

downcast iron
744

"Lord, ain't it funny how time slips away?" asked a semi-popular song of the day. *((I hope nobody asks which day...I can't recall if that was contemporary with Sweet Tuxedo Girl, Tuxedo Junction or Life in the Fast Lane.))* No, it ain't. Not the least bit. This issue was planned for November 1980 and what with one thing and another I think the actual publication date will be February 1981. Still I suppose that is better than September. The excuses are all standard so pick whichever you can think of and apply it to the semi-lateness of this issue. Semi because I really do not have any particular schedule to stick to and the zine gets published whenever. Whenever I get around to it. (Not to be confused with ROUND TUIT which is Becky Cartwright's FLAPzine. This isn't a FLAPzine although copies will probably showup there as well as elsewhere. Maybe even elsewhen.

Elsewhere or here or elsewhen or even now this is the 74th issue of DYNATRON a fazine (a what?) of sorts. A fazine of sorts (got it right that time) concerned with nothing serious--just the usual stf. DYNATRON is available for 50¢ per copy or, preferably, trades, contributions of material, and letters of comment. (The usual, as most ignorant fazine reviewers say although I prefer the unusual.) CONTRIBUTIONS OF ARTICLES, ESSAYS, REVIEWS, ETC., ARE NEEDED. The files are empty and ol' Roytac is about run dry. There isn't much incentive to publish when there isn't anything to publish.

Anyway, Dynatron is edited, published and all that rot by Roy Tackett at 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, N.M. 87107

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Anything not otherwise credited is probably by the editor.

✕ A Marinated Publication
February, 1981

PAGES FROM

the ancient Hortian¹ book of accumulating

Random Thought

For years now the elder generations have been castigating public school officials for not doing their job; for turning out uneducated students. I wonder if they have ever given any thought to the idea that the schools are doing their job...it is just that the students are dumb...

1

I know that you have all been waiting with some impatience for a report on the 12th (more or less) Bubonicon. It was held 22-24 August in Albuquerque (or as the International Science Fiction Yearbook put it, quoting the ASFS, of course, "the Bubonic Plague capitol of the United States."⁴) ((Would we say something like that? The Chamber of Commerce and the Albuquerque Industrial Development Commission will declare us pariahs and drive us all out to Cline's Corners.))

I will not go into any great detail for con reports can get to be a bore but it was a good conference. Total registration was about 105 which is a good size and brought in enough money to allow the club to break even which is about all one can ask. Con committee Dennis Virzi and the rest of us were a bit nervous for a while. The Hilton raised the price of the luncheon on us and we went \$140 in the hole on that but sold enough memberships so that, along with the take from the auction, kept us from having to pass the hat at the next club meeting.

Guest of Honor C. J. Cherryh was charming and voluble. Her main speech was generally interesting and her thought that science fiction occupies the valley between the peaks of science and art and therefore is in a unique position to blend the two is one on which writers might dwell. Besides C.J. Cherryh attending luminaries included Jack Williamson, Stephen Donaldson, Roger Zelazny, and Fred Saberhagen. And not to forget Bob Vardeman, Mike Kring, Vic Milan, and Kathy Ptacek (and probably some I have forgotten). The area's other big gun, George RR Martin, had already departed for Boston so sent his regrets. And, of course, the Australian contingent: Keith Curtis and Carey Handfield.

(Chatting with the Williamsons I found that they were not going to Boston. It seems that they had been unable to obtain a room in the main con hotel and felt that at their ages they had no desire to be assigned to the Outer Limits. It appears to me that the Boston committee erred grievously when there is no room at the inn for a writer of Jack Williamson's stature. That's what comes, I suppose, of trying to run things by computer.)

It certainly wasn't planned that way but the main thrust of Bubonicon 12 turned out to be one vast argument over fantasy vs. science fiction with a number of the panels which were, supposedly, to discuss other subjects,

1. The reference is to the country of Hort in the book PLEASURE PLANET by "Edward George".²

2. If you do not know where "Edward George" got his reference then you are the veriest of neofen.

suddenly veering into the fantasy vs. SF discussion. The cause was either a remark by one member of the panel or something that came out of the audience. Some of those discussions got hot and heavy with shouted arguments from the floor and heated words between the participants on the panels.

Interesting.

It appears that many fans have strong views on the subject. Those who favor the current wave of fantasy feel they have a legitimate claim on the field whereas the proponents of science fiction seem to feel that fantasy is an illegitimate intrusion.

Historically speaking the fantasy fans are correct. The field was mostly fantasy long before there was any science fiction as we know it. In the older context of fiction fantasy = romance (which has nothing to do with the modern American context of a romantic story being a love story; look up the definition of "romance" in your dictionary) and stories dealing with science were originally called scientific romances. "Science fiction" (or, more correctly, "scientific-tion") was, as we all know, invented by Gernsback.

The field reflects trends in mainstream life. Scientific romances were considered fantasy because the general public had a hard time distinguishing science from magic. Since the 1920s our society has pursued a course of scientific enlightenment and a progressive trend in social life. This has been reflected in the fantasy field with stf coming evermore to the fore and fantasy itself fading into the background. Recall that in 1949 when Boucher and McComas first brought out F&SF it was titled THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY. It became THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION with the second issue as the editors realized what was selling...We have been accustomed to SF being the leading factor in the field for such a long time that a resurgence of fantasy is unsettling.

It should be.

If, as postulated, the field reflects mainstream society, then it is reflecting a reaction against science and progressive social freedom.

The growing reaction against technology by a large segment of the people, the burgeoning of nutty religious cults, beliefs in astrology, witches, satanism and various other superstitions have all contributed to a rise in the popularity of fantasy and a decline in science fiction. (Indeed anyone who has been watching what has been going on in the fantasy field could easily have predicted the turn towards political conservatism in the world outside the microcosm.)

Perhaps it is a reaction against "future shock"! The real world is changing so fast that people are searching for the security of yesterday. Fantasy postulates a world filled with the old familiar trappings of the supernatural and not the unknowns of quarks and black holes and bubble memories and drifting continents. One can pay a priest for heavenly protection against demons or a witch for a proper spell to fulfill one's dreams. What can one do about a black hole in space that eats the universe?

The various discussions/arguments at Bubonicon 12 were interesting and laden with deep running emotions. It is amazing how seriously both fantasy fans and science fiction fans took the discussions.

Other possibilities for the increased popularity of fantasy included the idea that fantasy had soul whereas stf was essentially soulless (as in "You're a soulless materialistic bastard, Tackett"). Still another proposition put forth was that the increase in fantasy was due to (or the fault of) the number of women writers in the field now.

I don't believe that any solid conclusions were reached at Bubonicon 12 but we did find a subject that permeated the convention, got most of the attendees involved on one side or the other and plucked some taut emotional strings. Basic beliefs on both sides came under some startling attacks.

Science fiction vs. fantasy. Science vs. superstition. That which is real vs. that which is only imagined.

And perhaps the main difference between the dogma of religion and the dogma of science is simply that which the individual chooses to believe.

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(continued on page 12, column 2)

THE SPACE MAVERICKS by Michael Kring
Published by Leisure Books, 1980, \$1.75

Reviewed by Mike Kring:

The typos are not my fault.

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Reviewed by Dennis Virzi:

You've read this story before; the bureaucratic and greedy empire, a couple of nice guys, a damsel in distress, and an ancient mystery. The classic pulp formula all right. This version works. The story is about two cargo haulers, Fripp Enos and Kohn Tarkosz, who are trying to make a living carrying freight between various worlds. Fripp Enos is the pilot, besides having the psychic abilities to navigate in FTL, he can transform himself into a "modified man", a fanged and clawed superman. Kohn is the brains of the two, he selects cargo and destinations and handles the local customs agents.

While making a routine run Fripp rescues a young girl from some kidnapers, runs afoul of the local police, crash lands on a strange planet where he picks up a ring that is very good at keeping his alive, gets the girl back to her father and is let go by the police. The end finds the pair further investigating the mysterious ring.

The reason this story works is that it is well thought out. Nothing just happens, there is an explanation for it happening. Even if the explanation offered is simply "Boy, was that a dumb thing to do", as in the case of Fripp getting slugged in the police station. Similarly, hyperspace travel is not merely a lot of flashing lights, it takes effort to navigate the "spheres" of hyper-space. Fripp Enos has talent when it comes to FTL travel. Also he has to pay a physical price whenever he activates his modified mode. He gets mighty hungry and tired afterwards. The bad guys have their motives, too. The police are trying to do a job; it's nothing personal.

The lead heavy, Heuser, is not killed in the end. In stead he falls into disfavor with his superiors (a fate worse than death?).

The magic ring holds promise of greatness lost and ancient civilizations uncovered. As the book ends, the two are following up a clue about the ring, a desolate planet aptly named Charcoal.

A good read.

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Reviewed by Jodi Stinebaugh:

Mike Kring's The Space Mavericks is amusing. And frustrating because I am sure he can do better.

I was amused by recognizing numerous personalities and in-jokes. I felt the book had good action and flowed well from scene to scene. The idea of the Spheres of Space seems to be original, or at least is one that has not been worked to death.

It will be interesting, indeed, to read Mike's future stuff, including the sequels to Space Mavericks, he obviously intends to write.

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Reviewed by Fred Cleaver:

This first novel is a bang bang shoot 'em kick 'em space opera. Space mavericks Fripp and Kohn rescue a kidnapped girl and have to fight Central to get to safety on her home planet. Luckily Fripp is modified and can activate his fangs, claws, super speed and super strength when he's really in a jam. The book is nonstop action and adventure, the perfect thing if you can handle a junk food diet.

Happily, Central is filled with Tuckerised Albuquerque fans from General Tackett and group leader Speer to Colonel Milan while Virzi got a hole in his leg while helping our heroes.

((Fred Cleaver's review appeared originally in ROCKY MOUNTAIN FAN.))

Reviewed by Patricia Mathews:

Some of the Albuquerque Science Fiction Society have set themselves to bring back the good old Golden-Age-of-SF-is-13 adventure novel, the PLANET STORIES story. Mike Kring has done a competent job of it in The Space Mavericks.

Two spacegoing cargo haulers--interstellar tuckers--on shore leave rescue a damsel in distress from a thoroughly nasty and well-realized inner city gang, and suddenly the entire police forces of the galaxy are after them. Since Kring has established very early on that the central government and its colonial arms are corrupt, brutal, and not too bright, this is reasonably plausible if you assume that she holds the key to some sort of secret the government wants badly. She does.

There are alien worlds with alien and deadly customs, a lost city, a few monsters, and the requisite chases and fights. Although the Damsel in Distress is very young and Somebody's Daughter, according to the convention of these stories, she is presented as reasonably bright and reasonably human; although the author remarks, with some irritation, at the childish behavior she exhibits at one point (described in terms more applicable to a two-year-old), he seems to be dimly aware that a teenaged civilizn under stress of that sort might very logically break down and act like a baby once or twice. The prose is not purple, the plots have some plausibility, and the two leading characters have no desire to imitate Raymond Chandler. Nor does the author.

Give it a C for execution and a C+ for trying.

7

((On the whole The Space Mavericks is a competent job and fun to read. Mike is a student at UNM and did not have the ideal amount of time--or conditions--under which to write. He shows a lot of promise for the future. A sequel to The Space Mavericks has been sold. Look for it sometime in 1981. RT))

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THE SUNDERED REALM by Robert Vardeman and Victor Milan. Playboy Press, 1980, \$2.25

Reviewed by Patricia Mathews:

The Sundered Realm, first of a trilogy called WAR OF THE POWERS, is entertainment of the sort that the hard core of the Albuquerque Science Fiction Society has set themselves to write; this one is sword and sorcery, and extremely entertaining to read.

The hero, a dog-sled courier called Fost Longstrider, is hired by a wizard to deliver a jug to another wizard. Almost immediately the heroine, in true sword-and-sorcery style, drugs his sled dogs, attacks him, tries to steal the jug, tells him a transparent lie as a cover story, and then, in a lovingly described sex scene, seduces him; the only purpose at this point can be to keep from taking somewhat-deserved lumps at Longstrider's hands. And this is the chief Good Guy, the rightful heiress to the throne, and all that! Oh, well, it's a toss-up whether the authors' low opinion (look how little they expect in the way of ethics, or conversely, how much bad behavior they are willing to accept as normal) is of humanity in general, women, royalty, or royal women; as that may be, the hero ends up on her side for little or no good reason.

The jug is inhabited by the ghost of Erimenes the Ethical, who in life preached abstinence from worldly pleasures (neither authors nor ghost explain what was so ethical about that) and is now heartily sorry. Erimenes is a low-comedy portrait of the academic Middle Age Crazy of a thousand mainstream novels, and a bigger pain in the butt than C3PO could ever be. At least the golden droid never urged the leading characters into danger so he could see a little blood! Erimenes is the reader as seen by the doer, and a cheerfully repulsive portrait he is.

Back to the plot. The wizard who owned the jug is dead, and a few monsters are hanging around his castle just waiting to be slain. Erimenes has the secret of immortality, which was well-known to his people (is that why they all died out by the time of the story?) and both sides

want it: Princess Moriana (thief, dog-drugger, coward, and not above a little whoring in her cowardice) and her Evil Twin Synalon (Come on, fellows! That's a drug rehabilitation program, or the latest fabric from DuPont.) Synalon comes on like the Evil Queen of Acne on the Tarzan Show (Saturday morning cartoon hour) complete with the very same lines of dialog. She dresses in filmy gowns and lots of jewels, keeps a castrated and very sadistic cousin as her counsellor, rides and uses ravens rather than war-eagles; I wouldn't be surprised if she wore green nail polish on three-inch nails. I mean, she is Evil! If you need even more proof, consider that she went to bed with six guardsmen from the royal barracks at once. (Considering the hero's open interest in brothels, it ill-becomes him to consider her anything except a kindred soul; I suppose he simply hates to see his fellow men turned into nothing but sex objects for an evil tyrant's lust, or something.) And she is now looking into the possibilities of hornbolls and dogs, having, I suppose, been very disappointed in the males available to her in this book. (Me, too. The difference between most of them and the draft dogs lies in the number of feet and thickness of fur; certainly not in intelligence. In character, the dogs probably come out ahead.)

Moriana is captured by Synalon, who gives her a few sibling-rivalry nasties my own sister could surpass at ten (she's not quite up to the "Up your nose with a rubber hose" level, but give her time) and throws her to the only clever torture in the book, that of slicing apart all her old friends and family retainers before her eyes to make her talk. Whoever the Guild of Seekers after Truth and Penitence sent Synalon should be recalled and a couple of apprentices sent in his stead; Moriana is steadfast in the face of all this and instead is thrown to the Vicar of Istu, a very ugly statue of a very ugly demon, to be publically raped and eaten. Longstrider arrives in time to prevent the devouring but not the rape (he was too busy watching) and lo and behold, the fellows openly allowed that such a thing would hurt!

Not that Moriana is shown later as

having any scars at all, physical or mental, from her pair of ordeals; at the end of it all she and Longstrider are cheerfully fighting off baddies and on their way to the next battle for the throne.

The descriptions are clever, especially that of the city's hot-air balloons, powered by fire elementals but otherwise indistinguishable from those floating over Albuquerque every balloon fiesta time, and the hero even gets a ride in one.

The sex is very nicely done, if you can believe that both the heroine and a minor character would love to bed the hero on first sight and have a great time doing so; well, this is fantasy, after all. Neither hero nor authors show any sign of seeing an ulterior motive behind the princess' first sex scene, so maybe we weren't suppose to see anything more in it than that the publisher was Playboy Press. At any rate, it was shown as mutual fun with no sadistic overtones of dominance games. Male-viewpoint throughout, so a female reviewer's appreciation would necessarily be less gut level and more aesthetic, but still, nicely done, and those who find it extraneous can skip it.

The action moves fast enough that only someone who sat down and analyzed the plot would find it preposterous.

Buy it. If you have the \$2.25 and there's nothing worth watching on television, go ahead. You'll be entertained.

PAT MATHEWS

The City in the Glacier and The Destiny Stone, books two and three of THE WAR OF POWERS have also been published by Playboy Press. Vardebob tells me that books four, five and six (yep) have been purchased by Playboy Press and publication is scheduled for the first three months of 1982. Book publication schedules seem to be governed by things not known to mortal man. RT

THE DEVIL'S GAME by Poul Anderson (Pocket Books, 1980, 255pp, \$2.50)

In which Poul Anderson abandons stf for fantasy. Or does he? Poul has a go at the mainstream...or does he?

Sunderland Haverner has grown old, rich, powerful and bored all with the help, perhaps, of one Samael. Samael appears to Haverner as a shadow, an image, a voice. He may be a demon, a visitor from another world or another time, or just the figment of Haverner's imagination.

Haverner drafts seven people, all of whom need money, to come to his island and play games. The winner or winners get one million tax free dollars. The object of the players is to eliminate from the games as many of the contestants as is possible. Haverner's object is to study the psychology of the five men and two women he has trapped in his web. Samael's object...remains as intangible as his appearance.

Poul Anderson has written an excellent character study and the reactions of the players are realistic and understandable. Anderson is one of the better writers around the science fiction field and when he steps out of it (or maybe just a bit diagonal to it) he is even better. Good action, good characterization, (Julia April Fenn Petrie is one of the most one-track minded bitches ever put on paper (and I've met her a few times)), good motivation and something of a mystery, too.

(And Poul even tuckerizes himself by mentioning a fuzzy fourfoot named Winston P. Sanders.)

Recommended.

RT

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We have here THE SCIENCE FICTIONARY: An A-Z Guide to the World of SF Authors, Films & TV Shows by Ed Naha. It is from Seaview Books and costs \$16.95 and there is apparently a paperback version for \$10.95

This is essentially a listing of a vast number of stfantasy flics from the big and little screens along with some short biographies of many authors in the field. A handy reference, I suppose, for fantasy film

buffs. I am not one. The film listing is incomplete. So is the author listing.

RT

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Hal Clement's THE NITROGEN FIX (Ace, \$6.95) sounds as if it should be interesting if one can get into it. I couldn't. The first chapter didn't grab me. A family of three and a semi-domesticated salamander going from somewhere to somewhere for some reason. Not enough information in Chapter one to get me interested in them.

RT

X

Gordon R. Dickson's MASTERS OF EVERON (Ace \$6.95) on the other hand is interesting enough but seems too juvenile and obvious to really hold me. Man taking a giant cat back to its home planet for research purposes. We know who runs that planet, don't we? Perhaps in the objective view MASTERS OF EVERON may be better than Vardeman's SANDCATS OF RHYL but I preferred the latter. It seemed fresher and more fun.

RT

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Ah, you're just getting old and jaded, Tackett.

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Maybe. But I don't think so.

THE ADOLESCENCE OF P-1 by Thomas J. Ryan (Ace, \$2.25) is a fast-paced, humorous, and interesting story about a sentient computer. Egad, what a computer. You have to realize that I am a recruit in the Butlerian Jihad but I enjoyed this one. You will, too.

RT

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IN DEFENSE OF THE HORRID PUN

by

RALPH ROBERTS

As a happy inhabitant of that vague gray area (ya gotta call me on the "twilight phone") between pro and fan, my writing sometimes merges the two styles resulting in...ahem...certain stylistic "profanities" committed inbetwixt more serious and respectable projects; much as does that leading proponent of punning, the great Chuck Upmann. A good many of these horrid pun stories; what the French might despairingly refer to as "objects d'art" (will they get that one, Chuck?), the pub-going British as "dart objects", and US fen...well, a very few fen do have nasty mouths.

Disregarding all concern for life and limb, I've gone so far as to actually publish a few horrid puns in both pro and fanzines. Even one or two under my own name. So while not possessing the expertise of a Chuck Upmann, I'm on firm ground and speak from "no ledge" (contrived but what the heck) when discussing this oft maligned, and occasionally underlined, artform. And one, I might add (or subtract, or multiply) that gives the perspiring young writer a subtle communicative vehicle of sensitivity, imagery, word-sense, and rhythmic patternings. (And if that ain't creative writing about puns, Chuck, I'll turn in my Randall Garrett Fanclub membership card!) Suffice it to say, I enjoy this mode of expression and often make a "fun" in conversation as well as writing. (Right Chuck?...Chuck?...)

The forms for horrid punning vary, as do those for that gross cement statuary you see defacing lawns of the less-gifted-in-taste homeowner. Webster's defines the pun as, "a play on words of the same sound but different meanings...for witty effect." But the end line of an H-P story (note how cleverly I sneak in a plug for a well-known calculator company--that too is a pun) should fall on the reader with all the force generated by one of those statues being toppled. A great THUMP of

inevitability leaving the reader gasping of breath, his senses completely "punned" so to speak. In other words, it still must be a story. Good examples of such may be seen in ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE, who usually includes at least one per issue. F&SF will also, on occasion, lay a groaner on ya. And bunches of fanzines, of course.

All right. We now know; (a) I like horrid puns, (b) a definition of criteria for an H-P (65?) story, (c) either "a" or "b", (d) none of the above. Those choosing "d" may now go back to their BATTLESTAR GALACTICA coloring books. Do try to stay inside the lines.

Well, we gotta make some kinda conclusions. First, puns are a recognized and enjoyable form of SF humor. (If ya don't agree, ask the people who chose "d" for a coloring book.) Secondly, from a writer's viewpoint, the construction of horrid pun stories is a pleasurable and relaxing pastime. It'll soothe jangled nerves and give ya a break during snags in your longer, more serious works. Additionally, while drinking and writing don't always mix, composing pun pieces will "scotch-up" your writing ability; it's good practice (Chuck Upmann says puns are infinitely better if you "scotch-up" before writing or reading 'em.). Finally, a sense of humor benefits a civilized person in coping with the daily frustrations and complexities of modern life. Hence, I leave you with that age old adage: the pun is mightier than the bored. (And for those of you who still think this article serious, the persons choosing "d" have several coloring books left.)

RALPH ROBERTS

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LETTERS

DYNATRON's infrequent appearance during the past couple of years has not made it an attractive fanzine for letterhacks. There have been a few, though...

PHIL STEPHENSEN-PAYNE, "Longmead", 15 Wilmerhatch Lane, Epsom, Surrey KT18 7EQ, U.K.:

There is much to be said for Dainis' idea of not reading a book until it is ten years old, but I fear he forgets that what sells a book is not necessarily quality. You might discover, ten years later, that a book is worth reading - but how many good books are still in print ten years later? You can easily get ten year old books by Harold Robbins or Jackie Collins, or by Heinlein or Asimov - but what if you suddenly decided to read Pangborn's Trial of Callista Blake (a superb book by the way) which has been out of print for years. Maybe the ideal solution would be to buy all the books now - and wait ten years before reading them (or not as the case might be.) Trouble is that's a bit too expensive.

Readers (not only SF readers) seem to be divided into two very distinct classes - those who like short stories and those who don't. It is my feeling that the proportion of short stories that rely only on an "idea" is about the same as the proportion of novels that do. Similarly with "key revelations", which are just as common in novels as in short stories - they do not necessarily mean the concept is bad. To my mind some of the short stories by, say Ted Sturgeon or Raold Dahl. are much better than most novels.

((I tend to agree with you on that. I think the point attempting to be made is that novel length gives more space for "character" development, whatever the hell that is, and making the characters in the story more like 'peepul'. For my part I can usually do without 'peepul' and also "human beans, man". The thought occurs that "human beans" and human beings are not synonymous. RT))

I cannot say that I've formed any distinct opinions on Velikovsky one way or the other - though I guess I tend to skepticism.

Surprised Art didn't mention that the Velikovsky debate in Pensee was reprinted (in 1978 I think) by Picador under a title I forget ("Velikovsky Analyzed" or Velikovsky Rediscovered" or something like that.)

((I tried to remain relatively neutral in the Velikovsky debate for many years although I felt that none of his detractors, from Asimov to Sagan and everyone in between never proved him wrong. What they seemed to be doing was giving pronouncements from the scriptures...this is science, take it on faith...and one does not take the accumulation of knowledge on faith...we leave that for religion. What finally convinced me that Velikovsky was wrong was something the revered orthodox scientists should have checked in the first place. I was reading some dusty tome on the early history of Mesopotamia and found that the Babylonians had recorded observations of Venus some 500 years before V said the planet sprang from Jupiter. One would think that in matters of this sort V's opposition would have at least checked the records. RT))

Politics, unfortunately, is a Catch-22 situation. Everybody agrees that the only person suitable to rule is the one who doesn't want to - but he never stands for election so never will rule.)Except in a monarchy maybe.(Laws of government are made by the politicians, who will always propagate themselves a job and it doesn't matter much how people like Art suggest that this or that rule should be introduced, no politician will ever legislate against himself. Hence the Catch-22.

((A couple of elections back we had a big reform movement: let the people choose the candidates in the primaries. Now the party politicians are saying "What do the people know about it? Back to the closed conventions. We'll do the choosing." The politicians may be right...look what the people chose. RT))

X

SHARRON ALBERT, Box 80925, College, Alaska,
99708:

Twenty years of DYNATRON! Congratulations! I just hope I'm around 20 years from now and you're celebrating your 40th.

Hiding page 17. Now that's nasty. I searched all over looking for the conclusion of the Heinlein statement, finally gave up and continued to read through to the end. Were you just checking to see how many people actually read Dynatron all the way through? However, it was the best thing that had happened all day (take that any way you wish).

((With a little burbon on the side...I suppose this is as good a place as any to explain about last issue's page 17. There is no explanation. I had all the stencils stacked in order--checked them a couple of times--and ran them off. It suddenly came to me that I was putting page 20 on a new stack of paper instead of the back of page 19. Checking through I found page 17 missing. Couldn't find it anywhere. Located it a couple of days later under the desk and have no idea how it got there. Did it just slide out of the stack and crawl under the desk? I ran it off on the back of page one of an apazine and sent it through FLAP. RT))

Do you think that Buck Rogers on TV has any chance of teaching the television audience anything positive about SF? I find it interesting that they are apparently going to concentrate on script improvement this season rather than going the route of Battlestar Galactica of fancy expensive special effects. Perhaps I'm just parched for good viewing, but I kind of enjoyed Buck Rogers. At lest it was fun.

((I doubt that Buck Rogers managed to teach the television audience anything. It was, as you said, a fun-type show but not one to inspire any great loyalty on the part of the audience. It takes something such as STAR TREK to do that...a combination of story, characters and effects. (And the effects don't come over all that well on the small screen.) Doc Smith's Lens saga would be a natural for the tube: stalwart hero, adventure, strange situations and a guiding master intelligence for those who need that sort of thing. Not to mention unmentionable menace. RT))

Tell Rick Sneary that the bridging in Demon of Scattery (of the story being a tale told by an Irish god to a mortal changeling) was from the setting of The Broken Sword. Having just read The Broken Sword before Demon I appreciated that tie-in by Anderson to his much earlier book.

All right! All right! I'll try to find a copy of The Space Mavericks! Which may be difficult up here. I have to special order all but the major releases. My local bookstore loves me. Let's see, if I saved all the money I spend on books over a year's time...I probably could afford to go to a con. But I could never do without new books.

((And a con lasts only a few days whereas books last for years. You can't go to the same con twice but you can re-read the books.))

7

BUCK COULSON, Route 3, Hartford City,
Indiana 47348:

The current crop of readers can't tell the difference between fantasy and science fiction? How far back do you consider current? Bob Bloch won a Hugo for "The Hell-Bound Train" in 1959, and if you call that story science fiction you're more liberal with the term than I am.

I can tell the difference, but mostly I don't give a damn.

In your predictions you asked about prozines but not conventions. I wonder what the energy shortage will do to cons. In the long term will conventions decline because of the increased cost of getting there, or will they proliferate even more, to provide one within shorter travel time of every fan? ("You realize what this damn hotel is charging for oats? I should have ridden instead of driving the team, even if the saddlebags wouldn't hold as much huckster stuff.")

No, I don't really believe that one. Fans longing for the simpler life might, though.

((It's not just the energy shortage but the entire "inflation" gimmick that will hurt the cons. The hotels for Denvention II start at about \$50 per day for a double. That gives me pause...RT))

WALTER A. COSLET, Box 6, Helena, Montana
59601:

I have to presume you are a member of the club that circulates ALPHA CENTAURI COMMUNICATOR. You do say a number of things that I will bring to the attention of our stf club at its next meeting when five of them return from Moscon II. I am probably too well acquainted with their fanac though, to expect them to comment to you on this 73rd issue when they borrow it. Still, they did comment to ARECIBO--probably because it was being published monthly.

Mt.

St. Helens and the prospect of others to join it is about all that has been fascinating in the news recently. Volcanos and continental Drift have been about all the "science" I've been studying. And yes, there is a volcano right before our front steps. The whole rock face of Mount Helena to the north had to have been produced that way, and I would guess the last eruption blew off the west flank of the mountain.

((You are partially correct in that I am on the rolls of Alpha Centura (not Centauri) as a very inactive member. If you think about it you will realize that one of the reasons I am inactive in that club is because it is Alpha Centura and not Alpha Centauri...yes.

If it takes monthly publication to get any comment out of the Helena SF club then I'll never hear from them.

I suppose the biggest surprise about the eruption of Mt St Helens was that it was Mt St Helens and not one of the more widely-known peaks, such as Lassen or Baker, that blew. And that it has been such a long time since the last eruption along that chain.

I note that the eruption of Mt St Helens rated as only the 6th or 7th most important newstory of 1980. The election of Ronnie Reagan was first, of course, and I would, I suppose, agree. After all the President of the U.S. can get us all killed a lot quicker than a small volcano on the west coast.

RANDOM THOUGHTS (from page 4):

Berkley Publishing Company sends out something called WORLDS AHEAD "The Berkley Science Fiction Newsletter." The November/December 1980 issue listed the following "science fiction" books as forthcoming:
THE SUNSET WARRIOR by Eric Van Lustbader
TRANSFIGURATIONS by Michael Bishop
DIFFERENT LIGHT by Elizabeth Lynn
SATYRDAY by Steven Bauer
THE NORTHERN GIRL by Elizabeth Lynn
THE WORLD AND THORINN by Damon Knight
THE FINAL QUEST by Richard Monaco

Only Bishop's novel is not out and out fantasy. Elizabeth Lynn got on the list twice. She must own a hunk of the company.

Where did I put that copy of ANALOG?

7

I ran this quote from Phillip Lee Ralph's book THE STORY OF OUR CIVILIZATION in Dynatron #3, January 1961. I find it still significant two decades later:

"Contemporary civilization, in its obvious and external aspects, is an intricate mechanism. It is increasingly interdependent and all-embracing, and yet at the same time its successful operation depends upon a more and more exacting technical proficiency, beyond the reach of the majority. Back of the engineer and technologist lies the research laboratory. Beyond that lies the tenuous realm of pure science in which a few rare spirits scrutinize the secrets of the physical universe and through their revelations--characterized by mathematical equations rather than ecstatic trances--unlock new potentials which will alter or revolutionize the workaday world. The man in the street may be as ignorant of the cogitations of the scientist as a Campanian peasant was oblivious to the meditations of Marcus Aurelius. But while the peasant could live and die without philosophy, his modern counterpart cannot escape the impact of science, which continuously reshapes the environment in which he moves.

And that environment is an artificial and brittle thing, constantly exposed to the liability of injury and difficult to repair. In fact it could be smashed to fragments by instruments of destruction now known and perhaps already laid away against such an occasion. Destroy the laboratories and the whole technological mechanism will soon be off balance. Eliminate the small core of pure scientists and even the laboratories will have little meaning--the all important explaining and directive force will have been removed."

✕

Lastish I reviewed Robert Anton Wilson's SCHRODINGER'S CAT in which the People's Ecology Party "...a weird mixture of tangled religiosity and New Left anti-rationalism" won the 1980 elections. If one changes "New Left" to "New (or perhaps Old) Right" in that quote above it pretty well describes the outcome of the 1980 elections.

Tangled religiosity indeed. A fascist is a fascist is a fascist even when masquerading as part of something called "the Moral Majority". Born again are they? Yeah, reborn with the racial, political and sociological philosophies of Adolf Hitler not those of Jesus Christ.

✕

I don't suppose it is too early to tell you that BUBONICON 13 will be held in Albuquerque on August 28, 29 and 30, 1981 or thereabouts. For details send a SASE to

Dennis Virzi
429 Graceland SE
Albuquerque, N.M. 87108

If you are planning on attending Denvention II you just might want to arrange things so you can attend Bubonicon on the weekend before the big one. Sort of a warm up, you might say.

✕

Occasionally I get strange things in the mail. Oh, not really strange, mind you...just sort of...hmmm.

I have a couple of flyers from Bill-Dale Marcinko, for example. Bill-Dale writes that if I send

him \$10 for a four issue subscription to his zine he will be glad to give my zine a free listing in it. I should think so. Bill-Dale also wants comic book fans to get together to protest the draft. I don't think that comic book fans have anything to worry about. There are, after all, certain minimum mental standards...

✕

Dennis Virzi who ramrodded last year's Bubonicon 12 and, not having learned his lesson, is also the chief mover behind Bubonicon 13, suggested to the Albuquerque Science Fiction Society that incorporation might be in order. It seems that hotels and other businesses are getting harder to deal with on an individual basis. (That might be part of a continuing overall trend towards the anthill society in which the individual doesn't count but I really don't think I want to get off on that tangent.)

After much discussion and work on Dennis's part we voted in January to form the New Mexico Science Fiction Conference, Inc., a non-profit literary and educational body. The self-perpetuating governing board consists of Dennis, Jack Speer, and Jodi Stinebaugh. The new corporation is a separate body from the ASFS and exists to put on Bubonicon.

The

difference in the way the state and the federal government handle the game is amazing. The state requires only a copy of the by-laws, a list of officers, and \$11. The IRS provided Dennis with a 20 page booklet of questions to be answered.

✕

I have been playing with the idea of somehow moving Dynatron under the umbrella of the UNM Science Fiction club in order to take advantage of their mailing permit and thereby saving around 85% on postage. However, after talking to Eleen Haas who has been editing ALPHA CENTURA COMMUNICATOR for the past couple of years and sending it out under the auspices of the U club I decided that I'd best steer clear of the bureaucratic hassle involved. It may cost me more but it beats hell out of trying to conform to the regulations set down for publications approved for university mailing.

Which seems to bring us to the end of a somewhat abbreviated issue of DYNATRON. Didn't quite reach my usual 20 pages this time. So it goes.

As for the future ...I'm not sure. The future of DYNATRON and, probably, most other generally distributed zines lies with the U.S.P.S. If what I have heard about the forthcoming postal increase is true then DYNATRON will fold as a genzine. I certainly cannot afford to pay 85¢ per copy postage and that, so I hear, is what the 3d Class rate will be. Alternatives? Perhaps an eight pager to go 1st Class or else become strictly an apazine.

So.

HORT



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