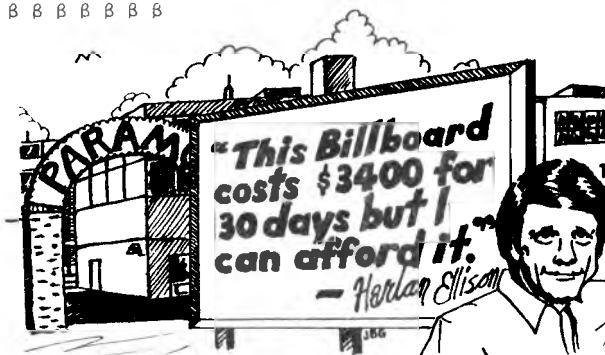
The cartoon on this page expresses Ellison's sentiments as to the outcome of the case between he and Ben Bova against Paramount Pictures.

Needless to say, they won.

And THAT is another can of worms I hope to get into next ish.

Yum!

B B B B B B B



THIS is a personal apologia and public flagellation of myself for my editorial ineptness in the setting of type for article credit to Anne Braude on her interview with Lloyd Alexander in N23. To make up for the undeserved diminutive declaration of devisor, I will now state her name in all-caps; not once, but thrice.

ANNE J. BRAUDE

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ANNE J. BRAUDE

I want it clearly understood that the above has nothing to do with her request of Ed that he send my "liver and lights" to her COD. This is evidently in response to some imagined slight that she, in her no-doubt fevered condition, thought I had caused her. She is obviously not a well person.

Speak softly when you see her.

B B B B B B B

THE other day I pulled out an anthology I had not read since my early teens. As I remembered it, this was one of the best collections of SF I had ever seen. Skimming through the various stories, I could not believe how lightweight they were (with one or two exceptions). But to a 12 year old Mike Bastraw, they were pretty wonderful indeed. Time is hard on everything and I suppose it is roughest on our perceptions of how things WERE.

Book and magazine illustrations seem to survive a bit better. Again, some more than others.

Some of the premier Survivors are Jack Gaughan's cover renderings for Ace Books' 1965 re-issue of Doc Smith's "Lensman" series. They are as timeless as the stories themselves. I even prefer Jack's less-than-literal interpretive illos to the original art that was in ASTOUNDING. These covers demanded that I buy the books and provided a comfortable basis for my visualizations as I read about Humanity's struggles against the vile Eddorians.

Imagine my delight when I learned that we actually get artwork for NIEKAS from Gaughan.

* musical interlude *

"Dreams can come true, they can happen to you...da, da, di, da..."

Kelly Feas has commented that publishers never give the artists proper credit and down-play their contributions to the success of a book. I suspect this occurs only

when they are walking with the artist himself.

I'm sure the Sales Dept. knows better.

Outside of the author's name, the next thing to draw my attention to a particular book is the cover illo.

C'est ca.

B B B B B B

THE artshow at Noreascon II was a real eye-opener. The bidding certainly did a lot as far as clearing away the haze and hype that sometimes surrounds so-called Big Name Artists.

Prices seem to seek their own level in a show that uses this limited-bid system. I assume that most people, like myself, made several preliminary passes to size-up what was available and to see what the minimum bids were looking like. If something was priced too low, the ballot would quickly fill to the appropriate level. If it was too high, it just sat there unless someone decided to take it for its minimum bid.

I was fortunate enough to make several purchases at the show, mainly by sitting on top of the paintings until the last bids were in. It payed off in two cases.

The two pieces in question were both done by Terry Jeeves of ERG fame. One is a sleek ship of space headed towards a twinkling star (I chalked up the twinkling to him having a poetic license). The other is an extrapolation of what one of the Krell power plants, from FORBIDDEN PLANET, might look like. The perspective work is done very appealingly and the basic structural designs are compatible with what is actually seen in the movie.

I was suprised to see that the 3D art did not sell better than it did. There were several fine pieces of sculpture and glass that were never even bid on. You never can tell, I guess.

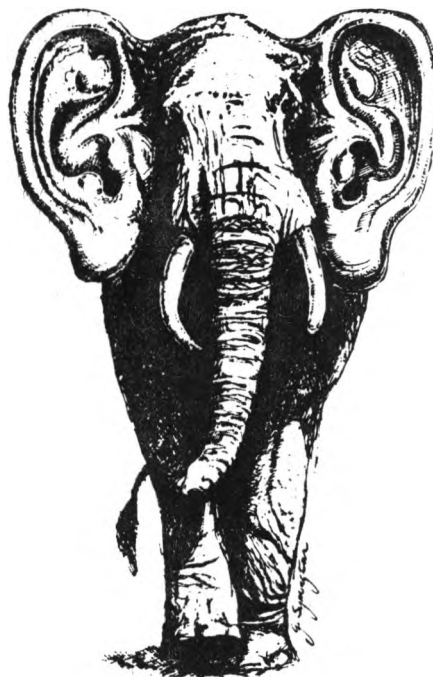
Which is as good a segue as any to . . .

Gary Symington: Fact or Fiction

The question is rhetorical as long as he can keep turning out mind-benders like the pseudophant on this page. I did a double-take which nearly put me in a cervical collar when I first looked at this piece.

Symington Speaks:

"The...illo is just a little ditty with a few minor changes from the



original ditty. (How precisely I write!) Seriously, I looked through one of my books on Rene Magritte and came away in a "I'm going to do something a little strange" mood. What else is an artistic license for, anyway?"

The man obviously has an insight into the art world of a latter-day Tom Sawyer.

I first met Gary back in the Dark Days at Memorial Junior High School in L.A.(conia). Even then, I noticed that he was a strange, bizarre, curious, deranged fellow; nothing out of the ordinary for our class, believe me. (Maybe it had something to do with the fact that we all had eccentrically-shaped heads which came to a point at the top.)

After graduating from good 'ole LHS, Gary entered Syracuse University as a Very Liberal Artistic Major. he left shortly thereafter to pursue a miserable career in a band with the unlikely moniker of "Tarnished Gold". I believe this pilgrimage was at the request of the school, but reports are confused on this point.

After re-entering S.U., Gary was shortly thereafter released with a degree. So HE says. I've never seen it myself, so cannot swear to its existence.

We now come to the Summer of 1978. Those were very hard days for Gary. He just couldn't do anything right, it seemed. He'd mix yellow and blue and get red, his brushes shed uncontrollably, and his pencils had an odd habit of breaking as soon as he touched point to paper. Undaunted, he turned to SF art as a means of escape. After all, didn't Freas, Frazetta, and Finlay (up until his death) carve a living out of this medium. It was a sure thing.

It didn't work out.

But, he did develop a healthy respect for, and interest in, the genre which carries through to this day.

Gary now lives and resides in the mythical land of Canoga Park in the country of California with his wife, Lisa. Gary probably doesn't deserve someone as nice as Lisa as he has no redeeming qualities other than, every once and awhile, he doesn't kick her as hard as he might. (Give him one back, Lise, right were it hurts: in his Grumbacher.)

How will the Symington Saga end? Only Kronos and the IRS know for sure.

We hope to feature a piece of Gary's art based on Out of the Silent Planet (C.S. Lewis) on the cover of our next issue. As the next issue will deal with, among other things, religion and SF, it seemed very appropriate--if not particularly tasteful.

Seriously though, we hope to see more from this shining star on the horizon at the edge of the world of forever where nothing grows old and everyone lives happily ever after until they die of boredom.

(Only kidding, Gar!)

Seeyaulnextime.



MATHOMS

ANNE BRAUDE



Back in the First Foundation of NIEKAS, when we were all young and innocent (except Fred Lerner), nearly every issue had something about juvenile fantasy. So far, NIEKAS Redivivus has had only relics preserved from the Golden Age--the Carol Kendall and Lloyd Alexander interviews. I propose to devote the next three MATHOMS to three major new authors of juvenile fantasy who have emerged in the last ten years. (I ought to make it clear at the start that I don't much care for the term "juvenile" as used here; "children's fantasy" is hardly better. I am talking about books that are classified by librarians as "J" or "YA" and are shelved--but not always--in the children's department by booksellers. The classic example of the irrelevance of this arbitrary distinction is Andre Norton, whose books, are uniformly classified as J or YA in libraries and as adult science fiction in the paperback section of bookstores.)

Ten years ago, the most familiar fantasy authors were men--Tolkien, Alexander, Lewis, Alan Garner, Charles Williams, E.R. Eddison--with the conspicuous exceptions of Norton and Kendall. (I would include Anne McCaffrey, even though her dragonbooks are generally labeled sf, because I think the fantasy elements appeal more to readers more than the sf elements, and the latter are not exploited at all in the HARPERHALL trilogy.) The three new major talents I am dealing with are all women. Whether this is Socially Significant or merely a curiosity of literature I do not know.

Susan Cooper, author of the sequence called THE DARK IS RISING, is a native of Buckinghamshire who read English at Oxford, wrote for the London SUNDAY TIMES, married an American, and now lives near Boston. Her series is far more varied than, for example, the Narnia and Prydain books, weaving together a number of different story types.

The first volume, Over Sea, Under Stone, has hardly any fantasy elements. The protagonists are the Drew children, Simon, Jane, and Barney, who are spending the summer in a small Cornish village with their parents and Professor Merriman Lyon, their

mother's courtesy uncle. They find an ancient manuscript containing clues to the location of a long-hidden golden grail, brought to Cornwall by one of Arthur's knights, which carries the true story of Arthur and the promise of his coming again. Helped by Great-Uncle Merry, the children try to find the grail in spite of several sinister and frightening characters who want it for themselves. They succeed in saving it, but the key to its mysterious inscriptions is lost in the sea. Except for one scene of possibly supernatural menace, and a hint at the end that Great-Uncle Merry is more than he seems, the only fantasy element here is the Arthurian connection. There is a very faint hint that there might be a sequel, but no real indication that Cooper had the rest of the sequence in mind at this point. As juveniles go, it is a good book, but it is by far the weakest in the series.

The second volume, The Dark is Rising, abandons everything from the previous book except Merriman--a startling development for a fantasy series. The setting is Cooper's native Buckinghamshire and the hero is Will Stanton, an ordinary small boy until his eleventh birthday, when he comes into his power as the lastborn of the Old Ones, the not-quite-human wizards who stand for the Light against the Dark. He is initiated by Merriman, the first of the Old Ones, into the magic of the Light, which includes the power to move freely back and forth in time. Will's quest is to find the six Signs of the Light (the cross-in-a-circle symbol in various elements). The story covers the time between Midwinter Eve and Twelfth Night in Will's own time, climaxing in a great storm with the Thames in flood and the loosing of Herne the Under and the Wild Hunt against the Black Rider of the Dark.

Greenwitch returns to Trewissick, the Cornish village of the first book, and brings together Will, Merriman, and the Drew Children. Against the background of the old Cornish rite of the making of the Greenwitch, a figure made of branches which is cast into the sea each year as a luck-offering, the children try to recover the grail, stolen by an agent of the Dark, and the key to its meaning, lost in the sea. After a nightmarish sequence in which Wild Magic is loosed over the village by an angry



Greenwitch, the Dark is defeated once more and, because of a strange sympathy between Jane and the Greenwitch, grail and key are recovered.

The Crey King is supposedly the best in the series, since it won the Newbery, but I would rate The Dark Is Rising as its equal. The setting is Wales, where Will, this time without Merriman's aid, is seeking a golden harp which will wake the Six Sleepers under Cader Idris so that they may aid the Light in the last confrontation. He is aided by the tawny-eyed albino boy Bran Davies and his dog Cafall, whose silver eyes can see the wind. The actual achieving of the quest is almost an anticlimax compared with the revelation of who and what Bran really is--the Pendragon, the son of Arthur and Guinevere, brought through time by Merriman/Merlin to be raised in our own century.

The final volume, Silver on the Tree, brings together all six--Merriman, Will, Bran, and the Drews--for the final quest. Once again, the setting is Wales. Will and Bran visit the Lost Land--a sort of Welsh Lyonesse--to win the crystal sword made long ago for the Light. Here time and space shift almost kaleidoscopically for all the characters; the story line almost seems to be slipping out of Cooper's control. As the gathered Circle of the Old Ones moves towards victory at the Midsummer Tree, the balance between Light and Dark ultimately rests in the hand of an ordinary man, the shepherd, John Rowlands, chosen by the High Magic to act as judge when Bran's right to take part in the quest is challenged. His verdict makes possible the achievement of the quest but leaves Bran with a terrible choice at the end.

The end of the story contains two elements which are more or less standard requirements for this sort of high fantasy: what I call The Passing Away and The Forgetting. Here, as in Tolkien and Alexander, the defeat of a supernatural evil force is followed by the departure of the magical champions of goodness, leaving the world to men, who are a mixture of both. This is a natural and appropriate transition from the world of fantasy back to the Primary World. But in Cooper's book the humans involved are also told that they will forget all that has happened: this has always seemed to me a most unsatisfactory solution. Its purpose, presumably, is to explain why such momentous events are not found in the history books or the daily papers, but surely some other means could be devised. The geas of forgetfulness seems to denigrate both the splendor of the magic and the value of the heroism, so that the adventures no longer afford the opportunity for learning and character growth; compare the experiences of Taran in the Prydain cycle, which are necessary to enable him to grow from the rash and headstrong youth of the first book into a mature adult fitted to become the High King.

But this is mere carping. The few flaws in the sequence are lost among its manifold excellences. The writing is both powerful and lyrical. The characterization is excellent, especially that of Will Stanton and of the various ordinary people who get caught up in the struggles. The magic is rich, splendid, and varied: in addition to the wizardry of Light and Dark, there is the Wild Magic of the forces of Nature, the Old Magic which preserves the Lost Land, and the High Magic which rules all in the universe.

Cooper's most original invention is the character of Will Stanton. Normally the child protagonist of juvenile fantasy is an ordinary person who is called to a quest. Sometimes he turns out to be the hero (usually by proving to be the long-lost prince), but more often he is the wizard's or the hero's helper. Never before have I come across a fantasy in which the child turns out to be himself a supernatural magical figure, but it is done very successfully here: Will is believable both as a small boy

and as an Old One. The whole Stanton family--Will is the youngest of nine--are vividly and believably portrayed.

In addition to the Arthurian material, Cooper makes use of English, Cornish, and Welsh folklore and tradition, not merely as ornament but well integrated into the story. There is a richly evoked sense of place--something that British fantasy writers have excelled at since Rudyard Kipling--particularly in the Welsh and Buckinghamshire settings.

Somebody once complained of the novels of Jane Austen that they had no weather. This is certainly not a fault which can be ascribed to Susan Cooper. The notoriously variable English weather plays a large part in the story, from the sinister snows and wild tempest of The Dark Is Rising to the broiling heat of Midsummer Day in Silver



on the Tree. The particular excellence of this sequence is the author's ability to combine realistic settings and characters with powerful and evocative symbols and actions, and in her sensitivity to the complexity of moral choice. Good and evil are never made simplistic, and the pain of having to choose between conflicting aspects of goodness is recognized. The final gift of the Light to ordinary men is the responsibility for their own choices and for the world they live in. As Merriman tells the children at the conclusion of the last book:

"It is altogether your world now. You and all the rest. We have delivered you from evil, but the evil that is inside men is at the last a matter for men to control. The responsibility and the hope and the promise are in your hands--your hands and the

hands of the children of all men
on this earth..."

"For Drake is no longer in his
hammock, children, nor is Arthur
somewhere sleeping, and you may
not lie idly expecting the
second coming of anybody now,
because the world is yours and
it is up to you. Now especially
since man has the strength to
destroy this world, it is the
responsibility of man to keep it
alive, in all its beauty and
marvellous joy."

His voice grew softer, and he
looked at them with the faraway
dark eyes that seemed to be
looking out into Time. "And the
world will still be imperfect,
because men are imperfect...but
if you work and care and are
watchful, as we have tried to be
for you, then in the long run
the worse will never, ever,
triumph over the better. And the
gifts put into some men, that
shine as bright as Eirias the
sword, shall light the dark
corners of life for all the rest,
in so brave a world."

There was silence, and the small
sounds of the mountain drifted
back into it: the faint calls of
sheep, the humming of a distant
car, and far above, the cheerful
trilling of a lark.

"We'll try," Simon said. "We'll
try our best."

The sequence named THE DARK IS
RISING, by Susan Cooper:

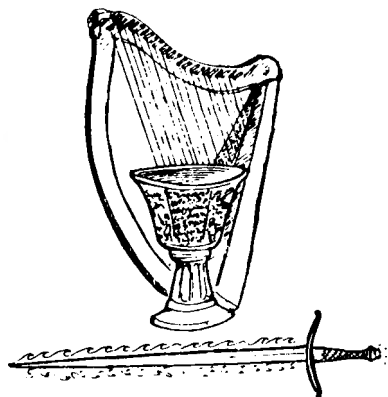
Over Sea, Under Stone (Harcourt,
Brace & World, 1965)

The Dark Is Rising (Atheneum/
Aladdin, 1973, paper, \$1.95)--
the 1974 Newbery Honor Book

Greenwitch (Atheneum, 1974,
\$6.95--also in paperback)

The Grey King (Atheneum, 1975,
\$6.95)--1976 Newbery winner

Silver on the Tree (Atheneum,
1977, \$7.95)



ENP

OL' MAN HEINLEIN by Spider Robinson

[This is the second filksong I've ever written, and it is set to
the tune of "Old Man River", as arranged by Marty Paich on Ray
Charles' Ingredients In a Recipe For Soul.]

D G7 D G7
Ol' man Heinlein That ol' man Heinlein
D A7 Bm E7
He must know somethin' His heart keeps pumpin'
A Asus A A+ D
He just keeps writin' And lately writin' 'em long

D G7 D G7
He don't write for critics 'Cause that stuff's rotten
D A7 Bm E7
And them that writes it Is soon forgotten
A Asus A A+ D
But ol' man Heinlein keeps speculatin' along

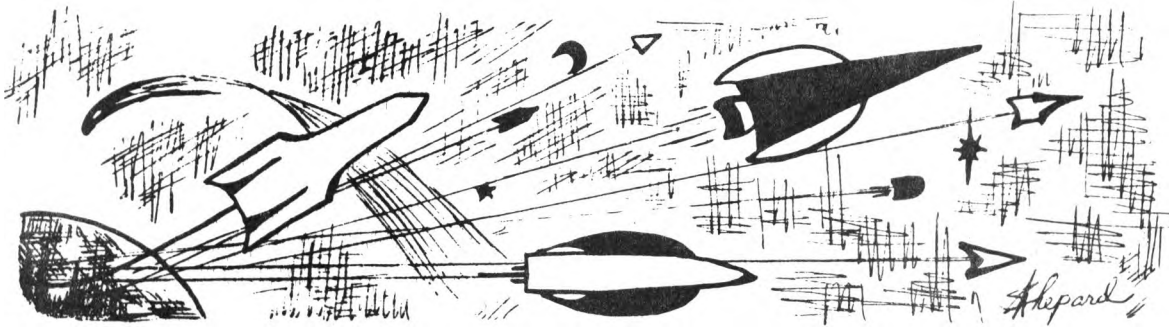
F#m C#7 F#m C#7 F#m C#7 F#m C#7
You and me Sit and think Heads all empty except for drink
F#m C#7 F#m C#7 F#m C#7
Tote that pen Joo that brain Get a little check in the
F#m Em A7
mail from Baen . . .

D A7 D A7
I get bleary And feel like shirkin'
D A7 Bm E7
I'm tired of writin' But scared of workin'
A Asus A A+ D
But ol' man Heinlein He keeps on rollin' along

Abm Eb7 Abm Eb7 Abm Eb7 Abm Eb7
You and me Read his stuff Never can seem to get enough
Abm Eb7 Abm Eb7 Abm Eb7
Turn that page Dig them chops Hope the old gentleman
Abm F#m B7
never stops . . .

E A7 E A7
So raise your glasses It's only fittin'
E B C#m F#7
The best sf that was ever written
E E+ E6 Am E C#5
Is Old Man Heinlein May he live as long as Lazarus Long!

reprinted from DESTINIES magazine, and will appear in the
forthcoming collection, Time Travelers Strictly Cash (and other
stories), by Spider Robinson (Ace Books, 1981), Copyright 1980 by
Ace Books; used by permission of the author



SHERWOOD FRAZIER SCIENCE FACT

SATURN ENCOUNTER 1980

By the time you read this, Voyager 1 will have encountered Saturn. Its cameras, heat sensors, magnetic field and atomic particle detectors will have inspected, measured, and sniffed the planet, its moons, and any particles that are part of the Saturn system. We will have had our first close look at that magnificent ringed planet that lies almost a billion miles from Earth.

Saturn, the second largest of the planets, is one of the solar system's four gas giants; the others are Jupiter, Uranus, and Neptune. They all have huge accumulations of hydrogen and helium surrounding small, rocky cores; but each exhibits its own unique properties.

One of the key differences Voyager is looking for between Jupiter and Saturn lies in their mechanisms for generating internal heat. They both radiate about twice the energy they receive from the sun. The heat (energy) is believed to have been generated some 4.6 billion years ago as the solar system was formed. Jupiter is large enough to still have its primordial heat escaping. But Saturn, according to theoreticians, should have cooled off long ago. Thus, Saturn's excess heat must be caused by some other mechanism such as the separation of hydrogen and helium.

The Saturnian system, being almost twice the distance from the Earth as the Jupiter system, has not been thoroughly studied. Thus the subjects of Voyager 1's research will include as much of Saturn's

system as possible: the planet, the rings, the satellites--with an emphasis on Mercury-sized Titan, and the magnetosphere (the magnetic fields that hold back the solar winds).

The Voyager spacecraft is a highly specialized, highly automated wonder of modern science. Because of the enormous communications gap (85 mins. out - 85 mins. back), Voyager must be able, to a certain extent, to take care of itself. Programmed into its computer brain is a complete mission should the communications from Earth fail. Though this would be a rather minimal mission, it would still be complete as far as the basic experiments go. The data would be collated and returned, via radio, to the Earth.

The resemblance in design to the earlier Mariner spacecraft and Viking orbiters is quite evident with the exception of the parabolic radio antenna and the three very prominent appendages which protrude from the ship. The large (3.7M-12ft.) antenna is located where the solar panels were on the earlier spacecraft.

The polygonal ring that makes up the main body of the spacecraft (see figure 1) also houses the electronic equipment and offers a minimal amount of protection from micrometeoroids and radiation. Around the outside of this ring are 16 thrusters that maintain the spacecraft's attitude and produce the velocity needed to change course during the flight.

Because of the vast distances separating the outer planets from

the sun, solar panels were discarded as the electrical power source. Instead, three Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generators are used to supply power to the craft.. These are located on the appendages to prevent any damage to the main subsystems from excess heat and radioactivity. The RTG's produce energy by absorbing the heat from the radioactive decay of plutonium oxide. The thermal output of these units will be about 7000 watts by the time Voyager reaches Saturn. This will be converted to about 390 watts of useable electric power.

The majority of the scientific experiments are located on the two remaining appendages. These include: infrared radiation, polarimetry, ultraviolet spectroscopy, and the sensors for the imaging sciences on one boom (the Science Scan Platform). The third and longest of the appendages is reserved for the low-field magnetometers. Because the spacecraft itself has a magnetic field, the magnetometers have to be isolated to insure the quality of the data collected.

Because of the need for the Voyager to maintain an orientation that points the parabolic antenna towards Earth, the Science Scan Platform can be precisely rotated about two axes. Also, the lenses of the two TV cameras have been boresighted to insure nested imaging.

The pictures taken by the Pioneer 10 and 11 were done with imaging photopolarimeter, which is neither a film camera nor television

camera. It is more similar to a light meter used in common photography. It measures the strength of the red and blue components of sunlight scattered from the clouds and converts this data into numbers. The signals when received here on Earth are converted by computer into shades of gray on photographic film which, when added to a synthesized green image, recombine to approximate the planets' true color. Because of the spin-stabilization of the Pioneer spacecraft, the light-sensitive field scan photopolarimeter was the best method of rendering good imagery. But the fully stabilized attitude of the Voyager permitted the use of ingenious, miniaturized television cameras.

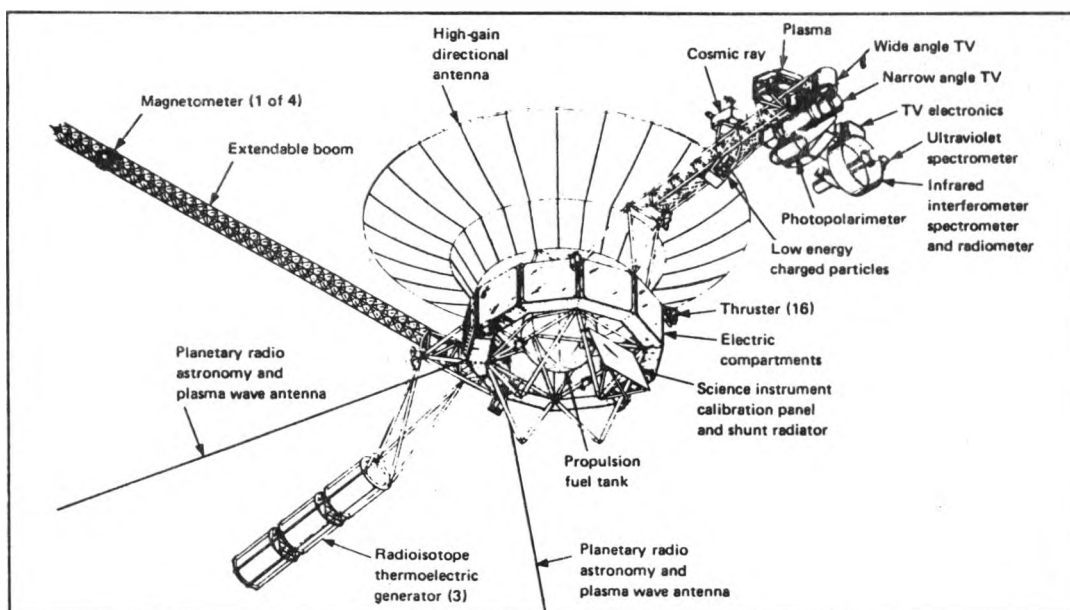
Each of these cameras are comprised of a lens, filter wheel, shutter, slow-scan vidicon tube, and the electronics necessary to

For reconstruction of color pictures, a wide range of spectral transmitters are needed for this purpose an eight position filter wheel is mounted on each camera. The two filter wheels are independent of each other which allows them to be changed from picture to picture by commands stored in the memory of the Flight Data Subsystem.

In spite of all the science experiments on board the Voyager spacecraft, the human eye is still one of the most important science tools we have. This is why so much attention has been given the imaging equipment. It is some of the finest ever produced for the space program. Let us take a look at some of the imaging objectives a little closer.

There are many objectives of the imaging science investigation; the most important being Saturn itself.

largest in the solar system). Titan is very interesting for several reasons. First, it is the only object, other than the Earth, to have a substantial atmosphere--at least in terms of density. Titan's atmosphere has a pressure estimated to be between 20 millibars and 2000 millibars (at the surface). By comparison, the Earth has a surface pressure of about 1000 millibars and Mars, about 10 millibars. Though we will not be able to see the atmospheric pressure, the amount of the moon's surface we see might be an indication of the atmospheric pressure. Let me explain what I mean. If we can clearly see the surface, it is probably a good indication that the atmosphere is thin and the surface pressure is low. If we can't, the opposite is true: the atmosphere is opaque and the surface pressure is high. Scientists are hoping to be able



operate the subsystem. The lens of the wide-angle camera has a 200 mm focal length and a relative aperture of f3.5. The field of view of the wide-angle lens will render an image 56 km (33.6 mi.) on a side from a range of 1000 km (600 mi.). The narrow-angle lens has a focal length of 1500 mm and a relative aperture of f8.5 which will render a picture 7.4 km (4.4 mi.) on a side.

Unlike Earth-based TV systems, these slow-scan cameras employ shutters to control the duration of an exposure. The fixed mode can handle exposures from 0.005 secs. to 15.0 secs. If a longer exposure is needed, the shutter is simply switched to the longer-exposure mode and the duration selected.

Scientists are most interested, as with Jupiter, in the motions of the cloud systems and what they may reveal about the global atmospheric circulations. To characterize the colored materials in the cloud belts and zones, and to determine the vertical structures of the clouds are also important undertakings. Sequencing images (a kind of motion picture) over an extended period of time will aid scientists in the understanding of the boundary region between the belts and zones, as well as the motions of the cloud systems.

Other than the planet itself, one of the most important photographic objectives is Titan, Saturn's largest moon (as well as the

to get a good look at the surface of Titan. Is it primarily ice or rock? This view of the surface will depend greatly on what I have already said about the atmosphere.

The size of Titan is very much in question at the moment. It is estimated to be from 5 to 20 percent larger than Mercury; Mercury's equatorial diameter is 4880 km (3032 mi.). Using this estimate, Titan could be within 600 mi. of the same diameter as Mars; yet there it is 800 million miles out in space, orbiting around a large planet. These are a few things of interest that make Titan one of the most important objects in our solar system.

Voyager is also very interested in the other satellites of Saturn. A comparative study of the geological composition of the surfaces of the other satellites will be made by the imaging systems. There are enough uncertainties about the densities of the moons so that their compositions could range from solid ice to as much as 50 ice, 50 rock. There is also hope that Voyager will discover new, small satellites outside the A-ring.

Photographing the rings of Saturn could prove to be very interesting. They are not expected to photograph well. The reason being that individual particles will be too small to render on film with any kind of resolution. The particles are expected to be only a few centimeters to a few meters in diameter and composed of ice or ice-covered material. Scientists are most interested in the apparently different densities exhibited by each ring. If they are all ice and/or rock, why the different densities? Are there waves or clumps of particles within each ring? Will we find empty or clear spots within the orbits of each ring?

There are 6 known rings. Beginning with the outermost they are designated E-ring, A-ring, B-ring, C-ring, and D-ring. The outermost ring, E-ring, is 480,000 km (298,000 mi.) from Saturn's cloud tops and has been photographed from Earth. The D-ring is closest to the planet's cloud tops and some scientists doubt its existence.

The last time the rings were seen edgewise from Earth (1966), they measured from 1-3 km (.625-2 mi.). Recently, observations have suggested that they are thicker, particularly the E-ring.

Though Voyager 1 will travel billions of miles out beyond the rim of our known solar system, it will only be able to communicate with Earth for about 10 more years. It will have added more to Man's knowledge than any other single undertaking. We will, for the first time in our history, be able to ask the right questions of those giants of our solar system: Jupiter and Saturn.

The following is a listing of the encounter events, November 6-18, 1980. This summary deals with the days when NASA's Voyager Saturn News Center at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., will be in operation.

Nov. 6: Voyager 1 makes a variety

of observations; distance to Saturn ranges from 9,300,000 km (5,779,000 mi.) to 7,900,000 km (4,909,000 mi.). Saturn, Titan, Rhea, Dione, Mimas, Iapetus, and the rings are subjects for Voyager's cameras.

Saturn's atmospheric features will be studied. Titan is the only satellite with an appreciable atmosphere; its surface (if visible) is a prime target; close approach imaging of Rhea on Nov. 12 will provide finer surface detail than the other icy satellites.

Nov. 7: First images of Saturn are from 7,877,000 km (4,895,000 mi.). By the end of the day, Voyager 1 is 6,694,000 km (4,159,000 mi.) from Saturn. Four photos near Saturn will be used to search for new satellites. Titan is a prime imaging subject. Rhea and Iapetus will also be photographed; Iapetus is of interest because one side is bright, while the other is dark--the difference in brightness is a factor of six. Ultraviolet and other instruments will measure Saturn, the rings, and the satellites. 201 photos.

Nov. 8: The opening range to Saturn is 6,514,000 km (4,048,000 mi.). By day's end, the distance closes to 5,300,000 km (3,293,000 mi.). Satellites are prime imaging targets: Tethys, Enceladus, Rhea, and Dione. Saturn pictures and photographic searches for new satellites continue. 173 photos.

Nov. 9: Voyager is 5,215,000 km (3,240,000 mi.) from Saturn as the day begins. An east-to-west infrared map will be started. Photographic searches for new satellites will continue. 299 photos.

Nov. 10: Pictures of Saturn begin when the spacecraft is 3,879,000 km (2,410,000 mi.) from Saturn; final Saturn pictures will be taken from 2,598,000 km (1,614,000 mi.). The infrared east-west map of Saturn is complete early in the morning; the day ends as work on an infrared north-south map begins. Purpose of the east-west infrared maps: to measure global atmospheric temperature, composition, and heat balance on the sunlit side of the planet. North-south infrared map will measure latitude and longitude variations in temperature and composition.

Satellite photos will be made--one every 22 1/2 degrees for surface mapping--of Rhea, Tethys, Dione; Titan pictures will be for atmospheric studies, and mapping (only if the surface is visible).

The imaging scientists now believe that Titan's atmosphere will be so opaque that even the extreme closeup pictures may not reveal the satellite's surface. The best opportunity appears to be a slim chance that a few holes in the clouds may provide occasional glimpses of the surface. 427 photos.

Nov. 11: Saturn photos will start when Voyager is more than 2,500,000 km (1,553,000 mi.) distant (part of the continuing infrared north-south map carried over from Nov. 10).

Some fields-and-particles experimenters will be looking for signs of Saturn's magnetic field--the bow shock.

In mid-morning the spacecraft will perform a fields-and-particles maneuver: a 384-degree roll to lock on the star Beta Carinae (Miaplacidus), to sample the region around Saturn. The spacecraft may be out of communication with Earth from 9:52 a.m. to 10:37 a.m. PST.

First event after the fields-and-particles maneuver is a 16-photo sequence of Titan to study atmospheric dynamics and map the surface, if visible.

A plasma-wave observation in the evening (6:00 p.m. to 6:05 p.m.) is one of a long series of measurements inside Saturn's magnetosphere. Plasma-wave structure affects interpretation of other fields-and-particles experiments.

Closest approach to Titan (followed by Titan-Earth and Titan-Sun occultations) occurs at 11:06 p.m. PST (ERT - Earth Received Time). Important Titan photo sequences occur as follows: 3:19 p.m. to 5:16 p.m. (36 photos); 6:09 p.m. to 7:06 p.m. (13 photos); 7:11 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (10 photos); 8:03 p.m. to 8:34 p.m. (23 photos recorded for later transmission); 8:41 p.m. to 9:09 p.m. (6 photos); 9:13 p.m. to 10:24 p.m. (16 photos); 10:33 p.m. to 10:45 p.m. (4 photos). A large share of the Titan data around closest approach will be recorded for playback to Earth later. Titan-Earth occultation runs from 11:12 p.m. to 11:25 p.m.

Voyager 1 will cross Saturn's ring plane inbound at 11:23 p.m. 257 photos.

Nov. 12: This is closest-approach-to-Saturn day.

First photos of Saturn are taken from a range of 955,900 km (593,000 mi.); final pictures are from a distance--beyond the planet--of 330,000 km (205,000 mi.).

Closest approach to Tethys (415,320 km or 258,067 mi.) occurs at 3:41 p.m. PST (ERT). Closest approach to Saturn (124,200 km or 77,174 mi.) occurs at 5:11 p.m. PST (ERT).

Closest approach to Mimas (108,400 km or 67,356 mi.) takes place at 6:02 p.m. PST. (NOTE: This is closest approach when the satellite is sunlit; actual closest approach doesn't occur until 7:07 p.m.--when Mimas is in the shadow of Saturn.)

Earth occultation begins at 7:07 p.m.; Sun occultation begins a few minutes later--at 7:20 p.m.

Closest approach to Enceladus occurs at 7:15 p.m., at a distance of 202,521 km (125,040 mi.).

No telemetry will be received from Voyager 1 for five hours, beginning at 6:34 p.m.

Sun occultation ends at 8:03 p.m., Earth occultation ends at 8:36 p.m. Ring occultation begins soon afterward.

Closest approach to Dione, while it is sunlit, occurs at 8:53 p.m., and closest approach to Rhea takes place at 11:46 p.m. at a range of 72,000 km (44,800 mi.). 315 photos.

Nov. 13: A primary target for the instruments will be the rings of Saturn: mostly infrared measurements and photographs. Some special observations of Saturn will be made: the ring shadow; north and south poles, although scientists don't expect Voyager will be able to see both poles on the same day; for composition differences there; searches for auroras and lightning in the atmosphere; and opacity measurements to find compositional differences between belts and

zones.

Satellites to be photographed include Iapetus, Titan, Dione, and Rhea.

The day ends with another north-south infrared map to determine temperature, composition and heat balance on the dark side. 201 photos.

Nov. 14: Infrared north-south map continues.

From 9:48 a.m. to 5:59 p.m. the spacecraft will take 154 photos of the rings.

Closest approach to Iapetus (more than 2,000,000 km or 1,243,000 mi.) occurs at 12:50 p.m. 176 photos.

Nov. 15: Between 3:58 a.m. and 4:43 a.m., Voyager 1 will take a series of long-exposure (15 seconds each) pictures of Saturn to search for auroras and lightning in the atmosphere on the dark side; range, 3,570,000 km (2,218,000 mi.)

An east-west infrared mapping, with supporting visible light photos, begins at 5:23 a.m.

Photos of Saturn, Titan, Rhea, and Iapetus are taken through-out the day. 157 photos.

Nov. 16: A search will be made for new satellites outside the Roche Limit--the minimum distance a moon must keep from its planet in order to avoid being torn apart by the gravitational force exerted by the planet.

A series of photos for the post-encounter motion picture begins at 2:53 a.m.

Beginning at 8:41 p.m., and continuing until 6:46 p.m. Nov. 17, Voyager 1 will take a series

of 276 photos of Saturn for the post-encounter rotation movie sequence. This series, with simultaneous infrared observations, will constitute most of the science data received for the next 22 hours. 424 photos.

Nov. 17, 18: As noted above, most of Nov. 17 is taken with photographing the planet for the post-encounter rotation film. A similar exercise begins at 8:38 p.m., Nov. 17, and runs until 6:44 p.m., Nov. 18. 276 photos Nov. 17; 276 photos Nov. 18.



On January 31, 1958, Explorer 1 roared into space atop a Jupiter C rocket. 1,042 major probes later, on March 31, 1970, Explorer 1 made a fiery reentry into the Earth's atmosphere. During the 12 years and 2 months life of Explorer 1, man would circle the Earth, walk on the moon, and dream dreams that would forever change man's view of man.

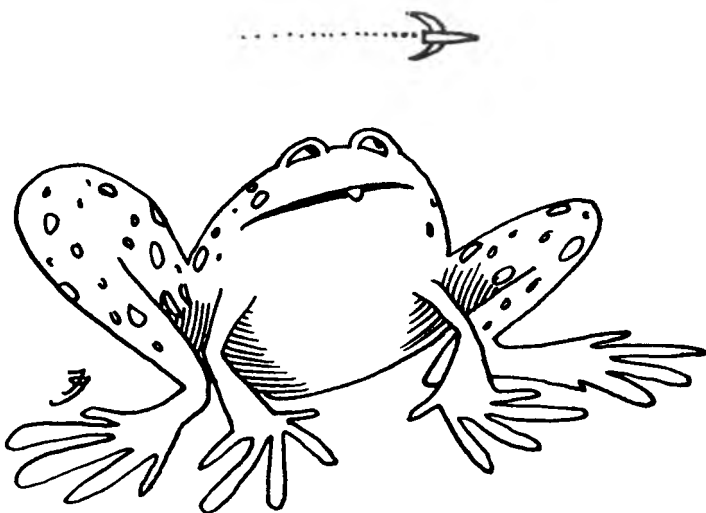
On July 24, 1975--almost 6 years to the day after man first walked on the moon--manned space missions ended. So ended an era; and so end the dreams of tens of thousands. The damage has been extensive: no manned flight, no colonies in space, and no permanent moon base. NASA had big plans, all were in the works in 1969 when Armstrong and Aldrin were making those first fateful steps on the moon.

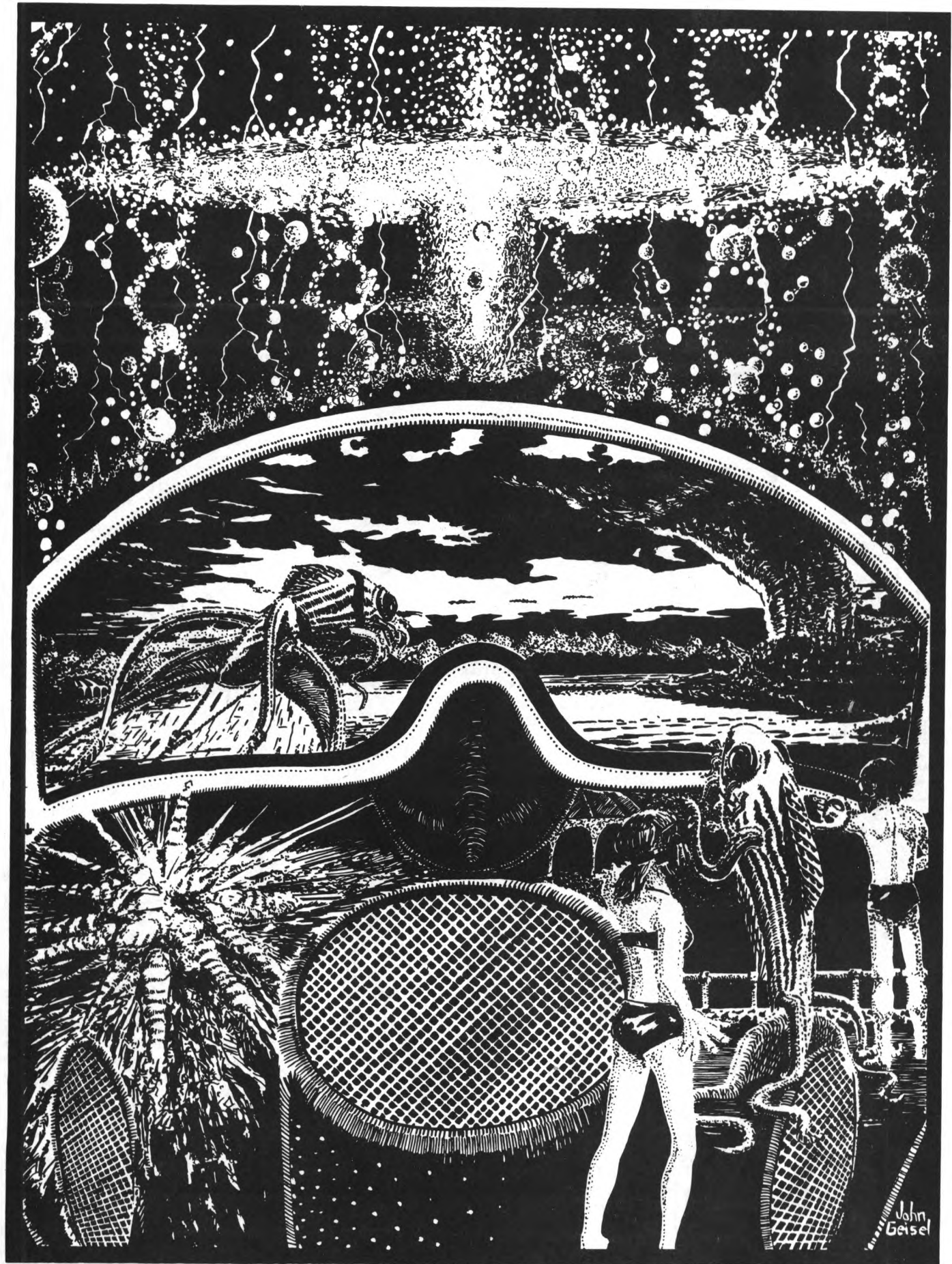
Lacking in leadership and being ill-advised by know-nothing do-gooders that masquerade as Presidential advisors, each administration starting with Nixon has cut and slashed at the space program.

I have no more faith in the administration to be sworn in this January than I have had in the past three. In my opinion their ability to govern is too much in question to feel that there will be any changes in the present stand on the space program.

Our space program has suffered greatly. Isn't it time we stood up and told the government, "No more! ". Isn't it time we told the government how we want to be governed. After all, is this not a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

We should expect nothing more from our government than what we put into it. From the look of things, we are not putting in much.





John
Geisel

Air of Righteousness

by Hal Clement

In December, 1934, ASTOUNDING STORIES magazine began a five part serial called The Mightiest Machine. The author was John W. Campbell, who a few years later (August 1938) was to publish in the same magazine what I consider the best science fiction story ever written--Who Goes There? The serial was "merely" one of the super-science space operas which were fashionable in the thirties, and which I liked very much at the time and still admit I enjoy.

Late in the story, the bad guys attacked the planet of the good ones with The Catalyst. Campbell pointed out that one of the oxides of nitrogen, N_2O_5 , has a negative heat of formation and should therefore form spontaneously. The fact that it doesn't do so here on Earth--in spite of the ubiquitous presence of its component elements in the free state--he attributed to the lack of any appropriate catalyst; this the enemy had developed. Campbell's description of the snowfall of dinitrogen pentoxide, the flames as it struck organic material, the "smoking" as it dissolved in lakes and streams to form nitric acid, and the red-brown fumes of NO_2 as the acid itself oxidized various substances gives the lie to people who claim that there was no real writing in the science fiction of the thirties. It forms an entrancing

part of an exciting story.

I didn't meet the original serial. I had started reading the science fiction magazines about that time--actually a couple of years earlier; I had started buying them about that time, but happened to be a devotee of AMAZING because of my addiction to Neil R. Jones' "Professor Jameson" stories. I could afford only one twenty-five-cent magazine a month. I first read The Mightiest Machine after World War II, in the 1947 hardcover edition published by Hadley.

By then I had picked up a little more chemistry than I knew in high school, and realized that John had slipped just a trifle in places. The spontaneity of a chemical reaction does not depend entirely on the "heat"--more properly, the enthalpy--of the reaction; the rather abstract factor called entropy is also relevant. This is the basic natural tendency toward disorder which is so readily observable in any work area which I have used, and which makes it natural for water to evaporate even at temperatures well below its boiling point. Entropy can be overstressed--some of the wilder Creationists claim that it proves the impossibility of organic evolution--but it should certainly not be overlooked. A reaction will be spontaneous only if the

decrease in enthalpy is not overridden by a decrease in entropy, whose normal tendency is to increase. Going from the gaseous to the solid state involves such a decrease; oxygen and nitrogen under standard conditions are gases, but the form of N_2O_5 which has negative enthalpy of formation is a solid--a very orderly array of molecules. I was hoping to be quantitative at this point, but the most recent edition of the Chemical Rubber Handbook in my school library (the 48th) lists neither the entropy nor the free energy of formation (algebraic difference of enthalpy and entropy) for this compound. However, it does list gaseous N_2O_5 with a positive enthalpy of formation, and I can feel pretty sure that it is not merely the lack of a suitable catalyst which keeps Earth's deserts from accumulating a layer of the stuff (as John said, it would not accumulate in the presence of water; we'd get nitric acid--the red fuming kind if there were enough oxide and little enough water).

I had also learned by this time, by the way, that catalysts don't make things happen; they merely control the speed. If it won't go on without the catalyst, it won't do any better with it. Not all the

writers (or readers) of the time realized this. Edmund Hamilton, whose writing skill is certainly above reproach, had a story called Space Mirror in the August 1937 Wonder Stories in which the daddies had needles with a very poison indeed. It was a catalyst which decomposed water into hydrogen and oxygen at normal temperatures. Too bad; about this energy shortage, now...

Campbell was also a little careless quantitatively. The amount of any nitrogen oxide which could be made, catalyst or no catalyst, is going to depend on the quantities of ingredients available. In Magya's case, as in Earth's, the limiting reactant would be the oxygen. I did some quick slide-rule work--this was long before slipsticks had grown push-buttons--and found that if all Earth's free oxygen were used to form N_2O_5 and the product dissolved uniformly in all the planet's water, the resulting solution would be only about one hundredth normal in nitric acid. Furthermore, there is a lot of solid carbonate around--limestone, dolomite, and so on--just itching to go into solution in any available acid (yes, you mineral freaks, I know that dolomite doesn't fizz in acid like calcite, but it's still a carbonate and we're talking about years, not minutes).

Quantitative estimates are hard to produce, especially for times involved, but there should be some time after The Change when oceans were slightly acid, atmosphere mostly nitrogen but quite rich in CO_2 , and many lakes and streams probably a lot more acid than the ocean. Karst country would be even more dangerous than it is now; at the moment, there isn't too much risk of falling through the roof of an unexpected cave if you're hiking around New Mexico or the French Massif Central. A really devout and consistent anti-nuker might worry about it, but I wouldn't. I'm afraid John's vivid description of the effect of The Catalyst has to be dropped.

But we don't drop the basic idea. Never. Ideas are much too valuable. After all, some pretty improbable chemistry, like me, does occur. Even without flaming snow, a planet with a recently deoxygenated atmosphere should be interesting. The oxygen we do have at the moment would be rather unbelievable if the only ones able to contemplate it weren't prejudiced by being alive. It's

freed, of course, by that most improbable series of reactions--most of them rate-controlled by catalysts--called photosynthesis. The free energy change involved is very positive; as everyone knows (I hope, as a professional science teacher) the energy is supplied by the sun.

The production of nitrates by some analogous reaction chain does not seem intrinsically impossible, therefore: but if it's possible, why doesn't it happen?

Well, it does, of course. There are "nitrogen-fixing" organisms in the soil; most of us have heard of the ones that live symbiotically in roots of plants such as peas and clover. But why doesn't it run away with the free oxygen? Goodness knows there's enough of the stuff around.

This is the sort of question always bothering the hard science fiction writer who wants to do something different. It crops up all the time. Why isn't there silicon life? Earth has orders of magnitude more silicon than it has carbon. Why aren't there supersonic birds? Speed is certainly a positive selection factor in ordinary evolution. (Yes, I was reading the magazines in the mid-thirties when the report about the 700 mph deer-bot fly was circulating. I even believed it for a while. I still don't know the margin of error, but at that speed the ram air would have squashed the poor thing much more effectively than a fly swatter--which means that its anatomy couldn't have held together under the muscular force needed to drive it that fast.) This leaves out the whole question of the driving force of airfoils at supersonic speeds.

Along any line of evolutionary development, some physical limitation like that is going to be met. Silicon doesn't seem to form chains with its hydrides. Its halides and oxygen compounds which can chain up (silly putty--remember?) lack that highly useful intermediate-strength link we call the hydrogen bond. It's all very well to have the molecular architecture of a living creature rigid enough to keep it in shape even if it's the size of a human being; but occasionally one wants to modify the shape, as when contracting a muscle or something of that sort, and it's a nuisance to have to warm the whole thing up to dull red to accomplish this. I like to argue that hydrogen, not carbon, is really the essential element

for life, though I know it's like claiming that the pitcher is the essential member of a baseball team.

In any case, we don't have silicon life on Earth in spite of the ubiquity of the element, and we don't have supersonic birds, and we don't have organisms oxidizing the atmospheric nitrogen at a rate which holds the oxygen content down to, say, a tenth of one percent. For this story, I wanted to know why (or at least form a reasonable guess). I'm the sort of person who can't write about the Sacred Jewels of the Great God Gwysshe being guarded by a giant cobra without wondering what the cobra lives on between thieves.

The most promising mental gymnastics led to the reminder that I was undoubtedly dealing with an equilibrium situation, not a simple one-way reaction or set of reactions. Nitrates must get broken down again quite rapidly, especially by biological reactions; they are usually water soluble, and on most parts of Earth are readily accessible to life forms which can use them. Things of this sort do in fact go on; Earth's biological nitrogen cycle is a fascinating study by itself--another of the things a person should be familiar with before presuming to call himself an environmentalist.

Now, equilibria can be upset, though most of the short-term biological ones on Earth tend to hold within rather narrow limits (actually they hunt back and forth between those limits because of time delays; it takes a while for a population explosion among the rabbits to show up in the fox count because of certain details in the family life of the fox). Long-term changes do occur; species become extinct, other species evolve.

I'd like, for the story, to have a real upset of the system, as John Campbell did with The Catalyst. I'd prefer it to be natural, for reasons I'll go into later; but if such a thing is naturally possible, why hasn't it happened? What's stabilizing the system at traces of nitrates and vast quantities of oxygen, rather than the other way around? What's against the nitrogen-fixers?

Could it be competition? Not for oxygen and nitrogen, certainly. Indirect competition? Maybe; a creature can get more energy oxidizing its sugar with oxygen than with nitrate, but not a great deal more; and why should

competition between katabolic organisms affect the anabolic ones? There would have to be some sort of positive feedback system, and I wasn't able offhand to figure one out (anyone at a loss for a Ph. D. subject, be my guest).

I had gotten this far in the late fifties. I remember mentioning some of it in a talk I gave at Stonehill College, North Easton, Massachusetts, in the winter of '58-'59. At this time, genetic engineering was clearly on the horizon--at least to science fiction types, though the double helix had not yet burst into public view. It was easy to imagine someone designing a more efficient nitrogen-fixing bacterium, with the best of motives, and allowing it to get out of hand and bring the oxygen down to a fraction of a percent--just as photosynthesis did to the carbon dioxide. I wonder whether this was a catastrophe from anyone's point of view (free story idea, with my compliments).

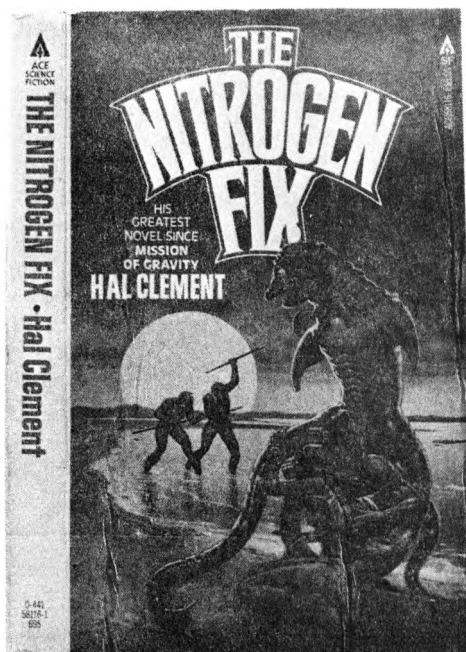
The circumstances would have to be worked out carefully, of course. Mad scientists had pretty well gone out of style, it seemed unlikely--in view of the above discussion--that the thing would go really hog-wild on its own. Ordinary scientists are reasonably thoughtful and foresighted beings, not too likely to let the thing out by sheer carelessness or indifference. I have never subscribed to the Naderian theory that Bigbusiness (one word, like Damyankee) is composed exclusively of people more interested in this year's dollars than next year's customers. To be trite, I can believe that capitalists are mostly selfish and even mostly naughty, but I find it very hard to believe that the very successful ones are mostly stupid.

Even Tom Lehrer's Old Dope Peddler gave away free samples.

In the sixties and seventies, of course, the idea that science was basically evil began to make a comeback, though the climactic nonsense of Reich's Greening of America and Fuller's We Almost Lost Detroit were still some years in the future. It might have been possible to write the story with a wicked scientist, then; but I couldn't follow that trend. In 1962 I reached the age of forty, something I could not have reasonably counted on managing without a technological culture supporting me; I was reluctant to get on the anti-science bandwagon. (I am now fifty-eight, diabetic,

and even more reluctant.) I still wanted a more or less natural cause for the nitrogen-fixing imbalance; I, in my young and naive way, still wanted science to provide the solution, not just the problem.

Then came the double helix and a much clearer idea of what genetic engineering was likely to be like, and my first shot at pseudo-life ("The Mechanic", ANALOG, September 1966). The key assumptions were now the notion that the five bases known in DNA and RNA were not the only possible structural units for a self-replicating molecule; that



other and widely different such units could be synthesized, some of them more stable in reproduction or replication than the natural ones and some no doubt less so; and that the connection between their structures and those of the proteins and other complex compounds whose formation they guided could in principle be understood and put to use--all items I still consider as probably true. I did assume a culture in which the engineering results of this knowledge were taken for granted. I did not foresee the fuss about recombinant DNA research, though I used to live in Cambridge in the days of poor old Mike Sullivan's Harvard-baiting and had, of course, read Isaac's Trends (ASTOUNDING, July 1939).

I'm not mystical enough to regard the Biblical remark about "swallowing the camel and straining at the gnat" as a prediction of the development of the automobile and nuclear power, but whoever wrote it certainly understood the human species better than I do. I hope genetic engineering doesn't suffer to the point that the prosthetics industry stays with wood and plastic instead of bits of the customer's own tissue; it would be rather nice if accident victims could be grown new legs, or eyes, or hearts, that are really their own and really work. Anti-science scares me; some people were encouraged by the recent referendum in Maine, but to me the fact that some forty percent of a supposedly educated electorate actually voted against nuclear power was frightening. A colleague from my school's history department tried to comfort me with the assurance that a third of the American public would vote for Lassie for President, but I didn't find it comforting. (Yes, I know, all this happened after Nitrogen Fix came out. Don't complain; you're getting the basic attitude as well as the thought that went into it.)

I wanted to believe that Mankind would have made some progress along the pseudolife line suggested in "The Mechanic". I didn't want the nitrogen fixing catastrophe actually to have arisen from this technology, but I did want the suspicion to be reasonable. I wanted to get a nonhuman intelligence into the act (of course, my closest acquaintances will sniff). The question whether some of the "nitro-life" which used nitrates as oxidizers had originated on Earth as part of the catastrophe or arrived with the other intelligence could--should I felt sure--be left open. I was slowly outgrowing the space-opera mentality of the thirties, where everything had to be explained to the reader (though I have never outgrown the need to have all the possibilities and explanations clear in my own mind, and never expect to).

I have long been past the weakness of having my problems solved by an ad hoc lightning bolt; there should be reasonable grounds for the reader to foresee all the major plot events, even if I do manage to conceal them effectively. As many of you know, my idea of the ideal science fiction story is a combination of Verne's From the Earth to the Moon and his Tour of

the World in Eighty Days; that is, space adventure with the problem solved by a scientific fact which any educated adult should kick himself for not foreseeing--but which he doesn't foresee.

Anyway, I had a background now. Dear old Earth, with its free oxygen gone and nitrogen down a good deal. The CO₂ would be well up from the effect of nitric acid on carbonate rocks as well as the acidification of the oceans; this, probably helped by oxides of nitrogen which would add to the greenhouse effect (I judge; I did not attempt the tedious calculation, and in fact don't have the infrared absorption spectra of any of these gases). This last would be working at the raising of the planet's mean temperature. Polar ice is melting; I don't know just how fast, but I'm assuming that after two thousand years, most of it is gone and the oceans are up about 40 meters. This has made interesting changes in the Greater Boston area where I live--and where Nitrogen Fix takes place. I did amuse myself by filling in with blue crayon all the area below the 130-foot contour line on a large topo map of the region, and also one of the Maine Coast around Boothbay--this was where Earrin came from, and I wasn't sure when I started that the action wouldn't shift to that area some time.

Some of the lakes and streams may well be a lot more acid than the ocean. This, as it happened, was barely mentioned in the book, but the situation was standing by waiting for use.

Nearly all of Earth's "real" life would be gone; adaptable as it is, a drastic change in so many environmental factors at once would take, in my opinion, intelligence to survive. If anyone wants to do a detailed analysis of the reactions of some specific organism, and comes to the conclusion that it might actually get through with a believable minimum of mutations, I'll be interested. So, no doubt, will fanzine editors.

Some of the more stable pseudolife might still be operating, with its cruder basic design. Some more would be carefully kept operating by the human survivors, since their lives would depend on it--things producing oxygen and food. Carefully keeping these things from infection--growing them in small, isolated plots which could be cleaned out and disinfected if necessary--would be part of normal

housekeeping. It would be something that even a typical juvenile delinquent would recognize as necessary. More of this later.

For story purposes (believe it or not) I chose to make the life which used nitrates for oxidation less stable genetically. I wanted a fairly complex background ecology to have evolved in two thousand years or so, and this clearly demanded rather broad variation with each generation. It also implied that the nitro-life would have little or no selection pressure in the direction of evolving sex, an interesting situation in itself. Please understand that I have nothing against sex, even at my age; this is an intellectual exercise. I wanted to find some believable alternate motivation. To some extent this may have been professional curiosity, of course; I am, after all, a school teacher, and obviously one of the major purposes of education is to reduce to and keep at a minimum the number of people who will have nothing to live for after their sexual powers give out.

In any case, the nitro-life on the new Earth evolves very rapidly, and Bones knows nothing of sex. Whether or not you find the Observers' basic motivations at all credible may say more about you than about my writing, so criticize with care. There was fun involved in working all this up, not the least of it in trying to get through the book without ever using a pronoun which would commit me to thinking of the creatures as either male or female (human characters in the story could have their prejudices, of course). It was a little like the Burroughs effort to keep Pellucidar timeless; he slipped occasionally, though he never (to my recollection) actually permitted night to fall. Without meaning to pick on ERB especially, he also had trouble in Liana of Gathol when one of the characters was pointing the way of escape to John Carter. The character was invisible at the time. It's very, very hard to replace all your background files with new ones--that's one of the things which makes science fiction so much fun. There's timelessness and invisibility, weightlessness, airlessness, and Bones' sexlessness (or William Tenn's extra sexes). They'll all get you if you don't watch out.

I'm not aware of having called Bones "him" or "her" myself anywhere in the book, though of

course Earrin and Kahve did, so did Jim Baen; why shouldn't editor's share responsibility?

Sociologically, I admit a lot of weakness. I believe firmly that social factors--customs, habits, laws--all stem from physical ones, and I tried to develop my Nomads and Hillers accordingly; but I'm very ready to admit that C.J. Cherryh or Joan Vinge would have done better. I spent a lot of time trying to work out a technology which would have had the Nomads and maybe even the city types living on salvaged metal--perhaps using it in acid batteries to provide energy for electrolytic production of oxygen. This would have provided the advantage of a very imminent doom for all hands as a story problem, but it really seemed most unlikely that such metal would be available so long after the change in atmosphere. Of course, the copper still being furnished by the pseudolife which I had carried over from "The Mechanic" might have been used, but the simple fact is that I didn't think of that until I was writing this article. I'm not inconsolable about that; the bioengineering I did use seems far more likely to work under the circumstances (maybe because I know less about it!). Also, it seems reasonable to develop such a system in case anyone asks for a sequel. Kahvi, of course...

No, I don't think I'm being inconsistent. The Nomads and Hillers were good at manipulating the pseudolife, as I implied; but this doesn't mean they really understood basic physics or chemistry. The biochem involved is at the art level, largely trial and error with the most serious errors already learned about before the catastrophe. The real scientists are gone and, as I point out, wouldn't be tolerated under that name in the culture I set up.

I won't spend a lot of time defending that culture. I may have been a bit cynical in formulating it, but I can believe it, even (or especially) the blind following of rules which is leading the Hillers to doom. Conservative as I am, I can see and even approve to some extent the rebellion of the teenagers against the system. The difference of Kahvi's reaction about the misfortune of humanity, that a species so badly in need of independent thinkers, develops the urge for independence so far ahead of the ability to think. Giving Kahvi nearly all the visible brains in the story was not a concession to Women's Lib; it was

because her background was the only one which might reasonably have taught anyone to think, it seems to me. Psychologists and sociologists may dissect this at their leisure. There may be illogical and even irrational aspects to this whole cultural pattern, but this does not make it unbelievable to me; I live in a culture saturated with irrationality. There are an incredible number of people who don't agree with me.

Jim Baen asked me why the Nomads don't play a larger part in the action. The reason is that there are very, very few Nomads. Very few children from the cities actually aborted; most are saved by the death of someone they can replace, since the bulk of humanity is afflicted with chronic nitrate poisoning--the reason why Kahvi has had such poor luck with her children. An occasional statistical fluctuation does cause a child to go; this happened to Earrin and very nearly to Kahvi. Only a tiny fraction of these few survive, however; they need the sort of luck which Fyn had, being found at once by an experienced Nomad.

There is one way in which I may possibly have done a little personal axe-grinding; I hoped it worked properly and smoothly into the plot. I happen to feel that one of the worst sins a social being can commit is to lie; all members of a group should be able to depend on each other. I consider it very likely that in the Nomad situation this attitude would be even stronger and universal; they are all very close to the facts of life, and when they depend on each other at all, they do so completely--they have to. To a slightly lesser extent this would be true of the Hillers; all humanity is, after all, on the edge of extinction. Knowing what can be expected of your neighbor is essential. In our present culture, we are separated from the fundamental necessities of life such as food, water, and information by layer after layer of other people. A few of us are in direct contact with one or another of these things, but not all of them (I am not advocating the Greening of America). We have evolved social systems which have enough parallel circuitry so that when one line of people fails its job--that is, doing what we expect of it--there are usually others. Some people starve, and God knows plenty of us are misinformed, but by and large we survive and increase human

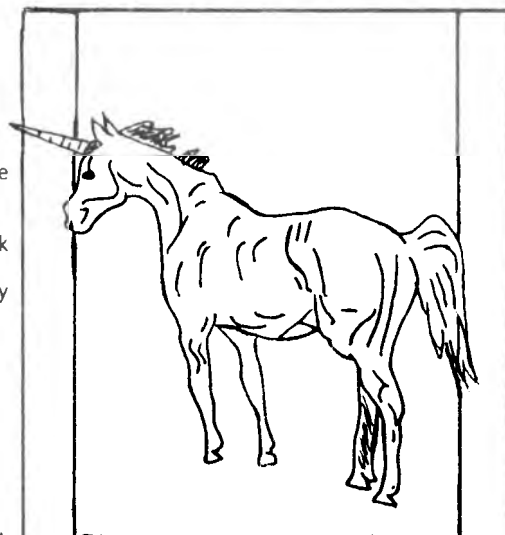
knowledge.

Therefore, the Nomads had a very tight set of moral standards, and followed it closely. Not because God would smite them with lightning if they didn't, but because they would probably starve or suffocate if they didn't. The title of this article was the one I had intended to use for the book through most of the years it was gestating, though I was constantly vacillating between "Air" and "Heir". It was during our conversation at Suncon, when many of the points in the whole idea finally crystallized, that Jim Baen suggested the title actually used--The Nitrogen Fix. I had to admit it was a lot better.

So Nomads didn't lie, and Bones couldn't grasp the concept, though the general idea of indirect communication by symbols may give birth to it some time. I think that if the gimmick stories of forty or fifty years ago were still in fashion, Bones' communication technique would be a darned good gimmick. I know about the flaws in the Worm Runner experiments and the doubts that our memories are actually coded at the molecular level, but if anyone thinks that Bones has human biochemistry, I've done some very sloppy writing indeed. Or maybe...

The story, to me, was another new background environment, not an exercise in sociology or a sales pitch for science. I tried to leave open the actual reason why the big change actually did take place. Kahvi's conclusion near the end of the book I consider reasonable; but I hope it's obvious that she jumped at it. The physical and chemical calculations I did for Nitrogen Fix were actually less extensive than those I had to do thirty years or so ago for Mission of Gravity; I hope these are more nearly correct, this time.

Whether they are right or not, I trust people enjoy the story; and I can only hope that arguments about it in fanzines and at conventions may be sources of fun. Some of my best friends, I know, will deeply enjoy tearing my ideas to pieces. Okay, go ahead; but if the process gives you any better ideas, or even what you think may be better ones, please put them into good stories. I get retired in seven years or so, and will presumably require at least one good book to read every day thereafter that isn't spent at a convention. Oil up your brains and typewriters, critics and thinkers.



"An Allegory"

by Vandy Christopher

On all four hooves the unicorn stood,
swishing his tail, midst meadow
grasses;

half shadowed by the woodland's
edge,
the unicorn grazed, but warily,
listening.

And lo! there came a hunter's call,
a bugle's throat loud braying its
challenge.

Did then the unicorn flee that
sound,
that sudden cry across the meadow?--
slip silently into the dark woods,
the shadowed forest of wandering
pathways?

And did hounds follow the strange
scent,
as if for a stag or a boar set
baying?

Certainly the grasses seemed not
to move,
but the mead was empty, the glory
vanished.

"The Marshmallow Chronicles"

by Joe R. Christopher
(for George Flynn)

Like sparklers of Fourths which
could boast 'em,
The spaceships brought Martians
that which grossed 'em--

The Martians, like 'mallows,
Then melted to pillows,
So the fiery old globes could come
toast 'em.



The Barnacle Strikes Back

★

by Anne Braude

These two poems are surviving fragments of a Gilbert and Sullivan parody that I was working on some ten years ago but have long since lost interest in. It had the dubious distinction of being the only operetta ever inspired by a term paper in Old English literature and was to have been called Beowulf, or The Monster of the Mere.

"The Awful Warning"

The monsters that dwell in the mere, tra-la,
Will eagerly eat you for lunch:
With never a sigh or a tear, tra-la,
Washed down by a bottle of beer, tra-la,
They will nibble and gobble and munch;
They will nibble and gobble and munch.
And that's what we mean when we say with sad cheer,
"Don't bother the monsters that dwell in the mere."
Tra la la la la, Tra la la la la,
The monsters that dwell in the mere.
Tra la la la la, Tra la la la la,
Tra la la la la la.

The monsters that dwell in the mere, tra-la,
Are ghastly and greedy and grim;
As you quiver and shiver with fear, tra-la,
They will chortle and snicker and sneer, tra-la,
As they vivisect you limb from limb;
As they vivisect you limb from limb.
And that's what we mean when we scream in you ear,
"Don't bother the monsters that dwell in the mere."
Tra la la la la, Tra la la la la,
The monsters that dwell in the mere.
Tra la la la la, Tra la la la laaaargh,
Tra la la la la la.

* or, MAY THE FARCE BE WITH YOU

"Beowulf's Boast"

I am the very image of an ancient epic warrior;
With each succeeding exploit I get gorier and gorier;
And though this monster Grendel may for you be too formidable,
I'm sure that I can rid you of him (if, of course, he's riddable),
In battle I conduct myself with daring and audacity:
I send the foemen flying and pursue them with tenacity;
Observe my mighty muscles (which this costume makes conspicuous),
And I will kill you if you dare to say I look ridiculous!

Cho.: And he will kill you if you dare to say he looks ridiculous,
And he will kill you if you dare to say he looks ridiculous,
And he will kill you if you dare to say he looks ri-dic-u-dic-u-lous.

At Heorot I hope to demonstrate my great agility
(And possibly my even more astonishing virility),
Because, for enterprises that progressively get gorier,
I am the very image of an ancient epic warrior!

Cho.: Because, for enterprises that progressively get gorier,
He is the very image of an ancient epic warrior!

The epic hero must display prodigious intrepidity,
With fortitude, and modesty, and most of all, stupidity;
You never can be clever and you never can be cowardly,
If you aim to swash your buckle in a manner Robert Howardly,
In battle you must leap upon your enemy impulsively;
Behead him or bisect him, or you strangle him convulsively;
Then clasp unto your manly breast the maid with lashes fluttering--
That's how to be the hero of an epic worth the uttering!

Cho.: That's how to be the hero of an epic worth the uttering,
That's how to be the hero of an epic worth the uttering,
That's how to be the hero of an epic worth the ut-ter-ut-tering!

I've fathomed the solution to an ancient human mystery,
The noble art heroical of going down in history;
With each succeeding exploit I get gorier and gorier;
I am the very image of an ancient epic warrior!

Cho.: With each succeeding exploit he gets gorier and gorier;
He is the very image of an ancient epic warrior!

art by
John Geisel



a tale of two novels

Piers Anthony



In 1976, which happened to be twenty years after my graduation from Goddard College, I returned not for a reunion (for they hardly were aware my class existed) but to address a summer workshop in my capacity as a successful science fiction writer. It mattered not that no one in 1956 thought I would ever make good in this field; the lightning had struck so now they wanted me. I was asked to come by Will Hamlin, the professor who had tried to inculcate some notion of writing in me, so I came. They could not afford my fee, but offered to pay my way there; I pondered and returned that check, travelling at my own expense. So I came with my older daughter Penny, and I brought my work with me, since I never like to waste time. The workshop did turn out to be a waste of time; it occurred on their first sunny weekend in some time, so no students stayed indoors, and Katherine McLean and I and assorted others on the program were left largely talking to ourselves. But I did get to meet Will Hamlin, after twenty years, and to my surprise Ed Meskys showed up, so it was worth while. Penny was thrilled with his seeing-eye dog, she (Penny) then being eight years old, and developed some interest in blindness and Braille thereafter. I read from the first chapter of my novel *God of Tarot*, and saw the various sights, and Penny went on a canoe ride with Katherine McLean (I trust that everyone here is aware she is an award-winning SF writer--Katherine, not Penny) and drank chocolate milk and had a good time.

I was then working on my first fantasy novel for Del Rey, titled *A Spell for Chameleon*, having just

received the contract for it. So I started writing it at Goddard, and it moved so well that I continued when I got home, though I had another novel, *Kirlian Quest* waiting to type in second draft. In fact I got moving so well that in my best ten days I wrote over 42,000 words of *Spell*, eclipsing my prior record that had stood for nine years of 40,000 on *SOS the Rope*. I normally write about 20,000 words in ten days. But *Quest* had its turn, for when I returned to it I broke my second draft typing record, 88,000 words in ten days. I am a figures fan, as may be evident. Anyway, *Spell*, started at Goddard, had a good history, selling well and winning the 1977 August Derleth Fantasy Award and launching me on a career of fantasy that has become more successful than my science fiction career. Maybe Ed Meskys or his seeing-eye dog had a beneficial effect on me.

I try to utilize personal experience in my fiction, even bad experience, and I had some on that occasion. No, it wasn't my meeting with Ed; rather it was the fact that when my daughter and I went to catch our airplane home, they refused to let us board, claiming we were not on the list. Our tickets had been paid for three weeks before and our reservations were confirmed; made no matter, the man would not look at the tickets. We did not board. This led to difficulties. We got a lift to Burlington, Vermont, where we caught a competing airline, but the fouled-up schedule messed us up in New York, where I had hoped to meet my fantasy editor Lester Del Rey and did not. I was furious at the whole thing, and resolved to take legal action. But when we

finally got home and made investigations, it turned out to be a clerical error on the part of the company who had sold us our tickets, and the man in Vermont was not at fault. So I had no recourse against the one I was mad at. For those of you considering airplane travel: learn from my experience that a confirmed reservation does not necessarily mean anything.

So how could I use this experience? I put it into the *Tarot* novel. I also put in much of the rest of my Goddard experience, including my memories of twenty years before, when I had been unjustly suspended from school and the only one to defend my position and that of the student body was Will Hamlin--who thus put his own job in peril. That was why I came when Will asked me to; for the present College President, who was then not President but was the man who arranged my suspension, I would do nothing. And I made up a Tarot card for Will. So though I did very little actual writing on *Tarot* while visiting Goddard--because *Spell* was going so well--more of Goddard actually became part of *Tarot*. My novels are very personal, if only my readers knew.

God of Tarot had a difficult history. It turned out to be 253,000 words long and contained some scenes that caused problems at the publisher I had done it for, Avon. I offered to write them a different novel on that contract, and I took back *Tarot* and marketed it elsewhere. The other novel I did for Avon was *Thousandstar*. Del Rey bounced *Tarot*, and Berkely bounced it, and Jove finally took it, broke it up into three volumes, printed the first--and went out of business. So the remaining two volumes went to Berkely, who had a new editor. I regard *Tarot* as the major work of my career, but my major works have unlucky histories, and the proper impact of *Tarot* may have been destroyed by the problems of publication. Other writers can get big novels safely into print, but I seemed to be cursed.

So there is the Tale of Two Novels, the ones extant when I met Ed. One was inconsequential light fantasy, the other my most important project. Naturally the wrong one picked up the award. I think I need a new field--which is one reason I am moving into other genres, despite doing very well financially in this one.

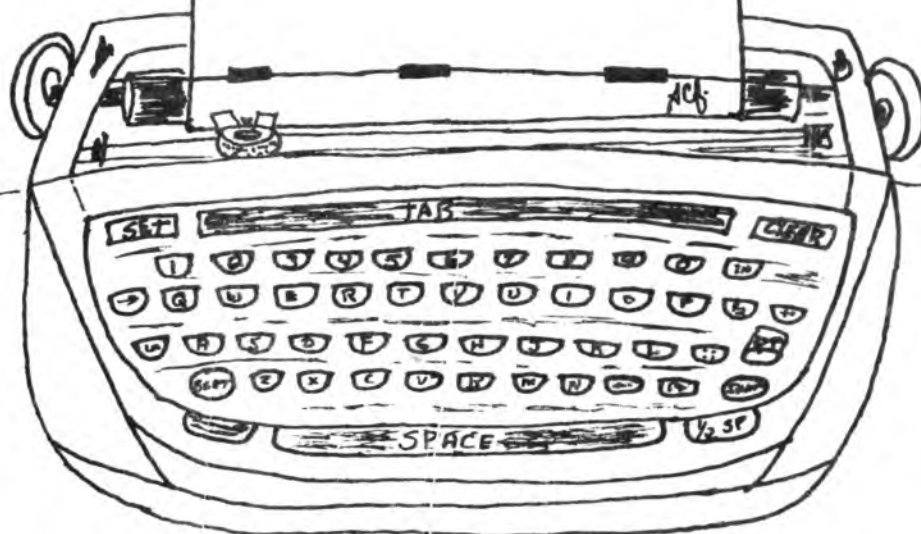
Life is more than bread alone.

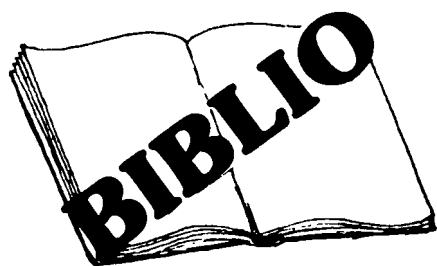




review and comment

Mike Bastraw
W. Richard Benedict
Anne Braude
Ed Meskys
Susan Shwartz





Thrice Upon a Time, James P. Hogan,
Ballantine, 1980, \$2.75

One can only stand in awe of a writer who can present difficult scientific concepts in a readable and entertaining form. Also, it is unique to find a plot set in 21st Century Scotland, rather than in a superindustrialized United States. The author is a new-comer (and I mean comer in the sense that he will rapidly develop a following of fans) who certainly knows his science. He is to be classified as belonging to the school of "hard" science fiction (that dealing with advanced technology) rather than the "soft" variety which deals with fantasy, character development and fast-paced action. Anyone who regularly reads ANALOG will understand what I mean. This is not to denigrate his talents in creating a fascinating book however, far from it. This book contains some of the best exposition of time paradoxes and problems I have ever seen, barring someone like Dunne whose non-fictional discourses tend to be very hard for the layman to follow.

The hero, Murdoch Ross, travels to his grandfather's castle along with his friend Lee Walker. It appears that his grandfather, Sir Charles, has in effect discovered a way to teletype messages to the past by means of a computer terminal using a new type of radiation. It rapidly becomes apparent that there is more to understanding the twists and turns of time than anyone believed. It further develops that the terminal may literally be the only way possible of staving off the end of the world due to a threat posed by a new fusion reactor. But, if the terminal is connected with another parallel universe in the past, then what good will it be for the principals to make contact if they cannot prevent disaster from their own doorstep? Moreover, what if some of these universes are having similar problems of their own? Is there a way of creating the best

of all possible universes; not only for yourself, but for all those other ones as well?

It is evident that Mr. Hogan has a feel for all those looming dangers which we are headed towards in the next 30 years, as well as the more promising prospects. There are a number of things in this book that are right out of today's headlines: parallel universes and quantum physics, fusion reactors, black holes and recombinant DNA. The characters, while not as three dimensional as they could be, are painted with enough depth to steer away from the cardboard cutout syndrome that is unfortunately all too often the case in hard science fiction novels of this sort.

The parallel universe theme is a fascinating speculation that is gaining ground as something that really has a basis in fact; this according to such physicists as John A. Wheeler. The parallel universe yarn in science fiction generally concerns someone who travels/gets dumped into a weird dimension by magic or mistake. Very few novels ever attempt to detail the scientific implications of such violations of causality. It is a tribute to Mr. Hogan's skill that he is able to do so, well and consistently.

I can only hope that this book will gain a wide readership as it well deserves it. Some of the bookstores seem to be at a loss as far as classifying it. One bookstore that I was in had it displayed in front of all the best sellers, instead of with the SF titles. This could bespeak ignorance on the part of the store clerks, but I would prefer to believe that it is an indication of the quality of the book.

There is much richness of detail such as an intriguing diagram of the structure of time as the characters see it. I would like to see all potential psychic researchers, budding physicist, and casual readers get their teeth into this one. I can recommend it highly as a perfect paradox puzzler with valid things to say about the near future.

wrb

The Flight of Dragons, Peter Dickinson, Harper & Row, 1979, \$17.50

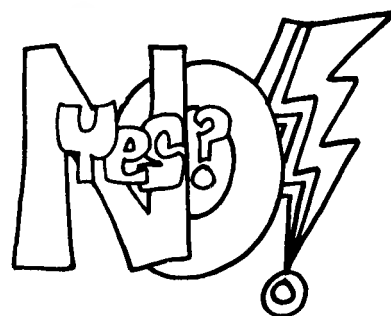
The well-known science fiction, fantasy, and mystery writer Peter Dickinson here turns to nonfiction with a work of

natural history. Although much of it is speculation, due to the unfortunate absence of fossilized dragon bones, he produces a coherent and plausible theory of draconic development, one of the few successful dinosaur adaptations. The species' major specialization, flight, was achieved by the evolution of a lightweight body composed of chambers lined with renewable spongy bone which, when dissolved by hydrochloric acid adapted from the digestive system and secreted by special glands, produced hydrogen to make the creature buoyant--in fact, a kind of living dirigible. This biology also accounts for such familiar traits as fire-breathing (developed to dispose of surplus gas), gold-nesting, and the corrosive effects of dragon "blood"; the last, of course explains the lack of fossilized remains. Evolutionary specialization also underlies such superficially implausible behaviors as dragon speech (human misinterpretation of the effects of the hypnotic stare this species shares with certain serpents) and the preference for maidens of noble birth as prey.

There are a number of useful charts and diagrams, an analysis of Beowulf considered as a manual of dragon-slaying, and magnificent illustrations by Wayne Anderson. The author has buttressed his theories with citations of actual observations ranging from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to Anne McCaffrey.

This is a very well written work of solid research which should serve as a useful corrective to the pseudo-scientific discussion of the subject in Carl Sagan's The Dragons of Eden.

ajb



Mission of Gravity, Hal Clement, Ballantine, recorded on two C90's (4 track cassette) by the Library of Congress as Talking Book #RC12118

It is good to re-read a classic. I first read this book when it was serialized in ASTOUNDING SF back in 1953. The book has aged well. The very few pieces of obsolete technology I caught were: circuitry using actual tin-foil capacitors, movie cameras to record items on a TV monitor, and scientists using slide rules. But these signs of age are trivial.

In case you haven't read this yet, let me give a brief outline. Hal Clement developed a plausible world with a mass 12 times that of Jupiter which is spinning so fast that a day lasts only 19 minutes. Because of centrifugal effects and the equatorial bulge, gravity varies from 3 times Earth-normal at the equator, to 700 times E-n at the poles. A robot laboratory at the south pole fails to lift off with its valuable data. An Earthman is sent to the equator to see what he can do.

The biochemistry, ecology, and psychology on such a planet are unusual to say the least. The Earthman, Charles Lackland, makes contact with an intelligent native lifeform in the shape of 3 foot long, 2 inch in diameter centipedes. Specifically he tries to get a native trader/explorer/pirate, named Barlennan, to help him retrieve the data. Barlennan is a native of the high-G latitudes; he is a well-drawn character with much gumption, ingenuity, cunning, and diplomatic skill. The story tells of Barlennan's journey from the equator to the south pole and the many strange cultures he meets on the way. He also gains much knowledge and an appreciation for the scientific process.



Hal Clement was a Pioneer in writing SF where the science was well-thought-out. The plot and characters are interesting and appealing. What more can one ask from a novel?

It is funny that three writers picked the name "Bree" for different items during the 50's. Barlennan's ship was named Bree, Tolkien had an Hobbit village named Bree, and Lewis had a horse in the Narnia Chronicles named Bree. I talked to Hal about this at a con and he pointed out that of the three books, his was published first. But I just noticed another near-coincidence. The name of the innkeeper at The Prancing Pony, in The Fellowship of the Ring, was named Barliman; a close phonetic to Clement's intrepid alien captain. (I won't even mention the fact that The Prancing Pony is located in Bree.)

This edition includes Hal Clement's essay "Whirligig World" wherein he explains the scientific background of Mission of Gravity and how he "plays the game" with the reader; trying to keep a step ahead with scientific accuracy. Earlier editions of this book did not contain the essay and it is good to see it included. (It was originally published in ASTOUNDING as a companion piece to the serial.)

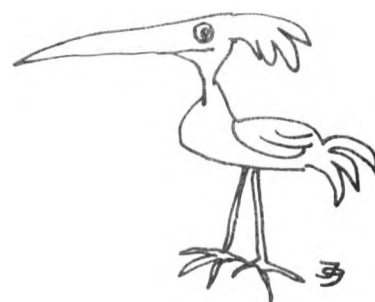
If you have not read this book before, by all means go and buy it! Hal Clement is excellent at this sort of thing which he was doing ages before Larry Niven. This is one of Clement's best books.

erm

The Cradle Will Fall, Mary Higgins Clark, Simon and Schuster, 1980, \$10.95

I'm hitting the fringes again. This is a mystery thriller with only a tangential sf connection. But it is a dandy read.

Mary Higgins Clark specializes in taut suspense plots of the will-they-get-there-in-time? variety. Her technique is to exploit the multiple point of view, so that the reader moves back and forth between the villain, the victim, the investigators, and various minor characters who have vital bits of information but don't quite realize it. This device can sometimes produce a muddle, but in Clark's hands it is as finely orchestrated as a Bach concerto.



Katie DeMaio, the heroine of The Cradle Will Fall, is a young assistant district attorney. Hospitalized overnight after crashing her car, she looks out the window and sees a man placing a woman's body in the trunk of a car. She thinks she is hallucinating and is astonished the next morning to find herself involved in the investigation of the supposed suicide of the same woman. But the killer knows he was seen, and is able to find out that Katie was in that room: he is the victim's doctor, a brilliant obstetrician/gynecologist with a reputation for performing miracles for women unable to have children--and scheduled to perform minor surgery on Katie herself within a week.

The plot thickens like a well-made but lethal custard as we follow, among others, Katie and her fellow investigators; the victim's husband, who realizes that the suicide isn't kosher but fears that he will be suspected and that the girl he loves will be dragged in; the murderer who, when not taking steps to insure that Katie will not survive her operation or calmly knocking off two possible witnesses, reminisces about how he twice became a self-made widower; and Richard, the attractive and intelligent county medical examiner, who is the only person to suspect the doctor (being very dubious about the kind of obstetrical care the victim was receiving because of what the autopsy revealed) and who is falling in love with Katie.

This is basically a novel of suspense, since we learn the killer's identity in Chapter Two; the only real mystery involves his motive, which has to do with just how he achieves those miraculous pregnancies: the answer provides the sf element. (No, it isn't cloning.)

I would give Clark's first thriller, Where Are the Children?, a slight edge over this one in characterization, but in all other respects this is her best yet. Don't start it late at night if you want to get any sleep--it really is a book you can't put down.

ajb

The Watch Below, James White, Ballantine, 1978, \$1.75

The "Gulf Trader", sunk off the coast of Europe by German torpedoes during World War II finally sinks to the bottom. End of story? No, just the beginning. Trapped within an airtight section of the vessel are five survivors: two women and three men.

Soon to be the end of the story? No, we're still at the beginning.

Switch to the Unthan interstellar colonization fleet, escaping from their recently-sun-ravaged planet. The Unthans are water-dwellers; their oceans boiling away, they begin an exodus to the planet we call Earth. Because of physiological degeneration which occurs every time crew members are revived to make periodic course corrections, the captain decides that he must take a desperate plan of action. By reviving two females he and another male of his race will take the first step in the partial conversion of their hibernation ship into a generation ship.

Remember what happened in Heinlein's "Common Sense" and "Universe"? James White does.

This is the second book of White's that I have read. I can be as positive about this story as I was negative about Lifeboat.

White has created two novel problems in survival. Their mutual resolutions are as interesting as they are entertaining.

One of the keys to the survival of generation after generation of humans on the "Trader" is the Game. This was developed by the original Five in hopes that it would take their minds off the sheer boredom and discomfort which dominated their lives after they had solved the immediate problems of survival.

The Game is a combination of "parlor psychology and medieval inquisition" wherein each person questions the others about events in their lives at random. This mental exercise bears out the hypothesis that nothing is ever truly forgotten and that, under

carefull questioning, even the most minute of details can be recalled. The Game, along with retelling of stories they had read in the past and the singing of songs, keeps the Five and their descendants from degenerating into sub-civilized (pun intended) barbarians--after which they would probably exterminate each other.

Intelligence proves to be the strongest survival trait after all; as may prove to be the case for our civilization.

Except for the impression that the author suddenly found that he had only 20 more pages in which to finish up the story, I would say this is one of the better reads of the month for me.

mb



Alien Intelligence, Stuart Holroyd, Everest House, 1979, \$9.95

This is a provocative, very readable, and thoroughly unreliable book. The jacket describes it as an exploration of "non-human, paranormal, and extraterrestrial intelligence"; I was expecting something of a cross between Carl Sagan and Lyall Watson, with perhaps a dash of Konrad Lorenz. Instead, Holroyd goes from fairly straightforward accounts of the Gardners' work with Washoe, the chimp they taught to communicate in American Sign Language, and of John C. Lilly's studies of dolphins, to Ufology and the Seth material--rather as if a book on archaeology were to give equal credence to the work of Sir William Flinders Petrie and Erich von Daniken.

The book is divided into three sections, each farther out than the one before. Part I, on non-human persons, deals in turn with animal intelligence (the higher primates, dolphins, and

speculations about whales), artificial intelligence (robots and computers), and "aliens among us." (When he started talking about angels, demons, and elementals, I realized I didn't have another Carl Sagan on my hands.) Part II, non-physical persons, takes up astral projection and communications with the dead. Part III, non-terrestrial persons, is concerned with possible intelligent life or other planets or in other dimensions impinging on ours, with the UFO phenomenon, and with discarnate "superminds" such as Madame Blavatsky's "Spiritual Hierarchy," Seth (supposedly a non-physical being who communicates through a young writer named Jane Roberts), and God (or somebody else of the same name). Holroyd quotes from science fiction almost as frequently as from his "factual" sources, particularly from Olaf Stapledon's Star Maker, which he seems to regard as slightly more inspired than the Bible.

I know nothing about Holroyd's reputation--the jacket says he has written a number of other books on parapsychology and the occult--or that of Everest House, a publisher I never heard of before; but he does exhibit, albeit intermittently, some capacity for critical evaluation of his material. For evidence of communication from the dead he relies primarily on the Myers cross-correspondences, which nobody has yet explained away in a satisfactory manner. (F.W.H. Myers, one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, died in 1901; messages from him were received for some 30 years thereafter, not all in one piece but fragmented among mediums in England, Boston, and India! Myers was a very erudite man, learned in the classics and English literature and fond of anagrams, all of which showed up in the various scripts. Only one of the mediums involved was even remotely capable of faking this sort of material, and the messages continued for several years after her death.) He rightly dismisses von Daniken's "scholarship" but seems not to know that Madame Blavatsky was a self-confessed fraud. He has no qualms about accepting Robert Temple's The Sirius Mystery, and even I know a couple of good objections to that. (The mythology of the Dogon, a primitive tribe in the southern Sahara, contains some remarkably

accurate data about Sirius B, the white dwarf companion of Sirius, information that modern astronomy has only verified in the present century; they claim that it was taught to their remote ancestors by beings from Sirius B. Critiques of this "proof" of extraterrestrial intervention can be found in Sagan's *Broca's Brain* and the episode of PBS's *NOVA* devoted to the demolition of von Daniken.) In discussing UFO's, Holroyd gives equal weight to the story of Barney and Betty Hill and the research of Jacques Vallee, an astrophysicist and computer scientist, has done a number of statistical studies on UFO sightings. One of his books, *Passport to Magonia*, is an absolutely fascinating comparison of the descriptions of alien beings given by humans who claim to have had Close Encounters with the traditional descriptions of the Little People in folklore throughout the world. The correlations are astonishing, as are Vallee's theories.)

Most of this material is generally regarded as being on the fringe--whether of science or fiction--depends on whom you ask. But with it is a lot of weird-sounding but perfectly respectable advanced speculation from the realms of biological science and theoretical physics. Trying to separate the two is like trying to disentangle the work of Beaumont and Fletcher. But the book is well written and often funny. (I learned the perfect item for opprobrium for Sagan, if one should wish to insult him: physicist Jack Sarfatti called him an electromagnetic chauvinist.) The speculations are fascinating even if you don't choose to accept them; there is plot material for a dozen sf stories here. Unless you are the type that starts foaming at the mouth whenever the paranormal is mentioned, you should have fun with *Alien Intelligence*.

ajb

Charmed Life, Diana Wynne Jones, Pocket Books, \$2.25

In an alternative England, Edwardian society is riddled with witches, clairvoyants, warlocks, hags--any type of sorcerer one might imagine. Only enchanters

are rare, chiefly because, to be an enchanter, a person must possess nine lives. In the fantasy universe of *Charmed Life*, a person may have nine lives only if that person has no duplicates anywhere else in the known universes.

But nine-lived enchanters hardly seem the proper concern of young Eric "Cat" Chant. His parents were drowned when he was a child, his sister Gwendolyn--surely one of the most malicious little girls outside a Gorey book--is studying to be a witch, and his is of little account to anyone; until the great Chrestomanci adopts him and Gwendolyn and takes them to his castle to live.

Immediately, Eric begins to settle in. The Castle's deep peace reassures and pleases him, and he develops warm admiration for Chrestomanci and his wife, Milly. But Gwendolyn, who is forbidden to practice magic, wages war on the entire castle. Even when her own magic is suppressed, she goes on fighting.

How is she able to do this? Certainly Eric has no idea: he never thinks to question his splendid sister. Not even Chrestomanci understands. Yet it is important that they learn, because upon that knowledge rests the entire security of the world. If they cannot manage Gwendolyn and her evil teachers, then they will probably bring a perpetual black witches' sabbath to England.

Unusual in fantasy is a writer who manages to be both stylish and funny; Diana Wynne Jones is, therefore, unusual. *Charmed Life* has that puckish wit, that fondness for comedy of manners, that insight into well-mannered but rather freakish children that always seems "typical English" to me. Jostling one another in this book are revenants and the "dear Vicar" who dodders and performs exorcisms, Chrestomanci's magnificent dressing gowns and the illicit trade in dragon's blood, tea, and human sacrifice.

Further praise would be superfluous; you could be reading *Charmed Life* already. Grab a scone, pour out another cup of tea, and enjoy!

sms

In Pursuit of the Unicorn, Josephine Bradley, Pomegranate Artbooks, 1980, \$10.95

The unicorn, says Josephine Bradley, "is truly a creature of

dreams...a beast of solitude and beauty, a creature of force, wisdom or calm." More mysterious and elusive than the dragon, it belongs more to the world of magic than to the world of men. Even though I live next door to a whole herd of them, I still have doubts about their physical reality. But like the artists whose work appears in this book, I know one when I see one.

In Pursuit of the Unicorn is primarily an art portfolio containing paintings of the creature by diverse hands. Although it is paperbound, it is printed on high-quality paper and the reproduction is superb. The artists' styles range from primitive to surrealistic. Josephine Bradley has contributed an introductory essay on unicorn lore and prose poems to go with the paintings. One source of the legends that she rather surprisingly omits is the oryx, a large and graceful antelope native to Saudi Arabia, whose long and elegant horns are parallel, so that in profile it appears to have only one horn. In recent years the oryx has been hunted to the verge of extinction by desert Arabs who believe in the aphrodisiac qualities attributed to its horn. A program to preserve the species by breeding in captivity was started some 20 years ago and has had great success. In order to place the animals in an environment similar to its native habitat, the breeding herd was brought to the Phoenix Zoo, which is quite close to where I live (just beyond the Desert Botanical Garden). Hence I am one of the few people privileged to have unicorns next door.

I recommend this book to all collectors of fantasy art. (Many of the paintings are available on calendars or as posters or note cards; for information or free catalogue write to Pomegranate Publications, P.O. Box 713, Corte Madera, CA 94925.)

ajb



Universe 10, Terry Carr (ed.),
Doubleday, 1980

My reading seems to go through cycles. Don't ask me why. Maybe it has something to do with sunspots or how the Bruins are doing. When Universe 10 showed up as an SF Book Club offering, I seized the opportunity to get back into short subjects.

I figured that an anthology by Terry Carr would be a good place to start. He does so many of them that he obviously must have a talent for compilation. This book does nothing to change my opinion.

If this were the 1960's I would say that Carr has produced a collection of Dangerous Visions. By today's standards the tales in this collection are no longer dangerous--simply innovative. (Come to think of it, most of the writers in this book are Dangerous Visions alumni.)

---"Saving Face" by Michael Bishop deals with the legal machinations of a society which has decreed that a public figure's face is a patentable commodity. What happens when someone infringes on that copyright?

---James Tiptree, Jr. offers a poignant tale of one man's encounter with Supreme Joy. No more on this one. You'll like it. Her story reminds me very much of "The White Ship" by H.P. Lovecraft. Poignant, yes.

---A good old literary free-for-all is offered by R.A. Lafferty in "And All the Skies Are Full of Fish". This one is hard to stick into a pigeonhole but it is very reminiscent of the Pterodactyl fable that Laumer and Ellison put together in Partners In Wonder. Good, clean, confusing fun.

---"Bete et Noir" by Lee Kilough takes us to the theatre of the future. If you like Walter Miller's "The Darfstaller", this is right up your alley. (Even though I found the ending predictable after the first few pages, it was still fun to watch the story unfold.)

---In "The Ugly Chicken" by Howard Walthrop the dodo is still dead--isn't it?

---"The Confession of Hamo" is the first piece of Mary C. Pangborn's that I have read. It is a fantasy story of rather ordinary vinatge; cliched even to a sporadic fantasy reader like myself.

---I won't even try to encapsulate Carter Scholz's "The Johann Sebastian Bach Memorial Barbecue and Nervous Breakdown". Try it, you may ask for seconds.



---And now we come to one of the more innovative yarns I have read in a while. "First Person Plural" by F.M. Busby introduces two new ideas to the SF bin. Maybe the ideas--transcorporeal possession and staggered time-hopping--are not completely unknown to the genre but their use in this story certainly is. This tale is slightly confusing at times but this is due more to the nature of the story than to any ineptness on Busby's part. This is the story to buy the book for.

There are also two "Special Non-Fact" articles.

The first, by Charles E. Elliott discusses the realtive merits of a language called Superl, "developed by a team of U.S. Coast Guard linguists on an abandoned oil rig off Santa Barbara".

The second is the "Report of the Special Committee on the Quality of Life" in which is discussed "The envrionemental impact upon Spain of the proposed expedition of the Genoese navigator Cristobal Colon".

All in all a very enjoyable collection of stories.

Harlan would have been proud.

mb

Lore of the Witch World, Andre Norton, DAW, 1980, \$1.95

This is a book I've been waiting for--but not very patiently: I've bought several fantasy or

sword & sorcery anthologies simply because each contained a Witch World story and now they are all together in one volume. (Fortunately, most of the collections contained other good stories.) The longest piece here, "The Toads of Grimmerdale", even appeared in a previous DAW anthology, The Book of Andre Norton, which would be a rather heinous form of double-dipping except that the one brand-new piece, "Changeling", is a sequel to it.

The Witch World, like Middle-earth, always seems to be more full of a number of things than even its creator realizes. One has the impression that east of the Lonely Mountain is terra incognita even to Tolkien, and that Andre Norton herself could be surprised by what might be lurking in one of the remoter dales of High Hallack. She is the only author I can think of who has improved a secondary world by wrecking it; the stories set after the cataclysmic destruction of Estcarp are more interesting than the earlier ones. The ingredients of a WW story are pretty standardized--a destabilized feudal society; a young female protagonist, usually not always possessed of witch powers, who is displaced or in conflict with that society; and some center of ancient prehuman power which may be either benign or baleful--but the stories themselves are varied, not monotonously the same. This is because Norton's imagination is both inventive and elaborative. She not only comes up with new situations and individualized characters within her basic pattern, but also examines more thoroughly different aspects of the Witch World frame. In these stories we have protagonists drawn from WW social groups that were hardly more than spear carriers in earlier books: Falconers, Sulcarmen, Torfolk. And we meet heroines with new problems and motivations: Dairine is blind; Tursla has a body which is of Tor but an alien soul; Hertha's obsession with revenge on the man who raped her leads her to involve herself with evil powers.

Those who already know the Witch World need not encouragement to buy this book, but those who haven't explored it yet will find Lore of the Witch World a good travel guide.

ajb

The Dragon, Alfred Coppel,
Harcourt, Brace, & Jovanovich,
1977, \$10 hc

I recently read this book as a recording for the blind by the Kings Transcriber Library in Hanford, California.

As in any good novel, several themes and plots intermingle. The American Presidency has been castrated by the press in the post-Watergate era. The President can do nothing effective in foreign policy because of constant dogging by Congress and the press. A mad Soviet general is planning to provoke a nuclear war between China and the U.S. by launching missiles against China at a politically opportune moment. The Chinese have secretly developed a missile-eating laser which is being tested. The novel is very fast-paced and once I started reading it, I couldn't stop. Of course the story had to end with nuclear war averted, Air Force One still in the air, the Dragon--the anti-missile laser--destroyed, and the bad guys, especially the mad Russian General and the spiteful communist sympathizing reporter's lives ruined.

The novel is very unsubtle propaganda for Presidential freedom to act secretly and for development of materials like the B1 Bomber and research into futuristic weapons systems. Many a character moaned that the U.S. was ill-prepared for war, that skeptical scientists had prevented the serious consideration of advanced weapons, and that the Congress and the press made it hard for the President to save the world.

erm

Mind in the Waters, Joan McIntyre (ed.), Charles Scribner's Sons/Sierra Club Books, 1974, \$10.95 pb

This book may not tell you everything you always wanted to know about whales and dolphins but were afraid to ask, but it comes darned close. Joan McIntyre has collected samples of prose, poetry, and art ranging from Babylonian mythology to contemporary neuroanatomy in order to examine man's view of his cetacean neighbors. Perhaps the most prominent fact to emerge is that we know next to nothing about them, even the smaller members of the order--dolphins and orcas--which have been the subjects of intensive study and experimentation in recent years.

The most important and interesting question is of course that of intelligence--are they as smart as we are? The issue is complicated by the fact that all the tests of "intelligence" we can devise seems to be culturally biased: we can hardly measure it accurately in, for example, humans at a Stone Age cultural level, let alone creatures whose environment and behavior are totally different from ours. By such traditional measurements as the ratio of brain weight to body weight and the size, lamination, and fissurization of the neocortex, they are superior to any living creature except man--and in some aspects superior even to him--but these qualities are not considered by contemporary biology to be absolute proofs of intelligence. (They were so considered until it was discovered that a species other than man possessed them.) The cetacean brain has more neocortex than the human brain, but with a lower neuron density, and the arrangement is different; so absolute comparisons cannot be made. If we use awareness, rather than intelligence, as the criterion, practically everyone who has worked closely with cetaceans will grant that they possess it. These are the questions that we have been afraid to ask: if whales and dolphins, despite their great physical differences from us, are indeed fellow hnau, how are we to come to terms with the fact that we have practically exterminated many of them and are working diligently at eliminating the ones that are left? It's enough to give a bad case of the guilts even to someone whose closest involvement with the whaling industry has been to read Moby Dick.

The most convincing evidence for cetacean mind for me appears in the instances in this book (and elsewhere) where truly open-minded people working with dolphins and orcas have found, while teaching and experimenting with them, that they in turn are being taught and experimented upon. There was a female orca (the dreaded "killer whale") which conditioned a human investigator out of his fear of entering the water with her, and



the dolphin Rudy who, while a human was teaching her to say her name, taught him a word in dolphinese. (Her real name? Her name for him? He never found out.) It is clear that we have barely begun to understand these creatures and their capabilities, but the little we do know suggests that we ought at the very least to cease killing them. There seems to be little little point in lobbying the International Whaling Commission, which is a farce; but we can support activist groups like Project Jonah (which received the royalties from this book) and Greenpeace. As a start, we can read this book. Perhaps someday we will be able to break through the communication barrier and truly know cetaceans: when that day comes, the "Nuke the Whales" T-shirt that so amused Ed at BoskLone may seem about as funny as an Aushwitz joke at a B'nai Brith convention.

ajb

Stormtrack, James Sutherland,
Pyramid Books, 1974, 95¢

A friend of the author leant me this book. That being the case I got my money's worth out of it.

Meteorologist Ross Maron finds interstellar intrigue on board the earth-orbiting station Boreas. Along the way we are present with glimpses of the world situation in the year 1996--depressing as ever.

This book was the lead-off in "The Harlan Ellison Discovery Series" wherein Ellison gives new writers a chance at immortality-in-print. In the introduction Ellison advises that this is not a juvenile fiction despite the age of the protagonist.

I would take exception to this. I believe it is kinder (and nearer the truth) to look at this as an excellent "young adult" rather than a mediocre general adult SF. I do not mean to construe that the book is sloppily written; it is just that it rehashes ground which is certainly familiar to the average SF reader. This is basically a good ole mystery story set against a technological background with ET's thrown in for spice.

This paperback sports a nice color frontpiece by Tim Kirk and one of the better publishing ironies: Ellison's name appears more often in the book than the author's.

mb

A Middle-earth Album, Joan Wyatt, Simon and Schuster, 1979, \$7.95

English artist Joan Wyatt has followed Tolkien's own artistic technique in that landscape and architecture dominate her paintings, minimizing the living beings. This is just as well: very few of her portraits are satisfying. Perhaps no artist (with the possible exception of Tim Kirk) portrays orcs and Hobbits in a manner widely acceptable among Tolkien fans, but Wyatt gets no better than a C minus from me. While her Balrog and Nazgul-lord aren't too bad, her orcs and Hobbits are below par; her Ents are just silly-looking, completely lacking in dignity; and her Gollum combines the body of an emaciated hyena with the face of a malevolent John the Baptist. She is much more successful with the large-scale depictions, often capturing the mood of a scene very accurately. Rivendell, Minas Tirith, and the departure of the Ring-bearers' ship are well done; and I liked her version of the Great Mallorn of Lothlorien, though I suspect that not many will agree with me.

The commentary, by Jessica Yates, Secretary to the Tolkien Society in Great Britain, is merely elementary plot summary.

I think this book sells at about \$19.95 [the softback is \$7.95 mb] and I certainly would not have willingly paid that much for it. I bought it with the intention of giving it as a gift to a fellow Tolkien fan if I didn't like it well enough to keep: I am still trying to make up my mind whether or not to hang on to it. However, artistic preference (particularly in Tolkien art) is highly idiosyncratic; A Middle-earth Album might be just your cup of tea. My recommendation is that you don't buy it unless you have a chance to look through it first.

ajb

A Hobbit's Travels
A Hobbit's Journal, Running Press, \$3.95 each

Every year, usually around Christmas, the non-book appears in the bookstores: a volume of blank pages, usually handsomely bound, in which one may create

one's own book. These two volumes belong to that genre, but with a difference; illustrations (by Michael Green) are provided. They are slim volumes, paper bound, printed on parchment-like paper. The drawings are of high quality: those in AHT depict flora, fauna, and landscapes of Middle-earth, while AHJ contains portraits of the characters. Either would make an excellent gift for anyone who keeps a diary, a travel journal, or (as I do) a commonplace book.

ajb

Kill the Dead, Tanith Lee, DAW Books, \$1.75

In Sabella, Tanith Lee presented readers with a vampire with religious blues and a taste for nymphomania--as well as blood. Now, in Kill the Dead, Lee takes on another creature of the night--the ghost. Parl Dro, whose leg causes him constant pain because he was bitten by a ghost, is a ghost hunter. He tracks down ghosts whose emotional or physical ties--a surviving bone, a room morbidly kept as a shrine to their memory, a lover who cannot forget--cause them to linger in the world where they quickly become malignant. Once he has found them, he destroys their ties to the earth and frees them to go to some sort of Beyond.

As Parl Dro deals with the ghosts of a girl who killed first her sister, then herself, he encounters Myal, a psychic and musician. Myal follows him, driven by feelings that neither he nor Dro can understand. Ultimately their quest brings them to the realm of the dead which Parl Dro must exorcise.

Once again, Tanith Lee proves herself to be the mistress of a certain kind of macabre esthetic: it is delicate and willfully ironic, as is Lee's style. Part of what lends it its special charm is Lee's ability to infuse pathos into frightening situations. Some ghosts--as Dro's leg attests--bite; others weep and cling to their pseudolife. Even the Ghost Killer pities them. But Lee's greatest triumph comes with the last reversal in the plot which sneaks up on the reader and which combines irony, humor, and the special craving for love that seems to haunt all of her protagonists.

sms



Tic-Toc in Oz, The Scarecrow of Oz,
Rinkitink in Oz, L. Frank Baum,
Ballantine, 1980, \$2.25 each

To whoever went out and bought the first seven books in this series: you have my abject thanks. By showing the folks at Del Rey that there is renewed interest in the lore of the Wonderful World of Oz, you have given them the incentive to continue this fine cycle of paperbacks.

Tic-Toc in Oz, the eighth book in the series, tells of the Shaggy Man's search for his brother who has been captured by the Nome King Roquat (herein renamed Ruggedo). To help him in his quest are such personages as: Betsy Bobbin and her friend Hank the Mule; Tic-Toc the mechanical man of copper fabricated by those splended artisans, Smith and Tinker; Polychrome the Rainbow's daughter; Queen Ann Soforth and the Royal Army of Oogaboo (all 17 of them); and the Rose Princess.

This is my favorite of the three. Baum uses some of his better characters and takes us literz'ly to the other side of the world where dwell the great magicians of the world--sort of Ozian Valar.

Book #9, The Scarecrow of Oz, introduces Trot and Captain Bill the one-legged sailor from Baum's Sky Island. Evidently these two characters were favorites of many of Baum's readers and their insistance that they have some adventures in Oz prompted him to include them. These two worthies are sucked under the sea by a whirlpool. By the usual progression of happenstance, they arrive at the lands immediately surrounding the various Sandy Wastes and Deadly Deserts which enclose Oz proper. They, along with their new-found friend the Ork, arrive in Jinxland. They are just in time to assist Pon the Gardener and Princess Gloria in their return to the throne which had been usurped by King Krewl. Glinda the Good dispatches the Scarecrow to aid them in his usual low-key Politeman style: "It would be very rude to conquer a King without proper notice."

One of the more fascinating critters in the Oz books--and you have to go some to achieve this distinction--is the Ork. This ostrich-like creature has the power of flight (something Man did not have a firm grip on when this book was first published). It is supported by bowl-shaped wings and moves about with the aid of its tail which looks and acts like an airplane propeller.



Rinkitink in Oz: "in which young Prince Inga of Pingaree is aided by King Rinkitink and Bilbil the goat in rescuing his royal parents from the clutches of Kalico the current Nome King." I have to admit that I still haven't finished this one yet. What I have read of it shows that Baum lost none of his wit and whimsy over the one year span after the writing of Scarecrow. Skimming through the illos, I notice that he manages to introduce some new, typically singular characters.

Del Rey has kept the same design sequence going that was used in the first seven books in this series. John R. Neill's original art pieces still adorn the interiors in all their pen-and-ink splendor. Michael Herring's color renditions of the Neill art reappear on the covers of these three books. One of the nicest things about this set of books (other than their content) is that the design work is compatible throughout the skein. Luckily the word "Oz" is used in all the titles as this is obviously the major eye-catcher on the covers. Over all one of the better jobs of marketing through packaging.

L. Frank Baum, as I have said before, shows more imagination than consistency. For example: I

was very disappointed when, in Tic-Toc, neither the Shaggy Man or Polychrome recognized each other after all they had gone through together in The Road to Oz. Oh well, I suppose I will just have to get by with this man's tremendous imagination and love of his subject matter.

mb

The Incomplete Book of Failures,
Stephen Pile, E.P. Dutton, 1979,
\$4.95pb)

No, this is not the long-awaited definitive study of the NIEKAS editorial staff; it is the official handbook of the Not-Terribly-Good Club of Great Britain, of which Mr. Pile is president. (He has no other accomplishments.) As he points out in the introduction:

Incompetence is what we are good at: it is the quality that marks us off from animals and we should learn to revere it.

Of course, the occasional Segovia does slip through the net with the result that we all cut sandwiches

and queue in the rain for hours to watch him play the guitar without once dropping his plectrum down the hole. But this book is not for the likes of him. It is for us: the less than good, who spend hours shaking the plectrum out and impress only our mothers.

And he proceeds to provide us with a gratifyingly ample selection of Leasts, worsts, and Most Unsuccessfals from all areas of human endeavor. There is the General Assembly of the state of Indiana, which in 1897 passed a law declaring the value of Pi to be four; HMS Trinidad, the British warship which managed to torpedo itself; the pornographic bookseller who was fined and given a ten-month suspended prison sentence because his books were not sufficiently pornographic; and the immortal Pedro Carolino, who did not allow his total unfamiliarity with the English language to prevent him from writing an English-Portuguese phrasebook, graced with such remarkable locutions as "Undress you to", "Exculpate me by your brother's", and the ever-useful "To craunch a marmoset". The arts are well represented, with Florence Foster Jenkins, who did for music what Mrs. O'Leary's cow did for urban renewal; Julia Moore, the worst American poet, and her British counterpart William Topaz McGonagall; a sheaf of contenders for the title of Worst Lines of Verse (I think James Grainger's "Come, muse, let us sing of rats" is unfairly excluded from competition). A reviewer is strongly tempted simply to quote the book in its entirety, but I will confine myself to a handful of the briefer and choicer examples:

THE LEAST SUCCESSFUL EXPLORER (Thomas Nuttall, 1786-1859)

His work was characterized by the fact that he was almost permanently lost. During his expedition of 1812 his colleagues frequently had to light beacons in the evening to help him find his way back to camp.

One night he completely failed to return and a search party was sent out. As it approached him in the darkness Nuttall assumed they were Indians and tried to escape. The annoyed rescuers pursued him for three days through bush and river until he accidentally wandered back into the camp.

THE LEAST ACCURATELY LABELLED MUSEUM EXHIBIT

A first-class example of inaccurate labelling was discovered in October 1971 in County Durham. The object was exhibited in a South Shields museum as a Roman sestertius coin, minted between AD 135 and AD 138. However, Miss Fiona Gordon, aged 9, pointed out that it was, in fact, a plastic token given away free by a soft drinks firm in exchange for bottle labels.

THE LEAST SUCCESSFUL SECRET CAMERA

Attempting to catch a persistent thief in 1978, the Doncaster police set up a secret camera in the changing rooms of a local squash club.

When they played back the film, the police found that all they had succeeded in filming was one of their own policemen wandering round naked and looking for his clothes, which had been stolen.

THE LEAST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITION

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents held an exhibition at Harrogate in 1968. The entire display fell down.

THE WORST HIJACKERS

We shall never know the identity of the man who in 1976 made the most unsuccessful hijack attempt ever. On a flight across America, he rose from his seat, drew a gun and took the stewardess hostage.

"Take me to Detroit," he said.

"We're already going to Detroit," she replied.

"Oh...good," he said, and sat down again.

I recommend that you rush right out and buy this book--managing in the process to leave your wallet behind and to lock your car with the keys inside.

ajb

A Proud Taste of Scarlet and Minnever, E.L. Lonigsburg, Athenium, 1973, recorded on three C90 cassettes (standard format) by the Xavier Society for the Blind, NY

This short, humorously written biographical novel of Eleanor of Aquitaine is a framed story. It opens in Heaven today--not a theologically sound heaven but one of folklore, comic literature, and drama. The saints rest on clouds,

their impatient drumming causing interference with TV reception, etc. She and several old cronies are waiting impatiently for the release of King Henry II, her second husband, from Hell (actually Purgatory). As they wait, they start talking about aspects of each other's lives they had not been aware of before. They concentrate on Eleanor's life; each taking turns covering different periods.

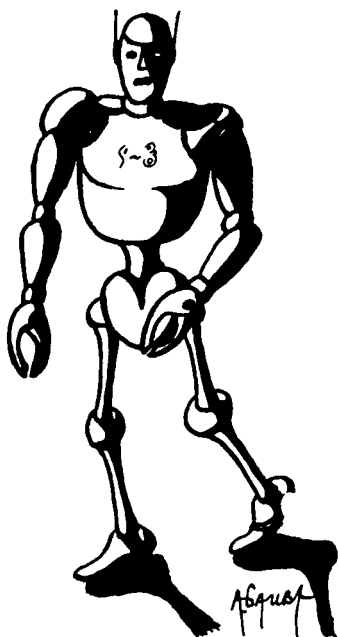
First comes Abbot Suger who had been King Louis VII of France's teacher. He covers the period from Eleanor's marriage to the young Prince Louis, when she was 15, through his own death shortly before their separation. The general conversation covers her separation and engagement to Prince Henry II of England. At this point the narrative is picked up by Empress Matilda, Henry's mother. She too covers the period up to her death which was a glorious time with Henry, accomplishing much with Eleanor's help. Shortly after the Empress died, things went sour between Henry and Eleanor and William the Marshall. At various points William was assistant to one of Henry's sons, to Henry himself, and to Eleanor. He continues the tale. The King has taken up with a mistress so the Queen returns to Aquitaine with her three oldest boys: Henry, Richard, and Geoffrey, leaving the young Prince John with King Henry. She taught the three princes to hate their father, which was easy because he would give them no meaningful responsibilities. She fermented the rebellions by the princes and the King imprisoned her instead of divorcing her. Prince Henry and Richard hated each other and often fought. The young Henry died in battle. Later the King died in another battle with Richard's forces. Finally Eleanor herself covers the period from the reign of Richard the Lion-Hearted to her death shortly after the advent of King John.

I do not know very much history and cannot vouch for the accuracy of this book. Too much seems to have happened in too short a time. Abbot Suger invented the Gothic cathedral. Henry II established a uniform law system for England. Eleanor invented romantic love to amuse the knights in the Aquitaine. Henry conquered Ireland to have some land for his son John to rule. Eleanor popularized the legends of King Arthur, which at that time only existed in the pages of Geoffrey of Monmouth. She did this by having her troubadours

spin romantic tales about him and his court. Under Richard she reformed the money of England. Henry II had his run-in with Thomas Beckett. And shortly after her death, her son John was forced to sign the Magna Carta.

But a novel is a story of people. And the author portrays Eleanor as a vital and fascinating woman. I enjoyed the book very much.

erm



The Experiment, Richard Setlowe, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980

Harry Styles lungs are dying of cancer. We can rebuild them...

Close, but not quite. The reconstruction will allow him to live; but only underwater.

If you have never read anything like this before, have at it. I for one have read this basic concept several times. Probably one of the more enjoyable of this

sub-genre (sorry, just HAD to do that) was "The Merman" by L. Sprague De Camp.

Setlowe, an ex-media executive, looks at this situation with an eye to toward social and sensational ramifications of this operation. Also he manages to put a plug or two in for the environmental causes.

For a book that reads like a Movie of the Week it isn't half bad.

mb

Dr. Bowdler's Legacy, Noel Perrin, Athenum, 1969

It is a rare event when a genuine scholar produces a book that the nonacademic will find intelligible, let alone enjoyable. The best-known examples are probably Carl Sgan and historian Bruce Catton. Ironically, literary scholars are among the least likely to battle their way free of jargon, as the most cursory glance at their professional journals will show. This book is an exception; it is at once learned, lucid, and funny. Of course, the author has chosen a subject that is inherently amusing: the history of expurgated books in England and America. Not that the expurgators themselves thought so; they were, in the main, deadly serious--which is what makes their work so hilarious.

The term "bowdlerization" dervies from Dr. Thomas Bowdler, whose Family Shakespeare was guaranteed suitable for reading aloud in the parlor in the presence of innocent young girls. (Perrin suggest, however, that the original 1807 edition was actually the work of Harriet Bowdler, the doctor's bluestocking spinster sister. There were three generations of Bowdler expurgators, whose literary victims ranged from the Song of Solomon to Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.) The practice itself started late in the previous century--John Wesley was a pioneer bowdlerizer--and remained a legitimate literary endeavor until the First World War. Its principal causes were the eighteenth-century cult of sensibility, which gave rise to the widely accepted notion of female delicacy--manifested by blushing and swooning in the presence of impropriety-- which must remain unsullied at all costs. Test by exposure one should become (horrors!) hardened; the evangelical religious movement; and the appearance of the Reading Public, a mass audience which

included members of the newly literate lower classes, whom the well-born expurgators felt to be in need of protection from the impropriety, profanity, and criticism of the ruling classes that were sometimes to be found in the major English poets.

At first, bowdlerism was practiced in an almost respectable fashion. Scholars and literary figures (like Johnson and Scott) whose aim was to produce definitive editions of early authors considered it their moral obligation to provide complete texts; the high cost of these volumes pretty well guaranteed that their readership would be limited to the educated and prosperous, whose morals were of course immune. For the general audience, however, there were cheaper volumes of "selections" of "elegant extracts", which made no pretense of being complete. Somehow or other, the indelicate passages of an author's work always turned out to be unselect or inelegant. Later, after the success of the Family Shakespeare and its imitators, editors produced supposedly complete editions which were admittedly castrated, as critics of the practice termed it. Once the Victorian era really got under way, bowdlerism reached the zenith of its hypocrisy: expurgated editions which never admitted that anything had been cut. (Perrin calls this castration with anesthesia.) The principal victims were, obviously enough, Shakespeare and the Bible, but practically every author who wrote before the middle of the nineteenth century suffered at one time or another. Even sermons were not safe: the seventeenth-century palin speaking of John Donne was too much for the delicate-minded. It is true that nobody ever quite managed to find anything off-color in Wordsworth, but such unlikely works as Moby Dick and Huckleberry Finn came under the knife. One curious result of all this is that the very proper Robert Browning wrote the most indecent single line of Victorian poetry, innocently employing an extremely indelicate four-letter word because he had no notion of its real meaning. Apparently nobody noticed except the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary forty years later, who enquired what he meant by it. (Surprisingly enough, when practically the same thing happened in a poem by Arthur Hugh Clough, lots of people noticed, even though Clough's impropriety was in Gaelic--a phrase he had borrowed from an old map without knowing its meaning.)

Surely the strangest--and to my mind the most reprehensible--instance of bowdlerism was James Paterson's 1860 edition of William Dunbar, the great medieval Scots poet whom Scott called the equal of Chaucer. The editor implied that he was not expurgating and guaranteed that explanatory footnotes would clarify all obscurities; he accomplished both these apparently contradictory aims by the wildly ingenious method of printing all the obsolete obscenities with footnotes giving false meanings! For example, he glossed "swyfe" (copulate) as "to sing and play", thus achieving decorum at the expense of common honesty.

Even today, bowdlerism is not entirely extinct, though is generally limited to books intended for the young; if you check Poerter's speech in your high school copy of Macbeth against a scholarly edition, you may be in for a surprise. As recent court cases have demonstrated, there is hardly anything left that can really be declared unfit to print. Perrin implies that this is not the result of increased respect for author's freedom of speech and readers' ability to resist the corruption but a reflection of the fact that the Reading Public has become the Viewing Public. The controversial "family hour" mandated by the FCC a few years ago is the logical successor to the Family Shakespeare, and the network censor is the last bastion of sensibility. Meanwhile, statistics indicate that the delicate young girl whose blushes Dr. Bowdler was so anxious to spare has her first sexual experience at the age of fourteen; and we find everywhere, scrawled on walls and sidewalks, words whose very existence would not be admitted by Noah Webster, proud inventor of the expurgated dictionary.

It's enough to make the entire Bowdler family swoon.

ajb

The Visitors, Clifford D. Simak, Ballantine, 1980, \$2.50

The bio at the end of the book states that Simak is "the pastoralist of science fiction". I guess what they mean is that he usually incorporates down-home types into his stories and rarely has any major acts of violence. I always thought that was the case but I certainly had my doubts after reading the first chapter of this

book. Before eight pages had flipped by, one poor fellow had been "blackened into a grotesque stump of a man". Brrr; I check the author's name again--still Simak.

Earth is visited by a multitude of large (200 ft. long) black boxes which float around in defiance of gravity. When they are not sailing through the air, they are eating trees. After a time, they excrete neat little bundles of pure cellulose. Whafo? Are they machine or entity? Intelligent?

An alternate title for this book might have been Lou Grant Meets the Giant Boxes from Space. Simak, a newly-retired journalist tells this tale from the p.o.v. of several newspaper and various government types. He focuses on public reaction and what them boys in Washington D.C. (led by a rational President for a change) are doing about the whole thing.

I don't want to say anymore about

the plot than is necessary to get you to read this. Simak's name alone should be enough as he is one of the best SF writers alive.

I hate to sound so cryptic, but a lot of the pleasure in the reading of this book comes from the mental exercise in trying to figure out, along with the characters in the story, the many puzzles presented.

A neo might not get too excited by this story as, on the surface, it appears to be a rather tame piece of fiction. But underneath lurks sweaty dynamite.

Maybe the reason why Simak turns out such consistently fine work is the fact that he has such a good grasp of what makes a "human bean" tick.

Which makes me stop and think: "Is Clifford Simak the Walt Kelly of science fiction?"

mb



"It's been overheating like this ever since I joined my last two car clubs"



The 13 Crimes of Science Fiction, edited by Isaac Asimov, Martin Harry Greenberg, and Charles G. Waugh, Doubleday, 1979, \$12.50 (book club edition \$3.98)

The notion that the genres of science fiction and detective fiction could not be combined, which was once an article of faith, now seems quaint as the phlogiston theory--largely due to the efforts of the Good Doctor himself. I know of at least two previous such anthologies: The Science-Fictional Sherlock Holmes and an excellent collection edited by Miriam Allen de Ford, whose title I have unfortunately forgotten. It was the best of the three, but 13 Crimes is a worthy successor and includes come newer authors.

Tom Reamy's "The Detweiler Boy" is a first-class combination of the vampire story with the Spade/Marlowe/Archer school of hard-boiled detective fiction. There is a Lord Darcy story from Randall Garrett and a Dr. Ezterhazy story from Avram Davidson; it is perhaps stretching things to call them sf, but detection they certainly are. Jack Vance's Magnus Ridolph story involves detection by cultural analysis and combines a rococo sf setting with a classic Agatha Christie pattern.

De Vet and MacLean's spy story also seems borderline but is a better story than Larry Niven's locked-room mystery, which I found too confusing. Asimov himself contributes a Wendell Urth story, "The Singing Bell", to represent the inverted or we-know-who-did-it-now-how-do-we-prove-it? type. Wilson Tucker's police procedural has an ending which is contrived and unfair by

detective-fiction standards. Courtroom drama is represented by Clifford Simak's "How-2", a funny robot story with an O. Henry-like twist to the ending.

The stories I liked best were Edward Wellen's "Mouthpiece", a dilly of a dying message cipher puzzle featuring a thoroughly nasty self-aware computer program, and William Tenn's "Time in Advance", about two would-be murderers in a future society in which one can serve one's prison sentence in advance (at a 50% discount) and then get to commit a "free" crime. It is the most radical and provocative story in the book and a real winner for multiple irony.

This book provides a good introduction to sf for mystery fans and vice versa.

ajb

The Number of the Beast, Robert A. Heinlein, Fawcett/Columbine, 1980, trade, \$6.95

If nothing else, rest assured that RAH had a lot of fun writing this book. Hat-tips go to various writers and personalities, factual and fictional, who he has felt obligated to acknowledge in print. And woe to the critics.

The story deals with the trials and tribulations of four characters--in all their Doc Smith-splendor--who gallivant between alternate worlds and times in their personal speeder modified with an Acme Space Inverter.

A couple things bothered me. The endless jawing between the protagonists gets to be a bit wearing. It seemed as if when they weren't pounding each other on the back in congratulatory chiropractic fits, they were bickering to beat

the band. (One of the favorite arguments seemed to be who would be the Captain at any given moment.) Also, until rather late in the book, the story didn't seem to be moving in any discernable direction. Maybe this is *avante garde*.

I don't know.

I'm firmly convinced, more than ever, that Heinlein can write on just about anything and make it entertaining. Fictions, huh? Why not?--and he'll do his damndest to make you believe also.

Cameos abound (one of my favorite interludes was an encounter with a Lensman on patrol) and probably present most of the interest if not most of the illogic. The "L'Envoi" section (envoi: "a short fixed final stanza of a ballade serving as a summary or dedication" - Webster) is definitely worth the price of admission just to see how Doc Hazel from The Rolling Stones relates to the hedonistic Jubal Harshaw of Stranger in a Strange Land.

If anyone out there know who the "waiter" in the last section that everyone seems to recognize is, please let me know. I have a guess but I don't feel all that sure about it. I'm still working on the last paragraphs but I expect some day it will come to me.

Consummate expressionist Richard Powers' illustrations adorn this hefty tome. He evidently had some idea of the storyline as most of the illos definitely relate to particular sections of the book.

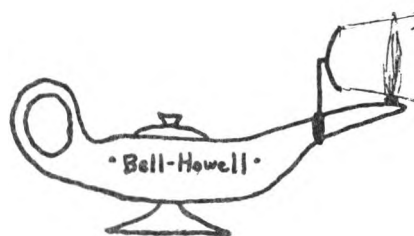
I have no idea how history will see this book in relation to the rest of Robert Heinlein's bibliography, but it sure is different.

mb

UNREVIEWED NEW RELEASES

Ballantine

Roadmarks, Roger Zelazny, \$2.25
Twilight at the Well of Souls, v5
Jack L. Chalker, \$2.25
The Seven Sexes, William Tenn, \$2.25
Master of the Five Magics, Lyndon Hardy, \$2.25
The Best Science Fiction Novellas of the Year, Terry Carr ed., \$2.50
The Complete Venus Equatorial, George O. Smith, \$2.50
Turnabout, Thorne Smith, \$2.25
Topper, Thorne Smith, \$2.25
Topper Takes a Trip, Thorne Smith, \$2.25
The Night of the Gods, Thorne Smith
Way Station, Clifford D. Simak, \$1.95



MAGIC LANTERN REVIEWS

COSMOS

Carl Sagan has long been one of my favorite TV intellectuals--right up there with Alistair Cooke and Kermit the Frog--and lately he's been all over the tube publicizing this series. And with good reason. COSMOS, subtitled "A Personal Voyage", is the latest in the PBS tradition of turning a Great Mind loose to explore his subject as he sees fit, a tradition which began with Kenneth Clark's CIVILIZATION and has included Cooke's AMERICA and Jacob Bronowski's ASCENT OF MAN. Unlike these, COSMOS does not follow a begin-at-the-beginning-go-on-to-the-end-and-then-stop pattern of development; Sagan defines the cosmos as all that ever was or is and ranges back and forth in time and space, from the far side of the universe to the ancient Library of Alexandria and from medieval Japan to the inside of a single cell. Some of his illustrative digressions take us a long way from the subject, but so far they have been consistently fascinating.

The graphics and simulations, done by Jet Propulsion Laboratory experts and some of the same people who worked on STAR WARS special effects, are simply superb. Never has eight million dollars been better spent. The sequence showing an imaginary spaceship voyage to earth from eight billion light years away, which forms nearly half of the first episode, should become a classic of sf film along with 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY and STAR WARS.

I consider myself typical of the audience COSMOS is intended for: I am educated, reasonably intelligent, and--here I probably differ from the rest of the NIEKAS reviewers--not particularly well informed about science, having had it taught to me in a regrettably

boring manner in high school and college. I have tended to avoid science programs on TV, except for an occasional NOVA. But I have found COSMOS not only informative but entertaining; it is one of the few frankly "educational" shows that I have found so absorbing that I have lost track of time. One of the qualities that makes Sagan so effective as a host is that he is just enthralled by his subject as the most uninformed member of the audience discovering it for the first time. A NEWSWEEK review criticized him for his "perpetual expression of awestruck reverence" and for excessive indulgence in speculation, particularly on the possibility of extraterrestrial intelligence; but no one who is interested in science fiction is likely to regard either of these attitudes as a fault.

The one flaw I can find is something that I have noticed in Sagan's other TV appearances and in his writings: he never misses a chance to put down religion. It is understandable, since the history of science from Copernicus to Teilhard de Chardin has been marked by a struggle with church censorship; but in an age in which science and religion have pretty much agreed that their areas of study do not overlap, ontologically speaking, Sagan's anticlericism not only strikes a jarring note but seems rather quaint. But this is a miniscule fly in some very classy ointment: for sf fans (as for everyone else not actually in an advanced state of decomposition) COSMOS is not to be missed.

ajb

THE NEW FRONTIER

I offered Paradox Films, producer of this movie, my services gratis. This would entail traveling with

this flic as a full-time heckler. I would not harangue this 8mm testimony to amateur ingenuity out of meanness; rather, I feel that it is intrinsically funny.

J.J. Coleman (played by NIEKAS editor Rafe Folch-Pi) sends Fletcher Pratt (Robert Audley) to Lower Orbit Station 5 to determine why certain materials are being diverted there. Station commander Pete Burack (Chuck Holloman) is the keeper of a secret which is pretty much predictable for anyone who has read Arthur C. Clarke. Enough on that.

On the way we are treated to some not-half-bad-considering special fx courtesy of Bill Rudow and Steve Parady. Miniature work, interiors of space shuttles and orbiting stations, and some ingenious exterior perspective work just goes to prove that it doesn't take megabucks to produce a worthy film. But it certainly would have helped.

With the usual proviso: "...for the money spent", this 20 mins. of cinema shows dedication and resourcefulness.

Or, as J.J. Coleman might say:

"WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!"

mb

VIKINGS!

I recommend this half-hour series to history buffs, Creative Anachronists, and smash-and-grab artists of all ages. I considered myself fairly familiar with the subject, having read Beowulf twice in the original and taken a course in Old Norse literature in translation, but I am learning a lot. For instance, I had never realized that the Viking longship was a major technological advance; nor had I fully appreciated the

beauty and grace of Norse wood-carving. The host of the series, co-produced by the BBC and--who else?--Minneapolis public TV, is Magnus Magnusson, a descendant of Vikings who takes this opportunity to try to counter the bad press his ancestors have been getting for the last 1500 years or so, relying principally on readings from the sagas and film of Viking artifacts. Of particular interest are the scenes showing the building of a nearly full-scale replica of the famous Oseberg Ship--all by hand, with adzes--and its voyage from Norway to the Isle of Man to take part in the latter's Millennial celebrations (makes the Bicentennial seem pretty paltry, doesn't it?).

We tend to think of the Vikings--thanks to Hollywood--as history's most successful gang of hoods, raping and pillaging their way across western Europe with an occasional pause to discover America. There was a lot more to their culture and accomplishments than that. Have you ever heard of the Vikings who went east, mostly from Sweden? Known as Varangians, they made their way as far as Micklegarth the World-City (their name for Byzantium) and their leader Rurik founded the first Russian state. (The name Russia itself is derived from ros, rower.)

Although I've only seen a couple of episodes so far, I can assure you that VIKINGS! has more to offer than Kirk Douglas in a horned helmet.

ajb

THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT

There was not a Deathstar in sight; nor a T.I.E., Y-wing, X-wing, or Falcon either. But this is not only one of the best SF films ever made--it is an SF comedy.

Chemist Alec Guinness has developed a fiber which appears to be practically indestructable and infinitely resistant to soiling. His patron, initially overjoyed at the prospect of having a monopoly on this wondrous material, is given cause to think about the potential impact of eternal clothing on the garment industry.

TMITWS is pretty heavy parody of both Big Business and the then-fledgling labor unions. Neither are shown in a particularly flattering light. This film presents a timeless humor 'which belies its some two-score age' which is almost Pythonesque in its silly-sophistication. It seems as if the producers of this film had more faith in their audience than "creative persons" who turn out SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT clones ad regurgatorium.

Guinness plays an excellent absent-minded professor type; bemused and confused. Chaplin would not have handled the part any better which is high praise considering that this character is in the same mold as many of Chaplin's roles of the poor little guy caught up in situations that he has little control over.

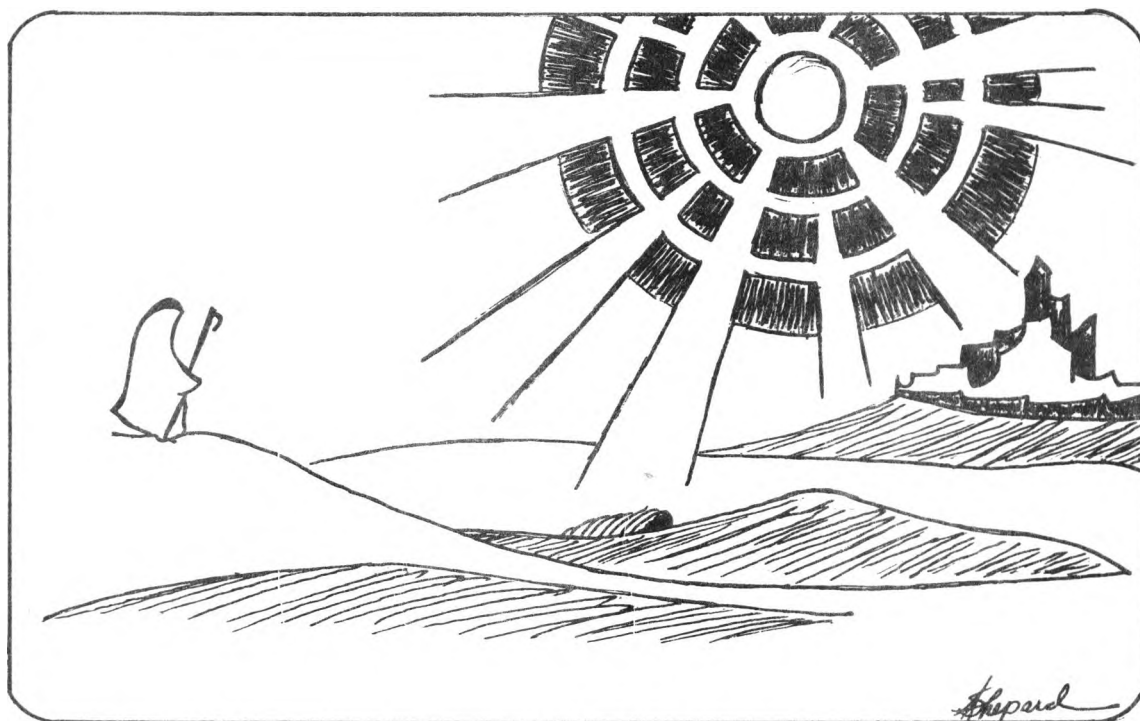
Humor does not rely on one-liners or heavily contrived exchanges between principles as is so often seen today; especially on the Bube Tube. The comedy arises from situation and characterization; much more pleasing sources I think.

I call this a "pure" SF movie. It takes a particular development in science and extrapolates its potential effect on the society of that story. This flic poses the classic dilemma: What price progress? Planned obsolescence is a fact of life. We must protect people's jobs or Bad Things will happen, right? Like they may be freed to follow endeavors better suited to the advancement of the Human Condition.

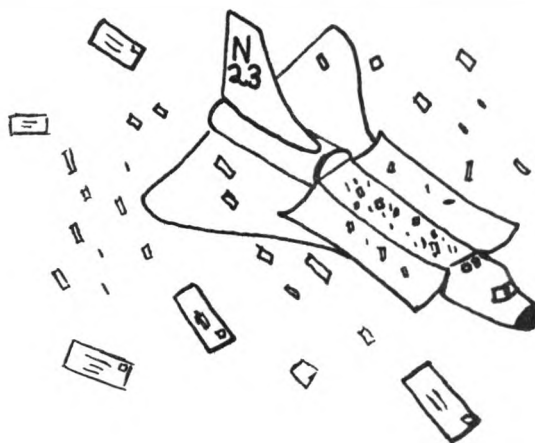
Who knows...

mb

[Magic Lantern turned out being a bit shorter than we anticipated. But to make up for it, next issue we will present a full-length review on REVENGE OF THE JEDI and other lies]



LAISKAI



409 East 88 St. 5A
New York, NY 10028

...I'm delighted that NIEKAS has been revived. It was the first fanzine I ever read--or LoCed. How odd, ten years later, to be writing another LoC for it.

In the past ten years I've become a medievalist, left teaching, and done diverse other things; chief among them begun the glimmerings of a career in fantasy and SF. This is going to take YEARS!

But may I call NIEKAS readers' attention to an anthology that DAW Books has contracted for? It's called Hecate's Cauldron and it will consist of original stories (approximately 4000-6000 words long) about witches, male or female. What I'd especially like is somewhat out-of-the-ordinary backgrounds, with a strong focus on the figure of the witch. In other words, the magic must make the plot go. I'm hoping to begin to select stories after February, 1981. So anyone with a good witch story--I want to see it.

The magazine looks pretty much as I remembered, it still prints clever and literate articles. What else can I say but that I am glad?

Elen sila Lumenn omentilmo,
Susan Shwartz

P.O. Box 6485
Cleveland, OH 44101

Wow! #22 was good but #23 is fantastic. I love the reproduction. I hope I can be as lucky finding some kind of machine so I can get my zine [ELANOR] out again for such a good price.

I really would like to see the 1st and 3rd parts to Edward R. Boudreau's article--any chance I could get them? [We are still trying to track down the elusive Mr. Boudreau to secure permission to produce his essay, in total, in a chapbook. It is uniiely that we will run the other two sections in a regular issue of NIEKAS.]

Any publicity that you can give the British Fantasy Society of the American Tolkien Society, would be greatly appreciated.

Joy & Peace,
Paul S. Ritz

[The BFS was formed to provide a greater coverage and criticism of the fantasy genre. If you are interested in supernatural horror, heroic fantasy, sword & sorcery--any type of fantasy, be it literature, art, films, etc. then the BFS is for you.]

For info: Bob Butterworth
79 Rochdale Road
Milnrow, Rochdale,
Lancs., OL16 4DT, U.K.]

1005 Drexel Avenue
Drexel Hill, PA 19026

It was a delight to read Anne Braude's interview with me in NIEKAS. As I wrote to Anne, I don't have to eat any of my words--except that so-called "children's" literature has become even more important to me.

As for The Mabinogion, much as I found the old Charlotte Guest translation valuable to me, I'd suggest the Gwyn Jones as being more accurate and less Victorian-archaic.

I'm delighted that the cards arrived, and doubly delighted that you want to use them. I'm already celebrating! These will be among the rare occasions when my art sees the light of publication!

As for the status of the Disney Black Cauldron: I'm not all that much up to date on it. I haven't any accurate information--simply because I haven't asked Disney for it, not wanting to make a nuisance of myself. If you want to pursue the details, I'd guess that Disney would have some publicity material or press releases or information of some sort. For myself, I'm just sort of hanging in [there]! [Sorry, didn't send for info in time for N24; will try to have something for next ish. mike]

Meantime, with all warmest wishes,
Lloyd Alexander

141-03 82nd Drive
Jamaica, NY 11435

I'm sorry that I couldn't get to the Noreascon II, where I would have had the opportunity of seeing you [Ed] again. But inflation has hurt me more than most, because I retired seven years ago and am living on a fixed income, plus Social Security, which, thank goodness, goes up with rising prices. I found the registration fee of \$60 per couple particularly repellant. It seems that the fans who put on the cons are well-heeled, and don't give a damn about the elderly, the "newly poor" fans.

When I was young, nearly all the fans were poor, and the cost of attending conventions, unless they

were far away, was not so excessive. At least, that's the way it seems to me. The carfare was the thing that determined whether you could go or not; that and the hotel charge. Now, it's the registration fee. I never even had the chance to see whether the hotel charge would be too high, or not.

I found nearly all of NIEKAS interesting, particularly the parts you [Ed] write yourself, both the reviews of books and films, and where you describe some of the problems and experiences of the blind. I remember you in the days of your youth, when your vision was still good. You must have a wonderful friend who reads letters to you, and the magazines, and books which have not yet been recorded for the blind. You and they are doing a terrific job, and can hardly be congratulated enough. I don't wonder that you dropped the publication of NIEKAS for a while; I only marvel that you took it up again, like a new lease on life...

Yours very truly,

Ted Engel

Rte. 3
Hartford City, IN 47348

HORSES FUELED
HOOVES CHECKED
VISORS CLEANED
ARMOR VACUUMED & DELOUSED
OIL CHANGE FOR ALL WEAPONS
Bouillon a la Godfrey
served in our Snack Bar
[In re: N22]

Nice to see NIEKAS back. Looks like it used to (or, more properly, it looks just like my memory of the older issues.)

The various material on organizations for the blind, reading devices for the blind, etc. was interesting; the Kurzweil machine in particular. Also the paperless Braille, which seems an extrapolation of a machine used by the one blind person I've ever had much to do with. (And I didn't know him that well; he was a computer programmer in Milwaukee and Gene DeWeese turned him up. Gene became well acquainted with him, but I don't get to Milwaukee that often.) This man was both blind and deaf. He had a machine with a typewriter keyboard which produced tactile impressions on a flexible panel at the rear. Basically it was for conversation; the man put his hand on the plate and "read" what you were saying to him while you typed it. He responded in a fairly normal speaking voice, and had a

disconcerting habit of responding before you finished typing--I recall that only Juanita could type fast enough to keep him interested. But this machine didn't store permanent impressions. Of course, the talking books and Kurzweil machines wouldn't do this man any good; he's restricted to Braille. Though he also had some sort of reading machine that could be placed over the page of a book or magazine and produce raised lettering on the surface of the machine. So he read non-Braille material that way; he said it was much slower than Braille but it allowed him to read anything.

As a fantasy reader, I'm totally uninterested in a classification system for the genre. Publisher's labels will remain nonsense because publishers are interested in sales, not accuracy, and books will remain labelled in whatever manner the publisher thinks will sell the most copies. And I have no interest whatsoever in whatever classifications other people make for my reading material; I go my own way and make my own unclassified judgements.

Can't comment on the letters since I didn't see the last issue [N21]. I might say that I find the Dorsai, individually and as a group, much superior to their detractors. Many fans have never learned that pure individualism works only in a vacuum and they must give up some of their "rights" if they mingle with other people, and they therefore resent any group which restricts their right to spoil the con for everyone else. (I have learned it; that's why I don't mingle all that much.)

Buck Coulson

2432 Tenth Ave.
Oakland, CA 94606

Congratulations, not only on your new repro system (which is a 500% improvement), but also on picking up on the style we had before the hiatus. A lot of people seemed to like it...

It's good to see a bunch of the old contributors, and the new ones are doing well also. Sherwood Frazier's article on gadgets, widgets, etc. seemed a little overboard on the subject, but then I have been involved in it for a long time. Currently I am working with an ATEX 8000 typesetting system, which incorporates a PDP-11 computer. We do lots of things that are far in advance of most of the printing world, including other ATEXes. But back to Frazier's

article...I have always felt that educating people about possible diverse cultures was as important a function of SF as educating them about gadgetry; but then I was always involved in gadgetry (as I just said). Not only was my first husband an engineer, and my degree in math, but Ben (remember Ben? little bitty Ben?) is studying computer science at UC Irvine and of course I hear a lot about it.

So Diana is getting hooked on systems theory, hm? Har har har.

Blake has an idea for Mike Bastraw; blast everything above ground (not just the whales) and give what's left to the dolphins. He is sure they can do better than we have.

I really enjoyed Nan's interview of Lloyd Alexander, and will be looking for his books. I haven't seen them before. I have been trying, in the last 2 years, to catch up on all the fantasy I missed during the 10 years before that, but his books I missed.

Fred Lerner has a very interesting hypothesis about the course space colonization will take, although I have my doubts. (But then I had my doubts about ATEX, too.)

It's good to see, from the Allen & Unwin letter, that there will be another Tolkien book besides The Silmarillion. I have not been able to get into The Silmarillion. It will probably require going back and reading The Lord of the Rings.

One thing about the new NIEKAS is that I will be carrying it around to libraries and bookstores. The Review and Comment section is going to be useful. For one thing, until now I was looking out for the new Phil Farmer book. Then Mike [actually Sherwood] said it was "as good as Riverworld", or words to that effect. Oh dear oh dear...

The movie reviews were also excellent. I thought Diana's review of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK was better than Mike's, but, as we have seen, my taste and Mike's don't blend all that much. I have been feeling tempted to do a review of a movie for NIEKAS, myself--BATTLE BETWEEN THE STARS. Unfortunately I would have to go



see it again, and I don't think I could stand it. Just as an example, the big flashy closing scene shows huge flames licking through the Bad Guys' ship--which is in deep space, of course. (I 'spose it could have been the ship's interior atmosphere burning, but when taken with the rest of the film, somehow I doubt it.)

Actually the film is so bad it's a real classic. Everybody should see it. It is even better (that is to say, worse) than early United Artists' efforts. Blake says it's supposed to be a spoof of STAR WARS, but by the time you're three scenes into it, it doesn't matter. It's bad enough to stand on its own.

One of your contributors [?] made a reference to Somebody's Colonies. Since I can't find the zine I can't say who. However, the person who said it will no doubt remember, and I am interested in finding out more about it; it sounded interesting enough to be worth amplification. Is it anything like Dyson spheres, that Larry Niven made such a hash of in Ringworld?

Several of your letter writers commented on NIEKAS' proofreading, the lack thereof. Yes. Well. Since I am earning my living as a proofreader, it does rather rise up and hit me in the face. It maketh my eyeballs to cringe...but you know, Ed, typos were never the worst of it. The worst of it was that the repro-typing staff thought they knew how to spell. Take, for example, the simple possessive pronoun its. Somebody on your staff is convinced that it is spelled with an apostrophe. It's, spelled with an apostrophe, is the contraction for it is, which isn't a pronoun at all. But what the hell, Ed, people liked NIEKAS before when the spelling was lousy, and no doubt they will like it again... [in defense of the indefensible: believe me, please, when I tell you that I know the difference between the two cases. I can only attribute this to a lapse caused by my type-fevered brain in trying to standardize the English language by making its conform to the way the possessive is written 99.999999% of the time. as far as the rest goes: typos will be typos. I do wish to point out, however, that Ed was responsible for the proofreading. mike]

Much to my surprise, I am immensely enjoying your exposition on ways and means for the blind. Not only is it nice to hear how you're doing, it's good to find out what the world of the blind is

going through. You forgot to mention one advantage the long cane has over the dog guide. The cane does not have fleas. This has been a wonderful summer in Oakland for fleas...inversely proportionally, of course, it has been a lousy summer for people. We have a guard dog, two cats, and a rabbit (Boswell the Baffling Bunny), each of which is antagonistic to all the others and therefore has to live in a separate part of the house

Archie Mercer's letter [Anne Braude's letter] about Falstaff, and publishing in those days, was extra interesting to me. I knew about the publishing in outline, but the details are fascinating. Also, from now on I will be reading historical stuff, with his [her] explanation that the English considered the Irish subhuman firmly in mind; it does explain a lot.

And I distinctly remember someone [Roger Waddington] commenting that "Center Harbor" made two spelling mistakes for the price of one, for Britishers...this is a good point for me, since my company will soon be doing several books for Pergamon, which requires that we spell things the English way... and none of us can!

Well, this is not too hot of a letter of comment, but considering it's the first LoC I've written in about 12 years, it will have to do...

Love

Felice Rolfe Maxam
[former Hugo-winning editor
of NIEKAS]

Inverness, FL

...I recently recovered from a mild but prolonged illness--cat scratch disease--that washed out my exercise program and put me in the hospital and made me a month late on my last novel. Now I am digging out from under back-logged correspondence.

To answer the query addressed to me by Anne Braude (whose initials confuse me because my father's initials are ABJ) at the end of her review of my Xanth novels:

She says she hasn't read Hasan because she has to read her library books first, and asks whether I'd rather have my books bought and not read, or read and not bought? Well, her problem is readily solved: get your local library to stock the hardcover



Borgo edition of Hasan. That will make it a library edition. Then she can read it, and give her bought Dell paperback edition to someone else who won't read it. As for me: I would rather have my books read and not bought, which is why I encourage use of the library. If every potential fan of mine pestered every local library to stock all of my books, I would have considerable free reading for the fans. Now isn't that a neat solution? Those who like the Xanth novels can inform their library that they will be out in a one volume hardcover early next year from the SF Book Club, cheaper than the three paperbacks would be, so the library is not suffering either. Soon I will be at work on a new Xanth novel, Centaur Aisle, which one might subtitle When Dor was King; this one is by popular demand,

Piers Anthony (etc.)

English Department
Tarleton State University
Stephenville, TX 76402

Cotton-pickin'! Here, before I get NIEKAS 22 replied to, is 23. I wonder about the front cover of 22: does that symbolize a tendency in NIEKAS to subfandoms? [May a small nuclear vortex form in your garage. mike]

I see that Harry Warner has already advised Fred Lerner to get a record of Carl Orff's Carmina Burana. Mine is the Angel Records' version, Ang. 35415, done under Carl Orff's supervision; but there is at least one other recorded version. On my album, the section Fred wants is the eleventh, "In Taberna", which has five stanzas of the Archpoet's "Confession of Golias". A translation of the poem is in

Helen Waddell's Mediaeval Latin Lyrics (1929) with the Latin facing it--but only six stanzas and no repentance at the end. She has a note on the Archpoet in the back of the book. (I find later on in the letters that Roger Waddington mentions this book.) Waddell also has a chapter on the Archpoet in The Wandering Scholars (1927), and she translates eight stanzas there (still no repentance at the end).

[Thanks for the information (and thanks to Harry Warner, as well). Ed played that part of Carmina Burana for me on my last visit to Center Harbor. But I'm glad I hadn't known that Orff had included it, or I would have missed out on a lot of fun. fred]

Ed, have you ever read any of Max Carrados' detective stories by Ernest Bramah (you probably know Bramah as the creator of Kai Lung books)? [No, I haven't read them yet, but I understand that their portrayal of the blind is inaccurate. ed] Max Carrados is generally accepted to be the earliest and best blind detective in fiction. These are the books:

Max Carrados (1914)
The Eyes of Max Carrados (1923)
"The Bunch of Violets" in The Specimen Case (1924)
Max Carrados Mysteries (1927)
The Bravo of London (1934)

All are books of short stories except the last, which is a novel (the stories are generally accepted as being better than the novel). It would be interesting to read your comments on some of the stories if you've read them or if any of them are available to you. (Of course, if you don't read mysteries...)

Best regards,
 Joe R. Christopher



6721 E. McDowell, #309-A
 Scottsdale, AZ 85257

...How to LoC (I have already commented--vituperatively!--on tape on your attributing my comments on Shakespeare to Archie Mercer):

Corrections of minor errors (two of yours and one of mine): the co-editor of the First Folio is Heminge, not Hemings.

The Elizabeth Peters thriller is The Love Talker, not The Lover Talker. The title comes from a find of romantic vampire who preys on lonely young women, similar to the protagonist of the Buffy Sainte-Marie song "Reynardine". It's not clear whether the Love Talker is a figure from authentic folklore or an invention by Peters.

I think I goofed in MATHOMS when I cited Ivan Sanderson as an example of scientific skepticism towards the paranormal; I have come across references to him as pretty much of a True Believer. I have only read one of his books, long ago, which did not strike me as overly credulous.

I saw some background stills from the Disney film of THE BLACK CAULDRON in an issue of NEW WEST magazine sometime last year. According to the accompanying article, the film deals with the whole Prydain saga although taking its title from the second volume. It won't be out for about 10 years. Lloyd can probably give you the definitive word on it. (I hope he hasn't been ripped off the way Disney ripped off T.H. White: he bought the film rights to Sword in the Stone for about \$200 sometime in the fifties; then, when it became a hot property after the success of Camelot, he refused either to sell it back to White or, for a long time, to film it himself.) Leigh Brackett's Sword of Rhiannon owes nothing to the Mabinogion except nomenclature.

Since you like Stephen King, you might enjoy some of the Barbara Michaels occult stories. They are the only ones of that genre that I care for, because of Michaels' good plotting and use of history, humor, and believable and enjoyable characters. She works her supernatural occurrences into a mystery plot: in The Crying Child, what appears to be the ghost of a helpless baby in need of succor turns out to be a

malevolent spirit disguising itself to attract victims. I also recommend Ammie, Come Home, Witch, and House of Many Shadows. I haven't read her latest yet; the next-to-the-last, The Walker in Shadows, is pretty much a replay of Ammie, Come Home, with a background of Maryland during the Civil War instead of Georgetown during the Revolution.

Edward R. Boudreau's "On the Nature of the Archetypes" was very good, and I look forward to seeing the complete work. I have only a few quibbles, of which the most important is the lack of footnotes. I would like to know where in Jung's work I can find further discussion of the function of archetypes in literature. Under the Anima/Animus rubric, I would be very interested in seeing a discussion of how Aragorn functions as an Animus figure for Eowyn; and Galadriel surely should be mentioned in connection with the Mother archetype. She personifies that aspect of Middle-earth in many ways.

[Here you go, Anne. I just want you to realize the superhuman effort and care which goes into the compilation and presentation of the following abridged bibliography to the Boudreau article. I hope you appreciate/enjoy it.]

The Basic Writings of C.G. Jung, Violet De Lazlo, ed., Modern Library Books, 1959

The Collected Works of C.G. Jung:
 Volume 5 - Symbols of Transformation
 Volume 9 - Archetypes Of The Collective Unconscious
 Volume 11 - Psychology and Religion: East and West, Bollingen Foundation, Inc., Princeton University Press, 1959.

Also: Volume 12 - Psychology & Alchemy.

--mike]

Jungian theory is perhaps the most promising way of approaching fantasy. One reason that the genre has long been slighted by literary criticism is the influence of Freudian thought, in which fantasy bears a morally pejorative connotation. Jung opens our eyes to its positive and creative aspects. Also useful is myth criticism, particularly that of Northrop Frye, who is the only critic to develop a theory of romance as a genre in itself rather than as failed realistic fiction. Unfortunately, his



Anatomy of Criticism is horrendously hard to follow. Most of the myth criticism that appears in fanzines (presumably reincarnated term papers) is of the symbol-hunting variety, wherein every hero who contends with a water creature becomes a type of Beowulf, and anybody who disappears for three days and then turns up again is a Christ figure. What these writers lack is literally a sense of proportion: this kind of secular typology doesn't work very well unless the type looms as large, proportionately, as the prototype. Bilbo's experience with Gollum has certain affinities with the Beowulf-Grendel confrontation; but Grendel is a major menace, while Gollum is only an incident in The Hobbit. And surely it is not unreasonable to ask of a character, if he is to be regarded as a Christ figure, that he redeem something. This fault is not limited to amateur critics, either; there are some pretty weird Grail theories running loose in the learned journals. There are many ways to analyze a work of literature, but the approaches of Jung and Frye and their disciples seem to me to offer the only really useful ways of getting back to a synthesis. And we don't want to leave fragments of epic scattered around all over the library floor, do we?

I think that these comments apply also to Diana's grid approach to fantasy. Sorting it out according to its contents is rather like describing a jigsaw

puzzle in terms of its pieces while ignoring the picture that they form--something I am sure that Diana (who is more into patterns than ever now that her column is no longer called that) does not intend to do.

By the way, I think Mike Bastraw must have made an error in his review of E.E. "Doc" Smith's Masters of Space in the last NIEKAS. If it's as lurid and sexy as he implies, surely the correct title must be Masters and Johnson of Space...

Here is a choice quote I came across this week:

"Psychological experimenters who have particular expectations are likely to find results that confirm their expectations, whether the research subjects are flatworms, rats, college students, or human beings."

---Dr. Sheridan Fenwick
Getting It: The Psychology of est

Vale,
Anne Braude

R-234-0 Ushirokubo
Misawa shi, Amomori ken
003 Japan

[We found this letter in our Hope Chest. It should have gone into NIEKAS 22. Someone will pay for this.]

...I have also come across some newspaper clippings from over a year ago. One announced a cartoon version of the LotR, in two feature-length parts. According to the clipping, the films will be produced by a Ralph Bakshi (who did X-rated cartoons, previously) and will be narrated by Sir Laurence Olivier. I wonder if anything ever came of this; I can't help feeling that the general reaction to the films will be even more negative than the reaction to THE HOBBITT, even if the films are very well made. (Despite the negative reaction to THE HOBBITT, I have met several people who saw the film in the U.S. and began to read Tolkien for the first time). But back to the clipping, Ralph Bakshi is quoted as saying that Walt Disney formerly owned the film rights to the LotR. According to the biography by Humphrey Carpenter, Tolkien rejected a cartoon offer back in 1957, when three Americans proposed a film in which all foot travel on the part of the Company of the Ring was eliminated (everyone travelled on the backs of eagles) and lembas was referred to as "food concentrate".

Another item of possible interest was the issue of a limited (1500 copy) edition of LotR by Forum Publishing Company in Denmark. The set contained 70 illustrations by Queen Margrethe of Denmark and sold for \$180. It was very quickly sold out.

Has anyone ever studied Appendix E to the LotR to the point at which English words (or possibly phonetic spellings) could be written in it? The area of vowels was particularly "sketchy" in places. I have seen some examples of things written in the Tengwar, and would like to know how the language was "broken" down.

Thank you for the mention in your letter about the Elvish "límbo" and reincarnation that you found in The Silmarillion. The biography previously mentioned brings up the possibility that since Tolkien was a deeply religious man, the Elves could represent man as he was before the Biblical Fall. The Elves were immortal, created beauty beyond the grasp of modern man, and constantly sung praise to Elbereth. Although capable of "sin" (The kinslaying, for example), they were free of the sin that got man kicked out of the Garden of Eden.

Another item: Tolkien once planned for 'invisible lettering' to appear on Thrór's map in The Hobbit when it was held up to the light. The publishers scrapped the plan because of cost.

I am still shopping around for Japanese, or indeed any, editions of The Hobbit or the LotR, but without much success. From your description of the Japanese edition of The Hobbit, I would like a copy too, if I can find them. Whenever I run across something, you will be the first to know...

Sincerely,
Makiwo Chew

230 Bannerdale Rd.
Sheffield S11 9FE
England

Many thanks for the copy of NIEKAS 23, a lovely piece of work but so far I have only been able to glance through it (apart from all the normal chores, I'm trying to type up a trip report, do the illos, and edit some 450 feet of cine film before adding sound to it).

I hadn't known about Ed Meskys losing his sight, and was very sorry to hear it, and even sorrier that I didn't get to meet him

while over there. That was the sad part of the trip...so many people I wanted to meet, and so many other people around that I couldn't cover half the territory. However, I DID have a hectic schedule... into Boston on Friday night, Lexington & Concord on Saturday, Boston sights Sunday, Monday flew to Detroit and played pool with Lynn Hickman, Tuesday to the Neil Armstrong and USA Aerospace museums, Wednesday launching rockets before starting the drive to Boston. Thursday, on the road and a stop at Niagra Falls, night at Lake Oneida, Friday into Boston by 7pm and the WORLDCON, finally flying out of Boston on Monday evening. Hoo boy, talk about jet lag. [And talk about feeling embarrassed; I haven't been to half the places this Foreign-type person has. Hoo boy, indeed. mike]

Glad you [Mike] got the two pictures you wanted..and very pleased that you liked them enough to do so. Mike Banks is my agent and will be hiking one or two more paintings around the cons during the coming year. I got a letter from the British Museum Library--"We have not received any issue of ERG after No. 56"--so I had to hunt around and try to find all the missing issues. Luckily, I managed all except No. 62. I shall have to advertise for it. Incidentally, did you know that ERG is now Britain's oldest regular quarterly fanzine (in 22nd year) and probably the world's oldest regular quarterly from one editor. Hoo boy!

Liked the cover on N23..in some ways reminiscent of 'Drowned World'. Was interested in the comments on the 'Nuke the Whales' T-shirt. While sympathising..and to a large extent, supporting the movement, it is as stated, easy to lose perspective. However, when I get tempted to wear some such inflammatory slogan..or put one on the car..."Down with football" or "F... Labour" or "Strike the Strikers" I always remember that I am then making myself or my car a sitting target for the yobbo fringe.

Enjoyed Sherwood Frazier's SF very much (and will try my luck with NASA News. Tolkien on the other hand..and all that goes with him.. is/are an area which leaves me utterly disinterested. That does for sword and sorcery, heroic barbarian taut thewed heroes and mountainous breasted nubile semi-virgins (how does one become a semivirgin?..by appearing in an SF story wherein it is hinted that the heroine is chaste, utterly feminine and untouched by the

hand of man...but has been around and knows what it is all about)... the sort of woman every man dreams fantasies over...and never finds.

I see De Camp gets a book reviewed.. had a good natter with him in 2008 and he would keep telling me English jokes with an English accent. Very nice bloke. Film reviews excellent..only hope that I can get to see 'em. When I tried to see ALIEN, I couldn't find a parking space for room.

The whole issue is really a tour de force containing as it does so much interesting material..I shall just have to declare a moratorium on other work and settle down to a good long read.

Regards..and hope to be over there again in a year or two.

Terry Jeeves

2713 2nd Ave, South #307
Minneapolis, MN 55408

I was more than a little suprised to find NIEKAS lurking in my mailbox a while back. It was a pleasant enough surprise, mind you.

I like the offset. The reduction is clear and easy to read, though, as others have pointed out, the typos ut de keyboard come.

On the contents: Ed, I was fascinated by your editorial. I've met one other blind fan, some years ago, and I have nothing but admiration for the spirit and verve which keeps you involved in a hobby where sight is so important. I hope NIEKAS will become one avenue through which I can learn much more about the subject, in which my knowledge is woefully inadequate.

In fact, I do have one question which has tantalized me for some time: what is considered a "good voice" for taping talking books? Is a bass or a tenor better? (Or does it matter?) Is a highly flexible voice, "acting" different parts, good, or is what amounts to a monotone, with minimal inflection, the best? (Hm. That looks more like four questions than one, but I

don't think you'll mind too much.) [It doesn't matter, but clarity is the most important factor. The advantage of a lower pitched voice is that there is less distortion when it is played back at high speed. Acting the parts is OK as long as there is not too much "ham". ed]

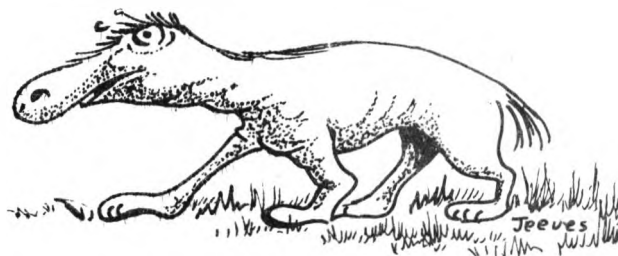
You see, I have periodically toyed with the idea of recording some SF stories of my own (or volunteering to do it for a blind organization), and volunteering them to be distributed to interested persons. Of course, the main problem I would presently have with this idea (aside from time) is the quality of my recording equipment. I currently possess only your basic portable tape recorder which is adequate for my personal taping but woefully lacking in quality for a project of this nature. There would be other problems, I think, but I'd be willing to give them a go if I thought this project were in any way feasible. (I'm speaking of problems with permissions for copyrighted works, duplicating if the work is popular enough, etc.) I'd be very interested in any information you could pass my way on this subject. [I clear all copyrights at this end. ed]

I fear, however, that the other topics in NIEKAS are a bit too deep for me. Not that I did not enjoy the articles. But, it's been quite some time since I was involved in deep criticism, and I really have no idea what to say about them.

A rather mixed bag of books, I see. Many of them, I'm not familiar with (except as names), though, so I'll spare you my opinions here. And movies, too. Oh, my. Here's even the first positive review of THE SHINING I've come across (in the fannish press).

I really must thank Anne (Braude) for "Sic semper etain shrdlu". It is a marvelous slogan for a lousy speller. I may well adopt it as my clarion call.

I found Mr. Brunner's gesture quite remarkable. I do hope he succeeds in accomplishing it.



And that's it for now. I feel a bit funny sending a printed LoC to a man who is blind, (and for future reference, would you prefer typewritten or tape-recorded LoC's on NIEKAS) but that's the way things go. Again, many thanks for the unexpected pleasure of your company. [Type them so they can be edited prior to publication. ed]

d1efueN yenraB

Box 293
Hanover, NH 03755

In her letter in last NIEKAS, Martha Adams wrote that Heinlein had surprised her by including in a chapter in his novel Time Enough for Love a poem written in the manly metre that we hear in Hia-watha. (Though it came from Kalevala) I've long been a fan of Heinlein's, and I share her admiration for his verse and for his novel. But she puts too high a value on the skill that is required to turn prose into a poem using Kalevala-metre. For it's such a simple rhythm that most anyone can do it; and the most prosaic statements can be set into it quickly. (If perchance you don't believe me, then reread--aloud--my letter.)

Yours most faithfully,
Fred Lerner

428 Sagamore Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666

I was delighted to hear from you, with NIEKAS and with a personal note. Although I have only glanced at the issue as yet, it bids fair to be a really fine read!! It is so handsome to look at, and so chockful of interesting things. I did, of course, note the George Allen and Unwin latter, and it was amusingly frank in referring to the "Tolkien industry", and also promised good stuff to come. I'm tempted to xerox my little tiny note from JRRT; it says nothing, but is warm and amusing, and if they ever do put out a volume of letters, they can use it.

I also note with some dismay that apparently many people bought but gave up on Silmarillion. Well, it wasn't easy, to be sure, but it did have many rewards in it. My son (25 now) read the major books years ago and surprised me by picking up TS recently; he promptly bogged down in the opening chapter, JRRT's recapitulation of the scriptures! I cautioned him simply to skim along, that pearls lay ahead. JRRT's deadpan mission, lifelong, with this book, in comparison with the more light-

hearted Hobbit and LotR always reminds me of poor Arthur Sullivan, "wasting" his time doing those collaborations when he "should" have been doing the serious things his advisors were always urging on him. An author may sometimes be the last to know where his strength is--and his true value! Still, Silmarillion rates very highly with me.

I have read...your [Ed] own fascinating essay on what the blind person does to accomodate himself to getting about. I was reminded of a play we saw last week, CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD, a very find play indeed, superlatively acted, and affording us new insights into the deaf person's world and thinking. We who hear always take for granted that the deaf person wishes to learn to accomodate him/herself to our ways, to learn to speak, to lip-read, etc. And as the play makes poignantly clear, this does great injustice to the deaf person, who considers him/herself perfectly complete and capable, and sometimes unwilling to force such accomodation. Blindness is, of course, a far more difficult handicap; yet, as your essay makes clear, it also has its own forms of living and accomodation. Certainly, in your case, in the years I have known you (all too slightly), it has been entirely self-sufficiently and without self-pity. I think much of what the splendid (and entirely deaf) actress in the play demonstrated applies to you, and, indeed, to anyone who has individuality and self-honesty in this world.

Actually, I have just completed the latest issue of my fanzine IBID, which has been drifting along in semi-retirement for too long, altho still quarterly. It is a more ambitious issue.

* * *

And, promptly, I come to your G&S comment. I thought two items might be of interest: 1) In Bergen County, NJ a "youth orchestra" (a good one, each year) and performers did a complete musical versions of Thespis! Not bad, considering all we have is one full song and another snatch of music (the book is extant). It appears the ambitious conductor wrote the full score, "in the style of early Sullivan". The local paper enjoyed it but did not indicate Savoyards would rush to mount it professionally. Like so much else in the theatre, it was a work of love, which is not to be confused with making a profit. 2) This is far more significant and a show you'd have loved; admitting it had many good sight gags, the sheer musical exuberance would

have caught you up. It is Joseph Papp's Shakespeare Theatre production in Central Park, NY of Pirated of Penzance, a complete winner. It starred George Rose, a grand actor, with a knockout Errol Flynnish pirate captain by Keir Kline. And, in quite a change of pace for the "First Lady", as I always call the sometimes girlfriend of Governor Jerry Brown, Linda Ronstadt as Mabel. I imagine Linda is the reason for the crowds, and she is simply adorable! Her acting is at best high school level; her soprano is, happily, true--if light, but she is captivatingly pretty. Ed! I doted on her!

There were some changes--some songs were dropped just a bitty for her (although she did a lovely and graceful duet with the flute on her big opening solo); a 3 voice patter song from Ruddigore was inserted ("It doesn't really matter"--it didn't! It was super!) A solo from Pinafore for Linda and a rewritten finale around the "Major-General" song. (This is not sacrilege. My "First-Nighter G&S" book script used this as a finale, and it works!) WUNNERFUL!

To see it, one must wait in line; tickets are free. So, for the 8 PM show in the outdoor, reserved seat theatre, we got there at 2:15 PM, spread our blanket in the enormous line, dozed, picnicked, read, watched baseballers, kite-flyers, and Frisbeers. It was NY Americana at its best--no poachers, no squabbling, all good feelings, capped by the show.

Its orchestra had one bass fiddle--and the rest: wind and brass--it also worked!

Thus, while there was surely a contemporary feel, it was also honest, loving G&S. Loved it!

I read very little SF nowadays and cannot profess interest in what seems like fine articles. Alas, I have not read Lloyd Alexander, even 12 years after the interview. So why start now? I note comment here on C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, etc., so I'll digress to the bio, "The Inklings". My stomach had to cease turning over that icky club title, altho' I didn't choose it. However, it was otherwise a good book. I cannot share the author's admiration for C.S. Lewis, a mixed-up kid who might well have become a Moonie had he lived today. Till We Have Faces remains a very fine book, but the first Narnia novel was enough and then some for me. Charles Williams had intensity to a high degree at times, which was by no means all the time. His view of a dead London populated by ghosts ("War in Heaven? All

Hallow Eve?" I forget) was very good. His antisemitism, typical of an upper-class snobbism--included was certainly not his class!--remains distressing. Thank goodness I need make no allowances for such stuff in JRRT's writing, that, indeed he transmogrified his strong beliefs into his own mythology.

But, ugh, that grown-up icky-poo! REVULSION! Bleccch. "Inklings"!! Yccchh. "Pirates", "Bastards", "Ratfinks"--fine; but "Inklings"--never!

Edward Boudreau's patience is, hopefully, great, to wait five years for only the middle section of his essay to appear! Well, that's Fanzinery! Anyway he sandwiches a long quote by Jung between two sentences containing the word "tautology" ("--logical" actually for the first) and that's already one--even TWO--too many for an aging fan. Then "eruptive" occurs here and there to further befuddle (without a dictionary one can only wonder--is it like an eruption? an erection? an interruption? sigh.) This is truly mouth-filling sentence construction one can chew upon! Yet, beneath the jargon, one senses it may, could one get through it, be saying something. Alas, it is easier, if less satisfying, to read Ludlum, Forsyth, and Stephen King. Or Tolkien.

Cheers for Michael Bastraw, whose review of Kubrick's THE SHINING is excellent and perceptive. However, in regard to the ending, including Kubrick's original portion, I would say I preferred the non-sentimentality; King, perhaps satisfying an audience need, allows Torrance a moment of fatherly care for Danny; Kubrick does not. Of such is this world made--no mercy!

However, all I can say about TV's THE LATHE OF HEAVEN is that this balderdash prevented my seeing

Mehta and the NY Philharmonic live TV concert, called by most critics the best ever.

As to Bakshi's film, seeing it was like seeing only the tips in a range of mountains; he presented scene after scene of fighting, with none of the beauty and poetry below those climactic tips. It confirmed my belief too that it should have been all live-action. He used some live, covered over with splashes of color, foolishly obvious, very wearisome. The animation of Rivendell was a total disaster, unlike all the delicate beauty of Snow White or Tinker Bell. And the abrupt curtain call pronouncement of "Peace" was absurd. I do not intend to see Part II, should it appear. [I will let you know how it is. I guess I was not as thoroughly disgusted with the production as you were. mike]

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, using imagination and lots of money, proves that live-action can work. Yoda is as real as any person; matte shots are likewise real. Beats cartoonery any time.

Getting back to Ed's article, must sighted (as well as hearing and speaking) persons--I am no exception--unconsciously become patronizing as you indicate, it is as unnecessary as it is unkind. I can only hope I have not fallen into this trap, not too painfully at least. Goodness knows we are all handicapped in some ways--but there! that is the trap!

Well, it was a very nice issue and I am grateful for you remembering me.

All best,
Ben Indick

WE WILL WITHHOLD ADDRESSES ON REQUEST



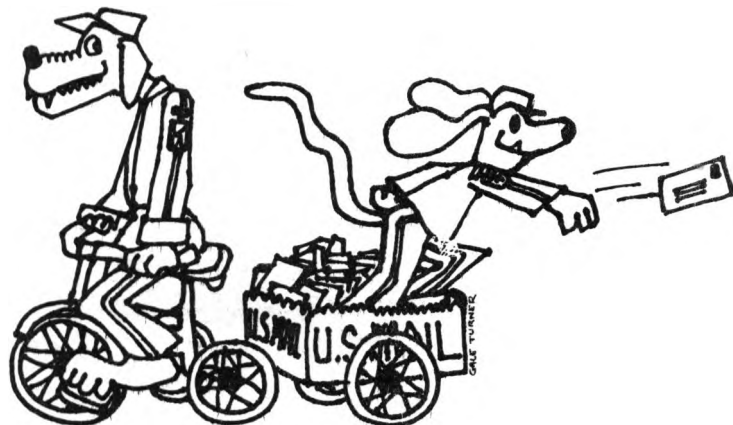
Mesa, AZ

Thanks for sending me NIEKAS. I thoroughly enjoyed your [Fred's] detective work leading to the unveiling of "Goliath", the at once most delightful and profound investigation of the intellectual climate which produced the Goliards is Helen Waddell's The Wandering Scholars, published by Henry Holt in several editions dated circa 1930. As a companion piece she also issued Medieval Latin Lyrics which topped Symond's famous collection in my opinion.

I liked your [Fred's] review of Urshurak as much as the authors doubtless did not. What you wrote about it is, to my finding, true of most of the so-called fantasies of our era: uninspired borrowings from the common stock of Elfen lore by ignorant oafs who never read Grimm, Andersen, and Lang when they were cubs and think what they have belatedly discovered can be palmed off as original on people like you and me who teethed on Faerie Gold.

John Myers Myers

We also heard from...
David Forbes
Joel Hagen
Harry Stubbs
Martha Adams
Ron Soloman
David Heath, Jr.
Greg Ketter
Robert Bloch
Giani Siri
Gary Symington
Alec Jordan
Mark Goralka
Maurice Tuning
Joseph S. Haas, Jr.
Aunustine Gauba



Bumbejimas Contd.

Another team has mounted three infrared lasers in a fat, long cane and connected it to the user's ear via a transistor radio earplug. The user manipulates the cane much as he would a standard long cane, but he gets, via his earphone, three different audio cues connected to the three laser beams. One tone warns him of drops or steps down, the second of low obstacles, and the third of obstacles at chest and face height. The battery is 'C' shaped and forms the crook of the cane. The cane itself is rather heavy but the battery acts to balance it which makes it easy to swing.

The Heinz Veterans Hospital in Illinois procures many of these devices and provides them to clients. They say that the vets given the laser cane like it despite the fact that it breaks down often. They quickly return it to the hospital for repairs. On the other hand, few bother to return the Sonicguide. I had training in the Sonicguide and so might be prejudiced. Also, one of the 3 laser circuits was broken on the laser cane I got to try a few years ago. Anyhow, I did prefer the Sonicguide myself. I believe the laser cane costs about the same as the Sonicguide.

I know of two other lines of research into what might some day be mobility aids. Both call for spectacle frame mounted miniature TV cameras. In one case, the TV camera is connected to a very large tactile array which stimulates nerves to receive signals from the camera. In the other version, the user literally wears a barrel-shaped object about his chest and the tactile array "draws" a picture on his back. In still another version, a smaller array encases the forearm. Only two or three of these devices have been built and tested. They are very clumsy, take a lot of time to learn to interpret data, and--even with computer-based image enhancement--can give very little information.

The tactile array common to these devices, as well as the Optacon reading machine, is made up of a number of vibrating pins. After long experimentation, it was found that such an array stimulates nerve endings over a long period of time most efficiently and with the least fatigue.

This system received a fair amount of publicity six or so years ago, but I have heard nothing of it recently. I have a feeling that it was a dead end and the project has been abandoned.

The most advanced device under current development is an attempt to wire a TV directly into the brain. The same research group is trying to create a prosthesis for the deaf by wiring a microphone directly into the brain, too.

About a decade ago it was realised that electrical stimulation of the visual cortex will cause a patient to experience a falseflash of light. An 8 by 8 grid of electrodes has been implanted against the visual cortexes of several subjects. Only those who had been born sighted and were now totally blind were selected for the experiment. The doctors wanted them to have visual memory of what triangles, squares, etc. looked like in their brains. The researchers would cause one electrode to flash, and then a second. The subject would report the direction and distance of the second flash relative to the first. There is little correspondence between the physical location of the electrodes and the apparent location of the flashes in the subject's field of view. By very tedious work, a correspondence map would be created and entered into a computer. Then a TV camera would interface through the computer to the electrode array on the brain to create crude approximate pictures.

The resolution is so poor with the current device that the subject cannot even recognize most single letters of the alphabet. The only use the subject has been able to make of the system thus far is to read Braille "visually" by seeing the arrays of up to 6 dots in his head. Improved versions are at least a decade away and the doctors are promising the guinea pigs no practical applications of the apparatus for at least that long, if ever. Many problems remain to be overcome: infection entering the skull through the wire entrance, rejection of the electrode matrix, and adding points to the matrix for greater resolution. They foresee having up to 256 dots using larger matrixes on both visual cortexes. Perhaps then there will be some artificial sight.

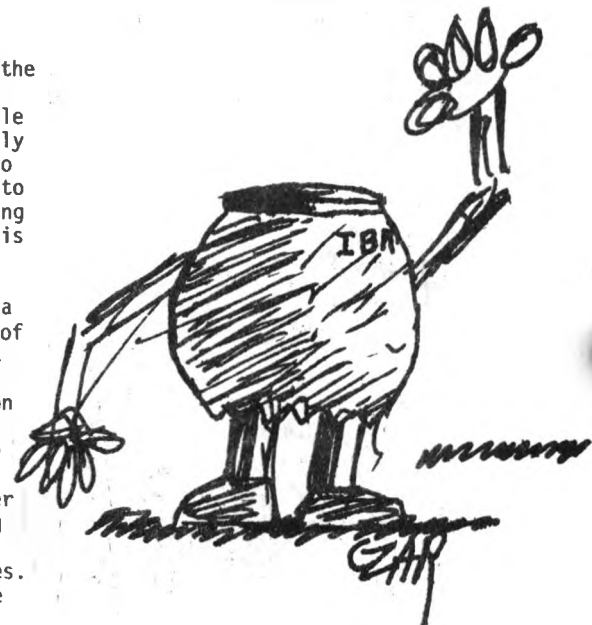
Dr. William H. Dobelle has said that his goal is to mount a miniature TV camera in a glass eye, have the computer in the frame of a false pair of glasses, and develop a sufficiently detailed array to allow the user to drive a car.

This is probably an impossible dream. It would call for a matrix of many thousands of dots. A black and white TV picture is made up of about 60,000 dots, the retina of one human eye has about 125,000 rods and cones, and just the small Fovea Centralis alone has a density of 150,000/sq. mm and is used for reading and fine detail viewing.

Also, the eye is more than just a TV camera that sends a signal from each rod and cone to the brain. A lot of signal processing is done in the eye, such as picking out borders for edges of objects and analysing motion.

If all of the problems are overcome, I could imagine that some day this sytem might allow the blind person to read with false vision or identify VERY crude images of objects about him, but as with the Kay device, he would still need a long cane or guide dog.

These travel aids must still be used by thinking human beings who also make use of their other senses. Schools for the blind include courses in mobility and orientation. The latter means figuring out where you are and what your surroundings are--and where it is you want to be.





Since I lost my sight in later life, I am most familiar with the training given to newly-blinded adults. The usual form is to send itinerant teachers to the client's home for 2 or 3 hours a week to teach techniques of daily living (cooking, homemaking, etc.), communications (touch typing, use of various types of tape recorders, and Braille), mobility and orientation. Of course, different clients start the program with varying amounts of skill, motivation, and self-confidence; but still it takes several years for these teachers to accomplish anything. The other alternative is to go to a residential school for newly-blinded adults. I went to such a school in Newton, MA-- formerly St. Paul's, now the Carroll Center. Here, in 15 weeks I learned many organizing and common sense techniques. Much of the training was to gain self-confidence. For instance: in shop we learned how to safely handle 5 different kinds of electric saws and other power tools, and we each designed and built a piece of furniture which we took home. I knew nothing at all of Braille when I entered St. Paul's, but at the end of 12 weeks I was independently reading grade 2 Braille which involves some 200 abbreviations and contractions.

We had 5 hours of mobility and orientation a week plus three other courses that supplemented it in various ways. Two of these courses are quite controversial. Many people who lose their sight despair and vegetate. They stay at home--going nowhere and doing nothing--until a family member and/or counselor finally browbeats them into getting rehabilitation. (This happens because society paints such a terrible picture of the world and capabilities of the blind. Many adults, as a result, figure there is nothing left worth

living for when they become blind. One of the major goals of the Blind Panthers [i.e. National Federation of the Blind], is to change this public attitude and image.) These people are flabby and unsteady on their feet; not because of their blindness, but because they vegetated! Two of the classes, each meeting for two hours a week, are designed to help get the people moving, give them greater stability, and do it all in a way that is fun: through fencing and yoga.

As the fencing instructor pointed out, sight is of very little use in the sport. The participant cannot keep his eye on the opponent's foil, and will lose if he tries. The primary information must be tactile, from the nature of the pressure of the opponent's foil on one's own. The only places that sight would help one against a blind opponent is to be able to anticipate a move by watching eye motion, and finding the opponent quickly if foil contact is broken.

The course does give a psychological boost in that it allows the blind person to achieve in a spectacular way that will impress his sighted friends. Other training centers use other sports, like water skiing, for this purpose. On the other hand, some in the organized blind movement criticize it for the claim that it aids mobility. They say that if it is being taught ONLY to supplement mobility, two additional hours of mobility training would accomplish more. I agree with this sentiment, but do feel that fencing is still psychologically important and does make the participant, even one who was never homebound, nimbler on his or her feet.

Yoga is not pushed as helping mobility. It does give one some interesting physical exercises which will muscle tone, and taught me relaxation techniques before they had become a fad. The only thing we students objected to was the mystical hokum that went along with the course.

At St. Paul's the course in mobility and orientation dovetailed with one in Videation. I do not know where the name of the latter came from, but it was taught by a sculptor named Mr. Mendola, who had worked with the founder, Fr. Carroll, right from the start. I understand he has since retired. I imagine that other training centers include the material in the mobility course or use other names.

Videation taught one to PAY FULLER ATTENTION to ones remaining senses.

An exercise would be to stand back from a road and listen to the traffic, and then hold the cane parallel to the road to show the teacher we had an accurate knowledge of the road's orientation. We then did this further and further back from the road. Another time we had to find the van parked alone at the curb near a park by listening to the sound shadows of passing traffic. We learned how to have people give us meaningful geographic information, and how to ask unsophisticated sighted informants for useful information. We trailed unusual boundaries (edges of docks and formal gardens), and from our sense of turn and muscle memory, interpret the shapes. We learned to sense direction and continuity of motion by observing the sun and wind on our faces. If we had to work in a small area with a lot of movement, we learned to use things like two radios tuned to different stations or other noisemakers to retain our sense of direction. A lot of these gimmicks are obvious and could be discovered independently, but the course brought them to our attention in rapid succession. We tested the limits of reliability of our sense of turn. Finally, we learned about "facial vision".

Many have heard of the supposed ability of blind people to magically sense obstacles. I regard this as a silly legend, akin to super hearing, smell, etc. of the blind. But; I learned that there is a little bit of truth to the legend. Everyone has this sense and a few blind people have learned to make use of it; tho it is of marginal value. When there is some object in front of one or to the side, standing sound waves can be set up between it and the person. These are akin to the standing waves which are amplified from random noise by a seashell and heard when the shell is placed against the ear; but in this case the sound is probably subsonic. It is not picked up by the ears but by facial nerve endings and can be felt as heat, cold, or pressure. In some cases the sensation can be akin to what one feels when something with an electrostatic charge is brought near which causes hair to rise. It is a very subtle sensation and you have to watch for it. We went through several exercises to make us more aware of it. In our class all of the students felt it at least a little and some got a very strong sensation. They tested all of our abilities to stop a short distance from a wall with it. I



flunked, miserably, both at the beginning and end of the course. The course was not a part of mobility because it was an idiosyncratic course taught by one man who had developed its content. Also, about a third of the lessons involved using the senses to interpret other data, such as indentifying things by touch. Mr. Medola pointed out that there are several components to the so called sense of touch; such as muscle tension which will indicate the weight of an object when it is held. He concentrated on three aspects which he called: TKG--touch, kinesthesia, and grasp. While this might be jargony, the idea behind it is sound. Touch identifies the nature of the surface; smooth, rough, with regular ridges, metallic, plastic, wooden, etc. In kinesthesia, you move your two hands simultaneously over a large object to judge its general shape. Grasp gives you ideas of size and shape on an intermediate scale.

One very interesting point that Mr. Mendola made was that occasionally a person is born blind in a rural setting, and the cause is congenital cataracts. Thus some light gets through and nerves are stimulated and do not degenerate. Later in life, the cause is detected and a simple operation gives sight. It was found that these people had learned to rely on hearing as much as normal people do on sight; and they have a hard time learning to integrate the information given by their eyes when solving a problem of mobility. They use information from sound shadows, etc. in

preference to that received by the eyes and it takes very sensitive training for them to learn to use their eyes.

In a similar way, newly-blinded adults have all the sense information they need to get by. They only need training in order to learn to pay attention to it.

Some blind people criticize this course because they confuse it with another course in visual imagery. The latter is only meaningful to people who have lost there sight later in life, and consists of exercises to retain a memory of what things used to look like. Of course, such study is totally useless to a congenitally blind person.

Well, this wraps up my little survey of the techniques blind people use to travel. Some of these involve the use of very high technology; some of which has been successful but much of which has not. I would like to end by paraphrasing some very interesting remarks made by Dr. Hadi Madjid at a conference held in September of 1980 on "Yankee Ingenuity and the Independent Living Movement". Dr. Madjid pointed out that blindness can be likened to a wall. Devices that fail, try to replace the eye in

all its functions, and do these things badly. Devices that succeed act like single gates in the wall, allowing access to one function that the eye used to perform.



OF ANNIVERSARIES

December 1980 marks a double anniversary for me. I read my first SF book--Isaac Asimov's Pebble in the Sky--30 years ago in December 1950. I attended my first fan meeting 25 years ago in December 1955; a meeting of the New York SF Circle in Werderman's Hall.

Like most, I first came to SF through comics and the media. In the late 40's I watched the TV anthology shows OUT THERE (CBS) and TALES OF TOMORROW (ABC) and the juvenile TOM CORBETT SPACE CADET! So many people have fond memories of CAPTAIN VIDEO but I looked at it a few times in 1949 and 1950 and did not like it. The western movie tucked into its center bugged me; I was even more annoyed by the mythological connections with the planets. Neptune was a water covered world ruled by some nut carrying a trident, and so on.

But, more than TV, I remember SF on the radio. In the nostalgia pieces I only see DIMENSION X/X MINUS ONE mentioned; I remember even better a program called 2000+. I wonder if no transcriptions of the latter survived as I never see it mentioned by the old-time radio collectors. A few years later there was a radio version of TALES OF TOMORROW which used stories from GALAXY the way DIMENSION X used mostly stories from ASTOUNDING. And for a few months there was a show (whose name I've forgotten) hosted twice a week by J.W. Campbell. I remember in his intro to the dramatization of "Who Goes There" he explained that the story was impossible. On its home world such a creature as the one in the story would very quickly exhaust its food supply. And of course there were the juvenile shows: CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT and HOP HARRIGAN had some SF elements, SUPERMAN was on for many years, and--for one season only--there was BUCK ROGERS. On Saturday mornings there was SPACE PATROL. That was a little better than CAPTAIN VIDEO but not

as good as SPACE CADET.

2000+ familiarized me with the term 'science fiction'. When I saw the dust jacket of Pebble in the Sky with the magic words science fiction on it on the high school library bulletin board, I went right in and checked the book out.

I got into fandom as a result of Rog Phillips' column in UNIVERSE, a short-lived Ray Palmer magazine, and Tony Boucher's novel Rocket to the Morgue. The former familiarized me with the concept of fandom and the latter made it sound like so much fun that I felt I had to get involved. I stayed on the fringes of fandom until I put out my first issue of POLHODE in the summer of '58. I then started getting lots of fanzines like SHAGGY and CRY and was really into fandom when I attended Pittcon in 1960.

The next NIEKAS is #25 and that is a landmark of sorts. We are celebrating by making it an extra thick issue and including a folio of full page art. Artists please

submit additional material for the folio before 1981.

NIEKAS #1 came out in June 1962 and #30 is due in May 1982. We are planning to make #30 a really special anniversary issue also.

SF FOR THE BLIND

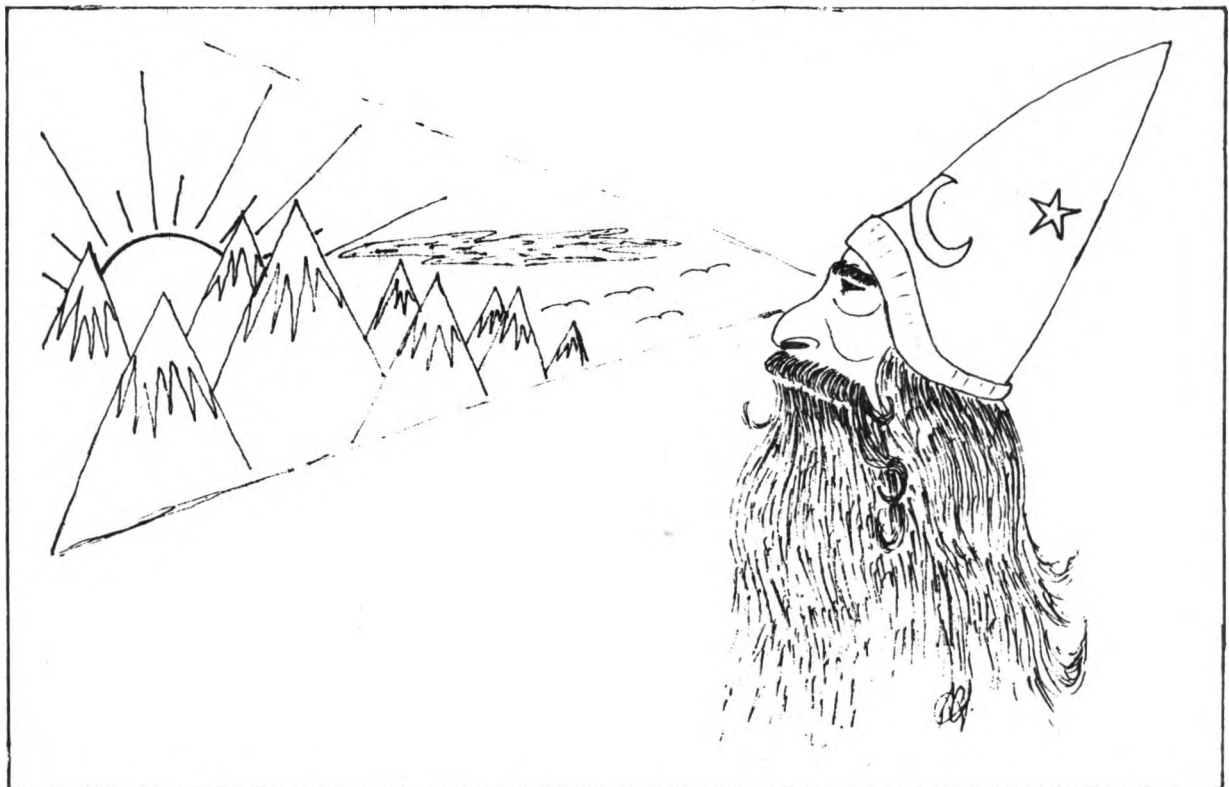
As reported last issue, the project is underway at last. I am handling editing of the tapes, Eileen Keim of the NH Talking Book Library is providing the cassettes and the high-speed duplicator, and I am handling the distribution. We have three books duplicated, copyright cleared, and in circulation. These are Marion Zimmer Bradley's Darkover books: Sword of Aldonis, Bloody Sun, and Star of Danger. We have recorded and are awaiting copyright clearance for Roger Zelazny's Nine Princes in Amber and Guns of Avalon, and de Camp's Spirits, Stars, and Spells. The de Camp and Bradley books were narrated by John Boardman and the Zelazny books by Marsha Jones.

We also have NIEKAS 23 narrated by

Alexei Kondratiev and ALGOL/STARSHIP 34 narrated by Valerie Protapapas in circulation.

John Boardman originated a taped fanzine which is an anthology from other sources. Two of his issues are out. The third, edited by myself, is also ready. This is made up of short stories and book excerpts narrated by the authors and various volunteers. Kurt Cochran has taped his fanzine HONOR TO FENUKA #3 which will be included as part of ATTIC #4. In the future, except for all fiction issues of THE ATTIC, 2 or 3 tracks will be produced by John Boardman and I will use the remainder to present items like HONOR TO FENUKA and other items read for me by Anne Braude, Owen Laurion, Sherwood Frazier, and others.

Authors interested in reading their own stories for such distribution should write me for details. I can take cassette and open reel tape in most formats and dub it onto the special 4 track cassette masters. I have a wide network of blind readers who would appreciate this very much.



HOT TIP FOR THIS QUARTER:

Watch DR. WHO.

The PBS station for our area has just started running this series which was originally produced circa 1975. I am generally pleased with most TV productions that come from across the Atlantic.

This show is no exception.

If you have already seen any of this series this advise is unnecessary. If you haven't, heed my words.

More on this in the next Magic Lantern.

If anyone out there owns a video tape recorder (VHS format) and is in a TV market which shows OUTER LIMITS reruns, PLEASE let me know. I am very much interested in obtaining tapes of some of the shows. The station that used to rerun the series in our area didn't renew or whatever, therefore I haven't had a chance to record them on my machine.

I caught one episode while visiting in the NYC area and it gave me a severe case of terminal nostalgia. Let me tell you: this show used to scare the strudel out of me when I was but a tad.

I'm more than willing to give it another try.

Does anybody out there remember...

The SF short story which dealt with a fellow who developed a faster-than-light "crystalline needle" of a ship. He then proceeded to break the light barrier and by doing so ended up in a world of gigantic proportions. I have no idea who the author is. I have a feeling it was written in the 50's sometime. I

read it in an anthology somewhere but I assume it appeared in a pulp at one time.

Let me know if your memory is better than mine.

Thanx, mike

"And another one bites the dust". Number 24 is out, we can relax and enjoy Thanksgiving dinner without the sound of the A.B. Dick thumping away in the background. No Liquid Paper in the stuffing this year.

I would like to take a little time to make a few remarks and ask a favor or two.

Man's great facility for communication and the rapid accumulation of knowledge distinguishes him from all other living things. In order to appreciate this knowledge, whether it be esthetically or practically, it must first be communicated.

This magazine is our extension of Man's facility to communicate; not just the editors and writers, but the readership also. It is not necessary that we share the same view. What is important is that we are sharing views: views on many things of interest to all of us. We are first and foremost a magazine about science fiction, fantasy, and science technology. This does not mean that we will not accept comments and remarks about other things of interest to our readers. You will find that the majority of our articles deal with the above-mentioned topics but we encourage comments and/or discussion on any subject. If we can get enough feedback on a particular subject we would like to reactivate the old "Gincas" section which many people enjoyed in the old NIEKAS.

"Gincas"--Lithuanian for "argument"--

has contained discussions about Tolkien, children's fantasy, space travel, etc... In the future we would like to get opinions about science fiction, space travel, bio-engineering, and anything else that has placed a barb under your saddle. Let us know what you are thinking about.

Now for the favors. One of my biggest interests is the space program. I'm as bullish about this as the KKK is about WASP's. The space program has changed our world more in the last 20 years than anything in the prior 1000 years. We desperately need to get the space train back on track again.

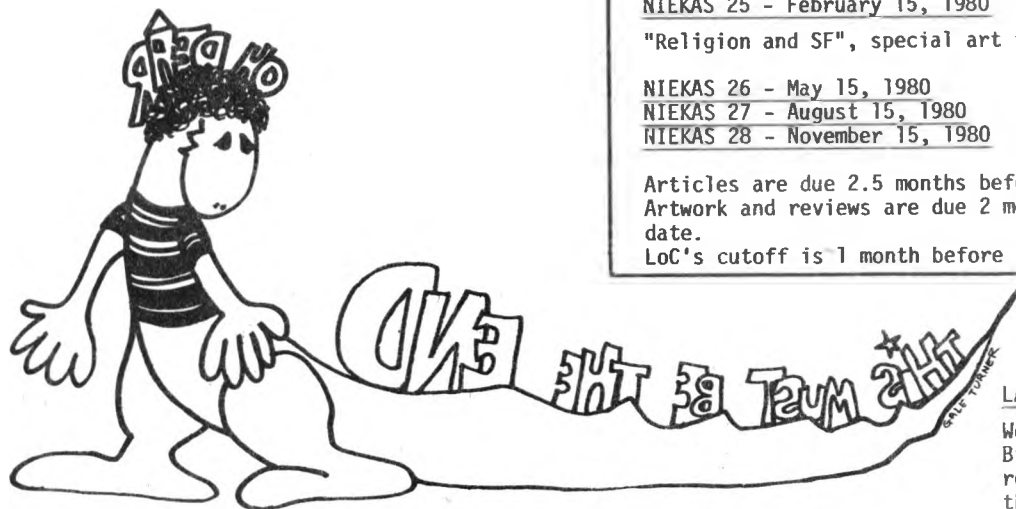
With this in mind, I have set out to educate the people who I think will be affected the most: the young people of grade school age. The kids that are 7-10 years old are the ones who will benefit directly from a revived space program. At the turn of the century they will be in their late 20's and early 30's; the workers and managers of the future world. If they can get a positive view of the need to expand into space, there will be no question as to where the money is to be spent, where to align priorities, etc.

My methods are simple. I give lectures at schools and put on public programs singing the praises of the space program, encouraging people to realize the effects on their everyday lives.

I'm in constant need of new material about the space program. If anyone has anything that pertains, I would greatly appreciate being able to buy or reproduce the material.

Thank you.

sherwood



NIEKAS 25 - February 15, 1980

"Religion and SF", special art folio section

NIEKAS 26 - May 15, 1980

NIEKAS 27 - August 15, 1980

NIEKAS 28 - November 15, 1980

Articles are due 2.5 months before publication date.
Artwork and reviews are due 2 months before publication date.
LoC's cutoff is 1 month before publication date.

LAST MINUTE MAIL

We received a letter from John Brunner advising that he will be recording some of his stories for the blind. More on that next ish.

ALFA

TWENTY FOUR

