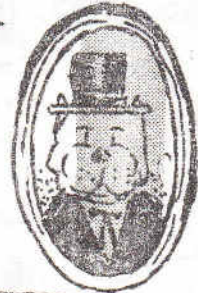


# Le Chat

**THIS ISSUE:**  
CSFA NEWS AND VIEWS ---  
AND SOME NEW FEATURES!



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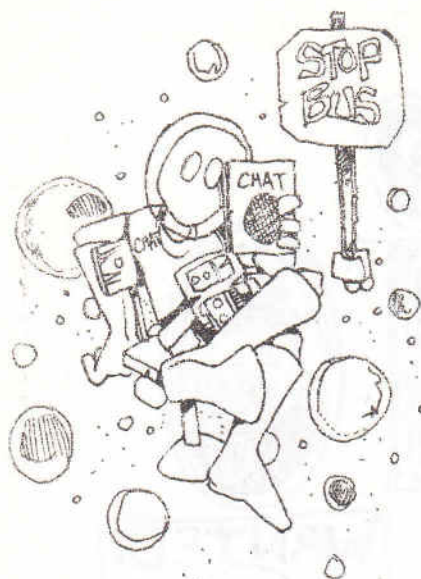
FOR  
IMPERSONATING  
AN ARTIST

PLE  
NO

C. Williams

MERRY  
CHRISTMAS!  
HAPPY CHANUKA!





# CHAT 39

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 3

December, 1980

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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4207 Davis Lane  
Chattanooga, TN 37416

Contributing Editor: Mike Rogers

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CHAT is a fanzine of Southern Fan news, and is supported in part by the Chattanooga Science Fiction Association. We encourage submissions of art, reviews, letters of comment, and news (especially news). Written material should be concise, about 500 words max unless previous arrangements have been made with us. While CHAT doesn't pay contributors, we provide a forum for fan writers and artists; a complimentary

copy is given to all contributors who aren't already receiving it. Opinions expressed in CHAT by contributors do not necessarily represent those of the editors, or of the Chattanooga Science Fiction Association. All correspondence to CHAT will be considered for publication unless otherwise specified by the writer.

DEADLINE for CHAT #40 - Sunday, December 21, 1980, for LoCs and articles.

*"Every dogma has its day, but ideals are eternal." - Israel Zangwill*

**DECEMBER CSFA MEETING FEATURES CHALKER DISCUSSION.** The November CSFA meeting at UTC featured both sercon and faan events. After a short meeting to determine when the December and January meetings would be held, Mike Rogers led a lively discussion on the current SF magazines. Afterwards, the gathered fans trooped out to the Rustic Village Apartments clubhouse for a well attended pizza party, sponsored by the Chattacon committee, with fans from Knoxville and Atlanta in attendance. The next CSFA meeting will be 7:30 PM Saturday, December 13 (one week before the normal meeting date) at the First Tennessee Bank in Brainerd. The December program will be a discussion of the works of Chattacon 6 Guest of Honor Jack L. Chalker, led by Rome/Atlanta fan Deb Hammer Johnson. Members are urged to read up on Mr. Chalker's works and come prepared for a spirited discussion of ideas and style. The January CSFA meeting date will be Saturday, January 10, probably at UTC. To get to the First Tennessee Bank, coming from I-75 west on I-24 take the Belvoir Ave. exit and proceed along North Terrace (which parallels I-24) to its end at Germantown Road. Coming east on I-24, take I-24 to the Germantown Road exit (just after the hill over 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. (NWL)

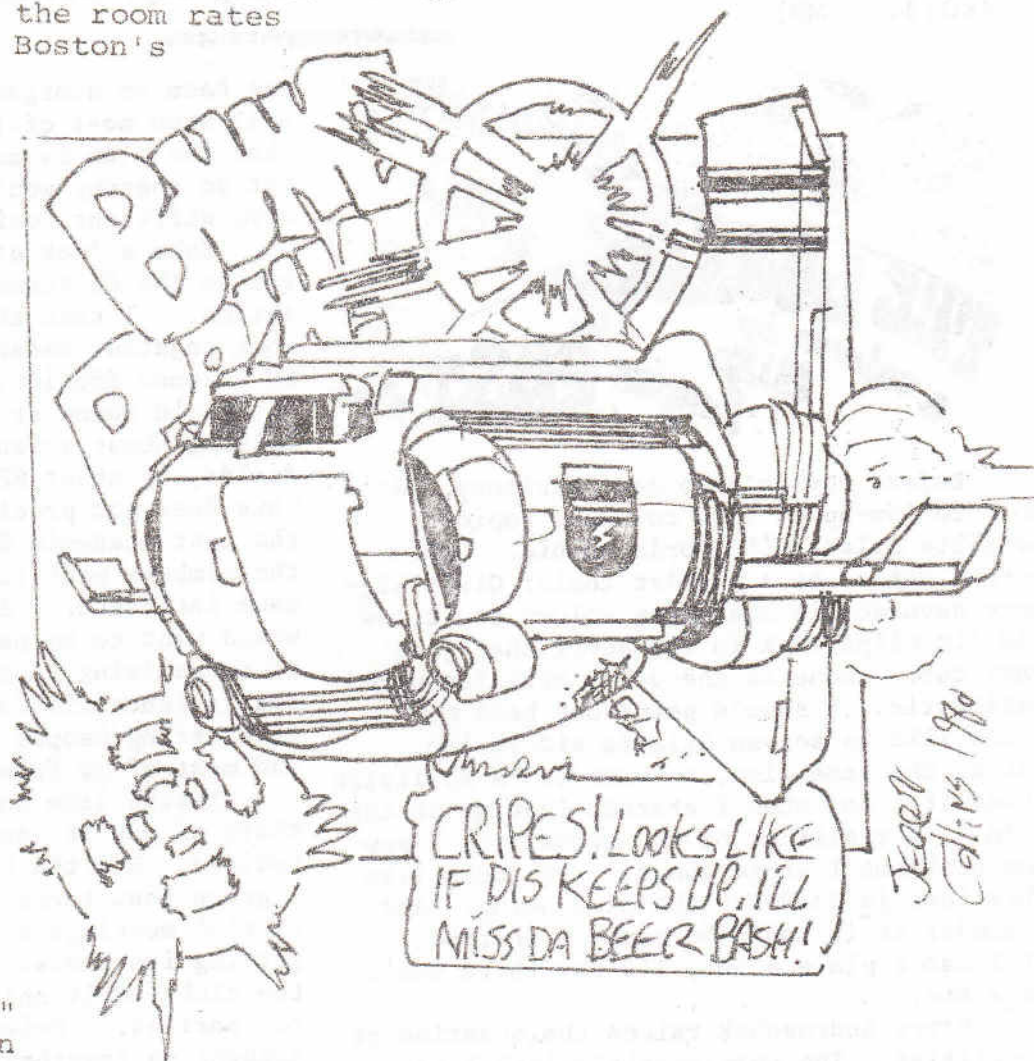
**CHATTACON COMMITTEE POSITION OPEN.** The Chattacon committee has announced an opening on the Board of Directors. Anyone interested in applying for the position must appear at the next ConCom meeting (Saturday Dec. 13, 1980 at the First Tennessee Bank; 6:30 PM). Those interested must also bring a letter of intent to present to the board. Interviews will be conducted by board members. (Janet Caruth)

**ONE LINERS.** *Galileo* and *Galaxy* magazines are dead barring a miracle, according to *LOCUS*. *Galileo* is \$125,000 in debt and doesn't even have enough money to send out notices to subscribers. *Galaxy* only had the money to mail out half of the copies of the issue they had printed.



## ONE LINERS (CONT.)

The short fiction market continues to shrink. \*\*\* The semi-prozines are also having their troubles. Both *Thrust* and *Starship* will skip an issue at the end of the year due to financial problems. The next issue of *Starship* will appear in February, 1981 and will cost \$2.95. \*\*\* *SF Chronicle* reports that the room rates for the next Boskone, Boston's annual SF convention, will be \$57 single and \$69 double, the highest room rates ever proposed for a SF convention. There are rumors that the Sheraton-Boston does not want to host the convention. If this is true, it spells trouble for future SF conventions across the nation. We would be glad to hear from anyone with first hand information on this story. \*\*\* One piece of good news, also from *SF Chronicle* -- Joan Vinge's novel *The Snow Queen* has gone back for a 4th hardback printing at Quantum. Congratulations, Joan. \*\*\* Sharon Webb's novellette "Variations on a Theme of Beethoven" will be anthologized in Don Wollheim's 1981 *Annual World's Best SF* from DAW Books. Congratulations to her also. \*\*\* Dick Lynch has resigned as editor of *Suncatcher*, the proposed ABC genzine. \*\*\* CSFA member Janis Johnson entered Memorial Hospital November 30 for abdominal surgery, and is now recovering at home. We're thinking of you, Janis. \*\*\* Dick Lynch has been issued two patents for chemical processes, giving him six overall. He also has a technical publication in the October, 1980 issue of *Analytical Chemistry*. \*\*\* Western Kentucky fan Rickey Sheppard was injured in a recent auto accident in Bowling Green, KY. Besides a chipped bone and torn ligaments, his auto was totalled. \*\*\* The Voyager 2 space probe unexpectedly went out of communication with Earth on July 16 because the Moon had realized that the occultation would occur. Tacky, tacky, y'all. \*\*\* The aforementioned Janis Johnson is the new CSFA Treasurer, replacing Colin Wright. \*\*\* *SF Review* carried this item: the Science Fiction Poetry Association is now selling Poetry Postcards. They offer 5 copies each of three poems by Joan Vinge, Ursula LeGuin, and Gene Wolfe for \$2.25 postpaid (Rt. 4, Box 192-E, Huntsville, AR 72740). \*\*\* Michigan fan George (Lan) Laskowski has announced that a special issue of his fanzine *Lan's Lantern* will be devo-



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## ONE LINERS (CONT.)

ted to Clifford D. Simak in honor of the 50th anniversary of the start of Simak's writing career. Lan would like any contribution that deals with Simak or his works. The deadline is June 30, 1981. All submissions should be sent to Lan at: 47 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013. (MR)



Before moving onto new territory, let's do a follow-up on last column's topic--possible Atlanta '86 Worldcon bid. This turned out to be a popular topic; Cliff Biggers devoted his Atarantes column to it, as did Jim Gilpatrick in the Anvil that just came out. None of the other articles were optimistic. I should point out here that I would like to see an Atlanta bid in '86. But at the same time, we have to be realistic about it. And when I started looking at the cold hard realities of the situation, I saw the problems I wrote about. It looks like this idea is dead for the time being. And I wonder if it could be revived in time. If I had a place a bet, I'd say there won't be a bid.

Harry Andruschak raises the question of facilities. The only possible lack I saw was in an auditorium where the Hugos, the Masquerade, and other major functions could be held. I've been told since then that at least one Atlanta hotel has sufficient space to handle even the major functions, so that wouldn't be a problem.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is time to turn our gaze inward to our own club. We have a big problem. And it's possible that CSFA could split up over the problem, though I fervently hope that won't happen.

We now have two factions in our club. One faction feels that the club has lost its aim and is drifting into purposelessness. The other feels that most club programming is a bore and that most meetings should be social events or parties. Up to now, CSFA

has been an unorganized anarchy. This works well when most of the members agree about what the club is and what it should be doing. But an anarchy won't work when two groups have different desires.

Take a look at our name--we call ourselves the Chattanooga Science Fiction Association. I take that to mean that we have come together because we have some interest in science fiction. I also think that means we should spend at least part of our time talking about science fiction and related fields, or about SF or related fandoms. This does not preclude socializing. Even the most academic SF groups organize because the members want to find friends with the same interests. And I doubt that any of us would want to be part of a group which did no socializing at all. I wouldn't. I find that science fiction fans usually are more interesting people than the general public, and most of my friends are SF fans.

I also like an occasional party, as those of you at last month's party probably noticed. But the key word is "occasional". A group that turns over more than a couple of club meetings a year to parties is forgetting its roots. This is true even if the club itself only finances, say, one of the parties. Science fiction is what brought us together. And if we forget that, then we are no more than any other group of friends with no special interests in common, and we have no right to call ourselves a science fiction club.

So I oppose devoting more than two club meetings a year to parties, and I also oppose the club's financing more than one party a year. The money is better spent on CHAT, which gives the club its only permanency and its only announcement forum, and which makes the club known outside our own area.

Those members who wish to party more often always have the right to throw their own parties, inviting whomever they wish and setting their own standards of conduct. As long as these are not official club functions, no one has a right to object.

And some of the club's programs have been boring. The solution to that is for

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## THE LOOKOUT POST (CONT.)

the club to have programs that people are interested in. So I'm going to ask all of you to take a few minutes to help the club. Think about what your ideal club program would be, regardless of practicality. Then think about a program idea that wouldn't be too hard to put together but which you'd still like to see. Write down those ideas

and send them to CHAT. We can't have interesting programs unless we know what people are interested in. Please take the time to respond. It's your club.

There's another question I need to talk about--should we organize, and if so, how? But my space is running short, so look for a special edition of "The Lookout Post" next month. And let us hear from you!

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHARLIE WILLIAMS  
...CONDUCTED BY DR. MARK ORION

Q: We're aware that Chattanocoga fandom was instrumental in getting you into fandom in the first place. How did that happen, and when was that?

Williams: CHAT gave me the kick to get involved in fanac. It wasn't like I wasn't aware that there was a fandom. My opinion of fans was poisoned by the time Rusty and I had been open as East Tennessee Comics for two weeks. Comics fans who were also SF fans were 90% whackos, 10% only slightly weird. And as I was getting into the very edges of fandom I came upon the sword'n' sorcery types, the fantasy people, and the rest of the fringe crowd that don't read. So I was resistant to the idea of 'joining', whatever that means.

Then along comes CSFA representative Ken Scott, who took Dick and Nicki Lynch a cartoon of Spock menaced by storm-troopers. This dates it at 1977. The cartoon saw print in their various clubzines and APAs, and then I started to get solicitations for more artwork. I apprenticed myself to Nicki, as it were, and visited Chattoon and North American, and liked the ambience. As more literate SF people wandered into our late store, I got sucked into their fanac. Most of the people I see, fanwise, are Chattoon people, even now.

What am I saying? I share studio space with three Knoxville fans, including Rusty Burke, Bob Barger, and Vernon Clark, and Knoxville is seething with fanac.

Q: Sure it is. We hear that Knoxville fandom is total anarchy with no direction and no goals. Further, its 'club' lists you as 'Grand Vizier' or something. How does an admitted neo get to be prez of a local SF club that's famous for its lack of activity?

Williams: By usurpation. I called up these people all over town who have their own hardcore interests and friends, and told them all we were meeting, where, and why. There's SCA people and underground cartoonists looking for a coat-tail to cling to, and fantasy enthusiasts and a handful of readers. We're a federation of interest groups, hence the name: Knoxville Science Fantasy Federation. And the acronym "Kissoff".

Q: Supply your own vowels, eh? Seriously, how does the club get anything accomplished?



"I IDENTIFY STRONGLY  
WITH LARRY NIVEN'S  
CHARACTER 'HINDMOST'."

Williams: We don't. Rusty, Vern and Bobby put together a second issue of our attempted news/club-zine. It's a headline feature, as the only contributors are Rusty, Vern and Bob. No one else wanted to contribute; I think they rely on CHAT and little else. Our bimonthly parties are primarily an excuse to watch movies, get loaded, and exchange gossip. As club president, I 'lead' by suggestion and bribery. I identify strongly with Larry Niven's character "Hindmost".

Q: Cute. I take it you're not a newcomer to science fiction as a genre, then?

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## WILLIAMS INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Williams: No. I was reading the stuff by second grade. I'm twenty-eight.

Q: Did comics ever dominate your 'reading'?

Williams: I read whatever is put before me. Comics are vastly entertaining, mainly for the same reasons SF is. If I read anything to excess it's Astronomy and Cultural Anthropology.

Q: Are you an artist by default, if those two fields command so much of your interest?

Williams: I forsook formal art training, studied at the University of Tennessee with an eye toward graduate work in a research aspect of theology. My particular area of study was the period 300 BC to the time of Constantine, and I was tracing the influence of Christian mystics on the forces that shaped the early Church. Further study would've cost an inordinate amount of money; I would have had to learn Greek, Latin, and probably French or German, and go to Seminary. I'm not 'called', so I couldn't and didn't go.

Q: What do you get from fandom?

Williams: Broader perspectives and a vehicle for self-promotion. That is, my interactions with fellow fans continues my education on diverse levels, and the publication of my cartoons brings my skills to the public. I've made professional sales solely on the basis of my reputation as a fan artist.

Q: What are your thoughts on *Suncatcher* and other Southern SF projects?



"[SUNCATCHER] WILL BE A WATERSHED IN SOUTHERN FANDOM, AND EVERYONE WILL BE CONGRATULATING EVERYONE ELSE."

Williams: I hope there's a plum for my work in *Suncatcher*, regularly. A large Southern genzine will be seen by a lot of people. The fact that *Suncatcher* is being assembled by a relative minority of the combined Atlanta, Birmingham, and Chattanooga clubs' members should reassure us that only those who are committed are involved. I'm sure that the editors intend this to be a class act, so I'm sure they'll be arguments, and I'm sure that that's OK, too. It will be a watershed for Southern Fandom, and everyone will be congratulating everyone else.

Q: Do you love your work like an artist allegedly should?



"I LOOKED AT SOME DRAWINGS FROM 1979 LAST NIGHT AND GAGGED WITH SHAME."

Williams: I'm doing exactly what I want to do, just not enough of it and for much less money than I'm worth. It's getting better. I looked at some drawings from 1979 last night and gagged with shame. Obviously it's an on-going education. I've found that my Bohemian lifestyle has to be more rigidly structured if I'm to increase my output of fan art, but I try to keep my editors stocked-up. Meanwhile, deadlines have a way of limiting the number of times I can take a night off and go drive to Chattanooga and carry on with the CSFA. I am working on projects for next year that are professionally ambitious, and secret.

Q: What do you like to do best?

Williams: Let's not bring my wife into this! I prefer black-and-white drawing to color work. I'm most comfortable on heavy illustration board, about 12" by 20".

Q: How do others see you? How do you feel about yourself?

*continued on page 7*



## WILLIAMS INTERVIEW (CONT.)

Williams: I hope I'm perceived as useful, as well as ornamental. I've been told that I'm intimidating and that I'm superficial. I've also been told that I have an ego of immense proportions. Sylvia disagrees with these analyses, but I imagine it's true. I hold grudges, but I'm also thick-skinned enough to take rejection, otherwise I wouldn't circulate little scraps of my soul around.

Q: That's a Joni Mitchell lyric. What do you listen to?

Williams: News programs. Joni Mitchell, Frank Zappa, progressive jazz, mostly.

Q: Tell us something you dislike intensely.



Williams: Pretension. The closest I come to self-loathing is when I discover that I'm being pretentious. Excessive humbleness makes my colon pucker, too.

Q: Have you ever written SF?

Williams: All the time. These cartoons I've done during the last three years were just to get my foot in the door. I've a novel in the works, and by that I mean it's plot-



ted, outlined, and in first draft up to about page 100. I hope to have a short story in Asimov's shortly.

Q: So you're a double threat, eh?

Williams: I'm a much better writer than I am a cartoonist. Trust me!

Q: We'll see. Any 'words to live by', Charlie?

Williams: "He who hesitates is bored." How'zat?

Q: Thanks for the interview.

Williams: Is that it?

Charlie Williams - Southern fan artist. Born 10/14/52; 5' 9", 140 lb, brown hair/blue eyes, beard. 4314 Hayes Ave., Knoxville, TN 37912. 615-689-4485 with Sylvia Blankenship Williams. Instructor, University of Tennessee; Prospective writer; Full-time busybody.

Dr. Mark Orion - Physicist at Oak Ridge National Laboratories; Well-read unpublished critic. Finally convinced by Williams to contribute to Southern fandom.

## LIGHT OF MY LIFE

...COMMENTARY BY WILLIAM BAINS

Now It Can Be Told. The real story behind the solar neutrino problem. You don't? Well, some time ago several 'scientists' tried to detect the neutrinos

emitted by nuclear reactions in the Sun's core. They could not find any. Not surprising, as the neutrino is clearly a fiction invented for physical book-balancing, akin to lines of latitude and income tax rebates, which do not really exist at all.

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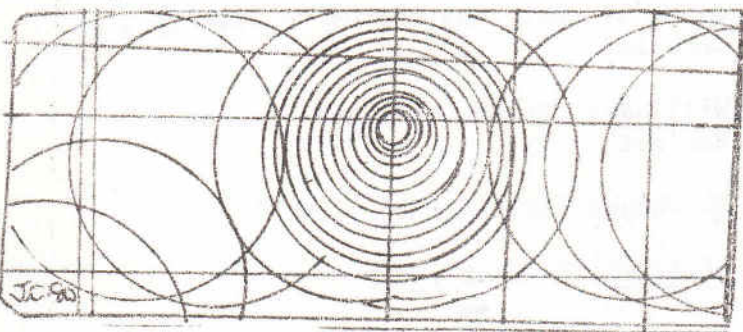


## LIGHT OF MY LIFE (CONT.)

But the problem did, at last, raise the question of whether the sun is shining. After all, no neutrinos, no nuclear reactions, no light. Astronomers are adopting an intermediate position at the moment, saying the centre is not shining but the rest is. (The Sun is meant to be 8 light seconds across, but who heard of a logical astronomer?) No doubt this is a move to avoid public ridicule, to break the news gently.

Because the Sun never was shining.

The whole fallacy originated with Newton who, to explain the obviously psychological effects on vision of mirrors, prisms, and lenses in physical terms corpuscles of light whizzing around at improbable velocities. Subsequent theories have given them numerous contradictory properties, such as being able to be in two places at once and even be absorbed and re-radiated at the same time. According to modern theory the laser, bless it, relies on all three. If Uri Geller made such claims for his keys he would have been laughed out of court, but such was Newton's standing that his ramblings were accepted.



All of this would have been unnecessary if he had held his mirrors up to himself rather than to the Sun. Then he would have seen himself reversed left-to-right. "Aha!" he might conceivably have exclaimed. "The mirror reverses left to right. So if I turn it through  $90^\circ$ , its plane of reversal should be vertical and I should appear upside down." One rotation later Zac and his invertate are scratching their various heads: he is still top-side up and still left-right inverted.

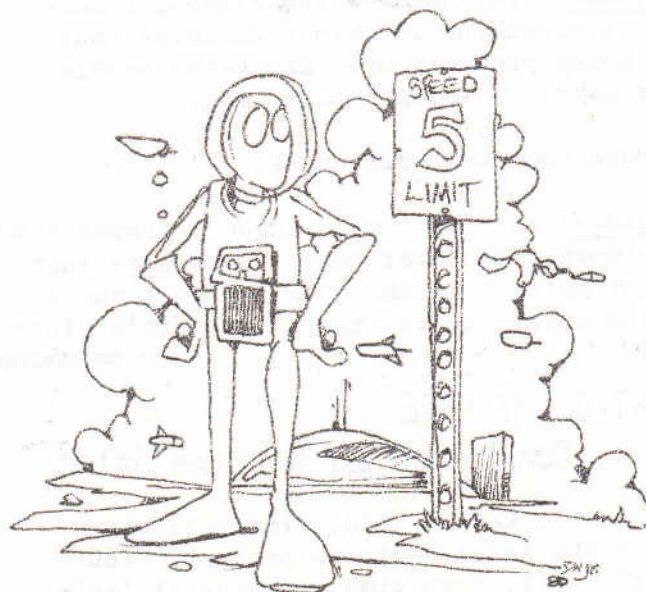
Maybe the mirror inverts at right angles to the gravitational field (another Newtonian fiction), but a few experiments lying on a plank would show this false. The mirror obstinately takes a person and makes their left their right and vice-versa, regardless of where their left and

right are.

"Maybe a woman's touch..." mutters Newton, and calls in the missus to conduct a joint experiment. Zac lies on a horizontal plank and admires his recumbent image in the mirror. It is, for him, left-right but not top-bottom inverted. Mrs. Zac then stands behind him. Her image in the same mirror is also left-right but not top-bottom inverted. But the axes of inversion are  $90^\circ$  to each other. Remember this is one plain sheet of metal, not a fancy TV system with directionally beamed displays. They are both looking at one of the simplest tools invented. Who sees what depends not on the mirror, but on who is looking. So we draw the obvious conclusion: light is not an absolute phenomenon or part of the material world like the mirror, but is a psychic detection actively participated in by whoever is looking. There is no such thing as a photon.

Physicists have been edging towards this view with talk of 'virtual photons' and 'potential fields' for years, but too little and too late. Now with the proof that the Sun is not shining, advances may be expected thick and fast. It is galling to realise that the ancient Greeks, with their ideas of light emanating from the eyes, were nearer the truth than we were some 2000 years later, but it is not too late. Logic has prevailed, and soon we will witness the brilliant dawning of the real dark age.

((Ed. note: William Bains is a fan from Coventry, England. And yes, this article was written tongue-in-cheek. At least I THINK it was.))







## LOOKING FORWARD TO THE HUGOS... 1980 IN REVIEW

...BY NICKI LYNCH

While the nomination ballots for the Hugo Awards have yet to issue forth from Denver (the site of the 1981 World SF Con), fans have already begun picking their choices for the Dramatic Presentation of the year. Let's have a look at the cream of what the SF/fantasy fan had to experience this year.

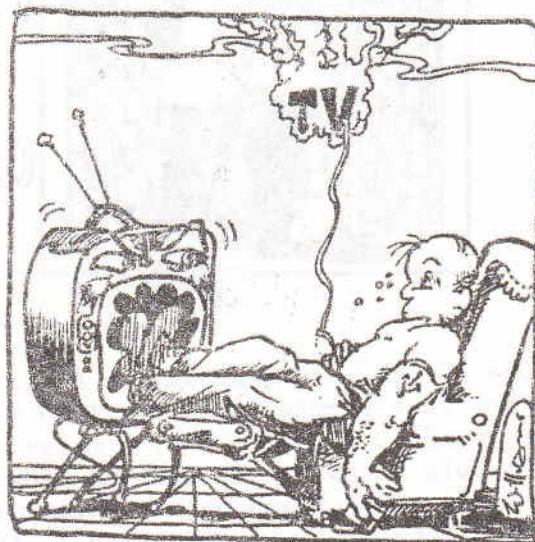
**THEATRE.** The movie companies spent a large amount of money on SF and related films, such as horror, this year to capture the momentum *Star Wars* started. The unqualified hit of the year in this respect was the *Star Wars* sequel, *The Empire Strikes Back*. It certainly should make the final ballot and most people expect it to win the Hugo, as did *Star Wars*. But *TESB* was not the only SF/horror/fantasy flick to come out this year.

Also out this year were: *The Shining*, *Saturn Three*, *The Final Countdown*, *Xanadu*, *Somewhere in Time*, *Battle Beyond the Stars*, and countless horror films, chief among them *The Fog* and *Dawn of the Dead*. Of these films, *The Shining* is the most likely to be nominated; *The Fog* and *Dawn of the Dead* have a slim chance. Of the others, there is a possibility, but not much. The fan press has not been kind to most of these films and not many fans seem to be talking about, much less remembering them. However, there are two films yet to premiere this year which do stand

a chance of being on the Hugo ballot, and they will be discussed at the end of this article.

While there has been few major theatrical movies this year, television has fared just a shade better, due mainly to the Public Broadcasting System.

**TELEVISION.** Top honors in evoking the sense of wonder on television this year must go to PBS for *The Lathe of Heaven* and the 13-part series *Cosmos: A Personal Voyage*. *The Lathe of Heaven* was to be the first of a series of movies taken from classic SF books, produced by PBS and their sponsors. While this idea is up in the air, *The Lathe of Heaven* was very well received and well done. Equally wonderful in production and sensawonder is *Cosmos*, hour long tours of the universe (or parts of it) with Carl Sagan. *Cosmos* is a science series with a difference — care and humor have been used to bring a sense of wonder to the universe we live in. While a science show may not garner the interest a film like, say, *The Empire Strikes Back* does, *Cosmos* does give one the same feeling not unlike the first SF or fantasy book read as a child. The chances of *Cosmos* getting on the Hugo ballot are slim, but with a best-selling book of the same name that follows the series, it should get attention from the mundane world.



On the commercial side of TV, the number of good SF/fantasy shows have been slim. One of the best was *The Girl, the Gold Watch, and Everything*, a fantasy about a young adventurer and a watch that could make time stand still. Based on the book of the same name by John D. MacDonald, it was a pretty good TV-movie

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## LOOKING FORWARD... (CONT.)

and deserves some fan consideration. However, as it was not a network TV effort (in Chattanooga it was shown in five half-hour segments), it may not have gotten the exposure it deserved, and its chances of being remembered may be slim.

Also appearing on commercial TV was the supposed "ending" to *The Lord of the Rings* in the form of a boring cartoon by Rankin/Bass called *The Return of the King*. Based loosely on the last book of the same name of the *LoTR* trilogy, it must have left many people wondering what the excitement around Tolkien was all about. It should not make the ballot or be remembered.



One TV offering that may be eligible (that is, that premiered in the 1980 calendar year) is *'Salem's Lot*, a made-for-TV movie based on the Stephen King best seller of the same name. While many of King's fans agreed it was flawed, it has been said to be much more faithful to its book than this year's *The Shining*. If it is eligible, I expect that it will be remembered for its finer points, such as performances and special effects.

Two TV specials that were not movies, but were SF related, were provided by HBO and CBS. The HBO offering was an hour of clips of the past 50 years of SF/

horror movies called *Monsters, Madmen, and Machines*. The special covered the field lightly (the studio making the documentary hadn't made many of the landmark films), using categories such as the Robot, the Girl, the Mad Scientist, to illustrate the growth of the SF/horror movie. The CBS offering, *SP FX Special Effects The Empire Strikes Back*, delved into the different types of special effects used in making *TESB* as well as past movie classics. Both documentaries were very well done, if too short for the material they could have covered.

**YET TO COME.** As the Christmas holidays approach, so do the opening of the holiday movies. Primary among these should be *Flash Gordon* and *Popeye*.

*Flash Gordon* is a remake of the old *Flash Gordon* movie serial of the thirties which became popular with the college crowd of the seventies. Produced by Dino DeLaurentiis, better known for disaster movies, *Barbarella*, and *King Kong* (the remake), *Flash Gordon* should be an interesting movie, and stands a chance to make the Hugo ballot. So far, fans who've seen the sneak previews have not been happy, while the mundane reviewers (such as in *Newsweek*) have found it a fun, campy film, empty only in characterization.

Also to be released is Robert Altman's *Popeye*, a live action film of everyman's favorite spinach-eating sailor. In sneak previews, fans have praised *Popeye* in its fine casting, script, production values, and music (yes, it is a musical). If it's as good as all the hype about it, *Popeye* could well be the one film to give *The Empire Strikes Back* a run for the Hugo.

All in all, 1980 has been a good year for Dramatic Presentations in the SF/horror/fantasy genres. *The Empire Strikes Back* lived up to, and may have surpassed its prequel *Star Wars*. The major film and TV studios recognize the SF genre as more than "kid stuff", and more as a market for quality work. This is one year that "No Award" is not expected to win the Dramatic Presentation Hugo!





## Book Reviews

*The Magic Labyrinth*

Philip Jose Farmer

reviewed by Bob Barger

Seven or eight years ago the first novel in the projected Riverworld trilogy was published: *To Your Scattered Bodies Go* was a brilliant novel, an awesome novel. The second novel in the saga was not quite so good, but then what sequel ever is...it was a good, solid book. The third book in the trilogy had its moments, but for me it seemed diluted of its magic somehow, as Farmer tried, almost desperately it seemed, to tie all the plot lines together into a cohesive whole. The fourth book in this intended trilogy is no better, perhaps even a trifle worse. In this book all the mysteries of the awesome Riverworld are revealed, much to my disappointment. The Great Cosmic Secret behind the Riverworld seems mundane and pale compared to the incredible imagination Farmer has displayed with the creation of, and the choosing of characters to portray in, the Riverworld.

This is a good, readable, and enjoyable book. If you're into learning all the mysteries hinted at in the previous books, you should enjoy this. But, if you're like me, you resent it slightly when all the glorious mysteries are laid out in front of you and carefully explained; you resent it even if it is the creator of the Riverworld who is doing the explaining. The Riverworld holds no more mysteries; I think I'll cry.

For the true Riverworld fan, reading this book can be compared to examining one's lover under the harsh and sterile lights of a medical laboratory, where each pimple and blemish is revealed. It takes a lot of the joy and mystery out of life...



*The Mercenary*

Jerry Pournelle

Pocket Books (\$1.95)

reviewed by Bob Barger

This is not a bad book. This is not a good book; rather, it is an interesting book.

This book takes place about 600 years before the events in *The Mote in God's Eye*, and deals with the adventures of Colonel John Christian Falkenberg -- once commander of the CoDominium's 42nd Marine Regiment, now forced out of CoDominium military service by politicians with grudges against him, and now leader of Falkenberg's Mercenary Legion.

The primary interest generated by this book was, to me at least, the detailed descriptions of the political situations within the US and USSR-dominated CoDominium, and how these circumstances contributed to the development of the events detailed in *The Mote in God's Eye*.

The book is choppy and not very well paced, reflecting its origins in two or three short stories published in the early '70s in *Analog*. But for all that, it's worthwhile to read for Pournelle's descriptions of military engagements on the colonial planet of New Washington -- by far one of the finest pieces of military SF ever written, I think. Here we have 22nd century interstellar commandos worrying about capturing mountain passes and railroads and riverboats: New Washington is a primitive planet, and logistics present the primary problems to Falkenberg and his men and the New Washington native government who hired Falkenberg to help in their revolution against the occupation forces of the other inhabitable planet in the star system.

And against this adventure story is the backdrop of the crumbling CoDominium. It's obvious interstellar civilization as an organized entity hasn't long to live, and everyone is trying to fortify against the coming night of barbarism -- including Falkenberg, which makes the book's ending somewhat surprising but relatively satisfactory.

The only thing that really bothers me about this book is that everything it says has been said before, in much greater detail, by Poul Anderson in his 'Flan-dry' books.



## BOOK REVIEWS (CONT.)

*Three Ring Psychus*

John Shirley

Dell Books, 1980

reviewed by Chris Estey

*Three Ring Psychus* was written before and published after *City Come a Walkin'* -- Shirley's absolutely wonderful novel dealing with the consciousness of the cities, a socialistic compromise with a libertarian philosophy. That theory is repeated in *Three Ring Psychus*, but on a much deeper and thorough level.

The plot of *Three Ring Psychus* involves a topic current to Shirley's political personal opinion: anarchy. Blending the 'best' of individual political philosophies, he will either unite apathetic individuals with this novel, or alienate rhetorical activism groups. But that's prototypical of Shirley's work, to say the least -- it seems as though the mass market ignores him for the greater good of Sidney Sheldon and such glitter-fixated compromises in density. Shirley is rock 'n' roll incarnate -- a beat generation poet with all the 'charisma' of Jim Morrison to Jim Jones. And the plot within this novel of many faces can be reflected by Shirley's total persona itself -- everything lifts; it flies in the air; psychic messages ring in every ear.

Shirley is a fine storyteller, especially when dealing with characters; his treatment of the forty year old protagonist Dreyer is a good example of this: Shirley is twenty-seven, yet he feels the clashes, the inherent psychological pain of a man turned forty. And no mention of Shirley is complete without any hype of his bizarre chemistry with ideas: the Indians reclaiming much of the United States after the Great Uplifting (the ultimate form of Noah's Ark-ish anarchy at the beginning of the book), the odd sex and intimate scenes (the one between Dreyer and the Indian Kilkenny really blew me away with its intensity), and the berserk-state ideas represented in all of Shirley's novels (*Transmaniacon*, *Dracula in Love*, *Three Ring Psychus*, *City Come a Walkin'*).

I recommend Shirley to you. Please accept him as he stands. Shirley is the writer of the '80s, and I hope that is recognized soon by the general public.

*Involution Ocean*

Bruce Sterling

Jove Books, 1977

reviewed by Bob Barger

This book isn't readily available today; I found my copy in a used book store. But finding a copy in a hucksters room at a con shouldn't be too difficult -- and it would be worth the effort.

Despite the fact that this book was the fourth in the so-called Harlan Ellison Discovery Series, it is a great little book for a first novel.

Let me quote the first paragraph of the book to you:

"We all have some emptiness in our lives, an emptiness that some fill with art, some with God, some with learning. I have always filled the emptiness with drugs."

And because of this, our protagonist John Newhouse finds himself duffel bag in hand, ready to go out on a whaling voyage on the planet Nullaqua -- a planet as dry as Dune.

Nullaqua is as desolate as the moon, except for a crater 70 miles deep and 500 miles across. There is atmosphere in the crater's bottom, and a great ocean of almost monoatomic dust. In this dust live the dust whales, whose intestinal fluids are the source of the incredible drug Flare. There are also many other things that live in the dust, as the Captain of the ship Newhouse signs on with eventually finds out. Captain Desperandum can easily be compared with Ahab in *Moby Dick*. In fact, Sterling had originally titled this novel "Moby Dust"... There are many parallels between this book and *Moby Dick*, but it's more than just a rip-off of a great classic of literature.

John Newhouse changes in this book; he changes in a very positive way. His relationship with the quasi-alien woman Dalusa is handled very convincingly and very subtly.

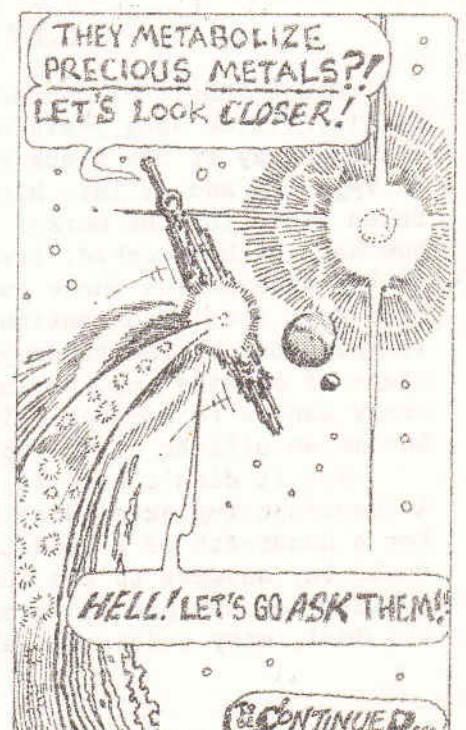
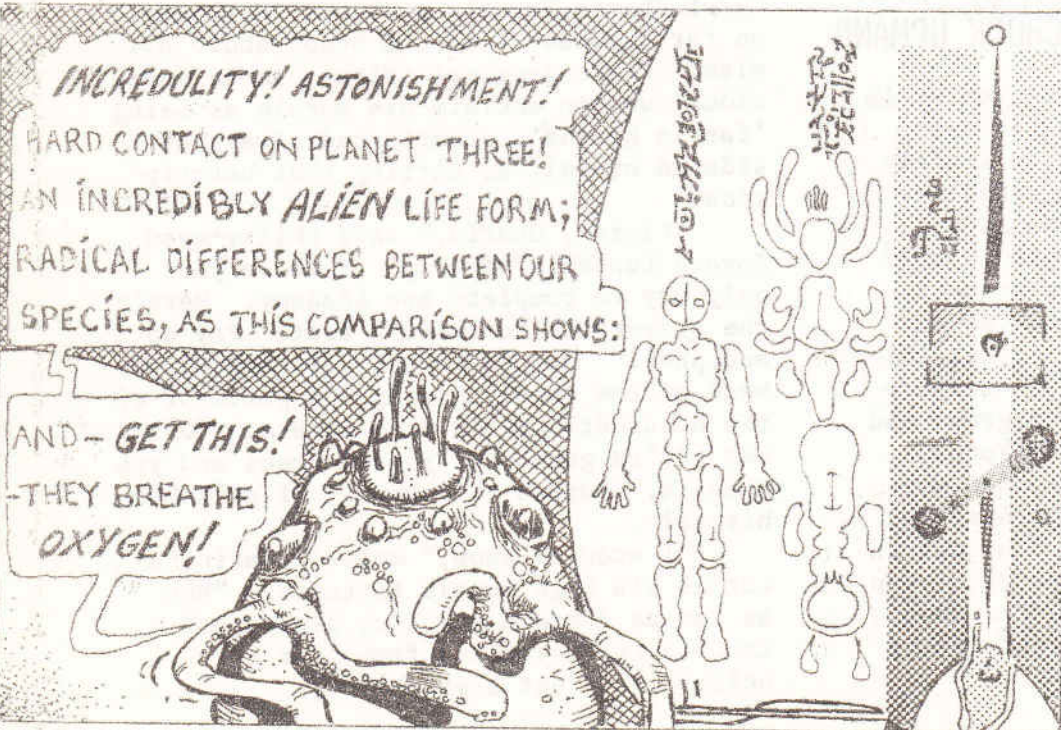
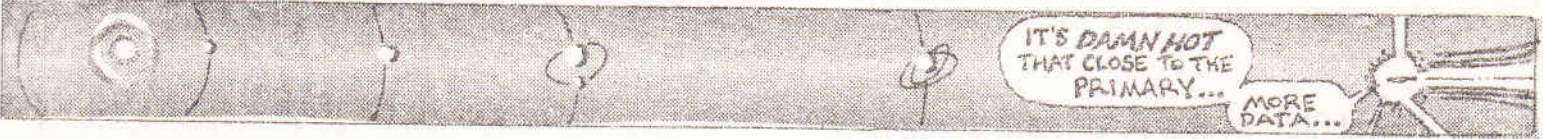
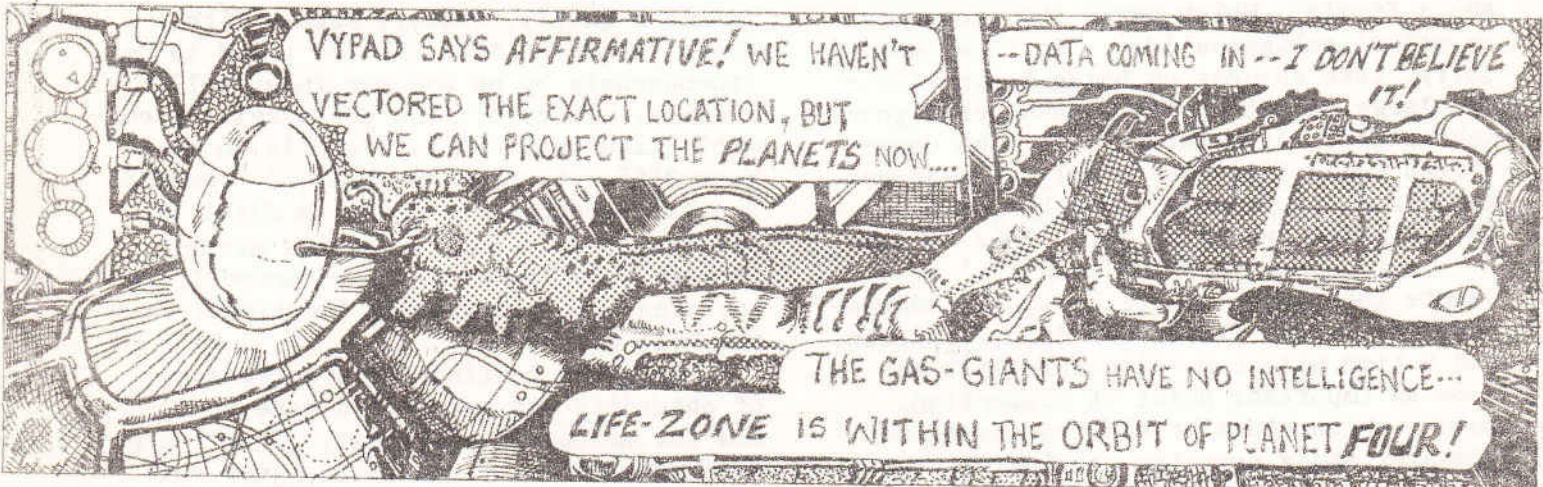
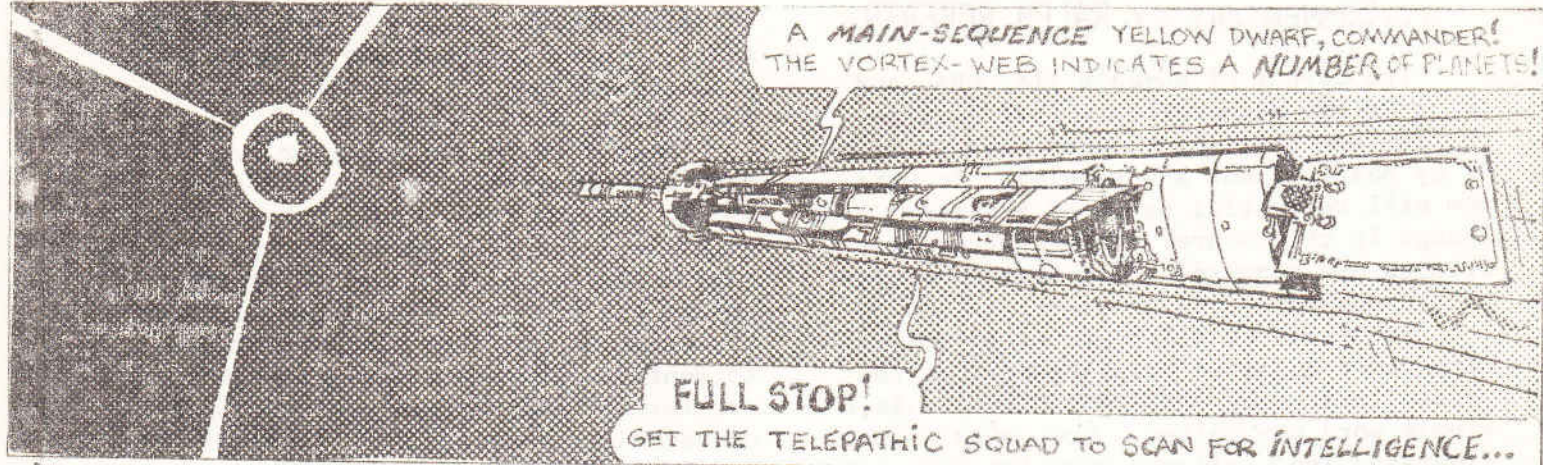
An excellent book.





**the thurnéstleclēz** ENTERED SOLAR SPACE AND IMMEDIATELY APPLIED THEIR GRAVITY POLARIZERS -- THEY'D NEVER VISITED *THIS* STAR AND ITS PLANETS BEFORE...

©1980  
Charles Williams





## EXCUSE ME...ER...ER

## ...COMMENTARY BY RALPH ROBERTS

The advent of women's lib, ERA, and the like has engendered an interesting problem (no disrespect, dear ones -- some of my best friends are female). To wit: how will respectful terms of address change in the future? Us scientifiction writers are supposed to be able to extrapolate coming events.

Naturally it all began with 'Ms'. Many women disliked being branded as to marital status by 'Mrs' and 'Miss'. So a single word was coined. Now, with a more liberated lady, all you know for sure is she's female. Which evens the score with us males' ambiguous 'Mr'. So those who dally, take chances on being later accosted large, ill-tempered spouses of a goonish nature. At least this way the cemeteries would fill more evenly as regards the sex of those dispatched by jealous mates. Fine enough so far. Fair is fair.

But. The words 'Mr' and 'Ms' still denote the gender of the person so addressed. Horrors! That's sex discrimination. And a time will come when this will become an important point of contention. When such concepts as electronics funds transfer and a computer terminal in every home for electronic mail become reality, one might not wish his or her sex to be

known. Like several young ladies of my acquaintance who put only their initials and last name in the phone book to avoid crank calls (no, not my calls). I propose 'Mz'. Good as any.

Step forward a century or two. No more sex discrimination via terms of address. Peachy keen. But. We discover alien life (or they stumble across us). A great galactic community of sentient beings springs up. Ah! Discrimination now takes on new dimensions. Not even to mention races that have six sexes. A new term of address must be developed for us and all our neighbors. Sakes alive! We musn't be prejudged just because a person is a smelly, crawly, stinky little Xeno. Perhaps 'Sss' will be found to be pronouncable by us and our interstellar buddies. Whatever. So you receive a communication from one Sss Portilo in the year 2525. Is it a human male? Female? A squat, greenish creature on Rigel IV who breathes in an unspeakable manner through a bodily orifice not normally associated with respiratory functions? How the hell do ya know?

We could continue this complexity of absurdity but you should have enough now for me to make my point. That being: when you see me at Chattacon, just call me 'Ralph'. I already know what's a 'Ralph'.

THE PERILOUS PLIGHT OF CADET PACOT  
...BY CHUCK UPMANN

Cadet Charin Pacot had a problem in morals. Three long years he had spent slaving away at the Space Force Academy on Vega III and of late his grades had taken a dip for the worse. No matter how hard he had worked, irregardless if he had studied the whole twenty-seven hour day, the trend continued. He was flunking out of the Academy. A terrible state of affairs for Charin who desperately wanted to complete his degrees and become an officer of the Space Force.

But it didn't have to be that way. A cheating ring existed at the Academy. For a hundredth of a credit each, Charin could buy answers to the hundreds of pop quizzes he must pass to graduate. Not a bad deal, many cadets had already taken

this easy way out. Here lay the crux of Cadet Charin Pacot's problem. His people on far Regulus VI valued honor above all else. Their greatest tribute to an individual was to acclaim his morale as being 'far in height'. Charin had always considered himself as fitting that description.

"Listen, Charin," said shifty-eyed Bovoch Lupesh, "wise-up. This is your only way to complete the Academy. Here's the answers to tomorrow's test. Pay up and pass." Bovoch Lupesh, of course, was head of the cheating ring and purveyor of the hundredth-credit crib sheets. "Only way you're gonna get your degrees and you know it," Lupesh said by way of clinching his sale.

"I know, I know," moaned Charin Pacot as his high morals tottered. "But as far as degrees go, I've always had trouble in converting from 'far in height' to 'cent a grade'."



# chat

Chat 100s!

EDITED BY NICKI LYNCH



Bob Barger  
4900 Jonquil Lane  
Knoxville, TN 37919

Dick managed to completely mis-read my LoC last month. Or perhaps not read it

at all, if he thinks either of you should, in my opinion, censor anything. Good editorial judgement and censorship are two quite different things.

Art this issue was excellent. The cover was the best inked Collins piece I've ever seen. David Heath should have a wider following in fandom...he's...of professional caliber--to say the least.

((DL responds: Editorial judgement is, of course, a purely subjective matter, and for that reason, we stand by the decision to run Ken's editorial in CHAT 37 without revision. But your letter points out a problem in editing a fanzine; too often you are faced with a can't-win situation. Your letters would have us heavily revise or edit possibly controversial material to a form less 'emotional'. Yet, in an off-the-record letter recently received from a former contributor, we were taken severely to task for editing material to a form we found acceptable (i.e. certain four letter words were changed to synonyms or deleted entirely, and submissions were frequently shortened due to space considerations). One man's censorship is another's editorial judgement.))

James K. Woosley  
Box 5441-B  
Nashville, TN 37235

Anyway, I have noted the current discussion about the desirability

of a sercon VS. social format for the CSFA. While I am not really an "in" person in Nashville and have been away from Bowling Green for a couple of years now, perhaps a discussion of the way I feel these clubs work would be of help in you discussion.

The Bowling Green group's meetings tend to be very business oriented, as they have to interact, not only with fandom, but with the WKU community. However, for half an hour before each business meeting (weekly), time is set aside for mingling, and most members attend the after-the-meeting meeting also.

Programs (usually) every other week, on the average, range from the annual trivia quiz to movie still slide shows, from UFOs to interstellar flight to decorating the interior of spacecraft. In addition, the club sponsors approximately 7 special movies a year on campus for publicity (and, if they're very lucky, fund-raising).

The Nashville meetings tend to be much looser and mostly social. Two attempts to begin a sercon in Nashville have failed, primarily do to lack of interest. The most formal programming seen in Nashville is con slides and movies.

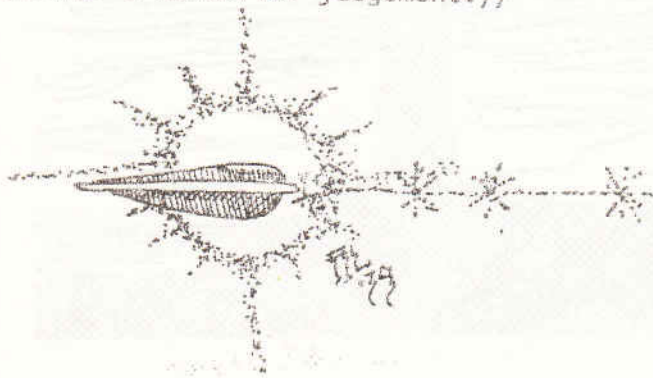
But I think you are missing a very important point somewhere. Fandom is divided into numerous special-interest groups: books, art, media, Star Trek, games, SCA, L-5 (a fairly legitimate classification for people interested in space), and perhaps others. No individual is given over to all of these groups, or probably ever will be. I think fandom can serve no more important purpose than to provide a forum for two people with special individual interests to get together and discuss that interest.

Which cannot be done in any but a completely social setting. Which is not to say that programming isn't important, but it should not be the be-all and end-all of any SF club (except sercon, whose members attend because of serious programming, not in spite of it).

I would also like to respond briefly to Andy Andruschak's letter in #38.

Star Trek, SCA, and other groups are valid parts of fandom. SCA, in particular,

*continued on page 16*





## Woosley LoC (cont.)

is made up of people who are trufans in every sense of the word--most SCAers I know read SF profusely. I realize that there is some element of "groupie"ism in Trek fandom, that it has also produced more than its share of committed, real fans (Bjo Trimble, Janice Lichtenberg, Jean Wilson, et al.). Do we punish these people, and people of their caliber, by cutting them out of fandom completely because of the Shatner and Nimoy groupies?

I am surprised that fandom has to resort to this sort of heavy-handedness. Of course, its nothing new: remember Harlan Ellison and Perry Rhodan?

I agree that Worldcons are too large, though, and that something should be done. I just have no idea what.

A final comment on Andy's letter: as I recall, NorthAmeriCon was stuck at the last minute with the failure of its two 35-mm projectors and has to use an alternate 16-mm film program rented in case such an emergency (incidentally, Bowling Green fandom supplied them with the film catalog which allowed them to cheaply provide a decent alternate selection--which is why I know the story).

((Thanks for your letter, Jim!

((Let me clarify the usual CSFA meeting as follows: it opens and there are announcements, discussion of what the next meeting will have (such as a book discussion and other things such as video tapes, people doing whatever) where the next meeting will be and whatever else needs to be brought up that isn't a "programmed" item. These are in any order and there is usually someone moderating. Next is the program-book discussion and whatever. Then whoever is left goes out to eat and talk somemore. After that, we or other members open their houses to more discussion or gaming or video tapes.

The "business meeting" is short and open because the club has little "business" outside of what to do with the money in the treasury. The club runs no con, puts out no zine (Dick and I are contracted by the club to put out a newszine), and the meeting and programming ARE the only club business by and large.

The club also has an annual Fall party, usually in November, and about four auctions a year. Other than that, the programming and what happens are open to whatever whoever is working on programming can scrape

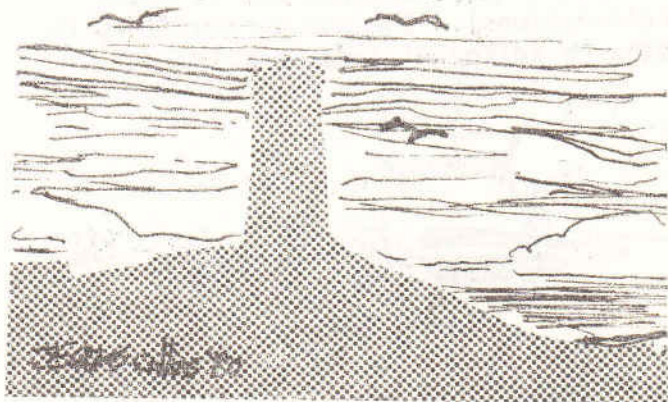
up. The club started around the book discussion, but expanded as the club expanded.

((The real problem with the club began with summer with many people not in attendance and the programming failing due to people promising to lead discussions not showing, problems with meeting places, etc. This led to some problems when the club started meeting back at the usual fall meeting place, UTC. The September meeting was more disorganized than usual and led to some people in the usual after-the-eating-meeting group to discuss what should be done to give those doing a program some quiet (which was the problem). Well, the sergeant-at-arms idea was taken up and several people volunteered to help steer those who wished to socialize (i.e., gossip with friends during the program) to the lobby. The idea that a social hour be BEFORE the meeting (effectively moving the meeting back to 8:30 from 7:30) was also put forth. The later idea was put in the meeting report in CHAT and the former was stated by one member of the club, in a way which some other members took as insulting, and the October meeting was strained, to say the least.

((The real problem is not the way the club is or has been run, but that some people have decided there are "sides" in the club wrestling for "power". There is no problem in what the club does, there might be a problem in the personalities in the club.

((There it is, in a nutshell, from my point of view. Might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, as I have heard charges of people being a puppet of Dick and I. What trash! Let's just get back to having fun, rather than purges! That WAS the reason we all got together, wasn't it?

((Sorry, Jim, but you know how it goes. Thanks for the letter and good words on all subjects.))





Irvin Koch  
2035 Idlewood Rd. #H6  
Tucker, GA 30084

Re: Harry Andruschak's comment on an Atlanta Worldcon. Several

groups have gotten as far as checking the facilities before the SMOFs assassinated the groups. All have concluded it would be possible to run 3 world cons of about 5,000 attendance (not counting one day memberships) at the same time. The prime choice for main hotel has one room large enough to put Boston's art and huckster rooms into both and have room left over. I have reason to believe a worldcon would have to go over 10,000 attendance before non-hotel facilities (in Atlanta-ed.) were needed and those are across the street from the likely main hotel.

((I assume you mean that the main choice hotel has one room that has a floor space equal to or larger than the combined floor space of Boston's art show and huckster room. That is some room!

If the SMOFs killed the groups, does this mean the A in '86 idea is totally dead or that those particular groups have given up? ~~WILL THERE BE A MURDER CHARGE?~~ (Sorry, watching M\*A\*S\*H will do that to one.) The idea is still being discussed in Atlanta and Southern fandom in general. Well, who knows? Anything is possible.))

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Dalvan Coger  
Great Oaks  
1433 West Crestwood Dr.  
Memphis, TN 38119

CHAT #38 arrived today and I found it as entertaining as ever. The de-

bate on programming was especially interesting because we have essentially the same problem here. I would like to see us borrow you book-review format.

I am interested in the difference of opinion on the Heinlein book. Both Dan Henderson, a journalist and pro SF writer, and I read it when it came into the *Commercial Appeal* last spring. Neither of us wanted to review it, and it didn't get reviewed. By comparison with his other work I think it is extremely thin stuff. That is not only my opinion apparently. Ackerman's comment was something like, "If a new writer had tossed it on a publisher's desk it would have been properly and promptly rejected." At a convention in Wichita in June Fred Pohl damned it with faint praise.

The function of a critic, as someone said, is to make perceptive comments that will lead to an intelligent discussion. There are those critics so enamored of their own cleverness that their vanity makes them unreadable. There are those who cannot disagree without being disagreeable. And finally, there are those who cannot make a judgement without condemning. Yet criticism is an essential element in the creation of any body of literature.

If I had written a review of the Heinlein book it would have noted, among other things that the novel lacked unity. Instead of one book there were three cobbled together, and poorly at that. The first resembled vintage Heinlein and ends when the characters reach Mars. The second is a study of four strong characters, all chiefs and no Indians, and struck me as sophomoric. And finally, there is an extended playful in-joke, with references to the Lensman universe, the Gordfather (a reference to Gordy Dickson), and various other fans.

It is obvious that Charlie Williams read the book with a greater attention to detail than I did. He caught a number of points I probably missed because by half-way through the book I was bored out of my skull. But then, I read for a living and when I read for relaxation I want to be entertained. Of the 150 to 200 books I read a year probably only 40 are SF.

((Thanks for your thoughtful letter, Dal. I like that definition of a critic; whoever said it certainly has a grasp of criticism and literature. Perhaps a critic is truly in top form when intelligent discussion can be made of ANY work of literature, whether or not the work is a classic, due to the person's perception. Then, it would lead one to wonder how much the writer had to do with it--that is, can ANY writer (artist, etc) be truly so bad as to never evolve intelligent discussion? Art forms and criticism are positively linked, following that reasoning. I can understand and appreciate that!))

\*\*\*\*\*

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Harry J.N. Andruschak, Teddy Harvia, Sharon Webb, Ron Shelton, Chris Estey, Ralph Roberts, David Pettus, David Heath, Jerry Collins, Ted Guerin.



ARTIST CREDITS: Charlie Williams - cover, pages 5, 6 (both), 7 (both), 9 (bottom), 13; David Heath, jr. - pages 2, 8 (bottom), 9 (top), 12; Jerry Collins - pages 3, 8 (middle), 16; Julia Scott - page 4; Alan White - pages 10 (top), 15 (bottom); Bob Barger - page 10 (bottom); Ted Guerin - page 11; Chris Estey - page 15 (top).

## THE TIMES, THEY ARE A CHANGIN'

...EDITORIAL BY DICK LYNCH

This will, unless circumstances reverse themselves in the near future, be the last monthly issue of CHAT. The reasons are many: first, production of CHAT has gotten to the point where it eats up enormous amounts of time, and causes each succeeding issue to appear just a little later than the previous issue. At that rate, we'd miss getting an issue out on time in the very near future. Also, CHAT expenses have gotten to be a significant fraction of the club treasury. Just as parties should not eat up all the club funds, neither should CHAT. Finally, the rush job necessary each month has been resulting in a finished product that we're not entirely happy with. We can't, for example, put color into CHAT with the existing production schedule. A bi-monthly CHAT will be at least as long as this issue; the total value to the reader or subscriber should not decrease. So, we believe you'll like the new CHAT; the Jan.-Feb. issue (#40-41) will be out in early February. We invite submissions of all sorts from everyone.

### DECEMBER CSFA MEETING

7:30 PM, SAT., DEC. 13, 1980

FIRST TENN. BANK

PROGRAM: CHALKER DISCUSSION

### JANUARY CSFA MEETING

7:30 PM, SAT., JAN. 10, 1981

UTC STUDENT CENTER (WE THINK)

PROGRAM: CHATACON PREVIEW

CHAT

DICK & NICKI LYNCH

4207 DAVIS LANE

CHATTANOOGA, TN 37416

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