

DYNATRON

Number 66

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Maybe I ought to call it GHOSTRON or SHADOWTRON or somesuch. DYNATRON, being published on ever lengthening schedules if, indeed, there is any schedule at all (and I doubt that there is) by Roy Tackett at 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107. Only the bones for the Elephant's Graveyard.
A Marinated Publication

The last time I did one of these was November, 1976, and the one previous to that was November, 1975. Two issues in two years. No wonder fan editors are dropping me from their trade list.

well.....

Ah,

It has been difficult these past couple of years to whip up any real interest in things fannish. Maybe next year will be better.

According to a communication from Ed Cox, Official Teller, it appears that I am once again President of FAPA. Mostly by default since there was no other candidate. My thanks, as part of officialdom, to all who voted. 27 out of 65 is something over 40% which is better than most elections manage to turn out.

I wonder what would happen if we didn't have any candidates? duffus has been trying to rouse some activity in the local Faps without a great deal of success. I said, sure, if he could get an Albuquerque worked up I'd run for President. The other local Faps didn't seem much interested, however. Just prior to the last deadline Jack called and asked if I was still interested in running for President as no one else had filed. I agreed and here I am and you are stuck with me. Don't complain. Nexttime get up some opposition.

As I customarily do, and from a vague recall of the FAPA constitution, I hereby appoint Helen Wesson to the position of Officer for Other Purposes. What the other purposes are I haven't the faintest idea. Helen will just have to figure that out for herself.

I suppose I am now in a position to make some sort of ruling on the question of Boggs' last presidency. Unfortunately I can't remember what it was all about.

in FAPA.

Which is why we have historians

Anyway I think that was all settled several mailing back.

"Buck Rogers was the father of Captain James T. Kirk of 'Star Trek' fame."

I have that on the authority of the U.S. Air Force. Would you doubt the word of your U.S. Air Force?

The quote above is from an article, Things That Might Have Been by SMSGT Harold Newcomb in the June 1977 issue of ALIEN magazine.

It's possible. I suppose. I'm not sure if the time frame is right. Buck was 25th Century and I haven't the faintest idea of the chronological setting of STAR TREK. But, nevertheless, it's possible. Even if the times don't quite coincide I'm sure that Dr. huer probably whipped up a time machine somewhere along the line. He was rather good at that sort of thing, you know.

Surely you don't think Buck spent all his time charging around the System and being true to Wilma? You know how these soldier of fortune types are. Wilma might have been at home, or on Mars, or Luna, or elsewhere (and I'll lay you eight to five that she wasn't lonely either) and Ol' Buck may have been sending her regular Ethergrams but you can bet that he was doing the best he could with what was available.

I know for sure there was some hanky-panky going on with a buxom brunette called "Flame" during the uprising on Mercury back in '46.

There was a girl named "Gilda" back in the early days. Wilma really blew her stack over that one.

No question about it, Buck had a roving eye.

It can be assumed that one of his conquests bore the surname of Kirk and she eventually bore a manchild named James.

I think this a valid point for speculation and research. I will do the speculating. The research I leave to those who are more involved with STAR TREK.

I'll bet that Black Barney knows all the details.

ED COX doodle here:

The past year has been fairly eventful on the personal level. In January I changed jobs--involuntarily. The powers that be in the Air Force Weapons Lab have a new playtoy--lasers--and were in need of more personnel slots in the laser labs. It is not permitted to create new slots but old ones can be rewritten to serve new purposes. The transient radiation effects facility for which I was working was deemed no longer necessary (much to the dismay of several civilian contractors who were using it); it was deactivated and all of our jobs abolished. I ended up in the Precision Measurement Equipment Laboratory which is a fancy name for an electronics repair shop where I fix meters and power supplies and the like. Not exactly a challenging or interesting position. I didn't suffer any direct monetary loss although I did lose out on a promotion in the shuffle. I keep looking for an opening in something a bit more interesting but there are a number of factors that make the possibility of finding one somewhat remote. I am too old for one thing, getting too close to the point where I can retire. Another is that the entire personnel program has been downgraded and positions once held by technicians are now filled with engineers. And, of course, the Air Force also has recruited vast herds of young men which it promised to make technicians and now has to find jobs for. I suspect that unless something comes up to drastically change the situation I am stuck where I am until retirement.

In March younger daughter, René, decided she wanted to try making it on her own. She was then in her second year at the University of New Mexico. She moved into an apartment in town, got a part time job as a lifeguard at the University pool, wrangled a basic educational grant, and is doing quite well as a starving student. She is majoring in mathematics with side trips into physical education, biology and engineering. Like the hero of Zelazny's Doorways in the Sand, the University may someday have to force her to graduate.

August brought a lengthy trip through Arkansas and Florida. We toured the Ozarks, Mammoth Springs (truly fantastic--an entire river pouring out of the ground), wandered through northeastern Arkansas, Tennessee and Georgia visiting with a number of Chrystal's relatives whom we had not seen for 20 years. (No, we did not go to Plains.) Toured the length and breadth of Florida, visited St Augustine, drove on Daytona Beach, toured the Kennedy Space Center, visited Bok's Singing Tower and Sanctuary, the Everglades, and ended up at Pigeon Key for Dave Jenrette's Mooncon.

and relaxing few days. We lolled around (wet, I should point out as the rain came down almost constantly) enjoying the company of a small band of fans, wading in the ocean, drinking rum, eating turtle steaks in Key West, eating conglomerations put together by Joe Haldeman and his entourage and generally taking life easy. That was a fine

followed by Suncon. The convention was mostly enjoyable. Lots of good people there (and a surprising lot of good people who weren't there). The hotel was terrible: overpriced, rundown, most of the facilities closed. The choice of hotel is really about the only thing that I can fault the concommittee on. Otherwise they did a good job. That was

Attendance was apparently down from that of previous worldcons, a point noted by the hucksters. I don't know what the official figures are, somewhere around 2000, give or take a couple of hundred.

I picked up a copy of Harry Warner's A Wealth of Fable (which the seller assured me is sure to become a collector's item--were you aware of that, Harry?).

First Fandom grows alarmingly older which is what prompted, I suppose, the official organization of Second Fandom at Suncon. I don't know what their requirements are. When we learned, at the First Fandom meeting, that they were organizing, we tottered over and made rude noises at them.

Then in late September, the 24th, elder daughter Diana was married. The Tacketts now have a son-in-law. Tom Stull, a student now at the University of Nebraska and formerly of the USAF. Oh, the woe of it--one of those Air Farce types.

And that about brings us up to date. If I manage to get this run off and into the FAPA mailing it will be another big event.

Two more items for inclusion in the Fortean Book of the Damned. Which is to say they will be mentioned in passing and then never heard about again because they don't fit the accepted pattern. The first from SCIENCE NEWS, the report of the observation of two distant galaxies which appear to be moving faster than the speed of light. No explanations for this apparent un-Einsteinian behavior were offered. We shall watch SCIENCE NEWS diligently for any further reports but really do not expect any.

The second item, from the daily press, concerns the mummy of Rameses II, Pharaoh of Egypt more than three thousand years ago. The mummy, one of the prize exhibits at Cairo, had been deteriorating and was sent to Paris to see if anything could be done to halt the process. The scientists at the Museum of Man in Paris thoroughly analyzed the mummy. One of the strange and exotic herbs that the Egyptian undertakers had used to help preserve the body some 3300 years ago was tobacco.

TOBACCO?

Dwell upon that for a while. The newspapers played the story strictly for laughs going on about how the ancient Egyptians found one way to make the evil weed useful--they stuffed their mummies with it.

Ah, but tobacco is, as we know, strictly a New World plant and was unknown in the Old World before Columbus.

Still the body of Rameses II was treated with tobacco.

They were a bold, adventurous people, those men of the Bronze Age. They sailed the Mediterranean and beyond: up the west coast of Europe to the Baltic and beyond; to Cornwall and England in search of tin; across the Indian Ocean to Mohenjo-Daro; around Africa according to some reports.

And to America?

It is not necessary to postulate a continuous trade between the Old World and the New. It is only necessary to postulate one successful voyage across the Atlantic...from the eastern Mediterranean to America and return. A voyage extremely lengthy and full of danger with the sailors completely uncertain of their location or their landfall. But they brought back to their home port some souvenirs including this rare and exotic herb. And since it was rare and exotic where else would it end up but with the physicians of the Great King of Egypt?

And what did the sailors leave behind? Who can say? But it causes one to take a new look at the civilizations and legends of Middle America. Pyramids and white gods from the east and all the rest.

It has been speculated about for years. Do we now have a smidgen of proof? Will the civilizations of Meso-America be re-examined in a new light?

I doubt it.

But tobacco in Egypt thirty-three hundred years ago is proof enough for me.

The next Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund campaign will be to send a delegate from this side to that side. More specifically from North America to the 1979 World SF Convention to be held in Brighton, U.K., 23-27 August 1979.

Nominations will open on 1 October 1978 and close on 30 November 1978. The voting will open on 1 December 1978 and close on 14 April 1979 (this latter date being Easter Saturday which will give Peter Roberts a day or so to collect votes at Eastercon.

The nominating period opening is less than a year away so now is the time for all prospective candidates to start rounding up nominators. Or for nominators to start putting the pressure on their prospective candidates to run or stand as the case may be.

Lest you have forgotten--how could you?--prospective TAFF candidates this time must have five nominators, three from this side of the Atlantic and two from the European side. There should also be a 100 word or less platform telling all of fandom why this candidate is the one to choose and a \$5 good faith bend paid to the appropriate administrator of the fund. And you are aware, of course, that I am the American administrator of the Fund. Peter Roberts is the European administrator.

Considering the way things move in fandom and the slow pace of the postal service it isn't too early to be getting started. We'd like to have at least three candidates in the running--the more the merrier, of course--and are looking forward to an interesting campaign.

One more for the road.....

((Editor's note: Fanzines are published for pleasure (among other reasons) and one of the great pleasures in doing DYNATHRON is Dainis Bisenieks' column. I have had the very great honor of running these for the past several issues and I hope they continue. Dainis is one of the most erudite and perceptive critics on the scene these days.))

DAINIS BISENIEKS:

A REVIEW

FUTURE POWER, ed. Jack Dann & Gardner Dozois, Random House 1976, xxviii + 256 pages, \$7.95

The publishers or somebody decided that an anthology needs a reason for being. The editors were only too happy to provide an intro -- most of those xxviii pages -- and it is deadly. All the cliches of scrying into the future are there: "Modern technology has created new and undreamed of capabilities for the 'control of others'; 1984 is already upon us..." Yes, that kind of language. As if that were not enough, they have introduced each story, and along the way they quote the cliché of cliches, the infallible sign of liberal non-thought: "We have met the enemy and he is us."

I react to such things with growing disbelief. If these ideas are parroted by so many, there must be something wrong with them. Hmmm. Whatever progress may be taken to mean, said Robert Frost, it can't mean making the world an easier place in which to save your soul. I tend to agree. How about harder, then, as some SF writers would have us think (at least for the purposes of one story or another)? Shall we have a future in which everyone is programmed to be unfailingly bourgeois...or hedonistic...or enslaved, except for some poor doomed rebel? I incline to think no: for one thing, there are so many cross-currents in history. No vision should be forbidden to SF--but there must be story value. As to what that might be--well, outside this book Pohl's "Day Million" has it, as neat an example of pure exposition as I've seen, of a kind of hedonist future far, far beyond the visions of Brave New World. But it has verve, and it is blessedly brief. Here, now, we have "The Day of the Big Test" by Felix C. Gotschalk, about an insufferable young whipper-snapper taking what we primitives would call an IQ test, in a bourgeois technological paradise as gadawful as any I've seen. It is not so blessedly brief. And I wonder: did the author want me to see his world in this way? Any hints that he did are well concealed.

How will people in the future use the power that human inventiveness has given them? How will they deal with one another in human terms? Ursula LeGuin has an answer (Her name attracted me to the book in the first place). They will have to see those given into their power as people, be changed by them, and suffer for it. "The Diary of the Rose" tells of, in our terms, a psychiatrist in advanced training with a powerful means of healing--or mind-snooping, destroying. A "patient" is referred to her by the Authorities, and she comes to know him and perceive his doom and hers. It is one of the two moving stories in the book. Now there is story value.

Damon Knight's "The Country of the Kind" appears here again: about the misfit on whom the society's nearly infallible means of socialization did not work and who is doomed to wander, a solitary destroyer in a world of hedonists. The tale could not be more skillfully written, it is one of our classics. But it does not move me in that way. I cannot pity the protagonist's fate...

Tiptree's "She Waits for All Men Born" receives a pretentious introduction about life and death and immortality. After some vignettes from the history of evolution we reach the story of a post-holocaust mutant, a death-dealing immortal. I cannot stomach Tiptree's rhetoric: that's twice running that I've been disappointed by him.

Effinger has a tale with a long title about the last dictators of a computer-controlled society. A comedy, short on laughs: readable, no more.

"Coming-of-Age Day" by A. K. Jorgensson: a prudish society with almost compulsory surrogate sex. Readable.

"Thanatos" by Vonda McIntyre, a short tour through a future hell. But the glimpses I got of the solitary rebel and those who must deal with her are too short. There are bits of, almost, awfulness for its own sake here. So the future state will be served by some who enjoy their power over others? Go on--tell us more.

What Lafferty's "Smoe and the Implicit Clay" is doing here, I don't know, glad though I am to see it. Epikt, Aloysius Shiplap and others of the old crew appear in an indescribably zany tale.

Last in the book is Gene Wolfe's novella "The Eyeflash Miracles." As readers of "The Death of Dr Island" and "The Fifth Head of Cerberus" know, Wolfe is the master of telling a tale through the protagonist's consciousness with exquisite detail, revealing the pattern little by little. Toward the end, as in the other stories, he did have to put in a long patch of exposition: a forgivable flaw. A blind boy astray in a welfare utopia is befriended by a couple of the new jobless. He dreams and strange things happen: miracles. But the vividness of the tale is for me the miracle: much as I hate the prediction game, here (say I) is a winner. Read it, read it! Read also LeGuin and Lafferty. But don't, if you value your sanity, read the editors' maunderings.

Oh, and speaking of winners, I wish blurbwriters would quit telling us how often the authors (here, the editors) have been nominated for the Hugo and the Nebula. Often a bridesmaid....

ORBIT 18, ed. by Damon Knight, Harper & Row 1976, 256pp, \$8.95

If at times, reading a story in one of these collections, I ask, "But is it science fiction?", it was Damon from whom I learned so to ask. Now we know that "inner space" is preferred to outer in this series: the stress is on fiction, and the imagined science or society can at times be (more or less) background coloration. That's all right with me if only I can get a story...

Now I will risk naming as a typically weak story "The Eve of the Last Apollo" by Carter Scholz. It tells of the later life of Colonel John Edwards, first man on the Moon. His marriage is failing, the space program is in decline: he finds himself directionless. "...I don't know" - his words to his adolescent son end the story. Grant all its human truths--yet they leave me unmoved, add nothing to me. What is the story value in grey truths? (And the whole thing is no more SF than ARROWSMITH is: the setting is essentially today.

Now Kim Stanley Robinson, another new writer (with two stories here) has a really lively one in "Coming Back to Dixieland", about some jazz musicians from the exploited class of asteroid miners. There is some very good background, passably well integrated, but what carries the story is the life in its characters. It is pleasant to read about some winners for a change. "In Pierson's Orchestra" is a first-person piece of an apprentice performer on a one-man orchestra, re-experiencing his past and deciding his future as he goes through the agonies of withdrawal from a drug. Fairly good: now let's see if Robinson can write SF that is not about musicians.

Some more dooms now. "Ladies and Gentlemen, This is Your Crisis" by Kate Wilhelm: vicarious living before the big TV screen. Can't say it's badly done: there is suspense in the doings of the competitors in Crisis Therapy. But we know from the start that the spectators live only for this weekend show, neglecting all else, and one inevitable failure in fiction is very much like another. "A Modular Story" by Raylyn Moore tells of interchangeable company men, plugged into one job and family after another. It belabors the point. John Varley's "The M&M, Seen as a Low-Yield Thermonuclear Device" tells of the Skinnerian training of "pre-delinquent children": "We reward happy behaviors. Smile, Theresa." It's written in the present tense, a fairly effective technique here. "The Family Winter of 1986" by Felix C. Gotschalk is a farce of the coming fuel shortage, unbelievable, mildly funny, and forgettable.

Lafferty has "The Hand With One Hundred Fingers", as describable as the Golux's hat: about par for him. Better than the aforementioned is "Mary Margaret Road-Grader" by Howard Waldrop--post holocaust "Plains Indians" with salvaged motor vehicles as "horses". It's a lovely parody of the story of macho competitiveness, complete with a closing lament for the vanished old times. "Rules of Moopsball" by Gary Cohn is an unclassifiable joke. "Who Was the First Oscar to Win a Negro?" by Craig Strete--a modernistic story (juxtaposed fragments) about life lived in imitation of art. It nicely twits a certain few SF authors.

I thought and thought about "Meathouse Man" by George R.R. Martin. Its protagonist is a wage-slave, a corpse handler controlling by electronic mind-transmission the brain-wiped bodies of criminals (etc) in hazardous mining and factory work. He wants something better, and he wants love, something beyond the writhings of corpses in the whore-houses, controlled (as he soon learns) not by handlers but by feedback circuits. He meets, in time, real women, and experiences rejection and disappointment. He has confused love with the pleasures of love; and so the story moves to an end which appears more and more inevitable. This is true science fiction, skilfully written. If it left me unmoved, that may have been because I nowhere saw the protagonist getting a real chance to redeem his error.

And there was yet "The Teacher" by Kathleen M. Sidney--of a super-annuated schoolteacher coming in touch with a kind of consciousness in a city. I found it somewhat puzzling.

DAVIDS BISENIEKS