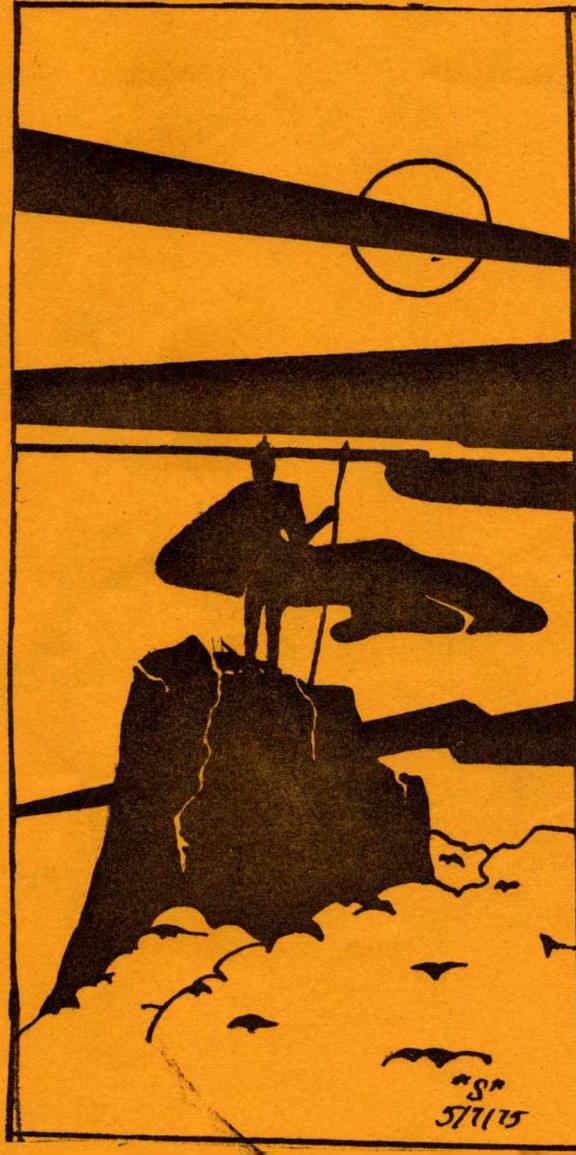


KOLVIR

no. 1 may-june

1975



*the
amber
society*



Since this is our first issue I'm not going to hit you with an earth-shattering editorial. Instead I'll hit you with our (the Amber Society) reason for existence.

The Amber Society originally started in New York City last January. It was founded by three friends of mine who had been turned onto the Amber Series by Yours Truly. Then, for some strange reason they decided to form a fan club and then induct me as a charter member. However, there was a problem. All three of them were between jobs and as a result were also rather short in the money department. The club soon folded.

At this year's Balticon I decided to revive the society. The meeting for the people who were interested was called on the Saturday. Unfortunately I had been to a number of parties the night before and came away with about three hours of sleep. As a result I was not overly coherent.

Since I am now somewhat coherent (the deadline for the material is still a few days off) I can clarify matters somewhat:

The Amber Society is an association of fantasy fans. Fortunately the term 'fantasy' is broad enough to cover many areas such as Sword & Sorcery, horror and the supernatural. In this group we have people who are into Tolkien, Norton, Zelazny, Lovecraft, Lewis, and Anderson to name a few.

Hopefully this magazine will serve as a medium for fans to contact each other and expand their boundaries. So far, we have contacts in Hopsfa, BSFS, I.S.F., Radical Apathy Inc., and the Virginia Wesleyan Science Fiction Club. So far I think its a great start.

Just one more thing; I'd like to hear from you. Mainly I want your reactions, advice, and suggestions. Get in touch, we want to hear from you.



Tim Daniels

All correspondence should be sent to The Amber Society
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SAC Offices
Johns Hopkins Univ.
Baltimore Md. 21218

Unfortunately the Princeton Science Fiction Club, Infinity Ltd. did not have many activities within the past year. However we did have one event of importance, a speech by Walter Breen on Tolkien.

Speaking before a crowd of over thirty persons, an excellent turnout, Walter spoke of the origins of many of Tolkien's ideas, names, and weapons systems. In addition, he explored some of the ideas for Tolkien's popularity. He emphasised the absolute certainty in Tolkien's writings that certain things do exist as one very important reason for his popularity.

Among these certain things that Tolkien does not question or name are divination, reincarnation, telepathy, and several other equally heretical beliefs that a good Catholic like Tolkien was not supposed to know about. (I hope this doesn't offend anybody, but many of the events in Lord of the Rings, if given their common names, would run counter to Church doctrine.) This fervent belief or suspension of disbelief, also common in several other successful novels, plays a large part in obtaining audience acceptability.

Also brought before our eyes was the possibility of a fourth ring, this one named Dorya, representing the last part of the elemental quadrant, Earth. Given to the Dwarves, it was taken by Sauron and was used extensively by Him.

Much of the material Walter drew upon was taken from a draft of a book he is planning to publish within a year or so. The lecture was cosponsored by the Society of Middle Earth Readers (SOMER) and the English Dept. In all, 'twas a most informative and enjoyable time for all.

Murder

Kill me a dream
 I give thee leave
 to trespass heavy-footed
 through the far fields
 of my feeling
 to the secret forests
 of desires I cannot admit
 There
 in that virgin place
 find you the Queens white hart
 feeding on the greenest leaves
 of the shadows
 Fit your fatal dart
 and dispatch her
 Let her deep eyes peruse the oak
 until the busy ants devour them

Murder (cont,)

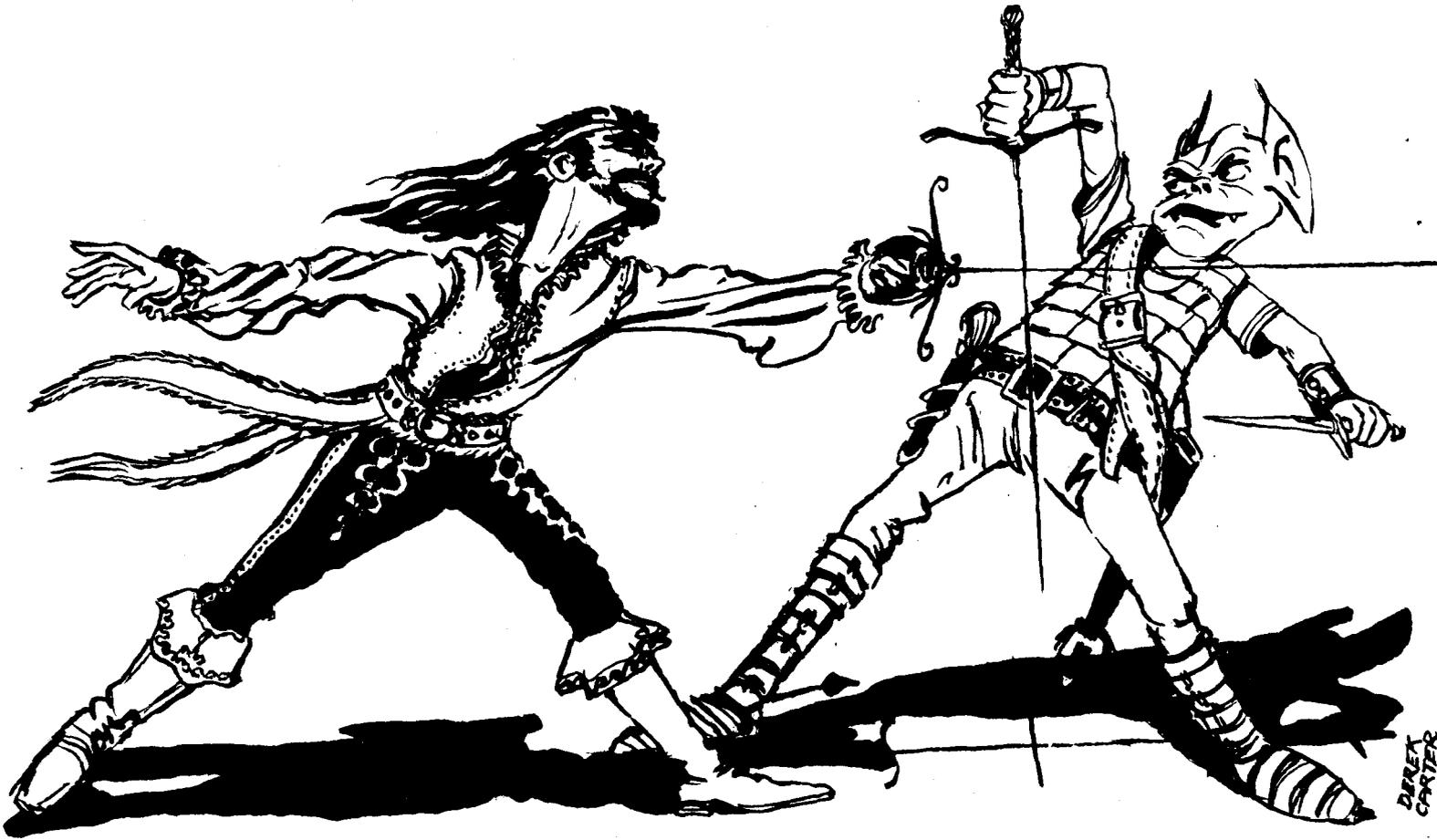
Return and tell me
when the deed is done
That hart was my first love
That I loved you does not
disturb the winds by one breath
My soul's again my own
You have killed me a dream.

Frances Truscott



Baltimore takes on the World!

BALTIMORE IN 80. . .



WHO - The Baltimore Science-Fiction Society, 30 members strong!

WHAT - A Worldcon!

WHEN - Labor Day Weekend, 1980. . .

WHERE - Baltimore. . . Charm City, U. S. A.

WHY - Because we like you!

Executive Committee - Artemus, Don Dohler, Judy Kurman, Mike Kurman,
Steve Miller, Sue Nice, Bill Simmons, Sue Wheeler

Easily accessible by Land, Air, and Sea!

Book Reviews

THE FLIGHT OF THE HORSE, Larry Niven, Ballentine Books, 209 pp.,
First Printing 1973, \$1.25

This collection of seven short stories is by Larry Niven, which should conjure up dreams of top-notch hardcore Science Fiction. But wait! What is this? Fantasy? Warlocks, trolls, werewolves, and sorcery in a Larry Niven book? Well, it's only the final story, but it's a gem. "What Good is a Glass Dagger?" It's worth buying the book just for this one, but there are six other beauties too.

The first five stories, about half the book, are stories of Svetz, the Time Retrieval Expert. This poor dude, who has a terrible fear of animals (and xenophobia to boot!), is always being sent back in time to fetch extinct beasts for the Secretary General. A horse, a sperm whale, a roc (!), a wolf, and a ghost(!!!). Having nothing to go on but children's pictures, a few mistakes are naturally made . . .

And what could make it more interesting than an extension cage (that's the part of the time machine which actually travels) which slips sideways in time to alternate universes occasionally. Universes in which exist unicorns, dragons, and wolf-people, as well as one where the Cuban missile Crisis turned into a full-scale war. Poor Svetz continuously lands in curious situations, complete with the Niven wit and humor we're all accustomed to.

The sixth story, by far the longest (a novella of 65 pages), is not an excellent SF story (on Niven's favorite topic, displacement booths), but is a very well written piece which should appeal to both fans and non-fans alike. The story is basically one of a news reporter's attempts to vindicate himself from the blame of starting a riot. But along the way, he discovers many of the evils which accompany instantaneous travel, and comes up with several ingenious solutions. A very fine tale, witty, cynical, and constructive. Future Generations: take note . . .

Finally, of course, "What Good is a Glass Dagger?" the icing on the cake, another novella. But I'm not going to tell you

any more about it, you've got to read it!

Perhaps I should mention one more thing. That most of these stories were previously published, mostly in Fantasy and Science Fiction from 1969 to 1973. Only "Death in a Cage" is new. But now they're all together . . .

Buy it!

NOW!

Brian Nolan

A goodly portion of the new fantasy novels published each year are never seen by the average fan, unless he is given to wandering into the children's room of his local library, collaring the librarian, and demanding to know what new fantasy books have come out in the last few months. She usually knows, because many children's librarians are fantasy fans at heart-- or at least, many of the ones I know are. If you don't take this sort of action, it is possible to miss some of the best fantasy in print today, simply because it has been labeled a juvenile by the publisher and thus been banished, unceremoniously to the children's room.

A case in point is Patricia McKillip's The Forgotten Beasts of Eld (Atheneum, 1974), a Newberry Honor book (for those who don't know, the Newberry is the American Library Association's version of the Hugo). It is the story of Sibyl, a beautiful young wizard who lives in peaceful isolation in a magic tower where she tends a collection of wondrous, fabled animals. When a young stranger brings her a baby boy to raise, she finds herself drawn, unwillingly, into the affairs of men, and she learns to hate, and to love. The storyline is a fragile thread, but McKillip handles it with the necessary delicacy. She is more interested in the effect that events have upon her characters than mere action, yet there is enough plot to keep the adventure minded reader turning pages, and it is all the more effective because the plot grows out of the characters.

The writing is fresh and beautiful, with the sophisticated simplicity that is only found in the best fantasy. McKillip has written one other fantasy novel, The Throne of the Erril of Sherril. I intend to find it.

(over)

The Perilous Gard (Houghton Mifflin, 1974) was a welcome arrival, because I had already read Elizabeth Marie Pope's only other novel and enjoyed it heartily. I wasn't disappointed. Katherine, Gard's sharp-tongued, practical heroine, is banished to a remote manor by Bloody Mary, where she hears strange rumors about the lord's brother, Christopher Herron. Christopher, it seems, allowed his niece to drown in a mysterious well sacred to the People of the Hill, and is suspected of murder. But Katherine soon realizes that the child has been taken by the people as a sacrifice, and that Christopher intends to offer himself as a substitute. Being Katherine, she can't stand by and let this happen. The Druidic survival theme is well handled, and one is never quite sure just how human (or inhuman) the People are. The hero and heroine are a refreshing change--Katherine would be absolutely miserable in Gor; she'd undoubtedly start a consciousness-raising group, and Christopher is a Gothic hero with a sense of humor.

Last, but not least, is the latest in Andre Norton's Witch World books, The Jargoon Pard. This one is a sequel to Year of the Unicorn, and concerns the fate of the son of Gillan and Herrol who is substituted at birth for the daughter of Lady Heroise of Car Do Prawn, who must have a male heir. At his betrothal to his cousin, young Kethan is given a fur belt with a peculiar buckle in the shape of a cat's head (the 'jargoon pard' of the title), which enables him to change into a mountain cat. Pursued by his betrothed's brother who wants the title, Kethan flees into the forests and comes upon a mysterious star-shaped tower.

The book is good Norton, but not top form Norton. It isn't up to Year of the Unicorn or The Crystal Gryphon, and the fault lies in the characters, rather than the plot or the writing. Norton's Witch World books have always differed radically from the traditional quest story, in which events, the feeling of great powers stirring and human forces uniting to battle supernatural evil, take precedence over characters. Tolkien is the classic example. This is not to say that this sort of work does not produce memorable characters--it does--but still there is a panoramic overview of action, much as in War and Peace.

Norton has chosen to concentrate on one or two characters in each book, and to mirror the cosmic forces warring about them in the smaller struggles her hero and heroine must face. Thus, if this method is to work, we must get very close to her protagonists; there must be something there to keep our interest. Unfortunately, Kethan and Aylinn aren't as interesting as Gillan and Herrol, or Joisan and Kerovan. Still, it's a fun book and it promises more to come.

Gil Fitzgerald

Roger Zelazny is one of the great fantasy writers of current times. While this is a somewhat unequivocal statement, I will be mightily surprised if anybody yells at me for it. And if anybody yells at you for it, just point to the Amber series, and his latest installment in it, The Sign of the Unicorn. If you enjoyed Nine Princes of Amber, and The Guns of Avalon, your only concern will be whether to buy all three in hardcover for your permanent library. If not, perhaps you should be watching soap operas, since real adventure and fantasy are obviously not for you.

This is, after all, a review nevertheless. If I tell you it's good and stop there, you may learn something about my taste, but very little about the book. The Sign of the Unicorn is the third book in the tale of Corwin, liege of Amber and rightful (so far as he is concerned) heir to the throne of Amber. Zelazny continues to weave a spellbinding form of magic around the infinitely numerous shadow worlds projected into unreality by the reality of Amber. It is here, however, that he produces material which may very well carry him through another umpty-ump installments, allowing him to retire with the royalties from Galaxy. We are assailed with numerous images which lead one to believe that there is at least one more Amber which is not a shadow, and a very intricate connection between the evil hordes released by the curse of Corwin and these two alternate Ambers. We see a vision of Mount Kolvir laid waste and the pattern exposed, of Dara sitting on the throne of Amber with her metal-armed father, Benedict, at her side, and it is very easy to miss the fact that Corwin opens the first book at the gates of the evil city, recalling the past occurrences that make up the subsequent books.

From this kind of a beginning (yes, that's what I call it), the tale could go anywhere. Quite apart from future events which may happen, it will take a heap of explanation to bring us up to date to where Zelazny obviously is. It is this explanation which had better be forthcoming soon. If any criticism can be leveled at this book, it is the disjointed way we are bombarded with new info, info which make the first two books look like prefaces, and info which just might be tailored to

selling magazines as well as finishing the story. Zelazny gives up some of his superb characterization, some of the richness of his language and imagery, and much of the supreme joy in enthralling literature; replacing it with a technique which smacks of gimmickry, complication, and confusion. This is not to say that it is a poor effort, only that it does not quite live up to the first two books, reading somewhat like somebody skipped the final rewrites, never fleshed out the skeleton, and put it out to press when no one was looking. It is a compliment to Zelazny that it is as superb as it is, and it is the fervent hope of this not-so-humble writer that his further excursion into the Ambers will be carefully plotted and written in the magnificently real way Roger Zelazny can write. However, finding fault is not usually a virtue, and I would be absolutely crushed if I scared you off from this wonderful series. And if you really feel you must see me personally (to knock my block off for this review, no doubt), just take out my Trump and think very hard. If I'm not too busy, you may even find me in the shadows, since I tend to show a marked preference for a very peculiar one called Earth, I think I should have my head examined.

Pat Stanton

This magazine will be available for trade with other magazines. The price per individual copy will be \$.25. Subscription for one year (six issues) is \$1.25. This magazine is published bimonthly. Issues can be received for letters and submissions of articles or reviews. I will accept short fiction but please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope in case it does not get published. One final note: I'll take artwork and will return it after having used it if you request.

credits

Cover art by Sylvia Starshine
inside cover by Wolf Forrest
interior art by Sylvia Starshine

Anybody wishing to help one existing magazine may contact

Michael Pritchard
1405 Hampton Blvd.
Norfolk Va. 23517

The name of their magazine is Stargate, and they need help so far as variety and communications are concerned. The magazine has a lot of promise and potential which should not be wasted.

Infinity Ltd. at Princeton wants to publish a magazine so anyone who is interested contact

Jon Coopersmith
236 1942 Hall
Princeton University
Princeton N.J. 08540
or
9201 Fox Meadow Lane
Potomac Maryland 20854

Thanks to;

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Baltimore Science Fiction Society for advice and comments
the people at Balticon
and last, but not least
all those who responded to the flier.

Tim Daniels...publisher and editor
Pat Stanton...editorial asst.
Rusty Truscott...editorial asst.

I'll be at Disclave this year, I've a huckster's table so
look for me there. If we can grab a room the Amber Society
is going to throw a party.
On Saturday, there will be a meeting of all members and all
people who are interested in joining

Take care.

any material sent in for next issue should be in by the
second week of June or at the latest by the 21st of June.

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