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"I am an idealist. I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way."  
....Carl Sandburg

JUNE CSFA MEETING: HEINLEIN & THE HUGOS....The Chattanooga SF Association met on May 20 in the meeting room of the 1st Tennessee Bank in Brainard. The book discussion this month was Mindbridge by Joe Haldeman, and was led by Jack Hawkins, who read a paper on the book. The discussion was lively and interesting. Afterwards, side one of "Harlan!", a Hugo nominated recording of Harlan Ellison reading his own works was played, and then we were treated to a showing of Universe, an Academy Award nominated NASA film narrated by William Shatner. The next meeting is Saturday night, June 17, at 7:30 PM in the meeting room of the 1st Tennessee Bank in Brainard. The book of the month will be The Moon is a Harsh Mistress by Robert A. Heinlein. Also, the club will be casting its vote on the various Hugo Awards that will be presented at Iguanacon. By having a membership, the club can be entitled to send in a site selection ballot as to where the WorldCon will be in 1980. Only dues paying members will be allowed to vote. Also, CSFA would like to welcome neo-pro writer Steve Vance of Dalton, Georgia, to our membership. One of Steve's stories has appeared in Unearth magazine, and his first novel, Planet of the Gawfs, has recently been released by Leisure Books. The book to be read for the July meeting is Ice and Iron by Wilson Tucker. Book orders are taken at each meeting, if you have trouble finding the book of the month. To find the bank, out-of-towners from Knoxville, Cleveland, Atlanta should take I-24 west to Belvoir Ave. exit, then North Terrace (parallels the interstate) to Germantown Road. From Nashville, take the Germantown Road exit from I-24 (just past Missionary Ridge). Go north on Germantown to the first traffic light (the one at the interstate doesn't count) and turn right. The bank is on the right, one building past the intersection. For questions: Mike Rogers, 266-0298. (NWL)

NEBULA AWARDS ANNOUNCED....The 1978 Nebula Awards (for fiction published in 1977) were presented at the Science Fiction Writers of America annual banquet, this year held in New York City on April 29. The Novel award went to Gateway by Fred Pohl. The Best Novella was Spider and Jeannie Robinson's "Stardance". The Novelette Nebula went to Raccoona Sheldon for "The Screwfly Solution", and the Short Story Nebula went to Harlan Ellison's "Jefty is Five". A special non-Nebula plaque was presented to George Lucas for Star Wars. (DL)

CONVENTION PROGRESS REPORTS....Heritage Press, Inc. reports that the 1978 DeepSouthCon in Atlanta June 2-4 will be without Robert Heinlein, who has undergone arterial surgery, and also without both scheduled Guests of Honor Gahan Wilson and Clifford Simak. Wilson had a scheduling conflict and Simak's wife will have surgery soon. Jack Williamson will replace Simak as one of the Guests of Honor; Williamson was recently GoH at SunCon, the 1977 WorldCon in Miami. The first progress report for North Americon '79 is out; 230 members have joined so far. Pros signed up so far include Karl Edward Wagner and Jack Williamson, besides the guests already announced. And Iguanacon has released PR's #3 and #4 in the last few months; among events planned are a Harlan Ellison roast, a Trivia Bowl, a Fan Cabaret, films galore, panels and speeches too numerous to mention, and, of course, presentation of the 1978 Hugo Awards. As of March, Iguanacon had over 3000 members registered. (DL)

SPACE EXHIBIT AT NORTHGATE LIBRARY...."A Look at the Future" is the name of the space exhibit on loan from Marshall Space Flight Center, Alabama, that will be  
continued on page 2



SPACE EXHIBIT (CONT.)....at the Northgate branch of the Hamilton County Bicentennial Library June 10-17. There will be NASA films, such as "Blue Planet" and "Who's Out There?", and a scale model display (including an impressive 8 foot tall Saturn 5 rocket). Related events include model rocket launchings on June 10 by a local high school rocketry club. (DL)

POPULAR CULTURE ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CONVENTION REPORT....Like myself, many readers of CHAT probably are unaware that SF has still another "place in the sun" beyond it's numerous conventions. The Popular Culture Association has held national and regional meetings for almost a decade now, and SF is a big part of the scene at all these meetings.

At this year's national convention in Cincinnati April 19-22, I chaired a section entitled "The Many Faces of Love in Speculative Fiction" and gave a paper on androgyny using Ursula LeGuin's The Left Hand of Darkness and The Dispossessed. About a third of the sections at the meeting were on SF, and a very large number of people there were fans and/or scholars of science fiction and fantasy.

It was also very exciting and appropriate that the convention gave the Association's 1978 award for distinguished contributions to popular culture to none other than Ursula LeGuin. I was really thrilled to be asked to write the citation for that award. She was, alas, not there in person, but the citation is being sent to her.

In addition to all the sections on SF, there was a special panel one night composed of members of "First Fandom"-- a group made up of those who were fans of SF before 1938. Needless to say, they had some interesting stories to tell. They also had a guest who is a "First Fan" and an early writer in the field, A. Bertram Chandler.

Mr. Chandler is a fascinating old gentleman from Australia who has written Big Black Mark, Star Courier, and The Way Back (all in print), in addition to numerous early short stories. I had dinner with him one evening. Though he must be well over 80, he still writes, goes to all the x-rated movies, and travels widely. My big regret is that I don't own a tape recorder, for we could have had a nice program for our club out of this panel session. (Dee Weisbaker)

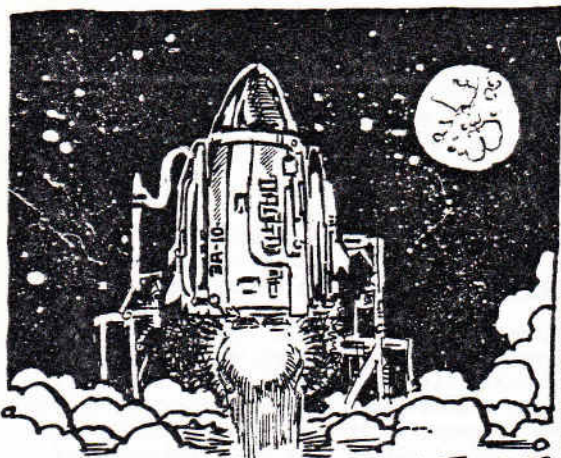
KUBLA KHAN SEXX SUCCESS....Again this year Ken & Lou Moore, along with the Nashville group, went all out to produce a good con. The program was most interesting and varied. Friday night featured slide shows by Alex Eisenstien and Robert Lovell, and movies until all hours. Also, the con suite featured video tapes and a magic show by Bill Hedrick. Saturday, a slide show by artist Vincent Di Fate served as warm-up for the GoH, Theodore Sturgeon. After Sturgeon, who read two of his short stories and generally entertained people, fan GoH 'John Cleve' gave his....speech. The banquet that evening was the usual great buffet. Toastmaster Andrew Offutt introduced Sturgeon's GoH speech and in general kept things moving in his usual style. After the art auction, the Midnight Masquerade was held. Top honors went to Barbara Harmon for her "Mrs. Pink" (from a Zenna Henderson story), and to John Neal who was a "Typical Fantasy Mushroom". There was more huckstering space this year, and probably more hucksters. The only thing smaller seemed to be the art show. Among unscheduled events were a Derby Day party given by the Louisville fans in the Con Suite (where Mint Juleps were distributed), and a ChatCon sponsored party Saturday evening after the banquet. Sunday was topped off with films in the main room and the Dead Dog Party in the Con Suite. (NWL)

CHAT encourages submissions of art, reviews, articles, letters of comment and the like. Written submissions should not be too lengthy--try to keep them under one page as it appears here. While we cannot pay for submissions, we provide a forum for fan writers and artists, and will give a complimentary copy of CHAT to all contributors who aren't already getting it. Art Credits for this month: page 3 - Charlie Williams; page 7 - Julia Wilhoit; page 8 - Jeff Mahr.



# CONSERVATIVE Predictions Dept..

VERY SOON, NOW, THE UNITED STATES WILL SEND A "WORKBENCH IN SPACE" TO ASSEMBLE "CATCHER'S MITT."



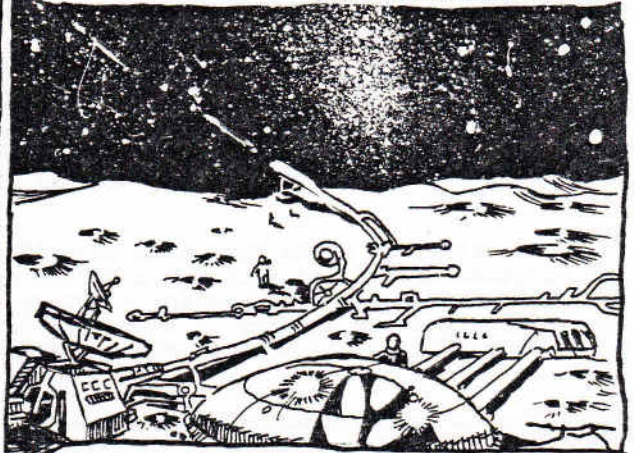
THE SHUTTLE BRINGS EQUIPMENT UP BY THE TON WITH MODERN PIGGYBACK BOOSTERS, ALL RECYCLED INTO YEARS OF REUSE.

"CATCHER'S MITT" IS A SKYLAB CORE WITH A FOR-REAL "TRACTOR BEAD."



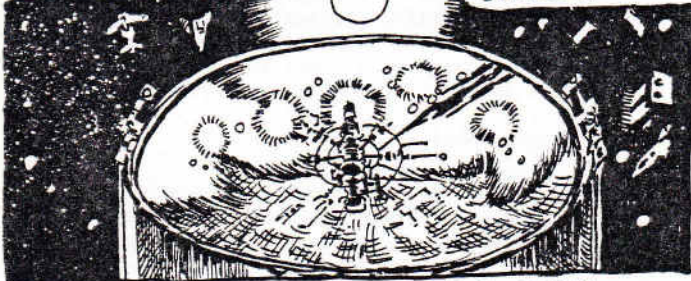
ITS MAGNETIC LATTICE ABSORBS THE INCOMING SHIPMENTS FROM SELENE, LUNA.

THESE SHIPMENTS ARE OF PROCESSED LUNAR SOIL... THE LUNAR BASE IS MANNED BY SIXTEEN ENGINEERS WHO RUN THE FUSION SMELTER AND THE ACCELERATOR WHICH HURLS THE MATERIAL INTO TRANSLUNAR ORBIT.



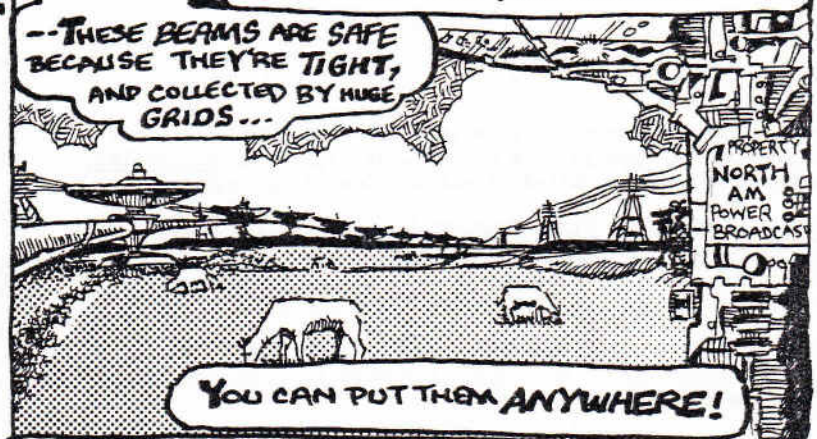
GLASS AND OXYGEN COMPILE THE BULK OF THE MATERIAL, SOON CONSTRUCTED INTO HABITATS....

--AND INTO GIGANTIC SOLAR PANELS, HARVESTING THE SUN'S RAYS 'ROUND THE CLOCK IN NIGHTLESS SPACE...



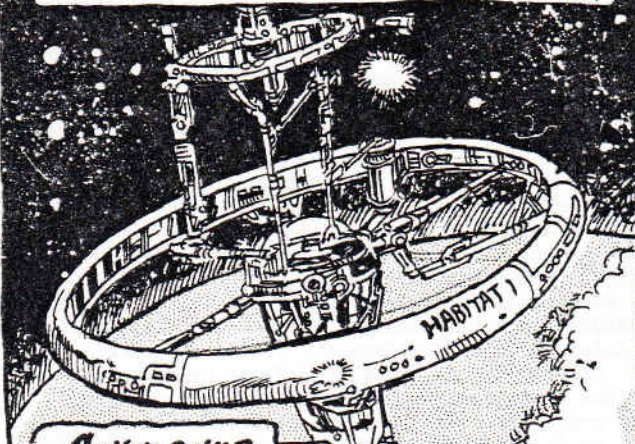
--AND BEAMING THAT FREE ENERGY VIA MICROWAVES TO THE ENERGY-STARVED EARTH BELOW...

--THESE BEAMS ARE SAFE BECAUSE THEY'RE TIGHT, AND COLLECTED BY HUGE GRIDS...



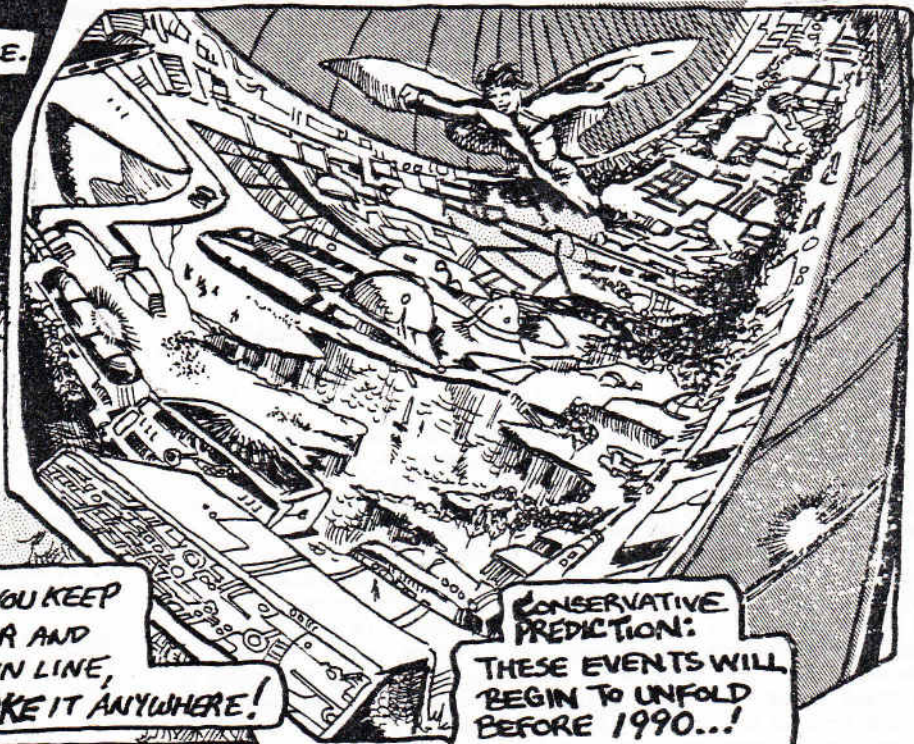
YOU CAN PUT THEM ANYWHERE!

I DON'T NEED TO TELL ANYONE WHY ONE SHOULD BUILD A COMMUNITY IN SPACE. IF YOU'RE A VISIONARY, YOU KNOW WHY!



SO YOU BUILD HABITAT BIGGER AND BIGGER! BRING IN A POPULATION IN THE THOUSANDS...

AS LONG AS YOU KEEP THE MIRROR AND SOLAR SAILS IN LINE, YOU CAN TAKE IT ANYWHERE!



CONSERVATIVE PREDICTION: THESE EVENTS WILL BEGIN TO UNFOLD BEFORE 1990...!



# Reminiscences of the Future....

A Dialog With FRANK M. ROBINSON & BOB TUCKER

Frank M. Robinson is probably best known as co-author (along with Thomas N. Scortia) of The Glass Inferno, on which the movie The Towering Inferno was in part based. But he is also a fine science fiction author. His science fiction novel The Power was made into a 1968 feature film by M-G-M that starred George Hamilton and Michael Rennie. His most recent novels, in collaboration with Tom Scortia, are The Prometheus Crisis and The Nightmare Factor, both good examples of a fast-growing class of science fiction called the 'technological thriller'.

On May 6, 1978, at Kubla Khan 6 in Nashville, Frank and longtime friend and author Bob Tucker met with the CHAT staff for a freewheeling discussion on everything from the history of fandom to the future of science fiction. A portion of the interview is given below.

CHAT: When did you first start writing? I take it you were a fan before you became a writer.

Frank: Yeah. Well, you know, you write off and on. I had my first short story published in June of 1950, in Astounding.

CHAT: What was its title?

Frank: "The Maze".

Bob: The one of yours I like the very best---you did two I like---one of them is "The Santa Claus Planet" in Astounding, and one of them is called, I think, "Good Luck Columbus".

Frank: "The Santa Claus Planet" was written as a special for the anthology, The Best Science Fiction Stories of 1951. And a little later reprinted by Palmer in Universe. "Good Luck Columbus" ran in....I really hated the story, Tuck.

Bob: I didn't. I liked it. I really did, Frank. It was an emotional story. This was a farewell to a man who could not come back to earth.

Frank: A guy who had gone to the moon and overshot, and could not return. It was in Amazing Stories.

Bob: Which is how Ted Sturgeon made his fame. Sturgeon writes emotional stories; the emotional story you did I remembered long after the others.

CHAT: It sounds like that story was about 10 or 15 years ahead of its time.

Frank: Well, we were all writing stories about going to the moon; none of us wrote a story about the way it was actually done.

CHAT: Science seems to be leaving science fiction behind. You don't see stories anymore about trips to the moon and the like.

Frank: I hate to say this, and this is a preface to a speech I'm going to give someday, in fact maybe next year. But the 'Lensman' stories, the 'Ensign Flandry' stories, the stories about rocketship adventures and the Great Universe Out There and all of that, as far as science fiction writers go are toys being put back in the box. Because we sent a man to the moon; we sent Neil Armstrong to the moon and we followed him up with some other people. And we proved something. You and I ain't gonna go. We can't. What we proved is that we're not liberated from this planet, we're bound to it. It's like, we stand here and tremble on the edge of eternity and there's a block there. It's not going to be in my lifetime, not in yours or your children's lifetime, not for a hundred generations are we ever going to get out to Alpha Centauri or any-

thing like that. And in the meantime, there's a test coming up. It's like, this planet is shrinking at such a rapid rate as far as people go, that within a hundred years it'll be a claustrophobic little race that'll have to learn something vitally important if it's going to survive at all. And that's how to get along with each other.

CHAT: I agree with that.

Frank: And it's like, there's a whole universe of things that we're going to have to drop. If you went to see Close Encounters of the Third Kind, there's an implied message in

there that the aliens are going to land, they're going to be lovable little creatures and furthermore, they're going to find that we're lovable little creatures. And, you smile when I tell you that because you know how ridiculous that is. Anybody that lands is going to find we're anything but lovable. Well, before we get out in that big, wide universe out there, we're going to have a couple thousand years right here building one thing. And that's how to get along with each other before we ever get out there. The rocketship stories, interplanetary space flight, the wars in outer space, all of that kind of thing is rapidly becoming sheer fantasy. It's no longer even conceivable; it's not to be considered. And what we're developing is a totally different kind of science fiction. It's dealing with something completely different. We're discovering this world is a strange, strange world in which we live. We're living in a world in which whales sing and dolphins talk, chimpanzees and gorillas learn how to talk to you. And that's the kind of world we're going to be investigating---how people think and how they feel. That's going to be done in terms of science fiction.

CHAT: How about you, Bob?

Bob: I accept what comes. Ted Sturgeon said tonight that science fiction readers, fans and writers don't suffer future shock because we're already acclimated to it. I agree. When the first Sputnik went up, yes, I was thrilled, but I wasn't surprised or shocked. I didn't panic like the politicians in Washington did. Let's see, in '57 it would have been Eisenhower, I think.

Frank: Yeah.

Bob: They panicked, and immediately poured ten million dollars or some such amount into the space program. I didn't panic. So what? I've been with Sputnik since 1931 when I started reading it. It was fun but it wasn't all that new to me. And it took a politician, Kennedy, trying to grandstand play; he promised the moon before 1970. 'Self-aggrandizement' is the term. If it hadn't been for President Kennedy saying he'd put us on the moon before 1970 and pushing the right buttons, we wouldn't be there yet. The pity of it is, it had to be a politician building up his ego and his image. That's what put us there, not all the beautiful dreams of science fiction writers. But no. I don't get any future shock out of it. If the radio telescopes picked up messages from Alpha Centauri tomorrow, I'd be surprised and delighted, but I wouldn't be shocked or frightened. I think it's the natural order of affairs. Sooner or later, perhaps not in my lifetime or my children's lifetime, the radio telescopes will pick up the messages from Alpha Centauri or wherever. The politicians will react as expected, running around like proverbial chickens with their heads cut off, the people will panic, the churches will experience a resurgence of religion. But the science fiction people, I think, will take it in stride.

CHAT: Frank, how do you incorporate science into your fiction? Do you feel concern that advances will leave you behind, in a literary sense?

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Robinson/Tucker Dialog (cont.)....

Frank: Oh, sure. Science fiction writers who use 'hardware' in their stories are not as far ahead of the actual sciences as they would like to think. Where science fiction really does a fine job is primarily sociological extrapolation. Which is the type of thing Heinlein does, or did. Where you extrapolate from a cultural basis rather than from a hard science basis.

CHAT: SF has been more sociological for a long time.

CHAT: SF has been really more sociological in the last few years than anything else.

Frank: It's been more sociological for a long time. In fact, that was the Campbell revolution. Not the addition of hard science as much as the addition of hard sociology. Few science fiction writers are hard core scientists; few of them could handle real genuine science.

CHAT: Changing the subject, just when did you two meet each other, anyway? I'm still trying to get this straight.

Frank: I was talking to Tucker about that earlier. It was around 1941. I was a 'little fan'; it was right after Chi-Con. And I had become a member of a very small local group called the Windy City Wampires.

CHAT: The Windy City what?

Frank: The Windy City Wampires. W-A-M-P-I-R-E-S. In Chicago. One weekend, I believe, we went down to a little convention in Joliet, and met this elderly....

Bob: Gentleman.

Frank: ....science fiction personality who was all of 24 at the time, I believe.

Bob: They call me 'elderly gentleman', sir.

Frank: Right! A real genuine "adult" who read science fiction, which impressed me greatly at the time. I thought only kids did. Back then, I was a very square, priggish little kid, and I found out that Tucker consorted with lewd women. I really had to think about if I really wanted to associate with this depraved monster.

Bob: Those were small conventions. There probably weren't more than 20 people there that weekend. That was a midwestern convention at that time. Whenever 20 of us could get together, or less, we'd call it a convention and have fun. Nothing like this. No banquets. No big room parties. We'd just get together, make the rounds of the bookshops to see what the mundanes living there hadn't picked over yet, and gathered in somebody's room. Maybe, MAYBE a beer or two, and several bottles of cola and all that jazz. And the more daring and elderly gentlemen among us might---not always---might have some real booze. And the youngsters would sit there, watch us drink that stuff, and gaaaaasp!

Frank: It was pure scandal! Tucker not only drank, he played poker, and there were even rumors---of course I couldn't substantiate them--- but there were rumors that he bailed!

Bob: (Laughs) And that was how I met Frank.

Frank: It was the ultimate in adulthood.

Bob: Yeah. Jeez. Considering what we did then and what conventions are today, we were babes in the woods, weren't we?

Frank: Right.

CHAT: Frank, do you consider yourself writing mainstream now rather than SF? The Nightmare Factor has been reviewed mostly as mainstream.

Frank: Correct. It's a form of mainstream using science fiction techniques, which The Glass Inferno and The Prome-

theus Crisis are the same sort of thing. An attempt to hit mainstream fiction by use of science fiction techniques.

Bob: Listen, bring me up to date on something. When you went to Beloit, you were a Physicist, were you not?

Frank: Yeah, I majored in Physics in undergraduate work, and took a Masters in Journalism.

Bob: Have you used that background in science fiction?

Frank: It's a terrible thing to ask me, because I am familiar with the vocabulary of science, but have never deliberately used what little scientific background I have. You understand I majored in Physics, but the Physics of 20 or 25 years ago is sheer mythology today; it has no relevance.

Bob: I know, of course, you don't make laughable mistakes when working on 'building' a planet. Like Poul Anderson, have you ever sat down and built a world, based upon what you learned?

Frank: No. I frankly don't have that ability; I'm not a Hal Clement. And I don't have Anderson's own background. Given my druthers, combined with Tom Scortia, I write what might be called 'technological thrillers'. They always have a technology base. They tend to be didactic novels, as Tom calls them, because they teach. You can learn a lot about the anatomy of burning buildings, or how power plants can fail, or the propagation of diseases. Left to my own devices, I'd probably, for the lack of a better expression, write people stories or extrapolation of cultural and sociological backgrounds. Like "The Fire and the Sword", "The Santa Claus Planet", "The Hunting Season"; things like that.

CHAT: What's your opinion of Irwin Allen?

Bob: (Laughs heartily) That's a good question!

Frank: What's my opinion of....how do you mean that?

CHAT: Well, Harlan has been somewhat outspoken about Irwin. Did he screw up your book?

Frank: Consider the problem Allen had. He had two different books. He had to combine them both because two different studios were cooperating. He had a screenwriter, Sterling Silliphant, who had to not only combine the two books, but write the necessary filler material between them. I think Allen did a very good job. There's no such thing as a writer whose going to be a hundred percent satisfied with what he sees on screen.

Bob: Tell me this, Frank. Another man's book was bought with yours. Since the picture was made, I know your career. Whatever happened to the other fellow? Is he famous, or did he fall by the wayside?

Frank: No. Richard Martin Stern has written a number of books. I don't mean to do the man injustice, but he's the type of writer who has turned out, oh, I don't know, 10 or 15 books, none of which I ever heard of. Which doesn't mean that other people haven't. But it's with a certain amount of irony that the title of the book that Stern wrote following The Tower is a book called Power. The Power was the name of the second novel I wrote, the first that was published.

CHAT: And it made an excellent screenplay.

Bob: He did it unconsciously?

Frank: I'm sure. With no malice aforethought.

CHAT: What do you consider your best work to date?

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Robinson/Tucker Dialog (cont.)....

Frank: I have to eliminate the books I do with Tom Scortia because a collaboration is like a separate entity. I can't point to parts of The Glass Inferno that I did or that Tom did; he's responsible for this, I'm responsible for that. What it amounts to is that you wind up with a certain amount of dispassionate interest. What do I like best of everything I've done? (Pause) In novels, of course, it's The Power. In novellas, it's probably "East Wind, West Wind", which was written for Harry Harrison. It came out in Nova 2. That one, and "The Wreck of the Ship John B", which ran in Playboy. And for short stories, it's another one that ran in Playboy called "A Life in the Day Of", of which I was exceptionally proud and considered my best 2000 words.

Bob: I rather liked "John B" myself, but I liked other stories you did for some of the pulp magazines and you don't agree. I liked "The Santa Claus Planet"; I liked---I can never get the title right---"Goodbye Columbus", "Farewell Columbus"....

Frank: "Good Luck Columbus".

Bob: "Good Luck Columbus". But you always put it down. And I don't know why, because I thought it was a touching, emotional little story.

Frank: I thought it was a little bit too emotional. I would use more restraint if I were to do it now. There's a story I should send you called "The Radio", which is an emotional story but told with a great deal of restraint. It ran in a skin magazine called Touch, I believe. It was about life in Haight-Asbury, as it really was. Oh, one thing that I should say, and I've really never said this before; nobody ever asked me. Since I'm here now with the gentleman, I may as well go on record. Every writer learns from other writers. You don't learn in schools, and you don't learn by just reading, although that's a big help. The people who taught me how to write, if it can be taught, were Oliver Saari, an old time science fiction writer, Poul Anderson, who helped the first couple of times around, and Bob Tucker, who was the source of not only encouragement, but a lot of very practical advice.

CHAT: How about your ideas? You look out your office window and see a skyscraper smoldering.

Frank: Ideas come from a multitude of places. When you're writing what you might call 'technological thrillers', you find your ideas in the newspapers, or Scientific American. I look for the scientific development and extrapolate from there. The danger in doing that, and it really is a danger in that it can cause you ulcers, is that between starting the novel and ending it, something else might have happened that will void your entire premise. Plus you're in competition. There's a lot of other writers with the same idea. When Tom and I did The Glass Inferno, we had no idea that Richard Martin Stern had picked up on essentially the same idea and had written The Tower, which was not the same plot, but the same situation. In Prometheus, we beat out by the hair of our chins a very well known science fiction writer who was collaborating with a very well known ecologist, both of whom were interested in what would happen if there was a serious accident in an atomic power plant. And in The Nightmare Factor, there the essential competition is a novel called Glory Hits, published by Ballantine. That makes you very skittish after a while. You can spend a year on a book, and then flush it.

CHAT: What projects have you got ongoing now?

Frank: Tom and I have another project together which I'm obviously not going to talk about, for reasons I just mentioned. I'm not going to talk about what the idea is, or anything like that.

CHAT: Can you give us a title?

Frank: The Gold Crew is the working title. It's under con-

tract to a major New York house for, you know, lots and lots of money. It may be the last book Tom and I do together for a while, simply because each of feel we are losing our own identity; this 'third party' that I explained before, this 'Scortia-Robinson', who is an invisible but very real entity out there, who doesn't think like either one of us. Both of us would like to re-establish ourselves. I have some straight science fiction on the burner that I would like to do, because I've been away from the field too long, and because it's fun to do. It's not as formula-ridden as 'Scortia-Robinson' are doing. You can have fun with it.

CHAT: Did you use to be an editor at one time?

Frank: Yeah, I spent most of my life as an editor. Just to round out the background a little bit, I worked on a Sunday supplement called Family Weekly as an associate editor; I worked on Science Digest. Fritz Leiber also worked there at one time; we did not work there together. I was managing editor and then editor of Rogue magazine during the early 60's. I subsequently worked on Cavalier. You know, another skin book with pretensions. In fact it was Cavalier, if you heard Sturgeon's speech tonight, that ran his article "Ask the Next Question" ((ed. note: also the title of Theodore Sturgeon's guest of honor speech at KK6)). Subsequently, I free-lanced for a while up in Haight-Asbury, then did a few interviews for Playboy--Robert Heinlein was one of them. I did a dialog with Alan Watts and Arthur C. Clarke that ran in Playboy, and eventually went to work for Playboy full time for three years as 'The Playboy Advisor', advice to the lovelorn.

CHAT: That was you?

Frank: Yeah, that was me. I also wrote their hi-fi articles and stuff like that. I left in '72 to come out to the west coast to freelance.

CHAT: Do you have any questions you want to ask Tucker?

Frank: Yeah, I've got a couple. The first and most obvious is, what kind of work are you working on now?

Bob: I'm glad you asked that question. But I'm superstitious. I won't tell you what the book's about. I can't talk about it and then write it. However, the working title is Rejoice! It's Resurrection Day. Picture in your mind's eye the paper in the typewriter; I put my titles in two sentences for visual impact. First sentence: "Rejoice!" Drop down to the next line: "It's resurrection day." And the story is about.....

Frank: You said you weren't going to tell me.

Bob: No, I've already written this part. It's about a man who was 'waked-up' one morning; he thinks he's awakened from a sleep, and actually he's been awakened from the dead. He was dead, as he discovers; he has been resurrected. But it isn't heaven and it isn't hell. The story is the world he is in when he is resurrected, and that's the whole damn book. That, and what happens to him when he discovers where he's really at.

Frank: I love it!

Bob: Now, I can't tell you any more than that, because I'm superstitious, as I said. I simply can't go back and write it.

Frank: I've got a couple of other questions to ask. Two of them. From what I've read of your writing, you specialize in people stories as opposed to gadget stories. Is that because of a basic lack of knowledge about science; do you feel uneasy about it?

Bob: Yes, that's part of it. I don't have a scientific background. I had no college; I'm only a high school grad. I have no background whatever in science, so I know I could be caught off base; the readers would laugh at me for what I don't know. That's half of it. The other half is that I love people, so I write people stories. I'm madly in love with people. And I write about what I know best.

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Robinson/Tucker Dialog (cont.)....

**Frank:** I would have to say: you, like Bloch, like Sturgeon-- jeez, I'm so full of compliments I can't stand it--(Bob laughs at this) If I were to introduce any one of you, I would do it, one, as a writer of great talent, et cetera, et cetera. I would also introduce you as human beings. By 'you' I mean all three of you. And the one line that I would use: There is no malice in you, anyplace. And that's the kindest compliment I could pay.

**Bob:** Thank you.

**Frank:** As long as I've known you that has shown. I think it's natural it has come out in your writing.

**Bob:** I don't hate anybody, Frank.

**Frank:** I realize that. The second thing is, over the course of a lifetime of writing, I don't know how many detective stories, how many novels. How much all told, Tuck?

**Bob:** 21 books, and about 30 to 40 stories.

**Frank:** Of those 21 books, some of them have been outstandingly good science fiction. The Long, Loud Silence, The Lincoln Hunters, The Year of the Quiet Sun. It's like you're a practicing, undiscovered major talent.

**Bob:** They're simply people stories. That's all I know how to write; I don't know any other way to write.

**Frank:** There's one last question which I'll ask. The other thing that really interests me is that you started out doing

some science fiction shorts, but in your novels you started out -- and very successfully -- doing mysteries. Why did you switch over to science fiction, or why did you start with mysteries in the first place? Why not science fiction; that was your background.

**Bob:** In 1945 when I started doing novels, there was no science fiction book market. You had to be a Wells or Verne or some big name mainstream writer. You couldn't sell; there was no hardcover science fiction market. But the mystery market was wide open. Anybody could write a mystery novel and sell it. I did, which is why I started in mysteries. By 1950, after Wellheim had opened the door and got us in with The Pocket Book of Science Fiction, Frank Belknap Long, George O. Smith and other people were reprinting their serials in book form. Suddenly, by the late 40's and very early 50's science fiction got it's foot in the door and the books began to appear. I took a flyer one year. Instead of writing a mystery novel, I wrote a science fiction novel, and it sold.

**CHAT:** What was it's title?

**Bob:** City and the Sea. It was published in 1950 or 51.

**CHAT:** One last question, Frank. Is writing science fiction what you always wanted to do?

**Frank:** Yeah. I've been doing exactly what I wanted to do. I edited for a while, but I like to edit. I like to publish. But I also like to write. In contrast to a lot of people I know in life, I am doing exactly what I like to do, and what I should do. And that's all I can say.

# Capricorn One

Movie Review by Dick Lynch

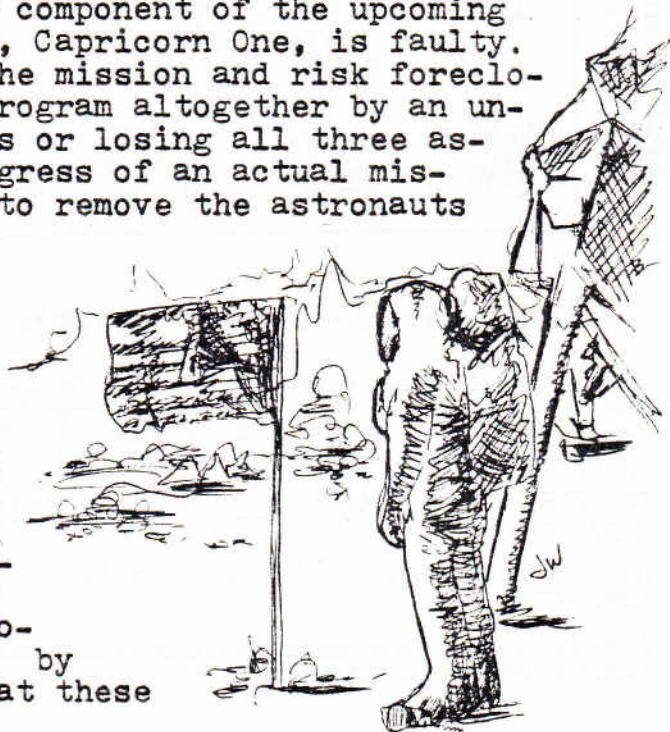
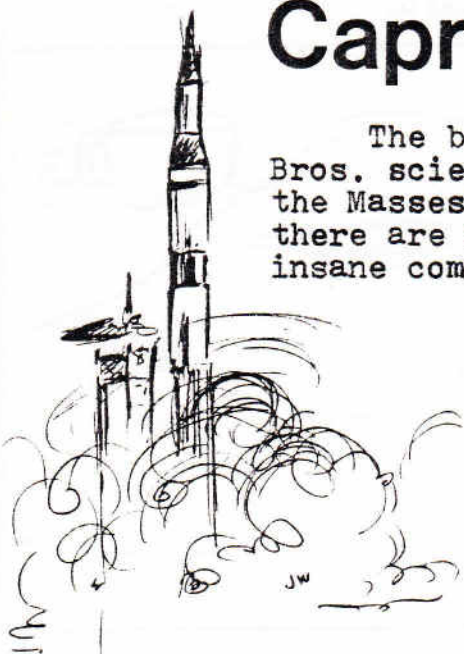
The best phrase I can think of to describe the new Warner Bros. science fiction film Capricorn One is "Science Fiction for the Masses". It is not science fiction in the classic sense; there are no futuristic space ships, no aliens, no ray guns, no insane computers; nothing like that. Instead, Capricorn One is a 'technological thriller'.

The basic premise of the movie is that the United States Space Program is in trouble. A major life support system component of the upcoming manned Mars mission, Capricorn One, is faulty. Rather than scrub the mission and risk foreclosure of the space program altogether by an unsympathetic Congress or losing all three astronauts in the progress of an actual mission, NASA decides to remove the astronauts from the launch vehicle at the last minute and black-

mail them into simulating the events of the mission on a soundstage over the course of the eight month mission duration.

You have to accept this basic premise if you are to enjoy the film. NASA stops at nothing to keep up the pretense, from eliminating investigative reporters to permanently silencing the three astronauts at the mission's conclusion (although both fail). You would think that this is a movie about the Soviet Space Program rather than the American; by using any logic at all, it's plain to see that these

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## CAPRICORN ONE REVIEW (cont.)....

circumstances are impossible to develop in today's world.

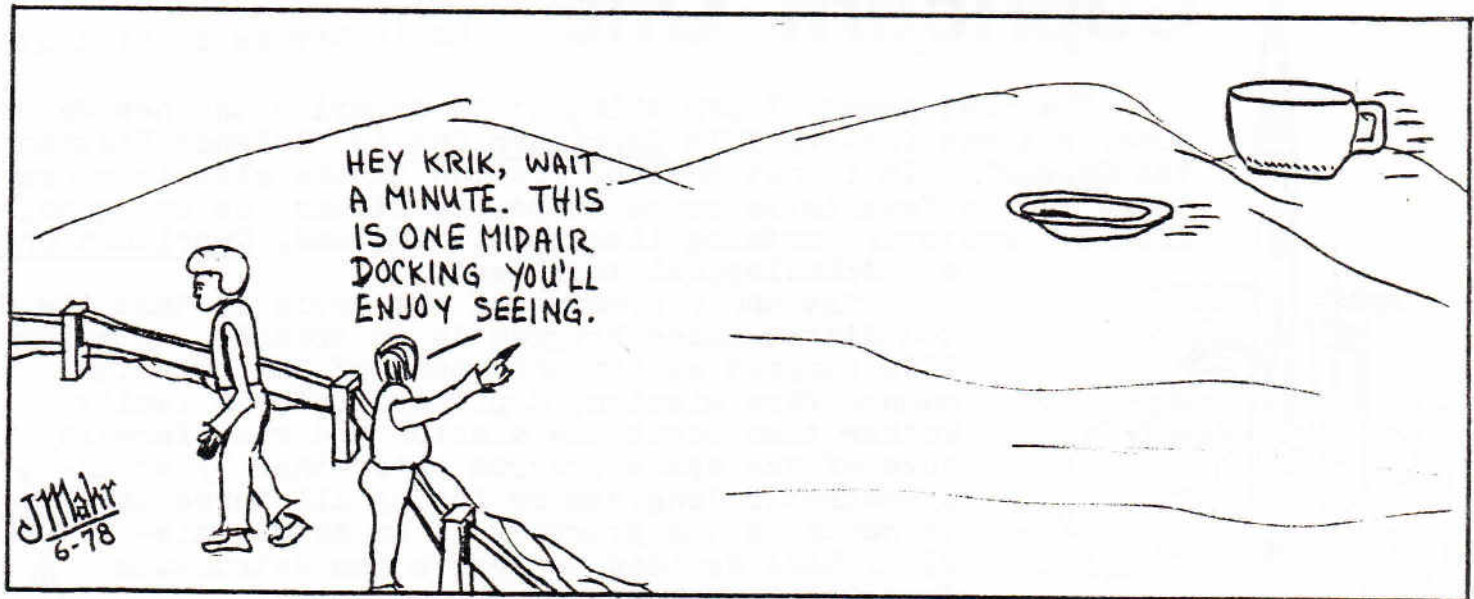
If the sense of disbelief can be suspended, however (use the 'parallel earth' method---the story takes place on an alternate earth where things are different), Capricorn One turns into a fine, entertaining movie. There are some good character performances, most notably by Sam Waterston and Telly Savalas. The last half of the movie is full of action sequences that should please most film-goers. And the science, lo and behold, is more or less accurate, right down to the excellently simulated Martian surface and believable video effects used by NASA to simulate the reduced Martian gravity.

But a few glaring errors stand out. Although it's never referred to as such, the Capricorn mission plainly uses a Saturn V rocket as a launch vehicle; a Saturn V won't get you to Mars and back. Other Apollo hardware was used, like the Lunar Lander on the simulated Martian surface. The mission duration was only eight months; this is too short by about half. And a couple of time lags in voice transmissions between the spacecraft and the ground were grossly miscalculated---in a real situation, somebody would have caught them there. All this is picky, I'll admit, but I like my science so hard it glints in the sun.

Another problem with the film is that, for a 'technological thriller', it starts out damn slowly. If you're not a science freak, you're liable to get bored and leave before the action sequences begin (i.e. the astronauts try to escape and tell the world). And the ending might have been better handled; it's an example of the "Well, what'll happen next?" syndrome.

But the movie has, overall, more positive than negative points. It will be popular; it should make money.

And it may be the best new SF film you'll see in 1978.



Krik's Universe.....by Jeff Mahr  
.....

an interview with

## Alan Dean Foster

Alan Dean Foster is one of the newer stars in the science fiction firmament. His name has become well-known through his association with two phenomenal successes: his Star Trek Log series, and his new sequel-novel to Star Wars, Splinter of the Mind's Eye. These have served to call attention to Alan's own original works, Icerigger, Midworld, The Tar-Ayim Krang, and others.

Then, too, he is the Featured Speaker at ChattaCon 4, in January, 1979.

Below is an interview conducted by telephone with Alan Dean Foster by Shelby Bush III on May 4, 1978.

Alan Dean Foster: Well, Shelby, what can I do for you?

Shelby: Well, I'll ask a few questions, you can tell a few lies, and we'll take it from there.

Alan: That's fine with me. Ask away.

S: First of all, what do you have coming up?

A: I have a couple of stories coming out, "Snake Eyes" will be in Stellar 4; a story called "Bystander", which is based on an unpublished Rick Sternbach painting---which may never

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Alan Dean Foster Interview (cont.)....

be published, but which I may show someday---that's up to Rick. Very interesting the way things come about. Driving back with Rick and another friend of his from the Worldcon in Washington a couple of years ago, and it was the first time I'd seen Rick's work---in fact, I think it was the first or second time he'd ever exhibited at a major convention. I asked him to do something for me; you do something, and I'll write a story about it, and we'll see what happens with it. The painting's not going to be used with the story, because it wasn't designed to be a cover illustration. It probably wouldn't fit properly, but the story will be in the first issue of Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Adventure Magazine which should be out shortly. And then, I've got a story called "The Chair", a horror story, not science fiction, about a chair I own, which is three or four hundred years old, and has a head of a screaming demon carved in the back of it. People get very nervous when they sit in it. That'll be out in Shadows 2, which Charles Grant is editing for Doubleday. And Union of Ice, (I don't know if that title will stick, but it's the tentative title) is the sequel to Icerigger, and that will be out from Del Rey in February or March next year.

And you've probably heard that I did the story for the Star Trek movie.

S: Yes, and I wanted to ask you about that later.

A: I don't know if I can give you any answers, but you can ask.

S: Then let's talk about the Star Trek movie. What can you say about it?

A: Well, I can repeat what's already been printed. There is at least one new character, a female navigator, who is played by a former Miss India. They did sign the rest of the cast, Robert Wise is going to direct, Jerry Goldsmith is doing the score, and the screenplay is by Gene Roddenberry and Harold Livingston, from an idea by Gene and myself in a treatment.

S: ...but no plot.

A: No plot. Sorry, I wish I could. I'm just as much of a fan as anybody else when it comes to these things, and I would like nothing better than to tell everybody what's going to happen. But for one thing, that would be very disappointing

to some people, and maybe encouraging to some people, depending on what their reaction is to it. Because I only did the treatment, I have no idea what the final script will look like; in fact, the final script is probably not final either. I know at least one other writer has done a final polish on it. What the final result will look like, and how much resemblance it will bear to the treatment that was finally accepted, I have no way of knowing. It will be interesting to see.

S: What's your association with Star Wars?

A: Well, I had the contract to do the one sequel book, and that's it. You know Leigh Brackett did the first draft of the screenplay for the sequel film, and she just passed away recently, so what will happen at this point I don't know. But I have no official involvement with the film sequel whatsoever at this point---or with any other sequel books at this point.

S: How close were you with the original production?

A: I wasn't.

S: You're featured speaker for ChatCon 4. Have you ever been to Chattanooga before?

A: No, I never have. The closest I've been to Chattanooga... I've been to Miami, Indianapolis, Milford, Penn. (where my agent lives), Northern New Jersey, Morgantown, West Virginia for MonCon...

S: Yes, I remember that.

A: Yes, you were there. And that's it. ((Ed. note: Alan left out Columbus, Ohio, for MarCon 12)). My wife, Joanna, however, lived in Atlanta for a couple of years, so she knows that part of the country, if not the Chattanooga area itself. Oh, yes, I was stationed at Fort Knox, Kentucky, for a while.

S: Thank you, Alan, for taking the time to speak with me.

A: Thank you, shelby. Any time.

*This transcript is a portion of an interview printed in entirety in Moondust 2, a genzine by Bob Roehm, 820 Cambridge Blvd., Apt. 765, Clarksville, Indiana 47130. Write, enclosing a SASE, for price and publication date.*

## Special Review Section: THE CLONES

Imperial Earth by Arthur C. Clarke; Ballantine Books, \$1.95

The Multiple Man by Ben Bova; Ballantine / Del Rey, \$1.75

Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang by Kate Wilhelm; Pocket Books, \$1.75

Reviewed by Dick Lynch

Cloning, as one aspect of bioscience, is 'coming of age'. Average people know about cloning, at least what it is. Clones are even technologically possible now; frogs have been successfully cloned. Plant life, such as the California Redwood, can also be cloned. The discovery of a preserved, frozen carcass of a young Woolly Mammoth in Siberia gives speculation that cloning attempts will be tried on it. There has even been a book published that claims (probably fraudently) that a human clone has been produced.

All in all, it's another area where science fiction will be hard pressed to stay ahead of science.

In the past year or so, three SF novels have appeared, giving new treatment to the subject of cloning. Each is believable, without overtaxing the reader's sense of credibility. Two were Hugo/Nebula award nominees; one won both awards. All are recommended reading.

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THE CLONES/REVIEW (cont.)....

Of the three, Arthur C. Clarke's Imperial Earth takes place in the most distant future, in the year 2276. Civilization has been unable to leave the Solar System, its farthest outpost being Saturn's moon Titan. An economy has been built there, based on availability of rocket fuel hydrogen from the atmosphere of nearby Saturn. One family, the Makenzies, "controls" Titan. However, due to a genetic defect, they cannot reproduce naturally, but must go to earth to be cloned; therefore the genetic defect is passed on to each succeeding clone generation. The majority of the novel deals with the scenerio of future earth, of changes that occurred over the past centuries since the 'time of troubles' in the late 20th century.

This is not Arthur Clarke's best novel. His style has changed somewhat in the past few years, tending toward people-oriented stories where not much happens in the way of action. In one sense, Imperial Earth can be considered a travelog; Clarke is showing his (new) universe, giving a background. It's possible there will be future fiction from him set in this same universe. Maybe then we'll get another quick-paced story, in the style of Earthlight, where events influence the story line more directly.

The Multiple Man, by Ben Bova, is a more direct novel; that is, there are relatively few extraneous scenes included that do not directly influence the story line. Bova's style is crisp and straightforward; it begins with the President of the United States apparantly killed through mysterious circumstances, only to turn up hale and hearty again after a political rally. And continues with a pseudo-Watergate style investigation into the matter being conducted secretly by the Presidential Press Secretary.

The Multiple Man is obviously not ment as science fiction. Just by the book title and cover illustration (several identical Presidents in political-type poses), anyone who has read any SF at all could tell you the scenario--the President is really several clones. Nothing in the novel discourages this idea, from the first pages on. This is really SF disguised as mainstream, aimed for the higher circulation mainstream audience. Nevertheless, The Multiple Man is very well-written, logical to the end, and interesting. Ben Bova should do more writing.

Possibly the best example to date of a novel concerning cloning is Kate Wilhelm's Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang. It is simply outstanding. Unlike the other two novels, the basis of this novel is a novelette of the same name that appeared in Orbit 15; the novelette makes up the first section of the book. Sometimes this approach does not work well; too often an excellent novelette or novella, when expanded, becomes a major dissappointment due to a change in the author's style or goal for the story in the interim. This is not the case here. The story seems very realistic for the most part, and neither races or plods along the way. In part one, we witness the fall of civilization and the rise of the clones, as a last desperate attempt at saving a sterile humanity. Parts two and three bring dissention and decay into the world of the clones, as ideals become compromised and individualism tries to reassert itself. And we are given views of fallen civilization, as expeditions embark on odysseys to great cities to salvage what they can. In the end, we find the world and civilization of the clones decaying as rapidly as the human civilization.

To say this novel is Kate Wilhelm's best work is an understatement. I look forward to future, equally excellent works from her.

In summary, cloning is popular now-in fact as well as fiction. No one yet knows whether it is a future path for humanity, but it should be good subject material for good, believable science fiction for years to come.

And that's it for another month. Again, we missed getting in our special "Close Encounters" cartoon feature due to lack of space. Next month for sure (we hope!). Also next month: an interview with Vincent Di Fate, and the return of the Science Fiction Idea Corner (note that Jeff Mahr needs submissions for it: 7 Harding Ave., Haverstraw, NY 10927), and A&J's Corner. Hope to see you at the next CSFA meeting.