

May 1996

Issue 296

BRUM GROUP NEWS

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*The monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group
(Honorary Presidents: Brian W Aldiss and Harry Harrison)*

Group Chairman & Newsletter Editor - Martin Tudor, Secretary - Anne Woodford,
Treasurer - Sarah Freakley, Publicity Officer - Steve Jones, Ordinary Member - Alan
Woodford, Novacon 26 Chairman - Carol Morton, Novacon 27 Chairman - Martin Tudor.

Professor Lawrence Krauss

author of

THE PHYSICS OF STAR TREK

will address the Group on

Wednesday 8th May,

7.45pm for 8pm,

at the Prince Hotel, Station Street,

(behind New St. Station, between the Electric Cinema and the Bus Station, Birmingham city centre).

Admittance: Members: £2.50, Non-Members £3.75. (Under 18s, Full-time Students and other Unwaged £2.00, at the discretion of the Treasurer, on production of appropriate proof.)

Professor Krauss is Ambrose Swasey Professor of Physics and Professor of Astronomy at Cases Western Reserve University in Ohio. He is also the author of FEAR OF PHYSICS: A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED and THE FIFTH ESSENCE: THE SEARCH FOR DARK MATTER IN THE UNIVERSE along with countless scientific articles. THE PHYSICS OF STAR TREK will be published by HarperCollins on 13 May, price £12.99, advance copies will be available from Andromeda's Rog Peyton at the meeting and at Professor Krauss' signing session in Waterstones, 24 High Street, Birmingham, from 1pm-2pm on the same day.

The BSGF meets at 7.45pm on the 3rd Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) in the upstairs function room of the Prince Hotel, Station Street in Birmingham city centre (formerly Stephenson's Hotel, between the Electric Cinema and the Bus Station). The annual subscription rates (which include 12 copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to meetings) are £10.00 per person, or £13.50 for 2 members at the same address.

Cheques etc. should be made payable to "the Birmingham Science Fiction Group" and sent to: the Treasurer, Sarah Freakley, c/o 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, B66 4SH. (E-mail should go via: bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk) Book reviews, review copies and other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to: Martin Tudor, Newsletter Editor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX.

Colophon

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Personal opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the committee or the membership of the BSFG.

All text by Martin Tudor except where stated otherwise. This issue was printed on the CRITICAL WAVE photocopier. For details of WAVE's competitive prices contact Martin Tudor at the editorial address on the cover.

Many thanks this issue to BERNIE EVANS for producing the address labels and transferring files; STEVE GREEN for his unsolicited (but very welcome) reviews; BEN GERBER; MIKE GLYER; DAVE LANGFORD; PAUL CARDINAL; MAUREEN KINCAID-SPELLER; RICK WYATT; THE BIRMINGHAM EVENING MAIL; WHAT'S ON; THE BIRMINGHAM VOICE; STEVE GREEN; DAVE HOLMES and CRITICAL WAVE for the news.

A Few Words From The Chairman

by Martin Tudor.

The more perceptive of you may have noticed that the forthcoming events listing did not appear last month and does not appear this month either. Why not? Well, amongst the many things raised at the EGM in March was the fact that Vernon Brown and others present felt the listing was mostly redundant. They said it took up too much space and was of little interest. (I tend to disagree with the points about repetition and redundancy - surely the purpose of a listing is to serve as a *repeated* reminder; an ever updated diary of events?)

After this I took the decision to scrap the listing for two reasons:

1. This is the only feedback I've received in the five or more years I've been running the listing.
2. Compiling the listing has always been the single most time-consuming and onerous task involved in the production of the newsletter - if no one wants it why bother?

So, in future, any events brought to my attention will be mentioned either in the Jophan Report or elsewhere - but I will no longer be searching the pages of WHAT'S ON and the shelves of numerous Information Centres for likely events on your behalf. (Unless, of course, enough people express an interest in seeing the column reinstated - in which case I *may* reconsider my decision to scrap it....)

Another thing that the perceptive amongst you may have noticed is that there was no copy of ANSIBLE distributed with the last issue of the newsletter, nor is there one with this issue. Again this is due to a suggestion "from the floor" at the EGM that copies of ANSIBLE should be produced and made available at meetings but *not* mailed out with the newsletter. This is, of course, a (doubtless vain) attempt to encourage people to attend the meetings....

I say "vain" because having, at no little effort, secured the acclaimed American author and professor of Physics and Astronomy, Lawrence Krauss, for our special meeting this month, we have sold less than half a dozen tickets to BSFG members! (Fortunately there has been interest shown by a number of non-BSFG members - but they are not the people for whom we were elected to organise the meetings.)

Correct me if I'm wrong we *are* a science fiction group, yes? This author has waived his customary \$5,000 fee to speak to us about a book which examines the scientific problems raised by the various devices used in the most popular science fiction programme ever broadcast on tv. Discussing seriously ways in which such things as warp drives, transporters, impulse drives, tractor beams and time travel may, or may not, be possible. He is willing to spend one of the five days he will be in this country to come and speak to our group and, apart from half a dozen members (and of course the committee) you can't be bothered to commit £2.50 each to guarantee yourselves a seat? It really is no wonder that Carol Morton, Bernie Evans, Chris Murphy and several other previous Chairs of this group have sworn never to run for the office again!

If you are *remotely* interested in science fiction and/or astronomy and/or physics I urge you to attend this meeting. I have just finished reading THE PHYSICS OF STAR TREK and it is an entertaining, amusing and fascinating book (see the review elsewhere this issue) - I am sure that Professor Krauss will be equally as interesting and entertaining in person. Be there!

The Jophan Report #93

Ex-Novacon and BSFG Chair and Bad Influence guitarist, Tony Morton, should now be addressed (with all due respect) as Cllr Morton. On 2 May he was elected as Labour Councillor for the Lye & Wollescote ward in Dudley. Squeaking by with just three times the votes of the opposing candidates: Liberal Democrats 294, Conservative 365, Labour 2,041!

The 10th Arthur C Clarke Award has been won by Paul J McAuley for FAIRYLAND

(Gollancz). The second place going to Ken MacLeod for his debut novel, THE STAR FRACTION.

The Award was presented in a ceremony at the Science Museum in London on 17 April. Other short-listed titles were: HAPPY POLICEMAN by Patricia Anthony (NEL); THE TIME SHIPS by Stephen Baxter (HarperCollins); THE PRESTIGE by Christopher Priest (Simon & Schuster); THE DIAMOND AGE by Neal Stephenson (Viking).

"Jonathan Wylie" and Tom Holt will be signing at Andromeda in June. Contact the shop on 0121-643-1999 for further details of this and other signing sessions.

Birmingham has won its campaign for a £50 million grant to create a revolutionary hi-tech museum of the future in Digbeth. Millenium Point, which is expected to create up to 11,000 jobs and stimulate up to £500 million of investment in the region (*not to mention driving hotel prices in the city even higher - making it even more difficult for sf conventions!*) still needs to raise another £110 million from European grants and private investors.

The Midlands Art Centre has received an arts lottery grant of £750,000; joining previous grant winners such as the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Ikon Gallery, the Custard Factory and Sampad, as well as Birmingham Arts Marketing which helps to promote them.

The MAC lottery grant, from the Arts Council, is the largest single award in its 33-year history. Most of it will be spent on equipment and repairs to the centre, but £150,000 will fund a study into the future development of the centre, which currently attracts 450,000 people a year.

Michelle "Cuddles" Drayton-Harrold of Albacon reports that she received a phone call from Susan Ellison on 16 April, who informed her that Harlan suffered a heart attack on 12 April and underwent an emergency triple by-pass operation. He is recovering well, but his appearance at Albacon '96 will not be possible.

Anyone wishing to withdraw their membership following this news will be given a full refund. If Albacon 96 itself is cancelled, *all* memberships will be refunded. Notification of the committee's final decision will be posted to all members within a week of their meeting on 4 May. Any enquiries should be directed to Michelle on 0141-558-2862. (Albacon's other guest is Terry Pratchett.)

After his return home Mr Ellison reported, on Monday 22 April, that he had received more than 600 phone calls and faxes, and despite his wishes to the contrary his house has been filled with so many flowers "it smells like an Algerian

whorehouse". The Ellison's wish to reiterate that they are doing fine and please don't call or send a card and for God's sake please don't send flowers!

L.A.con III, the 54th World Science Fiction Convention, has released the nominations for the 1996 Hugo Awards and John W Campbell Memorial Award. This year's Hugos, the 43rd annual awards, will be presented at a ceremony in the Anaheim Convention Center, California, on 1 September 1996.

The nominees that follow were chosen by popular vote by 442 members of L.A.con or Intersection who submitted valid nominating ballots. In some categories more than five nominations appear due to tie votes.

The nomination ballots were counted and verified by the L.A.con III Hugo Administrators, David Bratman and Seth Goldberg. The final ballots will be sent to L.A.con members in a special mailing in early May. Only attending and supporting members of L.A.con III are eligible to vote. Ballots must be postmarked by 31 July and received by 7 August to ensure that they will be counted. They must be mailed to: 1996 Hugo Awards, Seth Goldberg, Voting Administrator, PO Box 271986, Concord, California, 94527-1986, or faxed to (707) 745-0729. Until 31 July, L.A.con memberships are available for \$130 attending or \$30 supporting from L.A.con III, c/o SCIFI, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409, USA.

Plans were pending, at the time this information was made available on e-mail, to make as many nominees as possible available on L.A.con III's World Wide Web site:

<http://lacon3.worldcon.org/>

BEST NOVEL: THE TIME SHIPS by Stephen Baxter (HarperPrism); BRIGHTNESS REEF by David Brin (Bantam); THE TERMINAL EXPERIMENT by Robert J Sawyer (HarperPrism; serialized as "Hobson's Choice", ANALOG, Mid-December 1994-March 1995); THE DIAMOND AGE by Neal Stephenson (Bantam); REMAKE by Connie Willis (Bantam).

BEST NOVELLA: "Fault Lines" by Nancy Kress (ASIMOV'S, August 1995); "A Man of the People" by Ursula K Le Guin (ASIMOV'S, April 1995); "A Woman's Liberation" by Ursula K Le Guin (ASIMOV'S, July 1995); "Bibi" by Mike Resnick and Susan Shwartz (ASIMOV'S, Mid-December 1995); "The Death of Captain Future" by Allen Steele (ASIMOV'S, October 1995).

BEST NOVELLETTE: "Luminous" by Greg Egan (ASIMOV'S, September 1995); "TAP" by Greg Egan (ASIMOV'S, November 1995); "Think Like a Dinosaur" by James Kelly (ASIMOV'S, June 1995); "When the Old Gods Die" by Mike Resnick (ASIMOV'S, April 1995); "The Good Rat" by Allen Steele (ANALOG, Mid-December 1995); "Must and Shall" by Harry Turtledove (ASIMOV'S, November 1995).

BEST SHORT STORY: "TeleAbsence" by Michael A Burstein (ANALOG, July 1995); "Life on the Moon" by Tony Daniel (ASIMOV'S, April 1995); "A Birthday" by Esther M Friesner (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, August 1995); "The Lincoln Train" by Maureen F McHugh (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, April 1995); "Walking Out" by Michael Swanwick (ASIMOV'S, February 1995).

BEST NON-FICTION BOOK: YOURS, ISAAC ASIMOV: A LIFETIME OF LETTERS by Isaac Asimov edited by Stanley Asimov (Doubleday); SPECTRUM 2: THE BEST IN CONTEMPORARY FANTASTIC ART edited by Cathy Burnett and Arnie Fenner (Underwood); SCIENCE FICTION: THE ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA by John Clute (Dorling Kindersley); ALIEN HORIZONS: THE FANTASTIC ART OF BOB EGGLETON by Bob Eggleton (Dragon's World/Paper Tiger); TO WRITE LIKE A WOMAN: ESSAYS IN FEMINISM AND SCIENCE FICTION by Joanna Russ (Indiana University Press).

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: APOLLO 13 (Universal) Brian Grazer producer, Ron Howard director, William Broyles Jr and Al Reinert screenplay; "The Coming of Shadows" (BABYLON 5) (Warner Brothers) J Michael Straczynski, Douglas Netter, John Copeland producers, J Michael Straczynski screenplay, Janet Greek director; "The Visitor" (STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE) (Paramount Television) Rick Berman and Ira Steven Behr executive producers, Michael Taylor screenplay, David Livingston director; TOY STORY (Buena Vista) Ralph Guggenheim and Bonnie Arnold producers, John Lasseter director, Joss Whedon, Andrew Stanton, Joel Cohen and Alec Sokolow screenplay; 12 MONKEYS (Universal) Charles Roven producer, Terry Gilliam director, David and Janet Peoples screenplay.

BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR: Ellen Datlow; Gardner Dozois; Scott Edelman; Kristine Kathryn Rusch; Stanley Schmidt.

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Jim Burns; Thomas Canty; Bob Eggleton; Don Maitz; Michael Whelan.

BEST ORIGINAL ARTWORK: Cover of FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, October-November 1995 (illustrating "Dankden" by Marc Laidlaw) by Bob Eggleton; Cover of ANALOG, January 1995 (illustrating "Tide of Stars" by Julia Ecklar) by Bob Eggleton; DINOPIA: THE WORLD BENEATH by James Gurney (Turner); Cover of ANALOG, March 1995 (illustrating "Renaissance" by Poul Anderson) by George H. Krauter; Cover of FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, January 1995 (illustrating "Tea and Hamsters" by Michael Coney) by Gary Lippincott.

BEST SEMI-PROZINE: CRANK! edited by Bryan Chofin; INTERZONE edited by David Pringle; LOCUS edited by Charles N Brown; THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION edited by David Hartwell, Ariel Hameon, and Tad

Dembinski; SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE edited by Andrew Porter.

BEST FANZINE: ANSIBLE edited by Dave Langford; APPARATCHIK edited by Andrew Hooper and Victor Gonzalez; ATTITUDE edited by Michael Abbott, John Dailman, and Pam Wells; FOSFAX edited by Timothy Lane and Elizabeth Garrett; LAN'S LANTERN edited by George "Lan" Laskowski; MIMOSA edited by Richard and Nicki Lyrer.

BEST FAN WRITER: Sharon Farber; Andy Hooper; Dave Langford; Evelyn C Leeper; Joseph T Major.

BEST FAN ARTIST: Ian Gunn; Teddy Harvia; Joe Mayhew; Peggy Ranson; William Rotsler.

JOHN W CAMPBELL AWARD For Best New Science Fiction Writer, sponsored by Dell Magazines: Michael A Burstein (1st year of eligibility); David Feintuch (2nd year of eligibility); Felicity Savage (2nd year of eligibility); Sharon Shinn (1st year of eligibility); Tricia Sullivan (1st year of eligibility).

"The Fall of Night" (BABYLON 5) received enough votes to be nominated for Best Dramatic Presentation, but the producers declined its nomination in favor of "The Coming of Shadows", the other BABYLON 5 episode nominated. FILE 770 received enough votes to be nominated for Best Fanzine, but was ruled ineligible because its editor, Mike Glycer, is a member of the Hugo Awards subcommittee and had withdrawn it in advance. Linda Nagata received enough votes to be nominated for the John W Campbell Award, but was ruled ineligible due to professional publication of fiction in the science fiction and fantasy field prior to 1994.

The chart below shows, for each Hugo category, the total number of ballots marked, the total number of votes cast, the number of different candidates nominated, and the range of votes received by the finalists. The first two columns were calculated on raw eligible ballots, the third after reassigning scattered votes for single candidates to the most appropriate category, and the last on the nominees actually appearing on the ballot in each category.

Category	Ballots	Votes	Nominees	Range
Novel	330	991	210	76-27
Novella	222	610	68	39-31
Novelette	224	651	129	45-18
Short Story	237	686	201	35-18
Nonfic. Book	150	291	40	72-16
Dram. Pres.	299	917	131	122-30
Prof. Editor	227	564	54	113-35
Prof. Artist	201	576	138	80-24
Orig. Art.	100	270	113	25-8
Semiprozine	187	450	38	99-30
Fanzine	194	459	100	49-20
Fan Writer	165	423	148	39-13
Fan Artist	148	403	95	45-23
Campbell	139	260	73	39-8

L.A.con III, the 54th World Science Fiction Convention, has also released the nominations for the 1946 Retrospective Hugos, or Retro-Hugos. L.A.con III marks the 50th anniversary of the first Los Angeles area Worldcon, Pacificon I in 1946, and the committee has been authorized by the World Science Fiction Society to honour this anniversary by retrospectively giving out the Hugos that would have been presented at Pacificon I if they'd been invented. (The first Hugos were presented in 1953.)

The awards will be presented at a ceremony at L.A.con III on 30 August 1996. The nominees that follow were chosen by popular vote by 111 members of L.A.con or Intersection who submitted valid nominating ballots. In some categories only four nominees appear, as no other eligible candidates appeared on at least 5% of the ballots cast in that category, as required by Section 2.6 of the WSFS Constitution for 4th and 5th nominees. The categories "Best Non-Fiction Book", "Best Original Artwork", and "Best Semi-Prozine" on the nominating ballot had very few nominations and were eliminated from the ballot.

The nomination ballots were counted and verified by the L.A.con III Hugo Administrators, David Bratman and Seth Goldberg. The final ballots will be sent to L.A.con members in a special mailing in early May. Only attending and supporting members of L.A.con III are eligible to vote. Ballots must be postmarked by 31 July and received by 7 August to ensure that they will be counted. They must be mailed to: 1946 Retro-Hugo Awards, Seth Goldberg, Voting Administrator, PO Box 271986, Concord, California, 94527-1986, USA, or faxed to (707) 745-0729. Until 31 July, L.A.con memberships are available for \$130 attending or \$30 supporting from L.A.con III, c/o SCIFI, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys CA 91409, USA.

Due to the rarity of the original publications, additional information on reprints of the fiction nominees will appear on the ballot. Plans are afoot to publish a collection of circa-1945 works by the Fan Writer and Fan Artist nominees and selections from the Fanzine nominees. For further information, write to the balloting address (1946 Retro-Hugo Awards, Seth Goldberg, Voting Administrator, PO Box 271986, Concord, California, 94527-1986, USA) or send e-mail to:

retro.fan@lacon3.worldcon.org.

BEST NOVEL: THE MULE by Isaac Asimov (ASTOUNDING, November-December 1945, also published as Part II of FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE); RED SUN OF DANGER by Edmond Hamilton (writing as Brett Sterling, STARTLING STORIES, Spring 1945, also published as DANGER PLANET by Brett Sterling); THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH by C S Lewis (Bodley Head, Macmillan; etc); DESTINY TIMES THREE by Fritz Leiber (ASTOUNDING, March-April

1945, Galaxy Novels, Dell); THE WORLD OF NULL-A by A E Van Vogt (ASTOUNDING, August-October 1945, revised for book publication by Simon and Schuster, etc).

BEST NOVELLA: "Dead Hand" by Isaac Asimov (ASTOUNDING, April 1945; also published as Part I of FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE); "Giant Killer" by A Bertram Chandler (ASTOUNDING, October 1945); ANIMAL FARM by George Orwell (Secker and Warburg, Harcourt Brace, etc); I REMEMBER LEMURIA by Richard S Shaver (AMAZING, March, Venture Books).

BEST NOVELLETTE: "Pi in the Sky" by Fredric Brown (THRILLING WONDER STORIES, Winter 1945); "into Thy Hands" by Lester del Rey (ASTOUNDING, August 1945); "First Contact" by Murray Leinster (ASTOUNDING, May 1945); "The Piper's Son" by Lewis Padgett (ASTOUNDING, February 1945); "The Mixed Men" by A E van Vogt (ASTOUNDING, January 1945, revised for book publication in THE MIXED MEN (GNOME), cut version titled MISSION TO THE STARS).

BEST SHORT STORY: "The Waveries" by Fredric Brown (ASTOUNDING, January 1945); "Uncommon Sense" by Hal Clement (ASTOUNDING, September 1945); "Correspondence Course" by Raymond F Jones (ASTOUNDING, April 1945); "The Ethical Equations" by Murray Leinster (ASTOUNDING, June 1945); "What You Need" by Lewis Padgett (ASTOUNDING, October 1945).

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: BLITHE SPIRIT (United Artists) Noel Coward producer, David Lean director, Noel Coward, David Lean, and Anthony Havelock-Allan screenplay; THE BODY SNATCHER (RKO) Val Lewton producer, Robert Wise director, Philip MacDonald and Carlos Keith screenplay; THE HORN BLOWS AT MIDNIGHT (Warner Brothers) Mark Hellinger producer, Raoul Walsh director, Sam Hellman and James V. Kern screenplay; HOUSE OF DRACULA (Universal) Paul Malvern producer, Erle C Kenton director, Edward T Lowe screenplay; THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) Pandro S Berman producer, Albert Lewin director and screenplay.

BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR: John W Campbell, Jr (ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION); Sam Merwin, Jr (THRILLING WONDER STORIES, STARTLING STORIES); Raymond A Palmer (AMAZING STORIES); Donald A Wollheim (PORTABLE NOVELS OF SCIENCE).

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Earle K Bergey; Hannes Bok; Edd Cartier; Virgil Finlay; Frank R Paul.

BEST FANZINE: THE ACOLYTE edited by Francis Townner Laney; CHANTICLEER edited by Walt Liebscher; FANTASY COMMENTATOR edited by A Langley Searles; SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES edited by Charles E Burbee and Gerald Hewitt; VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION edited by Forrest J Ackerman.

BEST FAN WRITER: Forrest J Ackerman; Charles E Burbee; Francis Towner Laney; Bob Tucker; Art Widner.

BEST FAN ARTIST: Joe Gibson; Lou Goldstone, Jr; Alva Rogers; William Rotsler; Jack Wiedenbeck.

Many stories received nominations in more than one fiction category. All votes were combined into the proper category by the story's word-count (for example, ANIMAL FARM by George Orwell was nominated almost exclusively as Best Novel, but by length is decidedly a Novella), except for "The Waveries" by Fredric Brown, which received the bulk of its nominations as Best Short Story. Though over 7,500 words, it falls within the relocation option zone defined by Section 2.2.1 of the WSFS Constitution (as revised by the 1995 Business Meeting), and was placed in Best Short Story in accordance with the voters' preference.

I REMEMBER LEMURIA by Richard S Shaver was nominated in fiction categories and as Best Non-Fiction Book. Ruled ineligible in the latter (due to not being published in book form until 1948), it was placed in Best Novella by wordcount and because it was written as fiction "based on" fact (regardless of the actual truth of the facts in question).

The film THE HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN received enough votes to be nominated for Best Dramatic Presentation, but was ruled ineligible due to having been released in 1944.

The chart below shows, for each Hugo category, the total number of ballots marked, the total number of votes cast, the number of different candidates nominated, and the range of votes received by the finalists. The first two columns were calculated on raw eligible ballots, the third after reassigning scattered votes for single candidates to the most appropriate category, and the last on the nominees actually appearing on the ballot in each category. No eligible nominees received more than 2 votes in the Non-Fiction Book, Original Artwork, or Semiprozine categories.

Category	Ballots	Votes	Nominees	Range
Novel	94	223	17	66-5
Novella	72	190	8	39-11
Novellette	58	160	22	76-19
Short Story	84	252	26	35-18
Nonfic. Book	12	14	6	
Dram. Pres.	55	146	36	23-10
Prof. Editor	85	151	13	84-7
Prof. Artist	55	164	23	41-7
Orig. Art.	3	9	9	
Semiprozine	1	1	1	
Fanzine	45	118	25	21-11
Fan Writer	55	153	30	31-9
Fan Artist	27	61	10	19-5

CRYSTAL SPHERE, the magazine of Fiction and Fantasy is now accepting submissions for their first issue. CRYSTAL

SPHERE is a bi-monthly publication (Issue #1 due out this October) which will print new, inventive and high quality science fiction, speculative fiction and fantasy. They say they are targeting an international audience with a goal of 2000 subscriptions by the end of their first year.

All submissions should be double spaced with the author's name, phone number and address appearing on the first page. There is a 10,000 word limit but they may consider serializing longer works. Submissions may be sent via e-mail to: b_gerbe@oz.plymouth.edu, please include the words "CRYSTAL SPHERE" in the subject. Postal submissions may be sent to: Benjamin Gerber, c/o CRYSTAL SPHERE, Suite #2337, PSC, Plymouth, NH 03264, USA.

Any questions or subscription inquiries may be directed to the above addresses. CRYSTAL SPHERE reserves first publication rights. After publication all rights return to the author. A payment of \$10 will be made to the authors of all accepted submissions. As the magazine grows they plan to increase their payment and switch to a per word system.

The co-winners (tie) of the 1996 James Tiptree, Jr Award are WAKING THE MOON by Elizabeth Hand and THE MEMOIRS OF ELIZABETH FRANKENSTEIN by Theodore Roszak. The short list consisted of: FOOD MAN by Lisa Tuttle; "And Salome Danced" by Kelly Eskridge; THE ARMLESS MAIDEN edited by Terri Windling; LITTLE SISTERS OF THE APOCALYPSE by Kit Reed.

The awards themselves will be presented at WisCon 20, in Madison, Wisconsin, over the Memorial Day weekend (25 - 27 May 1996).

This year's Phillip K Dick Award winner (for works published in 1995) is HEADCRASH by Bruce Bethke; which has also been nominated for the Minnesota Book Award.

The first runner up for the award was CARLUCCI'S EDGE by Richard Paul Russo, with other finalists: VIRTUAL DEATH by Shale Aaron; PERMUTATION CITY by Greg Egan; THE COLOUR OF DISTANCE by Amy Thomson; RELUCTANT VOYAGER by Elisabeth Vonarburg. The award was presented at Norwescon.

Australian author Paul Kidd, currently living in London, has delivered a "Forgotten Realms" fantasy, THE COUNCIL OF BLADES, to US publisher TSR.

The 1996 Southern Writers' Conference will be held at Easley Concourse, near Chichester, on 7-9 June. Although not specifically aimed at sf/fantasy writers, speakers at the residential course will include horror author Peter James. Further details can be obtained from the conference secretary, Lucia White, at Stable House, Home Farm, Coldharbour Lane, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3JG.

A newcomer to the sf field is the bimonthly CENTURY, \$5.95 from Post Office Box 9270, Madison, WI 53715-0270, USA.

THE TWO DEAD GIRLS, the opening instalment of Stephen King's new paperback serial THE GREEN MILE, was published on 28 March by Penguin; further sections will be released on 25 April, 30 May, 27 June, 25 July and 29 August, at £1.99 each.

A copy of David Britton's controversial Savoy novel LORD HORROR fetched £220.00 - three times its current dealer price - at the INDEX ON CENSORSHIP "Auction of Banned Books", held in London's Middle Temple Hall on 6 November. A total of £17,000 was raised for the Writers and Scholars Educational Trust, the journal's publisher. Other items auctioned included a first edition copy of Margaret Atwood's THE HANDMAID'S TALE (£65.00) and Michael Moorcock's pamphlet THE RETREAT FROM LIBERTY (£95.00), but the highest bid was £1,500, for a privately printed, signed edition of D H Lawrence's LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER.

Filming on RED DWARF VII is scheduled to begin this summer, for a new year premiere. Chris Barrie is allegedly unhappy with the quality of the scripts - possibly a side-effect of the reported disharmony between creators Doug Naylor and Rob Grant - and will appear in only a couple of episodes.

STAR TREK: BORG (formerly GENERATIONS II, and REGENERATIONS prior to that) was scheduled to go into production in early April, with Jonathan Frakes ("Riker") doubling up as director. Initial filming was sited at an abandoned missile silo in Arizona, which still contained an old ICBM - presumably deactivated. Both Patrick Stewart ("Picard") and Brent Spiner ("Data") will appear, after lengthy negotiations.

Stephen Bowkett followed THE COMMUNITY and THE BIDDEN with A RARE BREED on 26 January, his third horror novel under the pseudonym Ben Leech. This latest work, published as £5.99 Pan paperback, also introduces sf elements, set in a near-future Britain threatened by the spread of a dangerous new drug which actually strips away the barriers between dimensions.

Readers of the Hugo-winning sf magazine INTERZONE are invited to join editor David Pringle and colleagues at their weekly get-together, Friday evenings (9-11pm) at the Mitre, Baker Street, Brighton. Issue #106, cover-dated April, focussed upon the life and works of J G Ballard, with two short stories (one obscure

reprint, plus "The Dying Fall", his first new story since 1992); the fiction line-up also includes Ian Watson, Richard Calder and Terry Dowling. There's a British flavour to #107, with fantasy from Keith Brooke and an sf collaboration between Stephen Baxter and Eric Brown.

NEW WORLDS, most recently published as a Gollancz paperback, is to be relaunched next year by the American imprint White Wolf, with David Garnett still at the editorial helm.

OMNI, meanwhile, has been axed as part of a cost-cutting exercise by Bob Guccione's PENTHOUSE corporation, although editor Ellen Datlow is maintaining a virtual presence by preserving its electronic edition on the World Wide Web.

Teenage girls favour horror films over any other genre, according to a survey conducted by Sierra On-Line, only 11% preferring romances. Boys aged 13-18 gave top marks to action films and comedies.

B-movie specialists Troma, whose past releases include THE TOXIC AVENGER and RABID GRANNIES, was spotlighted during the Avignon/New York Film Festival on 10-23 April. "There have been Troma retrospectives all over the world, including Troma tributes by the Cinematheque Francais and the British Film Institute," said co-founder Michael Herz, whose partner Lloyd Kaufman addressed a seminar on 20 April. "And we're proud to be finally honoured right here in New York City. The international flights to the other tributes were just too costly."

DreamWorks, the entertainments company set up, in late 1994 by director Steven Spielberg, former Disney chief Jeffrey Katzenberg and music mogul David Geffen, will shortly begin production on THE LOST WORLD, from Michael Crichton's sequel to his novel JURASSIC PARK. The company has already set up a 10-year contract with Home Box Office, part of Time Warner, for cable distribution. Spielberg is overseeing the live action division, Geffen the music wing and Katzenberg both animation and television; the last is already at work on PRINCE OF EGYPT, a biblical biopic of Moses scheduled for release in 1999. Meanwhile, construction has begun on a US\$200 million studio complex offering full computer networking.

Former timelord Jon Pertwee reacted scathingly to tabloid reports that the forthcoming £3 million DR WHO telemovie features latest incarnation Paul McGann in a sexual relationship with his new assistant. Pertwee, now 76 and celebrating 60 years in showbusiness, was quoted in the Daily Mirror as having mixed

feelings on such an update: "It goes against the spirit of the original series, but it was obvious when they cast a handsome young man they would involve him in romance. I don't know what kids will make of it. It's a sign of the times, I guess." However, it appears his concerns are groundless: McGann stresses his on-screen kiss with surgeon Dr Grace Wilson (American actress Daphne Ashbrook) is "not a licentious moment" and that the Tardis remains unscathed. Fans can see for themselves this month, when the Anglo-American co-production is screened in the US and released on video in the UK.

Nominations for the "best novel" Nebula Award are: John Barnes' MOTHER OF STORMS, Paul Park's COELESTIS, Nancy Kress' BEGGARS AND CHOOSERS, Robert J Sawyer's HOBSON'S CHOICE (aka THE TERMINAL EXPERIMENT), Gene Wolfe's CADRE OF THE LONG SUN and Walter Jon Williams' METROPOLITAN.

Mark Chadborn's third novel, THE ETERNAL, was released as a £16.99 Gollancz hardback on 25 April. The central character is a mysterious figure who brings death and destruction in his wake, and whose arrival in a previously picturesque village will shatter forever its innocent facade.

OTHERWORLDS, Judith Nicholls' compilation of "Poems of the Mysterious", is published as a £4.99 Faber paperback in June. The 144pp collection explores "that most poetic of regions, the mysterious and rationally inexplicable aspect of the world we live in", and features line drawings by Shirley Felt.

Pulphouse, the sf imprint which also lent its name to a news-stand magazine, is closing down, with several projects (including a Harlan Ellison book) now seeking new homes. Publisher/editor Dean Welsey Smith is reportedly returning to full-time writing.

Sf author Greg Benford was one of three recipients of the 1995 Lord Awards, comprising a \$2500 prize and a statue, for his work in astrophysics and for popularizing science through his novels; the other winners were both Nobel laureates.

Fears have temporarily lifted that the Maison d'Ailleurs, a unique Swiss sf museum, would be forced to close by a 70% cut in local council spending. A stay of execution was announced after more than 7000 fans protested, many by e-mail.

The HEADPRESS team of David Kerekes and David Slater is working on a second volume of KILLER KOMIX, the first of which presented biographies of such murderers as Charles

Manson, Reginald Crippen and Jeffrey Dahmer. First up, though, is Steven Puchalski's SLIMETIME, a £11.95 200pp guide to "sleazy, mindless, movie entertainment"; for further details, send a reply-paid envelope to Post Office Box 160, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1 4ET.

Harlan Ellison, Lisa Tuttle, J G Ballard and Pat Murphy are among the writers featured in Richard Glyn Jones' anthology CYBERSEX, "Aliens, Neurosex and Cyborgasms", due out in June as a £6.99 Robinson paperback.

BBC Radio 3's year-long overview of the 1950s, part of its millennium celebrations, turned its attention to one of Britain's most famous sf characters on 4-8 March with THE QUATERMASS MEMOIRS. Over five nights, creator Nigel Kneale discussed influences on the three BBC tv serials, whilst Andrew Keir (star of the cinema version of QUATERMASS AND THE PIT) returned as the professor to recall past terrors and triumphs.

Oscar-winning animator Nick Park is profiled in Faber's fifth PROJECTIONS, published this month, which also includes Eleanor Coppola's notes on the making of DRACULA and chronicles Brian De Palma's encounter with Quentin Tarantino.

Book Reviews

THE PHYSICS OF STAR TREK

by Lawrence M Krauss

HarperCollins, £12.99, 188pp, h/b.

Star Rating: ★★★★★

Reviewed by Martin Tudor.

After an amusing foreword by Stephen Hawking and a brief preface by himself, Professor Krauss launches into "A Cosmic Poker Game"; wherein he examines the physics of inertial dampers, tractor beams, time travel, warp speed, deflector shields and wormholes. This guy does not hang about!

Written in plain English and addressed to the layman and/or STAR TREK buff, he speeds through all of the various devices used in the STAR TREK universe. Some he has decided are *theoretically* possible, others, such as transporters, are beset by insurmountable problems: "building a transporter would require us to heat up matter to a temperature a million times the temperature at the center of the Sun, expend more energy in a single machine than all if humanity presently uses, build telescopes larger than the size of the Earth, improve present computers by a factor of 100 billion billion, and avoid the laws of quantum mechanics. It's no wonder that Lieutenant Barclay was terrified of

beaming! I think even Gene Roddenberry, if faced with the challenge in real life, would probably choose instead to budget for a landable starship."

But, of course, it is very easy to snipe at the "science" in STAR TREK (or most other sf films, tv programmes and stories) - what makes THE PHYSICS OF STAR TREK so entertaining is that Krauss is very much a fan of the series. He therefore treats even the greatest blunders with indulgent sympathy - better still he is not slow to point out the "successes" of the technical writers: "the term 'black hole' was coined by the theoretical physicist John Archibald Wheeler of Princeton University, in the late fall of 1967. The date here is interesting, because, as far as I can determine, the first STAR TREK episode to refer to a black hole, which it called a 'black star', was aired in 1967 before Wheeler ever used the term in public"; "the Caltech physicist Kip Thorne, among others, has argued that the only way to keep wormholes open is to thread them with 'exotic material' ... once again I find the STAR TREK writers remarkably prescient in their choice of nomenclature. The Bajoran and Barzan wormholes are said to involve 'verteron' fields ... since virtual particles - the quantum fluctuations in otherwise empty space - are currently the best candidate for Kip Thorne's 'exotic matter', I think the STAR TREK writers deserve credit for their intuition"; "dilithium crystals (coincidentally invented by the STAR TREK writers long before the Fermilab engineers decided upon a lithium target in their Antiproton Source)".

Not that Krauss lets the STAR TREK writers get away with anything - the final chapter is entitled "Impossibilities: The Undiscoverable Country" and details a list of his (and his colleague's) top ten favourite STAR TREK blunders.

This is an amusing, informative, entertaining book, which should appeal to armchair physicists, total-laymen (like myself - although he, like everyone else I've read, still loses me when he starts explaining about string theory and dark matter!), STAR TREK fans and anyone else even remotely interested in STAR TREK and/or the cutting edge of physics.

THE EYES by Jesus Ignacio Aldapuerta,
Critical Vision, £5.95
Reviewed by Steve Green

Available in English for the first time, this truly chilling selection of short fiction by a Spanish devotee of the Marquis de Sade whose suicide in 1987 may well disguise real-life crimes as horrific and as sordid as those he envisioned, no easy task, holds the same grim fascination as a road traffic accident.

Often surreal (the war-crazed masturbator of "Necrophile" stumbles out of NEW WORLDS

via the films of Jorg Buttgereit), frequently fantastical (no more so than in the flying torture chamber of "Ikarus") and never less than mind-numbing, THE EYES is memetic toxic waste: there are images here which refuse to creep back into the shadows, much as one would wish them to. Be warned: these are dark tales of insanity and inhumanity, foul splinters in the mind's eye. Read them at your own risk.

[Available from Headpress, Post Office 160, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1 4ET; copies cost £6.95, including postage.]

MY HERO by Tom Holt
Orbit, £15.99, 314pp, h/b,
Star Rating: ****
Reviewed by Martin Tudor.

Holt is back, he's pretty much on form (which for any other writer would be superb - but, y'know Tom, one of the penalties of such success is that everyone expects better and better each time...) and as entertaining as ever.

"Sharp, sparkling and seriously funny" says the cover blurb - and I can't argue with that. MY HERO features Holt's customary range of zany protagonists, plus the compulsory "slightly saner" heroine and the usual mixture of foils, villains, other-worldly bureaucrats and, of course, the *real* baddies - lawyers.

You want the plot? Read the book!

Oh, alright: it involves a fantasy novelist, Jane Armitage, who gets side-tracked whilst working on the latest volume of her CRISIS IN CHAOS trilogy, when pulp-Western author, Albert Skinner (aka Carson Montague), forces his way into her dreams demanding that she writes/sends her the hero of her fantasy books, Regalian, to extricate Skinner from the book he's been trapped in (literally) for 30+ years; her efforts are hampered by Hamlet (yes, *that* one - the Prince of Denmark - not the cigar, although I wouldn't put that past Holt either), who has been transported into the patchwork body created by Norman Frankenbotham (which Norman hopes will be the fast bowler who will save the Yorkshire cricket team from further ignominious defeats at the hands of the Surrey mercenaries); Hamlet wants to get back to Elsinore and needs Jane's help to get there; but Jane is having problems of her own because her book has started writing itself.... Look, I *warned* you - read it yourself!

Stuff it to say that if you enjoy crazy, madcap humour you'll love this; if you don't you won't. More "Holtian" than "Pratchettesque" and none the worse for that - recommended.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TV SCIENCE FICTION
by Roger Fulton, Boxtree, £16.99.
THE MAKING OF TERRY NATION'S BLAKE'S 7
by Adrian Rigelsford, Boxtree, £9.99

THE AURUM FILM ENCYCLOPEDIA: SCIENCE FICTION, ed by Phil Hardy, Aurum, £25.00

THE STAR WARS ARCHIVES by Mark Cotta Vaz, Shinji Hata, Virgin, £19.99

STAR WARS: THE SCRIPTS by George Lucas, Leigh Brackett, Lawrence Kasdan, Boxtree, £14.99

THE ILLUSTRATED STAR WARS UNIVERSE by Ralph McQuarrie, Kevin J Anderson, Bantam; £20.00

Reviewed by Steve Green.

Even ignoring the vast amount of STAR TREK merchandise churned out by Paramount and its cronies, the sheer volume of genre-related texts now available serves to remind us just how much the sf market has expanded in the two decades since STAR WARS went into production. With so many guides, encyclopedia and handbooks littering the bookshelves, it's no surprise that a sizeable proportion simply retrace avenues explored a dozen times before, offering neither insight nor illumination.

This failing is particularly noticeable with the numerous episode guides (there are at least three parallel series devoted to TREK's current incarnations, courtesy of Boxtree, Bantam and Virgin), of which Roger Fulton's updated tvsf encyclopedia is arguably the ultimate distillation. As well as the obvious candidates, such as the various shows produced by Irwin Allen, Rod Serling and the Andersons (the first two already chronicled in Gary Gerani and Paul Schulman's landmark FANTASTIC TELEVISION), Fulton offers a welcome platform for more neglected treats, dipping into the wealth of telefantasy produced by both British and Australian networks over the past 40 years. It's in his coverage of the likes of 1990, MAN DOG, THE GIRL FROM TOMORROW and ACE OF WANDS, rather than BUCK ROGERS, or even BLAKE'S 7, that Fulton's hefty survey justifies its pricetag. Besides, Terry Nation's infamous space western is already afforded more than sufficient space in Adrian Rigelsford's "behind the scenes" overview of a rare example of BBC telefantasy with a lower production budget than DR WHO (and even forgetting the shaky sets and shakier acting, I really can't support his assertion that "nothing surely will match BLAKE'S 7 for its style and impact").

Moving from the small to the large screen, Aurum's movie encyclopedias remain vital additions to any fan's reference library, and the great benefit of the latest paperback edition of the sf volume (aside from the reduced price) is that Phil Hardy and his team have taken the opportunity to extend the coverage into 1991-94; ah, if only there had been more than a handful of films worth the bother. Completists should note that this edition also loses its predecessor's colour section; whilst many of the stills would lose their impact if switched to

monochrome, it's a pity alternatives could not be found to similarly chart the genre's growth.

Whether the new STAR WARS trilogy will prove as important as the original remains to be seen, but the Lucasfilm bandwagon is doing its darnedest to pave the way. First, all three existing episodes are dusted off for the Christmas rush, remastered and presented in 2.35:1 ratio; then, the sky is suddenly thick with rival texts (tie-in fighters, you might say). The best is without doubt Mark Cotta Vaz and Shinji Hata's THE STAR WARS ARCHIVES, a dazzling array of models, props, storyboards and other assorted ephemera from both that series and from the Indiana Jones trilogy (itself about to be resurrected). The attraction of STAR WARS: THE SCRIPTS is less quantifiable, since the films' appeal was surely more visual than most, but it's a job well-handled (the inclusion of running times and various versions of the foyer posters are nice touches) and might come in handy if you're running an sf version of Trivial Pursuits. Which brings us to THE ILLUSTRATED STAR WARS UNIVERSE, wherein Kevin J Anderson adopts assorted guises ("Major Kem Monnon, chief of the Rebel Corps of Engineers", "Councilman Po Ruddle Lingsnot") to accompany work by veteran STAR WARS artist Ralph McQuarrie with autobiographical extracts, geosurveys and the like. Nice pictures, shame about the text - and anyway, David Hardy and Bob Shaw did it first, and better, 15 years ago with GALACTIC TOURS.

Now, has anyone seen my treasured copy of VR TROOPERS: THE POP-UP COLOURING BOOK...?

LEGACIES by Alison Sinclair
Millennium, 419pp, £5.99, p/b.

Reviewed by Pauline Morgan.

There seems to be a dearth of good science fiction being produced at the moment so it is nice to find a competent newcomer to the field. This is Alison Sinclair's first published novel and the standard of her writing is accomplished.

The story is told in two parts, in alternating chapters, both from the same viewpoint - that of Lian D'Halldt. Lian is a member of the Burdanian colony on the planet of Taridwyn. He is handicapped after a severe fall left him brain-damaged. He finds speech difficult but when an expedition is mounted to revisit the home world he is included. Part of the story tells of the events leading up to the decision to go, part is what happens when they get there. The problem is that when the colonists left, the warp drive of the ships was triggered within the solar system and the colonists have feared that the reaction destroyed their homeworld.

In many respects this is a novel which lacks momentum. There are long passages of debate, instruction and information dumping and

the physical action is played down. It does, however, try to explore relationships - between some of the individual members of the expedition, between the colonists and the surviving Burdanians and between the colonists and the sentient aliens who have allowed them sanctuary on their world. It doesn't always quite ring true but is nevertheless a brave effort.

THE STAR FRACTION by Ken MacLeod

Legend, £10.00, 341pp, h/b,

Star Rating: ****

Reviewed by Martin Tudor.

This is a stunning first novel by one of the most exciting new sf writers to appear on the scene since Iain M Banks scaled his first hotel wall or crawled under a bar carpet. A friend of the aforesaid Mr Banks and runner-up in this year's Arthur C Clarke award (missing the prize by a small margin) MacLeod is a name to watch.

The story opens with a conversation between Moh Kohn and his gun. Kohn, a mercenary and founder member of the Felix Dzerzhinsky Workers' Defence Collective, has been hired to guard the campus of Brunel University and Science Park plc. Next to be introduced is Januis Taine, a struggling post-doc student researcher, who is working on a project to increase intelligence in animals - financed by mysterious backers. Finally we meet Jordan Brown, a 17-year-old computer whiz and stock exchange trader, who is contacted by "A Black Planner"....

MacLeod has created a strange but believable near-future, Balkanized world "where the peace process is deadlier than the wars and the US/UN's spy satellites and laser weapons have everybody in their sights". But "the Watchmaker" (an enigmatic "Black Planner" - person? computer programme? no one knows) intends to change the world and Moh, Janis and Jordan are instrumental to "his" plans. The three swiftly find themselves drawn into a dangerous and complex web of intrigue, radical and reactionary rhetoric, espionage and counter-espionage - both in the "real" and "cyber" worlds. "Spectres of a betrayed revolution haunt the fight for space and freedom, as the Army of the New Republic prepares its fourth 'final' offensive and the green barbarians close in on the divided cities..."

This is an incredibly exciting novel; tightly plotted, taut, well-written and bursting at the seams with strange and wonderful ideas. The only problem I had with it was that at times I found myself lost in the complexities of the plot - but I recommend it highly nonetheless and eagerly await the publication of MacLeod's second novel, THE STONE CANAL in September (Legend, £15.99).

The sharp-eyed amongst you will have noted a new innovation in the book reviews recently - yes, we would like every reviewer to give a "Star Rating" in future. The ratings are:

- * = Crap, beyond belief.
- ** = Crap, but readable.
- *** = Not too bad, really.
- **** = Pretty good actually.
- ***** = BUY IT!

Please remember that reviews of books should reach Martin Tudor at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, WV13 1HX, within ONE MONTH of your taking the book.

A number of people still owe reviews, their names are followed by the books they have yet to review (and the month in which they received them). Please ensure that these, along with reviews of books picked up at the last meeting are passed/mailed to Martin Tudor at/by this month's meeting.

Dave Cox: HOT SKY AT MIDNIGHT by Robert Silverberg (5/95).

Bernie Evans: THE DEUS MACHINE by Pierre Ouellette (2/95); NIMBUS by Alexander Jablovok (3/95).

John Howes: THE WAR OF THE LORD'S VEIL by Adam Nichols (8/95).

Robert Jones: JERUSALEM COMMANDS by Michael Moorcock (1/96); RING by Stephen Baxter (2/96); THE UPLIFT WAR by David Brin (3/96).

Steve Jones/B'ham Uni: DRAGONCHARM by Graham Edwards (1/95); TALISMAN by Sam Lewis (1/95); WARHAMMER: WOLF RIDERS ed David Pringle (3/95); BRIGHTNESS REEF by David Brin (1/96).

Adrian Middleton: DR WHO THE MISSING ADVENTURES: LORDS OF THE STORM by David A McIntee (2/96); DOCTOR WHO: TIME AND THE RANI by Pip & Jane Baker (2/96); DR WHO: PARADISE TOWERS by Stephen Wyatt (2/96); STAR WARS: THE LOST JEDI ADVENTURE GAME BOOK by Paul Cockburn (2/96); STARTIDE RISING by David Brin (2/96).

Chris Morgan: ROYAL ASSAIN the Farseer trilogy book 2 by Robin Hobb (3/96).

Pauline Morgan: FORTRESS IN THE EYE OF TIME by C J Cherryh (3/96); LADY OF THE TRILLIUM by Marion Zimmer Bradley (3/96).

Carol Morton: WITCHES BREW by Terry Brooks (5/95); RONAN THE BARBARIAN by James Bibby (5/95); THE FEY: SACRIFICE by Kristine Katherine Rusch (8/95); SACRED GROUND by Mercedes Lackey (9/95); STORM WARNING by Mercedes Lackey (9/95).

Tony Morton: RICHTER 10 by Arthur C Clarke & Mike McQuay (2/96).

Chris Ridd: SUNDIVER by David Brin (1/96).

James Robertson: BEGGARS IN SPAIN by Nancy Kress (9/95).

Peter Weston: THE STARS ARE ALSO FIRE by Poul Anderson (1/96).

Would the person who took a copy of LIFE FORM by Alan Dean Foster in January this year, please either send in their review or identify themselves - they had signed with a squiggle. Will EVERYONE please note that you should PRINT your name in the box provided as well as signing for the review book(s) you pick up. (Apologies to Sarah Freakley for wrongly identifying her as "squiggle" in the March newsletter - although, to be honest, it *does* look like *her* "squiggle"!)

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BRUM GROUP NEWS

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*The monthly newsletter of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group
(Honorary Presidents: Brian W Aldiss and Harry Harrison)*

Group Chairman & Newsletter Editor - Martin Tudor, Secretary - Anne Woodford,
Treasurer - Sarah Freakley, Publicity Officer - Steve Jones, Ordinary Member - Alan
Woodford, Novacon 26 Chairman - Carol Morton, Novacon 27 Chairman - Martin Tudor.

This month's regular meeting features

Tom Holt

on Friday 17th May, 7.45pm for 8pm,
at the Prince Hotel, Station Street,

(behind New St. Station, between the Electric Cinema and the Bus Station, Birmingham city centre).

Admittance: Members: £2.50, Non-Members £3.75. (Under 18s, Full-time Students and other
Unwaged £2.00, at the discretion of the Treasurer, on production of appropriate proof.)

"Tom Holt was born in 1961, a sullen, podgy child, much given to brooding on the Infinite. He studied at Westminster School, Wadham College, Oxford and the College of Law. He produced his first book, POEMS BY TOM HOLT, at the age of 13, and was immediately hailed as an infant prodigy, to his horror. At Oxford, Holt discovered bar billiards and at once changed from poetry to comic fiction, beginning with two sequels to E F Benson's "Lucia" series, and continuing with his own distinctive brand of comic fantasy. He has also written two historical novels set in the fifth century BC, the well-received GOATSONG and THE WALLED ORCHARD, and has collaborated with Steve Nallon on I, MARGARET, the (unauthorised) autobiography of Margaret Thatcher. Somewhat thinner and more cheerful than in his youth, Tom Holt is now married, and lives in Chard, Somerset, just downwind of the meat-canning factory." (From the blurb on MY HERO, Orbit, £15.99.)

After the critical acclaim of the first of his comic fantasies, EXPECTING SOMEONE TALLER, Holt has gone on to produce a stunning amount of work: WHO'S AFRAID OF BEOWULF?; FLYING DUTCH; YE GODS!; OVERTIME; HERE COMES THE SUN; GRAILBLAZERS; FAUST AMONG EQUALS; ODDS AND GODS; DJINN RUMMY and, most recently, MY HERO.

A popular and entertaining speaker at conventions, Holt has proven an equally popular guest of the BSFG on several occasions.

The BSFG meets at 7.45pm on the 3rd Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) in the upstairs function room of the Prince Hotel, Station Street in Birmingham city centre (formerly Stephenson's Hotel, between the Electric Cinema and the Bus Station). The annual subscription rates (which include 12 copies of this newsletter and reduced price entry to meetings) are £10.00 per person, or £13.50 for 2 members at the same address. Cheques etc. should be made payable to "the Birmingham Science Fiction Group" and sent to: the Treasurer, Sarah Freakley, c/o 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, B66 4SH. (E-mail should go via: bsfg@bortas.demon.co.uk) Book reviews, review copies and other contributions and enquiries regarding the Brum Group News to: Martin Tudor, Newsletter Editor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX.