

# PITFCS 149

SONG OF MYSELF DEPARTMENT

OR

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE WITH HARLAN ELLISON

"From an adventurous and charismatic life style that has included stints as a logger in Canada, dynamite truck driver, tuna fisherman, shill in a carnival, lithographer and book salesman in Times Square (not to mention the ten weeks I ran with a gang of juvenile delinquents in Brooklyn's dangerous Red Hook section to gather background for my first novel) I have amassed a stock of experiences and anecdotes that inform both my writing on the current scene and America today and my singular lecture appearances.

"In 'An Evening With Harlan Ellison,' I use both science fiction and my fascinating life as a writer as departure points for discussions of ecology, the world of tomorrow, social change in our culture, writing in Hollywood, the underworld, the underground, revolution and dissent, my experiences with the famous and infamous and a wild potpourri of unexpected subjects. Then I read one of my offbeat stories with the lecture hall darkened in an approximation of 'around the campfire storytelling' and with a sense of humor that has been called 'so black that it ranges into ultraviolet' I answer questions from the floor with unlimited candor."

--extracted verbatim from a SFWA  
SPEAKERS' BUREAU brochure except  
for a modest change of pronouns  
from third person to first person  
singular.

S  
F  
W  
A  
F  
O  
R  
U  
M

NO. 17

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INSTITUTE FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY STUDIES

"Vox PITFCS, vox Dei"

Theodore R. Cogswell  
Coordinator  
Committee on Transmogrification

February 1971  
Box 186  
Chinchilla, Pa. 18410

---

FROM THE EDITOR

*(Errata: Due to circumstances beyond my control, FROM THE EDITOR is continued on page 23, which in some cases is upside down.)*

Dearly Beloved:

Come June I'm off for Mexico and points south for either three months or a year (depending on whether or not my sabbatical comes through). I picked up a four wheel drive Scout a few weeks ago and since then I've been checking out dotted lines on the map that go back into places where nobody I know has ever been before. Tentative plans call for using San Miguel de Allende (where Mack Reynolds is preparing a place for me) as a base of operations and then heading out from there. One swing I want to make is over through Yucatan, then through British Honduras and Guatemala, and back up the Pacific coast. I cased British Honduras last summer (very briefly) and in spite of all the nasty things Avram Davidson has to say about Belize (he didn't get laid there either), I fell in love with the place. But traveling alone is a bit of a drag and so I'm looking for another writer, to share the drinking and driving with me, female preferred, providing  
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 22)

---

SFWA Forum is published for the members of the Science Fiction Writers of America. Proceedings of the Institute for Twenty-First Century Studies is published for members of the Institute for Twenty-First Century Studies. All members of SFWA are, by definition, members of ITFCS. All letters express the opinions of their authors and do not represent the official positions of SFWA or ITFCS except when explicitly stated. Copyright 1970 by Science Fiction Writers of America. Permission to quote from SFWA Forum or PITFCS is expressly refused. All rights are assigned to individual authors of material published in this issue. Contributions to PITFCS should be addressed to Box 186, Chinchilla, Pa, those for the Forum to 108 Robinson St., Chinchilla, Pa.

---

CONTROLLED CIRCULATION REQUIRED NOTICE: 1. Each issue of the SFWA Forum contains at least twenty-four pages. 2. The SFWA Forum contains no advertising. 3. At least four issues are published each year. 4. The SFWA Forum is circulated free to all members of the Science Fiction Writers of America and circulation is limited to members. 5. The SFWA Forum is not published for the advancement of the main business of the organization.

REFERENDUM ON THE SFWA DUES INCREASE

Article IV, Section 1. of the by-laws of the Science Fiction Writers of America shall be amended to read as follows: "All members shall pay annual dues of \$25.00 which may be paid, by prior arrangement with the Treasurer in equal half-yearly or quarterly installments. The amount of the annual dues may not be changed without the approval of a majority of the active members in good standing."

FROM THE PRESIDENT: ( a man of few words if there ever was one. tac)

In the August 1970 issue of the Forum there was published the annual report of the Secretary-Treasurer on SFWA's income and expenses for the fiscal year July 1, 1969 - June 30, 1970. That report, in brief, showed income and expenditures for SFWA of approximately \$6000.00 respectively. These amounts, broken down into terms of dollars-per-member, show figures in the neighborhood of \$16.00 per member, respectively.

These figures further break down into dollars-per member as follows:

Expenditures:

Bulletin and Forum, official mailings and correspondence:

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| Postage             | \$ 3.75 |
| Supplies            | 2.00    |
| Printing            | 3.80    |
| Equipment, payments | 1.75    |
|                     | 11.30   |

Total publications and mailing cost per member \$11.30

Other expenses (including some publications telephone and secretarial not included above):

|                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| Secretarial          | .75  |
| Telephone            | 1.80 |
| Officers, committees | 1.60 |
| Miscellaneous        | .90  |

Total other expenditures 5.05     5.05

Total expenditures in dollars-per-member \$16.35

REFERENDUM ON DUES INCREASE

Income

|  |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Dues: According to by-laws, minimum                        | \$ 5.00     |             |
| Additional volunteered dues averages among the membership. |             |             |
| Average per member additional:                             | <u>5.00</u> |             |
| Total dues:  | 10.00       | \$ 10.00    |
| Royalties  |             | 2.60        |
| Misc. income: Donations and gifts                          |             | <u>3.80</u> |
| Total income in dollars-per-member                         |             | 16.40       |

These approximate figures (of \$16.35 per member expenditure and \$16.40 per member income) however, appear to balance only because of two large items not covered in the report.

These are:

- 1) A loan from the President to the treasury to cover his 1969-70 recorded expenses beyond an arbitrary cut-off figure of approximately \$500.00 for the year. This loan is non-interest-bearing and is to be repaid only when the current SFWA officers consider the organization can afford to do so. The amount of this presidential loan was \$976.97. Members will note that this, in addition to the figure of approximately \$500.00 mentioned gives a total of presidential expenses for the year 1969-70 of approximately \$1400.00 We are dealing here with expenses for 1969-70 and in particular those summarized in Anne McCaffrey's financial report for that year as published in an earlier Forum; and no weekly breakdown of expenses for 1969-70 is available. However, by way of comparison, present, unreimbursed presidential expenses for the week of January 11 through January 17, 1971, break down as follows...

(For comparison purposes, this particular week was light-average as presidential duties go. Involved were 27 hours of work, during which 32 letters were answered, averaging slightly over a page and a half per letter; and five long-distance phone calls were made. The time spent was about 30 per cent in the actual writing of the letters and phone conversations and about 50 per cent in digging up the information or facts necessary. The rest of the time being spent in filing, machine copying, and

other related activities.)

Local phone for the week (one fourth the basic monthly bill for the SFWA phone, No. 612-866-1165) \$ 1.84

Long-distance phone calls

|               |                |      |
|---------------|----------------|------|
| New York      | \$ 1.10        |      |
| New York      | 2.05           |      |
| New York      | .95            |      |
| San Francisco | 3.10           |      |
| Philadelphia  | 1.80           |      |
|               | <u>\$ 9.00</u> | 9.00 |

3M Copier machine copies --- 216 pages at .05 a page 10.80

Sationery used

|   |             |      |
|---|-------------|------|
| 32 sheets letterhead (for first pages only) at 2.4 cents apiece | .76         |      |
| 23 sheets of bond (for following pages) at .8 cents apiece      | .19         |      |
| 32 letterhead envelopes at 3.2 cents apiece                     | 1.02        |      |
| 55 sheets acetate for carbon copies at .6 cents apiece          | .33         |      |
| Ko-rec-type used  | .08         |      |
| 2 sheets carbon paper at 5 cents each                           | .10         |      |
| carbon typewriter ribbon (portion used)                         | <u>1.15</u> |      |
|   | 2.63        | 2.63 |

Part-time clerical assistance 11.25

Delivery 4.50

Postage used 3.06

New file folders used .35

Manila envelopes, boxes, etc., for mailing, used .60

Strapping tape used .12

(CPA's accounting services) (60.00)  
Total \$100.15

Less CPA's accounting services -60.00

Corrected Total \$ 40.15

The \$60.00 for accounting services represents a special expense undertaken for the president's personal information and while this was in fact an expense exclusively for the benefit of SFWA, it is not the sort of expense which would ordinarily be charged to the organization. Subtracting this gives an amended total of \$40.15 for the

week. This multiplied by 46 at-home weeks out of the year gives a comparable (if slightly higher) figure to that of the total presidential expenses for 1969-70.

- 2) A large amount of out-of-pocket unreimbursed expenses plus the cost of specific professional or technical services, equipment and supplies donated by members, committee members, officers -- and in some cases people who were not even members of the organization. The amounts of unreimbursed expenses and donations have been difficult to discover -- in some cases the officers have been asked to keep specific figures given them confidential. In other cases, figures have been refused completely or were unavailable and it has been necessary to estimate them; and it should be born in mind that the amounts shown were not necessarily spent by committee members only, but may include donative services or expenditures by others in the organization or even outside it.

The total of this item for the year 1969-70 is therefore, as said, strictly estimated. As president, I can only assure the members that to the best of my knowledge and conviction, the amounts listed, in every case are not less than the actual amounts by which SFWA benefited.

Unreimbursed Expenses 1969-70

COMMITTEES

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <u>Elections and Nominations</u> -- phone, correspondence,<br>other services | \$ 10.00     |
| <u>Policy</u>  | 5.00         |
| <u>Nebula Rules</u> -- correspondence, phone, clerical                       | 20.00        |
| <u>Contracts</u>   | (none)       |
| <u>Special Services</u> -- correspondence, phone, clerical                   | 35.00        |
| <u>Legal</u> -- correspondence, transportation, phone, forms                 | 60.00        |
| <u>Publicity</u>   | (none)       |
| <u>Credentials</u>   | (none)       |
| <u>Overseas Liaison</u>  | (none)       |
| <u>Grievance</u> -- correspondence, phone                                    | 10.00        |
| <u>Publications Monitor</u> -- correspondence, clerical                      | 250.00       |
| <u>Library</u> -- correspondence, clerical                                   | <u>20.00</u> |
| Subtotal   | \$410.00     |

Subtotal: Committees Unreimbursed Expenses 1969-70 \$ 410.00

OFFICERS:

Secretary-Treasurer -- correspondence, phone, clerical, office supplies, transportation, storage, SFWA hotel suite following Nebula Banquets 260.00

Vice-President -- correspondence, phone 20.00

President -- attorney and CPA fees, correspondence, clerical, long-distance phone (all these in addition to the expenses listed in Expenditures 1), transportation, meeting space and other miscellaneous costs in connection with SFWA Business Meetings 600.00

Bulletin -- supplies, correspondence, postage (in addition to reimbursed expenses) 60.00

Forum -- special supplies, (no reimbursed expenses) 50.00

Total all unreimbursed Expenses 1969-70 \$1400.00

Plus presidential loan 976.97

Total \$2376.97

Or (in dollars-per-member) 6.90

Add to this, then, the reported expenditures of 16.35

Total true expenditure in dollars-per-member for 1969-70 \$ 23.25

In brief, then, SFWA finds itself faced with the following situation:

Income:

|                                    |                        |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Legal and minimum dues             | \$ 5.00 per member     |
| Extra, volunteered dues (averaged) | 5.00 per member        |
| All other reported income          | <u>6.40</u> per member |
| Total actual income                | 16.40 per member       |

Expenditures:

|                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Publications                     | 11.30 per member                |
| All other reported expenses      | 5.05 per member                 |
| Unreported unreimbursed expenses | <u>6.90</u> per member          |
| Total actual expense             | 23.25 per member <b>\$23.25</b> |
| Less total actual income         | <u>16.40</u>                    |
| Actual deficit                   | 6.85                            |

Summary:

|   |                      |                |
|---|----------------------|----------------|
| Dues deficit (true expenses less total all dues)                                | \$ 23.25             |                |
|   | -10.00               |                |
|   | <u>deficit 13.25</u> | 13.25          |
| Dues deficit (expenses less minimum dues)                                       | 23.25                |                |
|   | - 5.00               |                |
|   | <u>18.25</u>         | 18.25          |
| Minimum amount of dues required to meet actual expenses from that source alone: |                      | <b>\$23.25</b> |

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- 1) Question: When SFWA was founded it had less than a hundred members and these paid no more than the minimum of five dollars dues apiece. Now we have something like four hundred members, and enough of those have paid in extra dues sufficient to raise the average dues payment to an average of ten dollars per member. How come with all this extra money we're in financial trouble when the early administrations broke even?

Answer: It is easy to forget that while each new member means added income to the organization, he or she also means added expense. If expense exceeds income then a larger membership simply means that much larger a deficit. This is why the preceding figures were broken down into dollars-per-member terms. Each individual member must receive both SFWA publications, plus copies of all official mailings and ballots. If he has problems requiring the attention of the organization, the cost of the correspondence, telephone communication, or whatever is connected with those problems, becomes part of the expense his membership represents.

- 2) Question: But costs can't have gone up nearly five times over since our founding, can they?

Answer: They have gone up a good deal more than many people seem to realize. Since the founding of SFWA it has been six years in which the general cost of living in this country has risen sharply; and those increases are reflected in the cost of supplies, equipment, services such as printing, and even postage. Note that the cost of the publications totaled \$11.30 per member, or more than all required and voluntary dues received in 1969-70; and of this amount, \$3.75, roughly two-thirds the required minimum dues, was for postage alone -- and we are facing a possible increase in postal rates this coming year.

However, the question is a good one. Because while costs have risen, that rise alone does not account for the present total of per-member expense. The other factor in rising expenses has been the very large increase in organizational services and the expense of these.

Our founding president in his first two terms of office, lived less than eighty miles from the editorial offices of the publishing center in New York City. Anyone in that center who wished to ignore a letter from him had to face the fact that it was entirely possible for him to appear in person one bright morning to take the matter up face to face. Not that he was required to do this often or even at all; but it is no

bad thing to have SFWA's president within commuting distance of the marketplace; as succeeding presidents living at further distances have discovered.

In addition to his proximity to the publishing scene, our first president lived less than five hundred miles from his Secretary-Treasurer, and by no small efforts these two between them managed to handle the whole work of the organization. Our first president was not only the executive head of SFWA, but a dozen committees rolled into one and editor of the Bulletin as well (there was no Forum, of course, at that time). The membership was less than a fourth of what it is now; but, more importantly, it was a membership with a large majority of experienced writers with their own agents and business connections who were used to fighting most of their own battles and generally equipped to do so.

By contrast SFWA at the present time has a president a thousand miles from the marketplace, a thousand miles from his vice-president in Philadelphia, fifteen hundred miles from his treasurer in Florida, and three thousand miles from the Secretary in San Francisco. He has two editors, for two publications each also a thousand miles from him, twelve committees, two special semi-independent organizations in the Nebula Trustees and the Lecture Bureau, and over-all some sixty members working for the organization. Meanwhile, the organization has grown to around four hundred members, a majority of whom do not have the experience with the literary marketplace that the average original member had. Proportionately there are more tasks to be done for members; and, since SFWA has attracted more than a little outside attention by this time, there are a great many more queries and requests for information from outside the organization.

All this adds up not only to many times the original amount of work, but to a great deal of expenses in accomplishing it. That figure of \$3.75 per member postage is an index of just how much more.

3) Question: Speaking of the Nebula Awards, don't the Nebula Awards Volumes make money for the SFWA?

Answer: The Nebula Awards were set up by the first officers of the organization not to make money for the organization but to provide a showcase for the Nebula Award Winners and runners-up and to make money for those of SFWA's writers whose work was chosen for the Nebula Awards. The Nebula Trustees, in SFWA's name, receive 15% of the royalties from the Nebula Award volumes; and this is only 5% more than a normal agent's fee (SFWA uses no agent in the marketing of these volumes). Out of that fifteen percent the Trustees must pay for the physical awards and all expenses connected with their production and delivery.

The membership should also be aware, by this time, that the Nebula Trustees were set up separately from SFWA so that income (if any) from the Nebula Award and other volumes could not provide a reason for Internal Revenue to refuse SFWA status as a non-profit organization -- a status we are still trying to achieve. Moreover, until this last year, there were no profits to provide SFWA with extra income.

This situation may change in the near future, mainly because of royalty income from reprint sales of the Nebula Award Volumes and because of royalty from the Hall of Fame I anthology. But the amount is uncertain.

- 4) Question: Still, doesn't this indicate that we can count on steadily increasing income from the royalties of our organizational anthologies? All we have to do is change things so that the Nebula Award Trustees pay their excess profits to the treasury, don't we?

Answer: No, the fact that our anthologies are now making money over and above the financial requirements of the Nebula Trustees is no indication that this situation will continue. Science fiction shows some signs of coming into a boom just at the moment, but public tastes change, sf itself changes, and there is no sadder sight today than the author who decided in 1965 that his income from back rights and royalties was enough to allow him to retire from writing. What operates in the case of individuals operates as well in the case of organizations, when it comes to the literary marketplace. Inflation, deflation, the sudden scarcity of some product or material necessary to the publishing process -- any one of the innumerable things can operate to cut off future, anticipated income.

The present officers of SFWA feel strongly that the organization should, as far as its basic needs are concerned, emulate any prudent individual by planning to live entirely on some source of income on which it can absolutely rely; and the only source of income on which SFWA can absolutely rely is the dues of its members. These should be pegged at a point sufficient to meet its expenses without requiring the individuals concerned with those expenses to dip into their own pockets as they have in the past.

If, in addition to the income from dues, there is to be a noticeable income from royalties and other sources, this other income will find no lack of uses. Ordinary dues, for example, do not provide any funds for necessary legal or accounting services, for long-range purchase of equipment which must inevitably wear out and be replaced, or for any emergency or relief funds -- either for the organization itself or its members. There is no provision for any of several long-term needs such as the ordinary type of financial reserve an organization such as SFWA should normally have. But these are matters

to consider only after we have dealt with the present deficit, which is over three times the amount of the minimum dues presently required, and over twice the amount of the actual dues paid in.

5) Question: How did we get into this sort of deficit anyway?

Answer: Gradually.

The by-laws require that any increase of dues be voted in by a majority of the membership. This is a cumbersome matter and even beyond the desire of the founding president and the early officers to hold the line on expenses and dues alike, it did not seem unreasonable to assume that there was nothing wrong in those working for the organization to donate something of their necessary expenses as well as somewhat of their time. It should be remembered, incidentally, that at the end of the first fiscal year of its existence, with per-member expenses only a fraction of what they are now, there was no great surplus of funds remaining in the treasury, at dues of five dollars per member. If the organization was only able to make ends meet comfortably then, how could it possibly engage in all the extra work and increased activity of the present without facing a concomitant increase in expenses? The answer is, of course, that it could not; but that the increase in expenses that actually accumulated was masked by a continuing increase in the unreported expenses, out-of-pocket donations and outright contributions made to SFWA by members and others.

6) Question: What's wrong actually with letting those who can pay, do so? Presumably they want to do it or they wouldn't be doing it?

Answer: Two things are wrong with it, in the opinion of the present officers. First, an officer, a committee member, or simply an ordinary member who can afford to spend a good deal of his own money in the process of doing his organizational job, may be followed in that job by someone who literally cannot afford so to spend. This creates a situation unfair not only to the second less-affluent member holding the job, but unfair also to the organization and its other members, who have become accustomed to the self-subsidized services of the former worker.

There is a saying to the effect that "the only good worker is the volunteer worker." While this actually rather smug bromide may find some justification in the case of the full-time enthusiastic volunteer versus the indifferent, temporary, paid employee, in something like Red Cross or Community Chest work, it quickly breaks down in the fact of the actual realities of our own people and their situations.

The most enthusiastic and hard-working of SFWA's volunteer

workers (and we have, for a professional organization, an extraordinarily high percentage of them in our membership) are all part-time volunteers. Their ordinary work, whether it is writing or a job, must come first before SFWA duties. If they hold a job and write both, then it is inevitable as well as only just that their work for SFWA come third.

It is possible for such a part-time volunteer to do something like filling out, addressing, stamping and mailing eighty membership cards late at night or on a Sunday evening, on his own time and without costing the organization a cent for the labor involved. On the other hand, when he must do the same job for a membership of four hundred, and most of his other labors for SFWA have also been multiplied five times over, he is likely to find himself faced with the alternatives of giving more time than he can afford, not doing the job at all, or of hiring help to get it done. The track record for SFWA for some years has been such that he usually ends up hiring the help and paying for it himself -- and not charging the treasury for it simply because he knows that the treasury does not have the funds to pay him back.

Bear in mind that the current cost figure of \$22.90 per member only covers services as they presently are -- any increase in organizational expenses will throw the volunteer worker back on his own wallet or pocketbook once more.

7) Question: Can't all our problems be solved by keeping the dues just as they are and simply economizing?

Answer: It is always possible to balance income and expense by economizing -- that is, cutting down expense until it matches income.

But it is a question of how much economy we want, or even whether economy itself is in this instance a good measure.

To begin with, we now have actual expenses of \$23.25 per member. If we want to live on less than that, we can begin by cutting out the unreported and unreimbursed expenses of \$6.90 per member. In effect, forbidding any of our members to spend their own money on the organization. This gets us down to \$16.35 per member, but leaves us with only the reported expenditure of \$5.05 to give to services (instead of that \$5.05 plus the unreported \$6.90 -- or in other words, the present, actual sum of \$11.95) - which means that we would be cutting services more than in half and gaining only what the membership as a whole were not paying for anyway.

We can, of course, go further, cutting out all services including the reported \$5.05. But this would leave us with money enough for nothing but the publications and the official mailings; and these alone still come to \$11.30, or more than the minimum and volunteered dues of \$10.00.

We can of course gamble on continuing to receive at least

\$6.40 per member per year in gifts and donations. But unless we want to face the loss of the volunteered \$5.00 per member (and the large majority of new members coming in in the last six months have been paying only the \$5.00 minimum dues) we will need to raise the required dues at least by that amount or face a situation of possibly trying to get by on the \$6.40 gifts and donations plus the minimum \$5.00 -- or \$11.40 total -- which would be adequate only for the bare minimum expenses of the publications and official mailings, plus 10¢ per member for all other expenses.

Quite frankly, the officers believe that economies as such offer a dangerous answer to a situation in which a young, vital and growing organization like SFWA is just coming into its own. Artificial confinement of the activities of a professional organization by arbitrary limitation of its working funds could be as disastrous as confinement of a growing child in a ceramic vessel -- the result could be an adult who was a cripple or a freak. No one wishes to suggest that the organization be allowed to become a spendthrift at the expense of its members. It is merely pointed out that ---

a) We are already spending an actual figure of \$23.25 per member, mainly by courtesy of general and individual charities to the organization.

b) This figure is slightly less than what is required in dues from the least expensive of other professional writers' organizations.

8) Question: What do other writers' organizations pay in dues? And what do they get for it?

Answer: Mystery Writers of America has dues of \$25.00 a year. The authors Guild has dues of \$30.00. The offices of both of these organizations have complained on occasion of a lack of sufficient funds. Neither organization provides the services to individual members provided by SFWA. To cite only one instance, the average SFWA member receives (unless his address is out of date in the Secretary's files) enough free paper-back books a year, courtesy of publishers to the organization, to more than repay his minimum five dollars of dues. Neither of the other mentioned organizations has a Grievance Committee, a Special Services Committee, a Library Committee, or a Publications Monitor Committee to which their individual members can turn for the sort of help that these SFWA committees provide our members. Neither offers its members organizational assistance in promoting their own published work such as SFWA offers through the Publicity Committee headed by Vice-President Tom Purdom. Neither organization has officers and committee people actively engaged in pushing the magazine and book sales, in bettering the contractual terms offered its members, in increasing advances and keeping books in print, in promoting the writings of its members among librarians across the country, in warning members of reissues of their books under different

title or format. --- And many other points.

To be fair, it must be also pointed out that these two other organizations are not confined to a single literary area as is SFWA and in which SFWA therefore can be unusually effective. Instead, they are both spread out, across the literary map (a number of our members are also MWA and/or Authors Guild members, as well as members of the Screen Guild and other organizations), including in the case of Authors Guild, non-fiction as well as fiction. On the other hand, over half of the work of the committees and services just cited in the case of SFWA are being carried on in spite of an official lack of funds and theoretically any other organization could do likewise.

- 9) Question: Why don't we have a sliding scale of dues by which those who make the most money out of the field pay more of the expenses of the organization than the struggling beginner who has only a few sales a year?

Answer: In the experience of the officers it is the struggling beginners who have most need, and who make the most calls upon, the services of the organization. The older and better-incomed members are better equipped by way of agents, connections and experience to fight their own battles and normally do so. SFWA should, we feel, be something more than a charitable organization, supported by the older hands for the benefit of the newer.

- 10) Question: How about having different levels in the organizations, with those on the highest level paying the most dues and those on successively lower levels paying less but receiving less in privileges and services from the organization?

Answer: The present officers are opposed to any change that would stratify the organization. It is felt that only if all members within SFWA remain equal in matters of dues and status alike, will it remain the active, healthy organization of working authors which was envisioned in the original by-laws and which we have struggled to maintain since. It is too easy as it is to imagine differences between members on the basis of income, or notoriety, without creating artificial distinctions of membership. What our newest and least successful member is now, our most successful member was once; and what our most successful member is now, our least successful member may conceivably become. In an organization that includes two such people and a common marketplace, there should be no room for anything but a single level of membership and obligation.

- 11) Question: What if a member simply doesn't have the money to pay when dues times comes around?

Answer: He or she may pay in two or four installments. The dues proposed are \$25.00 a year per member. Two payments of \$12.50 or four of \$6.25, may be set up by arrangement of the member with the treasurer. Officially, because of the problem of the dues requirement having to be stated in the by-laws, the referendum contains no provision for actual hardship cases in which a member is unable to pay his or her dues as a result of ill health, accident or circumstance clearly beyond individual control. Unofficially, however, a member originally in good standing who encounters difficulty of this order should contact the nearest officer of the organization. Unless the character of SFWA should change drastically from what it is now, something can always be worked out to see that the dues of such a member are kept paid.

- 12) Question: What will the dues increase to \$25 a year per member mean in terms of changing the present financial situation of SFWA; and how will the extra funds be used?

Answer: As the figures show, dues of \$25 per member would result in income of only a little more than we have presently been spending if our unrecorded financial benefits are added to our recorded dues, donations and windfalls. On paper, therefore, it seems that the raising of the dues to \$25 would merely be a matter of increasing them just enough to meet current expenses.

Actually, however, there is hidden benefit in the situation of dues sufficient to cover our actual expenses. In the first place, this assures us that any added gifts, donations or windfalls will be in addition to our bread-and-butter needs. We therefore gain our unexpected and added sources of income in their proper role as extras, rather than having to apply them to the basics of organizational existence.

In the second place, and more important, the fact that over half our income will shift from being invisible and uncertain to visible and assured means that we can at last sit down realistically with a financial planning committee and establish a realistic budget for the upcoming year. This is something that was not possible as long as we had to depend on unplanned charity and individual handouts in order to reach the bare existence level. But, once our assured income is adequate to our necessities, we can plan expenditures efficiently and \$25 per member of assured income should stretch considerably farther than \$25 per member income where over half this amount is not available until various emergencies have arisen.

For example, following is an instance of how the budget could be set up. Members will notice that while the expenses

for the publications, the officers and the business meeting expenses are essentially held at the level of current true expenses for these things, welcome increases are possible in the amounts of money available to the committees, which make up the main machinery of the organization, and for the needed but neglected expenses listed under General.

Suggested budget on \$10,000.00 a year income: (400 dues-paying members at \$25.00 per member.)

|                      |           |   |                |           |
|----------------------|-----------|---|----------------|-----------|
| <u>Publications:</u> | Bulletin: | Operating expenses<br>(\$200.00 x 6 issues) | \$1200.00      |           |
|                      |           | Editorial expenses<br>(\$ 20.00 x 6 issues) | 120.00         |           |
|                      | Forum     | Operating expenses<br>(\$150.00 x 6 issues) | 900.00         |           |
|                      |           | Editorial expenses<br>(\$ 20.00 x 6 issues) | 120.00         |           |
|                      |           |   | <u>2340.00</u> | \$2340.00 |

|                   |                  |               |  |        |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|--|--------|
| <u>Equipment:</u> | Repair           | 200.00        |  |        |
|                   | Depreciation     | 400.00        |  |        |
|                   | Purchase reserve | 300.00        |  |        |
|                   |                  | <u>900.00</u> |  | 900.00 |

|                  |   |               |                |  |
|------------------|---|---------------|----------------|--|
| <u>Officers:</u> | Monthly Officers Expenses:  |               |                |  |
|                  | (See list of weekly<br>presidential expenses,<br>under Expenditures, page 2B<br>for expense categories) |               |                |  |
|                  | President (per month)   | 150.00        |                |  |
|                  | Vice-President "  | 50.00         |                |  |
|                  | Secretary "   | 75.00         |                |  |
|                  | Treasurer "   | 25.00         |                |  |
|                  |   | <u>300.00</u> |                |  |
|                  | Yearly officers expenses: 12 x  | 300.00        | 3600.00        |  |
|                  | Sub total:  |               | <u>6840.00</u> |  |

(Sub total, carried forward from previous page) \$6840.00

Business Meetings of SFWA:

|   |          |        |
|---|----------|--------|
| Associated with World SF Convention:  | \$200.00 |        |
| Nebula Banquet: (hotel suite, other, miscellaneous costs)   |          |        |
| East  | 100.00   |        |
| West  | 100.00   |        |
| South   | 50.00    |        |
| Philcon, or one other business meeting a year regionally in addition to above (hotel suite, other, misc.) |          |        |
| East  | 150.00   |        |
| West  | 150.00   | 750.00 |

Committees:

|                           |                |         |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------|
| Elections and Nominations | 50.00          |         |
| Policy                    | 50.00          |         |
| Nebula Rules              | (none)         |         |
| Contracts                 | 50.00          |         |
| Special Services          | 150.00         |         |
| Legal                     | 200.00         |         |
| Publicity                 | 200.00         |         |
| Credentials               | 50.00          |         |
| Overseas Liaison          | 100.00         |         |
| Greviance                 | 200.00         |         |
| Publications Monitor      | 300.00         |         |
| Library                   | 200.00         |         |
|                           | <u>1550.00</u> | 1550.00 |

General:

|  |               |        |
|--|---------------|--------|
| CPA (yearly accounting                     | 100.00        |        |
| Attorney services (aside from Legal Comm.) | 200.00        |        |
| Copyrights, miscellaneous                  | 200.00        |        |
|  | <u>500.00</u> | 500.00 |

General Reserve Funds:

|   |        |               |
|---|--------|---------------|
| (Aside from equipment purchase reserve) | 360.00 | <u>360.00</u> |
|---|--------|---------------|

Total: \$10,000.00

(Damon Knight's counter-argument to the dues referendum article, follows. While generally excellent, his first version of this, through a lack of complete information or other minor errors, gave rise to possible misinformation at a few points. Damon was furnished with a number of corrections of these points, to be inserted into the article in case he did not want to make corrections himself. In most instances he chose to make the corrections or clarify his original position; but on several points he decided to let his original statements remain essentially unchanged. In these instances, I have felt it necessary to include the corresponding corrections, although I have profited by Damon's restatements to clarify some of the language of the corrections, themselves. (GRD)

#### AGAINST THE DUES INCREASE

The figures Gordy gives are broken down, often inaccurately, into per-member costs. Instead of these I will use the original figures in the ST's financial report.

Our annual costs are said to be the following:

|                               |           |         |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Postage                       | \$1202.00 |         |
| Supplies                      | 846.79*   |         |
| Printing & mimeo              | 1620.69   |         |
| Equipment, payments           | 658.98    |         |
| Total, publications & mailing |           | 4328.46 |
| Secretarial                   | 254.65    |         |
| Telephone                     | 628.76    |         |
| Officers, committees          | 578.56**  |         |
| Miscellaneous                 | 325.36    |         |
| Total other expenditures      |           | 1787.33 |
| Grand total                   |           | 6115.79 |
| "Presidential loan"           | 976.97    |         |
| Super total                   |           | 7092.76 |

... and since this is \$907.20 more than our income, it follows that we must increase the dues.

\* The ST's report gives two figures for this, of which I take the larger. (The other is \$710.29.)

\*\* Identified in the ST's report as "Officers' expenses and other payments."

Let us now examine these items one by one. The postage bill, I think, is all right. Gordy has carelessly lumped all the postage costs under "publications and mailing," making it appear that mailing the Bulletin and Forum alone costs us \$1,200 a year, but that is a minor error.

Supplies: \$846.79 or \$710.29, take your pick; either one is incredible. Does this represent a stockpiling of envelopes and reams of paper for future use? If so, it should not be entered here as if it were a normal, recurring expense.

For supplies, including stationery, envelopes for the Bulletin and Forum, etc., paper clips, rubber stamps and the whole lot, \$400 might be a reasonable figure. Subtracting this from \$846.79 plus 4% of Gordy's unreimbursed expenses (for this and other percentage figures, see his breakdown of a "light-average" presidential week), we get \$485.87.

Printing & mimeo: \$1,620.69. Between July 1, 1969 and June 30, 1970, SFWA published 176 offset pages, counting five issues of the Bulletin and two booklets. At \$5.50 a page, which is what I am told we are now paying, that comes to \$968. Mimeographing in the same period should not have cost more than about \$400. Total, \$1,370. The difference between this and what we actually paid is \$250.69.

Equipment, payments: \$658.98. The ST's report explains this as follows: "R.A. Lupoff mimeography '66-68, \$177.48; Gestetner 360, \$345.00; Nord addresser, \$136.50." As Bob Silverberg has already pointed out, these also are non-recurring items and should not be entered here in a lump. Amortizing the purchases over a 1)-year period, we get a figure of \$48.15. The difference is \$610.83.

(Correction: Mimeography is a continually recurring cost to SFWA, whether hired from outside mimeographers or achieved with the use of our own equipment. By no ordinary bookkeeping process can a portion of this continuously recurring cost arbitrarily be isolated, declared non-recurring and amortized over a certain number of years. The R.A. Lupoff bill is a charge for mimeography incurred by a previous administration and paid for by mine --- in short, a simple debit carried forward from one fiscal year to the next. GRD)

Secretarial: maybe a hundred fifty hours at \$2.50? That doesn't seem excessive.

Telephone: \$628.76, plus 11% of Gordy's "presidential loan" to SFWA.

It is my opinion that Gordy's use of the telephone is immoderate. I voted for him anyhow, never dreaming he would use his SFWA office to run up such a phone bill. But nobody told Gordy, "Don't call Calcutta." So here we are, \$976.97 in debt, and we published four issues of the Bulletin in 1970. The last one was ready for the printer in July, but could not be published because the organization was broke. When it finally appeared, the market news was five months old.

(Needless to say, I have never called Calcutta, at SFWA expense or otherwise. I have twice called outside the country on SFWA business --- both times entirely at my own expense. Within the country I have called long distance when particular urgency or other reason required it; and three out of four of these calls have been paid for either by me personally, or by the parties receiving them. I assure the membership that if I was as addicted to use of the phone as Damon seems to believe, I would have found much more satisfaction in devoting the personal funds I have spent this way to my own private calls, rather than to SFWA business. (GRD)

Under previous officers, the organization's yearly phone bill never exceeded \$50. Shall we be liberal and say \$75? The difference, subtracting this from Gordy's phone bill plus 11% of his presidential loan, is \$661.23.

(That the above paragraph may not be misleading to the members, it should be pointed out that the phrase "Gordy's phone bill" refers to an amount which is actually the total telephone expenses of the organization for 1969-70 --- see Damon's own listing of expenses at the head of his argument.

This comparison of past with present telephone expenses ignores the problems of recent years imposed by and large distances separating a greater number of officers, editors and committee-people, and the greatly increased problem load resulting from a membership five times its original number. GRD)

Officers, committees: \$578.56. I can't imagine what this is for, and the report gives us no clue. Take a wild guess and say that \$100 of it is a justified expense. The remainder is \$478.56.

Miscellaneous: a buck twenty a day, about. Not excessive.

Adding together the amounts which are dubious, misspent, or improperly entered, we get a total of \$2,487.18. The remainder, \$4,605.58, is that part of our last year's expenditures which can properly be used in forecasting our expenses in other years.

The Forum is bigger now and costs more. Prices in general have gone up and will no doubt continue to do so; we are expecting an increase in postal rates this year. Allowing for all these factors, we can forecast SFWA's normal and legitimate expenses at just about \$5,000 for the coming fiscal year,\* that is, the year beginning July 1, 1971 -- the date when the new officers will take over. Our income from dues and subscriptions, based on a projected membership of 420, will be \$4,400, assuming we retain the voluntary dues system. (Other organizations, such as the National Audubon Society, have been using this plan successfully for years.) Income from other sources, chiefly royalties--conservatively, \$1,000. (Each Nebula volume ultimately earns about \$7,000, of which SFWA currently takes 25%, or \$1,750 in royalties from this source alone. The total is \$5,400.

(Correction: SFWA --- which in this case means the Nebula Trustees, who receive all royalties from the SFWA anthologies --- takes not

25%, as Damon says, but 10% from each Nebula volume's royalties. Only with the Hall of Fame anthology do the Trustees receive 25%. From these percentages are deducted all the expenses of the Trustees themselves and the expenses involved in the production and delivery of the physical awards. There has never been any provision for passing on from the Trustees to the SFWA Treasury any surplus funds that might be left after such expenses are met; nor, in spite of excellent management of these funds by the Trustees, has there as of fiscal year 1969-70 been any reported surplus to so pass on. (GRD)

The cost per member for the publications (assigning half the postage and supplies to correspondence) works out to \$7.33, not \$11.30. The total per-member cost comes to \$11.95, not \$23.25.

Gordy's analysis of the \$1,400 of "unreimbursed expenses" breaks down into two categories: the trivial and the unbelievable. I will concentrate on the latter.

Item: \$250 for the Publications Monitoring Committee. This is a boondoggle. Whenever a book by a member is published, the committee sends him a form notice by mail, giving the title, publisher, order number and price, the idea being that in this way members will be able to spot new editions for which they should receive additional royalties. The committee could do the same job at almost zero expense and with one-tenth the fuss by simply publishing its lists in the Bulletin, where they would serve other purposes as well. (The Bulletin published similar lists when I was editor.)

Item: \$260 for the Secretary-Treasurer for correspondence, phone, clerical, office supplies, transportation, storage, SFWA hotel suite following Nebula Banquets. Every one of these is either incredible in itself or an unbelievable addition to another item when is already unbelievably high. The SFWA suite was nice to have --I enjoyed it myself--but the organization has no right to tax every member for a luxury enjoyed by a few.

The proposed \$10,000 budget is a gaseous wonder. SFWA owns about \$500 worth of equipment, for which Gordy proposes an annual depreciation of \$400 and repair costs of \$200. He proposes an annual allotment for officers' expenses, \$3,600, which would have equaled our entire income only two years ago. The committee allowances are equally inflated. What would the legal, publicity, grievance and library committees do with \$200 each? What are the attorney services for which we are to pay \$200 a year?

\* \* \* \* \*

SFWA is a volunteer organization which tries to give value for money. It is true that this system puts a heavy burden on the officers and members of committees. People take on these jobs, just the same and because they invest so much energy in an endeavor that concerns them personally, they get extraordinary results.

Many of our members are students and other young people living on very little. We should keep dues low for them, as other organizations do. It is ungracious to complain of turning SFWA into "a charitable institution, supported by the older hands for the benefit of the newer," and it is absurd to suggest, as Gordy does inadvertently, that we lose money every time the membership goes up. Each additional member reduces the per-member cost of the publications. Running off one more copy costs only paper and time; postage for all the material the organization sends a member during the year comes to less than \$2.

I respect and revere Gordon R. Dickson as a colleague and friend, but I look forward to his being followed in office by a pinchpenny president. Please help bring this about by voting "NO" to the amendment.

Damon Knight

|   |           |                |               |               |
|---|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| * | Postage   | \$1600.00      | Secretarial   | 300.00        |
|   | Supplies  | 440.00         | Telephone     | 80.00         |
|   | Printing  | 2060.00        | Officers exp. | 110.00        |
|   | Equipment | 48.15          | Misc.         | 380.00        |
|   |           | <u>4148.15</u> |               | <u>870.00</u> |

Grand Total: 5018.15

EDITORIAL NOTE:

*Will you mothers please remember that you are not being paid by the word for contributions to the Forum? J. Comrade Christ, I've got to run all this drek through the Gestetnor and Dickson and Knight have used up the first twenty-two pages of this issue for a few preliminary remarks. Given that the more trivial the matter the more long winded the response, might I suggest that those of you who can't boil down your replies to a single page call Gordie collect. That way you can talk all night if you want to and I won't have to listen. The one page limitation, of course, only applies to dues. If you have something interesting to say, take all the space you want. Actually I think the most equitable solution to the whole dues question would be to assess all those who object to raising the dues twenty-five dollars and charge those of us who approve of the increase ten. As far as I'm concerned, my agent takes care of my professional problems, I take care of my personal ones, and the only thing I get out of SFWA is a very occasional Forum and Bulletin. I get all of the former I want free and, excellent as our companion publication is, I'm not about to pay twenty-five dollars a year for it. trc*

HELPING HAND DEPARTMENT: *Will one of you nice people please give Miss. Cyphers the information she wants?*

## General Research, Inc.

PUBLISHERS  
HOUSE

LAKE BLUFF,  
ILLINOIS 60044

August 11, 1970

Institute for Twenty-First Century Studies  
c/o Professor T.R. Cogswell  
Department of English, Keystone College  
La Plume, Pennsylvania 18440

Dear Sir:

Our researchers have been unable to locate information relating to the following subject. Can you help us?

Is time travel theoretically possible?

A postage paid envelope is enclosed for your convenience in replying. Thank you in advance for any information you can give us.

Cordially,

*Cathie Cyphers*

Cathie Cyphers  
General Research, Inc.

=====

PAGE 1 CONTINUED:

there's one floating around who's a two-knocked survival type who doesn't get up tight over occasional bugs, dirt, and inadequate sanitary facilities. But, male, female, or undecided, if the idea of back road and cantina crawling with Cogswell appeals to you, and you have enough bread to handle your end of the gas and tequila, drop me a line. All of which leaves the future of the Forum somewhat up in the air, but that's been par for the course for some time now. There will be another issue in May. After that, quien sabe? Anybody want the job? In addition to interesting mail you get a lot of long distance calls, usually at two in the morning. If I'm just gone for the summer, I could put an issue together in San Miguel and run it off as soon as I get back. Or if somebody will lend me a light trailer I could haul the equipment down there and set up shop. One thing, though, I'll be damned if I'm going to sleep in the Scout with that Gestetnor. All suggestions will be gratefully received. Anybody driving down there this summer who could carry the beast in their trunk? trc

ISAAC ASIMOV SAYS:

I guess I haven't been paying attention, but as I leaf through #16, I notice that Jim Blish is suggesting that to qualify for SFWA, one ought to publish 15,000 words of science fiction per year.

How about anthologies? How about reprints? How about non-fiction articles intended for science fiction magazines?

May I point out [in a markedly offended manner] that if this suggestion is adopted, at its narrowest, as 15,000 words of new science fiction each year, then I, Isaac Asimov, am ineligible for membership and have been for many years.

I refuse to strike a note of false modesty here. Instead, I will simply say that any professional science fiction organization which so words its rules as to make me ineligible for membership is a corporate jackass.

Volume II of the SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME anthology will be published next year. Nominations are now open for this volume which will include stories of 15,000 to 30,000 words and must have been published no later than December 31, 1964. Members may suggest any number of stories for inclusion, but should not nominate their own work.

Nominations should be sent to Ben Bova, 12 Lakeview, Arlington, Massachusetts 02174.

ALFRED BESTER SAYS:

Ted, my beauty, what the devil is this tsimmiss about qualifications for membership in the SFWA? I take my life in my hands asking this question because I can't qualify by any of the standards suggested and should be kicked out which would break my heart because I'm honored by my membership and enjoy it tremendously. I have a hunch that the ladies and gentlemen who are in power very kindly tolerate me. I do thank them.

But this raises an interesting problem. I have written science fiction in the past; hopefully I will write it again in the future; presently I am not. But I am a working professional author. Must I be working on science fiction to be a member of the SFWA? Isn't past experience enough? Isn't mere interest enough? If not, why not? There has been much talk about the quantity of science fiction published as a qualification for membership. What is the

intent of this? That the author should be devoting most of his time to science fiction in order to belong? Surely this is unfair to the honor and ambition of authors. One need not be entirely dedicated to the writing of science fiction to be trusted to have the best interests of its authors at heart. A professional author doesn't like to limit himself to one field; he wants to write anything and everything he possibly can, and indeed he should. Must this cost him his membership in the SFWA? On the contrary, his broader experience will make him a far more valuable member.

And there's an irony in this situation, Ted, which I find amusing and yet a little sad. On the one hand science fiction has bitterly resented the fact that it has rarely received serious consideration from the doyens of "mainstream" fiction, and the resentment was completely justified. Yet on the other hand these membership shenanigans can only serve to withdraw science fiction and its authors even further from the mainstream. Rather than turn ourselves into a tight little enclave wouldn't it be more sensible to join the mainstream? For example, couldn't the SFWA become a section, auxiliary, platoon, taxi-squad, you name it, of the Authors Guild?

LLOYD BIGGLE, JR. SAYS:

I have the honor of introducing Allan Hayes, who is virtually unknown to the SFWA membership. Allan is an attorney. His sole writing qualification consists of the sale of one story back in the 50's. He has been a loyal supporter of SFWA from the beginning and for several years he has served as a member of the SFWA Trustees, the group responsible for distributing anthology royalties and for various related matters. He has devoted considerable time to SFWA's legal problems and also to those of individual members. He is a good friend, an excellent colleague to work with, and an invaluable SFWA member. Any change toward more stringent membership requirements would eliminate him. We have many such members, performing more tasks than probably any one of us, even the president, is aware of. I don't think this organization can survive as we know it without them.

Except for myself, all of the present Trustees are part-time writers. When I bow out (finally) this spring, the entire new Board of Trustees will consist of part-time writers. I trust that it did not escape the membership's attention that the only members willing to run for the office of Secretary-Treasurer in the last election were part-time writers.

The dues these members pay are surely irrelevant when compared with their other contributions. We need them as much as they need us; we may need them more. The question I would ask of those who advocate restrictive membership requirements: Are you willing to take over the jobs and perform the work of those you are eliminating?

I have long felt that the one keystone to SFWA's success has

-26-

been its lenient membership policy. An organization that can speak for the entire field is a force; an organization that presumes to speak for the field while representing one small clique is a farce. Let's have an SFWA that includes the whole field and represents it.

I would even favor an apprentice classification that would admit to non-voting membership carefully screened, promising youngsters who have not yet sold professionally. I have had the pleasure of watching several writers progress from wistful amateur to solid professional. They should be doing so within SFWA--the youngsters we help today will be helping us tomorrow.

Senator Muskie remarked, during last fall's election campaign, "Organizations do not become great by excluding people, but by including them." Instead of kicking out members we already have, let's use the energy to enroll those valuable potential members whom we've missed.

JOHN W. CAMPBELL SAYS:

PITFCS 148 raises some interesting questions of consistency of ideas and definitions. A lot of scf. people think I'm terribly conservative; this is somewhat odd, it seems to me.

For instance, as I recall it that debate you mention was in Detroit, and concerned the possibilities of psi. You were strongly conservative in holding that psi nonsense--while I was somewhat more open-minded on the subject. As a practicing pragmatist who'd seen it work, I was holding that there was something going on. Your deeply conservative position was that it was nonsense.

I think that the AMA and FDA, for example, would not agree that I was a proper conservative.

The National Academy of Science doesn't think I'm particularly conservative, I'm sure.

Whereas I believe your attitudes in those areas are highly conservative.

And surely the psychologists and sociologists do not consider I'm conservative; they seem to rank me as more on the crackpot side.

Now in the political areas, for some reason people seem to think that a man must be either Left or Right--Liberal or Conservative--either one way or the only other.

I'm neither Left nor Right, neither Liberal nor Conservative; I'm impossible because I'm Pragmatic. Or Realist or whatever term you want except one of those either-or Aristotelean limited-choice propositions.

Essentially, I'm saying "A plague on both your houses!" and

suggesting we go back to observable basics. I'm an anti-theoretic man; I prefer the observational facts to the finely-structured theoretical "inescapable conclusions."

Naturally, I make both Liberals and Conservatives mad at me.

From your reaction to Laumer's "Plague" story, I get the impression that you, personally, have never really encountered one of the petty-tyrant demagogue politician types--the Jimmy Hoffa-Adam Powell-etc. types. They are arrogant, sly-clever but stupid, self-righteous and selfish, aggressive but cowardly, and quite impossible to discuss with. They have "non-negotiable demands", which means, of course, "you do what I say and no back-talk, hear!"

They are fairly stereotyped in "Plague".

Yes, "stereotyped", because art is, properly, an abstraction from reality wherein the camouflaging confusions of distracting reality are simplified away. "Plague" wasn't a novel, wherein the author would have room to develop the characters in more detail--but his characters were valid portrayals of specific types of demagogic leaders.

How can you distinguish between a Conservative who holds that proposition P is true because it's always been held true, and the pure pragmatist who observes data and reports "Proposition P appears to be valid"? Each states his belief that P is true, and should be accepted--but are they, therefore, really the same mental types?

Oliver Cromwell, perhaps the most ruthlessly rigid dictator of post-Roman times, held that murder was evil. You hold that murder is an evil thing. Therefore you are a Cromwellian fascist, right?

What is your evidence that I am Conservative?

It seems a somewhat odd mental attitude to find in someone who's been deep in science-fiction for forty years!

One thing that we, who have been brought up in the Western tradition of civilization, need to examine damned carefully is the interesting fact that all the violently religious wars of history have been between Judaic tradition religions, or have involved a Judaic tradition on one side. I think that's because the Judaic tradition holds not only with One God monotheism as a basis--but also that There Is Only One Right Way To Think, and All Others are Evil. The Hindu can say, quite calmly, "Your gods or my gods--who knows which are the stronger?"

The essential underlying postulate of There's Only One Right Way means that if any other system of thought exists, it must be Evil, and it must be attacked and destroyed before it attacks and destroys. The One Right Way thesis implies the necessity for mutual destructiveness of alternatives.

Thus the false conclusion that peace can come to the world only

by means of a One World government, speaking one language, and having one cultural system. Thus Communism cannot be secure so long as Capitalism exists, and Capitalism must constantly dread the existence of Communism.

And it is clear to you that, since I don't agree with all your honest beliefs, I must be a Conservative.

Thanks-----but I decline that label just as strongly as I decline the other Aristotelean either-or label of Liberal!

You see, I genuinely believe in the validity of what I called "the Schwartzberg Test"--which neither Liberals nor Conservatives are willing to consider.

---

Cogswell here. To begin with, I didn't say you were a conservative, I said you had a conservative bias, which is a very different thing. I believe that we are all God's children and that conservatives have just as much right to equal opportunity for education and employment as the rest of us. They are a simple happy people with a natural sense of rhythm and a real zest for life. On the other hand, there are property values to consider and they're really happier living with their own kind. But considering how difficult it is for a young conservative to get his stories in print, and I'm not overlooking the sterling efforts of the Nixon administration to integrate the publishing industry, I think we are fortunate to have an editor who has enough compassion to eschew the usual tokenism and frequently publish their work, even though it often falls short of the usual professional standards. But to other matters. We both agree, I'm sure, that the hall mark of a doctrinaire liberal or conservative is that one can always predict how he is going to react to a given situation. If John Campbell were a conservative, I would know what position he was going to take on a matter concerning blacks, slums, the AMA, unorthodox cancer cures, and the Kent State love in before I read his editorials. Now Poul Anderson is a hawk of a different color -- I always know what position he is going to take before he takes it. As Hal Schwartzberg, a lab technician at RCA, once said ~~xxxxxxx~~ on his way back from Hialeah with empty pockets, "The measure of a good horse player is his ability to predict." But you, John, as Winston Churchill once said when we were discussing you over brandy and fine Havanas, you're "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." But to return to your letter. You say that you have the impression that I "personally have never really encountered one of the petty-tyrant demagogue politician types." For your information, my latest ex-wife charged me with being just that in her last letter. Further, during my service as an Air Force officer I was given the order of the Cloud and Dragon, Third Class, by the Republic of China in appreciation of my ability to make enlisted men meet my "non-negotiable demands." My experience has been that once you've busted a few asses, it's amazing how the back talk quiets down. Be that as it may, I can't give you any evidence that you're a Conservative because I don't have any. Even if I did, I couldn't get mad at you if I tried. As Oliver Cromwell used to say, "Keep the faith, baby." I'll have a sequel to the Spectre General for you in '72. trc

KPFT, Houston's non Commercial, non Profit, non Violent Pacifica Foundation radio station, has twice been dynamited off the air by somebody (or somebrunner) who seems to be practicing sabotage as a hobby.

When the station gets back on the air (January? February? 1971?) SFWA member H. H. Hollis (who is non violent but irritating) has been given carte blanche to run a science fiction program. He hopes SFWA members transiting Texas will let themselves be interviewed (taped in whatever privacy is desired, at any recognized cultural center in Texas, Texas). Just write Hollis at P. O. Box 35303, Houston, Texas 77035, with a week's notice of your visit, and you can review your latest book, attack Agnew, denigrate Tim Leary, or ask that KPFT's license be cancelled ...anything short of actual libel (and that, too, if you'll post bond to indemnify the station for any judgements).

Also, Hollis will be reading stories members tell him he can read. He will protect copyright, but non Profit means NO MONEY. So, it's all freebies, but good publicity. (Well, publicity...is there any bad publicity?) Hollis promises to pronounce names correctly, read whatever encomiums are handed him to read, and flatter anything except sword and sorcery. Roman Hruska is right: even the mediocre are entitled to some place in the sun. Hollis particularly solicits permission to read the work of writers who are as obscure and as idiosyncratic as he is.

Favorite stories, poems, fragments? Something you couldn't sell? Let's hear from you on Hollis' HODGEPODGE, a program of skintillating skience fission. P. O. Box 35303, Houston 77035.

L. SPRAGUE de CAMP SAYS:

Re: Tom Disch's reply (in SFWAF 16) to my reply to his previous statement, I blush to confess that Messire Thomas caught me in a logical error. Or rather, he did not but committed the same error and thus enabled me to catch myself. We both used the phrase "the main purpose of fiction" and then pontificated about it as if it were real.

Webster defines "purpose" as "That which one sets before himself as an object to be attained; the end or aim to be kept in view in any plan, measure, exertion..." The word "one" means a sentient being. In the primary sense, then, a "purpose" is a quality of a sentient being: that being's intention, desire, goal, &c. An inanimate object can have a "purpose" only in the secondary sense of having had that purpose ascribed to it by a sentient being. Thus a shovel, strictly speaking, has no purpose in and of itself. When we say that the purpose of a shovel is digging, we are using shorthand for saying that he who made, sold, or uses the shovel does so for the purpose of digging.

The same with fiction. A stack of manuscript, or a magazine or a book containing the same material in print, is an inanimate object. It has no purpose in and of itself. The author who wrote it did so for one or more purposes, a major one usually being to make a living. The editor who bought it also had a purpose: to sell the greatest possible number of copies of the publication wherein the material appears, again to make his living.

The buyer and reader had other purposes, and to know these for sure one would have to ask each reader. I think it safe to say that the main purpose of many readers - perhaps a large majority - is entertainment. There is, however, no necessary contradiction between this and Tom's purpose "to gratify the esthetic sense" and "illumination." If a writer can do those for me as a reader, I am all the more entertained, provided the esthetics and illumination are subordinated to the business of telling an interesting story well.

Jim Blish makes me feel like an illiterate clod, never to have finished Ulysses. But I have read all of Shakespeare, all of Gibbon's Decline and Fall, and all of Burton's Arabian Nights (17 vols.) So I shan't hang myself for shame just yet.

As for the proposal to scrape off SFWA members who don't produce 15,000 words of real stuff a year: I have just finished my 69th book, counting collaborations and anthologies. Of the 69, about half have been science fiction or fantasy. In the last year, I have written and sold three heroic fantasy novels, so I should be safe for a while. But, if I soon get contracts for two or three non-fiction books, that would keep me wholly tied up for a year or two, so I should become a scrapee. Ah, well, I belong to more things than I have time for now, so I shall bear my fate with becoming fortitude.

Announcement for the next Forum:

SFWA Members desiring to run for office, please tell me, and soon.

George H. Scithers  
Chairman, election committee  
Box 8243  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19101

RICHARD HODGENS SAYS:

In #15, Harlan Ellison objects to my comment that the "Waves" clashed partly because the "New" one came to sweep away the "Old" or so one gathered from the "New" propoganda. He thinks this is "rather out-of-line with historical fact." I think he is not a historian. He protests, "Almost all the sword-rattling about how old-timers were going to perish before the onslaught of younger, more daring (sic) writers came from peripheral types biased in favor of the Old Wave." I am not going to trouble anybody with quotations to show what I had in mind. They would not date from the past "year or two." Ellison is thinking of the "clash" itself, --though it is unrecognizable in his description of it. But I was not referring to the clash but to the "New Wave" propoganda that was one of the causes of the clash. And I was not thinking of individual writers "perishing", but of the Waves in general. I suppose Ellison read too much (violence) into my "clashed" and "sweep away." But the idea of "Waves" was not mine; "New Wave" is not a purely descriptive term,--if it can be called descriptive at all;--and if "to sweep away" is too strong, how about "supersede" ("to set aside or render null and void by superior power; come into, or take, the place of")? See the speeches in #15 for more recent "New Wave" propoganda. Kate Wilhelm sees the "Old Wave" as a "company town"; the "New" as an "English Tudor...in the midst...." So it is "New" but really older and better and yet apparently still the "newer" which must "supersede" the merely "new" "Old Wave." This is controversial,--or maybe just "curiouser and curiouser"....

And Disch is back, in #16. Now he says that "the field...has been consistently hostile to any other imaginary world" than one "'wherein all men are mighty'" and so on (quoting de Camp's idea of "Pure escapist entertainment"),--and I gather that by "the field" Disch means sf&f in general) "a branch of children's literature"). I suppose Disch has not read much. I am inclined to accept his characterization of himself as a blind man feeling up an elephant. The blind men in the story, however, did not proceed to denounce the elephant for not feeling the way they happened to want things to feel. "I propose," says Disch, "that the main purpose of (an adult's) fiction is to gratify the esthetic sense, and that in achieving this purpose entertainment is of far less importance than the kind of 'illumination' a great writer can bring to his material ...." It is good to have both, of course, but ordinary definitions

suggest that entertainment has more to do with esthetics than illumination has. "Like philosophy and religion," he says, "art creates values." "Creates" is a big word for it, but art inevitably expresses values. Maybe by "esthetic" values Disch would mean values that others would call "philosophical" or "religious" (not that the categories are exclusive...). He might lack esthetic sense. This might explain his insisting on being "illuminated", not entertained, and might help explain his proposition that "Art...has...the obligation" to "transform" "real life" and make it "meaningful." Hence, I suppose, his sweeping justification of "erotic realism" when it is not entertaining: "because no human relationship can be understood without a clear appreciation of its sexual components"--provided, presumably, it has sexual components, and provided they can be explained by "erotic realism." Everything Disch says is questionable -- so he insists that it is immature and inartistic to disagree with him. As for "formal experiment", now Disch takes a very broad view of it, though he puts it clumsily: "since the invention of papyrus ... language (or stone or song)... it is as old as Homer." So is hf, but let that pass: he does not mean to justify "formal experiment" because it is traditional, but because it is inevitable; but, since it is, it follows that it is not lacking in sf&f, anyway. Read some, Disch.

Darko Suvin is as bad as Disch. Nebula Award Stories Five has a long essay on "The SF Novel in 1969" by this Professor, and I wonder why. First, the Professor defines sf in a manner that appears to distinguish it from nothing. Then he proceeds to dismiss and denounce what sf&f he imagines does not conform to this definition. (E.G., "eclectic mythological fantasy and not SF ... possibly interesting to those who like to sympathize with that sort of thing", -- and that sort of thing.) Whether what he calls "traditional SF" conforms or not, the Professor finds it stale. Nothing will do except the "New Left", -- though he chides them for their failure to solve things. He does like The Left Hand of Darkness, but this is as regrettable as Professor McNelly's not liking Rite of Passage: he likes it because it "could be claimed as a major victory of the 'New Left' in SF...." The Professor approaches sf not as if it were a "Sleeping Beauty" (his image), but as if it were a toad. What he wants in sf is not sf. He is probably poisonous. And the editor says, "We have come a long way to have gained such a friend; perhaps someday we shall be able to say we have earned him." I hope not. It would be a harsh thing to say of anyone that he has earned Suvin. Maybe Disch has. Of course, Professor Suvin speaks for himself, not SFWA; but, in a Nebula anthology, he makes a very bad impression for SFWA, too.

DAMON KNIGHT SAYS:

Wally Macfarlane calls the Nebula Awards feckless, and asks if someone won't defend the present system. As its designer, I guess I ought to volunteer. The system is the way it is for several

reasons, the first of which is philosophic: I wanted the Nebula Awards to be the choices of the members of SFWA, to the extent that that is possible, not of any jury or panel, because it seems to me that alone gives them any meaning. Second, I wanted the choices to be made with maximum fairness, and for that I relied on the safety of large numbers. I would not suggest for a moment that this system is perfect, but I think it is better than any other proposed system by a country mile.

Of the twenty-one Nebula Award winning stories & novels to date, I voted against fourteen. The fact that only one-third of my choices won does not suggest to me that there is something wrong with the system: I recognize that if I could tinker the system so that it always produced my own choices, there would be no need for a system--you could all just relax and let me pick the winners.

Objections such as Harry Harrison's and Jim Blish's are apparently based on the belief that there is a Platonic absolute Best Story in every category, that Harrison and Blish know which one it is, and that if the system does not pick it, something is wrong. In fact, as they ought to know, there is no "best of the year" apart from the judgments of the people who vote on it. If the Nebula balloting accurately represents those judgments, that is all we can expect or hope for.

Another pretty obvious point: in a field of this size, with five or six contenders in every category, no candidate is ever going to get a majority. This means that no matter which story wins, a majority of the voters will have expressed the opinion that it is not the best. When we are in this majority, we have to accept the verdict with good grace, if we expect others to do the same when we are in the winning minority.

One further point: when on occasion the voters have made what seemed to me a wildly improbable choice, I have almost always gone back to the story to find out what in hell they saw in it, and in every case I have found something I missed before. I recommend this procedure to Harrison, Blish, Macfarlane & co.

A jury system, in any of the versions that have been proposed, would have all the faults of the present system in exaggerated form. At present, if a hundred members vote, 20 votes may be enough to win. In a ten-member jury, it would take as little as 2. It is unlikely that the ten members, however chosen, would be representative of the tastes and judgments of SFWA. And we would lose the protection of large numbers. Under the present system, anybody trying to manipulate the voting would probably have to swing at least five or six votes. In a ten-man jury, one or two could be enough. The system Jim Blish proposes, although it is ingenious and elaborate, would have the effect of turning the Nebulas into a French Academy. Under the present system, at least we start with a clean slate every year; under Jim's system, we would perpetuate our errors. The winners of Nebula Awards are all brilliant writers, but some of them are not

noted for mature or considered judgment. And there would be only three of them on each jury.

I do think the Nebula committee's preamble is a good and necessary thing; old members may remember that I published something similar in the Bulletin at the time of the first balloting. It is weird, but I do believe people will do a lot of dumb & destructive things purely because nobody ever told them not to.

I reject with horror Bob Silverberg's suggestion that the officers should have discretionary power to assign stories to the wrong categories in order to cover up our mistakes. The reason Harlan's story got into the wrong category last year is that (a) the author misinformed us about its length, and (b) nobody bothered to check it. This year the Nebula committee is sending lists of recommended stories to the editors who published them and asking for correct word counts. The editors always know how long a story is--they have to. I told Annie that last year, too, but alas, etc.

I call attention here to a problem which I did not foresee when I left office four years ago, although I've learned since that it crops up in every volunteer organization. It never occurs to the departing officers to leave their successors any comprehensive account of how the job is done--procedures, policies, costs, names of suppliers, and other details. As a result, each new officer has to start from scratch. I mentioned this in the last Forum with reference to the Nebula anthology editor, but it obviously applies to the awards committee, above, to the Bulletin and Forum editors, usw. I will get off my duff real soon now and work up some kind of a manual for the president, but those who served after me will have to correct & revise it.

The indecent and scurrilous matter in the first few pages is really in piss-poor taste.

(I must admit to a certain puzzlement about this final remark. When I first read it I felt a moment of panic because quite frankly I didn't read the Nebula Rules Committee carefully before I passed it on to the typist and I didn't check it after it came back. However, after Damon's comment above I went back through the report line by line and, though I would hardly classify it as stimulating reading, I fail to see anything in it that could be called either scurrilous or in poor taste. But then I've never been a subtle type and I obviously missed something. Perhaps Damon will explicate more fully in the next issue. trc)

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT TELEPHONERS ANONYMOUS? WHEN A MEMBER HAS AN OVERPOWERING URGE TO USE THE TELEPHONE, HE CALLS UP ANOTHER MEMBER AND THE GUY TALKS HIM OUT OF IT.

KEITH LAUMER SAYS:

Although I do not usually reply to Fan Criticism, I feel I must take exception to your Nebula Award nomination for my story, THE PLAGUE: green wood does too burn.

While I have no objection, of course, to your singling me out for praise, I question the suitability of printing and distributing such material at the expense of the membership (including me) as I feel it gives me an unfair advantage.

I do, however, object to paying a portion of the expense of bringing long, dull, self-dramatizing essays in letter form to the doorsteps of inoffensive SFWA members, as well as the usual kind. I feel there are a sufficient number of fanzines cluttering the mails without our help. I would suggest limiting contributions to pieces which might be described as articles, minus all the in-group innuendo and nominatives of direct address.

"The 1970 SFWA Directory should get to you sometime before 1971, holiday mails and rail strikes permitting.

The directory has the addresses of all members who were active while Anne McCaffrey was Secretary-treasurer (except those members who only wished to be contacted through their agents). It also has a list of agents who handle SFWA members, and other handy information.

Please regard all of the addresses in the directory as confidential information -- i.e., don't let any of your fannish friends incorporate it in their mailing lists. Otherwise, we'll all be getting dunned by the Famous Writers' School by and by.

Many thanks are due Anne McCaffrey, who tracked down everybody's latest address (and we're a mobile group) and set up camera-ready copy for the book. Also many thanks to my brother, Jack C. Haldeman, who did the mimeography and one heck of a lot of collating, stapling, etc.

If you desire a copy of the directory and haven't gotten one yet (or if the Post Office managed to destroy yours in transit), drop me a card c/o Keith Laumer, Box 972, Brooksville, Florida (33512). We have an overprint of about sixty copies.

-- Joe W. Haldeman  
(SFWA Treasurer)"

URSULA K. Le GUIN SAYS:

I agree heartily with Poul Anderson's comments in the last Forum, and would amplify: If the current membership requirements were stiffened to the degree proposed (min. 15,000 wpy), we would lose most of the young, most of the comers, and most of the oddballs; and those who take more than a year to write and publish a novel would be in and out, in and out, like sluggish porpoises. We'd be left with a little elite of the prolific and the "professional." What a dreary thought! We have a sloppy, erratic, imperfect organisation, but it has one essential virtue: it's adaptable -- flexible, unpredictable, complex, capable of growth. To sacrifice that to a rigid purism of standards would be, I think, to kill the SFWA.

Everybody suddenly seems to be saying that a panel of judges will solve the Nebula Problem. Again, a rational rigidity is to replace a flexible mess. But in an irrational situation, a strictly rational solution may be the worst possible; and the picking of the aesthetically "best" of anything for a calendar year is about as irrational a situation as you can get into. If we accept it as such, we'll continue to make aesthetic blunders, to yield to our whims and prejudices, and to pretend that we've read all the nominated stories. If we all do so, our sins and errors will tend to cancel out -- as will our virtues and perceptions. We will once more arrive at that almost meaningless and yet very honorable thing, a general choice of the "best."

The singularity of the Nebula Award is, that it is the recognition of one's colleagues. Few such awards exist in literature. After all, real generosity is involved in voting, anonymously, for your fellow/rival/writer. A genuine effort over vanity is called for. It is a magnanimous act. And therefore it seems to me to be, however faulty, a truer honor than any selection by a known board of judges trying to be "dispassionate."

Brotherly love and sibling rivalry seem to be inextricable; but rather than naming dubious experts (and thus creating certain scapegoats) I should prefer it if we continued to be one another's inept and fraternal executioners. Anyhow, has any method been proposed of selecting the judges, except by the judgment of the membership, whose judgment of previous winners is judged (by the membership) to have been so faulty as to disqualify them from judgment?

BILL PRONZINI SAYS:

Thanks for Forum No. 15, which just arrived here on Majorca by Portuguese fishing smack, via Bombay (in view of its contents, I'm not really complaining about the delay).

Alfred Bester's quietly rational letter, and your very funny and very accurate editorial comments were the only sane, sensible, intelligent, non-egotistical and happily impersonal

items in the entire issue. Everything else, unfortunately, was eminently forgettable (especially Kate Wilhelm's gross misstatement: "Some years ago the field of mystery writing was shaken to its foundations by innovators like Agatha Christie, who broke all the rules." Agatha Christie, for God's sake, is and was about as old-line, old-guard, deductive puzzle, body-under-the-pianner, traditional and non-progressive as you can and could get. Perhaps Miss Wilhelm never heard of Butch Hammett and Sundance Chandler?).

I'm tempted to include here the sadly obvious pun about there being a vas deferens of opinion as to the authenticity of Harry Harrison's pinworm problems, but being too sophisticated a writer for such banality, I won't.

Since I'm also a hopeless optimist, I'll be looking forward to the next issue of the Forum.

PAMELA SARGENT AND JACK DANN SAY:

In relation to your article concerning Lucky Starr and his electric penis: it is with much displeasure that we must notify you that Lucky Starr's penis is not electric. Nor, for that matter, is it even erect most of the time. Of course, we realize that the standard rejoinder will be ... "there is never enough electricity to go around", but in all earnestness we feel that if Lucky Starr's penis was electric, there would certainly be enough electricity to go around (it), it being very small indeed.

Now his rectilinear expansion is a different matter altogether, being able to encompass bananas, candles and chopsticks. Next time, be more accurate in your writings about the "Flaming Asshole", as he is affectionately known to his friends. We would also greatly appreciate the return of our chopsticks as they are Ming Dynasty originals.

We must also voice our displeasure at the odious and noxious tenor of the latest Forum. It seems to us that anything concerning writing or SFWA should be made as boring as possible. The ratio of laughing writers is inversely proportional to nasty letters. Excuse me, this is not the time nor the place to voice our displeasure. We shall voice our pleasure. We like your Forum, Mr. Cogswell, but could we give a copy to our aged grandmothers? We are afraid the answer to that is no -- then why are our aged grandmothers reading this Forum?

GEORGE SCITHERS SAYS:

I am appalled at the inability of our Members to use words in their commonly understood senses, as evidenced in PITFCS148/Forum 16. The more verbose among us -- those well beyond 15,000 words sold a year -- seem generally worse than the conciser of us.

The question of impressing the publishers -- "Standards of performance ... of a professional group" -- was brought up by our

Mr. Blish, in Forum 15. In the first place, the ensuing squabble over "trying to throw everyone else out of the club" will hardly accomplish that. In the second place, Blish leaves undefined what he means by professional standards; an important omission, since describing one as a "professional lover" is a deadly insult, on the other hand, describing an airplane pilot's performance as professional is high praise. And in the third place, the "professional conduct" of our Mr. Piers Anthony will unimpress publishers more than any ten of our under-15,000 word a year authors. In the fourth and final place, shedding such people as our Mr. Asimov and our Mr. de Camp will do nothing whatever to accomplish Blish's stated purpose.

I disagree with our esteemed Mr. Cogswell on one point; unless the discussion on the Blish proposal starts moving toward compromise and attention to an increased "professionalism" on the part of all our Members, quite a few people are going to get hurt. Our Miss McIntyre is not alone in her feelings.

Turning to our Mr. Anthony, the word "boycott" is normally used to describe an action by a group against an individual, not the action by an individual against another. Further, no one in his right mind would arbitrate anything on the terms that Anthony suggested, since "illegal" behavior is a matter for a district attorney and a grand jury, not a SFWA arbitrator-to-be. The only boycott likely to take place is that by publishers who are getting warned off by Anthony's own letter to PITFCS148/Forum 16. It rather seems to me his aim is to become a martyr, and I don't see that we should assist him in that aim. (It is hard to imagine a more difficult undertaking than a boycott of a sf author, when one considers the ease of using a pseudonym.) Finally, I happen to be an officer of SFWA, albeit a minor one: chairman of the elections and nominations committee. Therefore, I take offense at our Mr. Anthony's comment about financial disclosure by officers.

On the proposed Nebula Awards Rules: a good job indeed. May I suggest, however, that you, in paragraph 5.b, delete "'public relations firm" and substitute therefor "auditing firm"? I wouldn't trust a firm of flacks as far as I could sling them by the balls, whereas auditors depend on their reputation for honesty and being able to add.

On dues and finances: one of the more sensible suggestions made at the November Phillycon SFWA meeting (by myself, of course) was that a proposal by the SFWA administration for a dues change should be supported by a proposed budget, including both estimated income and outgo. As for the \$600 phone bill -- my personal phone bill runs about that a year, so I don't consider it particularly excessive. Perhaps I can ask our Mr. Silverberg and our Mr. Knight if they will provide me with a prompt decision on whether one or both wish to be listed as a nominee for SFWA office, next election?

Last -- I invite our esteemed Cogswell to chop large chunks out of letters to the PITFCS/Forum that appear too long. His judgement can be trusted.

JACK WODHAMS SAYS:

More than one Eminent SF Identity, and numerous lesser lights, does and do from time to time in direct comment and persistent aside refer to the 'bad writing' that gets published, and to the 'poor quality' of so many stories, even be they Award nominees.

In FORUM #15 both Harry Harrison and James Blish would seem to take a measure of open affront at some elected material that they consider under par. This attitude shows how far a man can go down a mineshaft without a candle. Memo to Members: Do not reveal your meatheadedness by voting for those pieces which H.H. or J.B. - or Similar Authority - disapprove.

The difficulty of defining what is, and what is not, sf, is plasticine in comparison to attempting to define that amorphous quality which separates good from bad writing. This is inescapably and always a highly subjective affair. There is so much good in the worst of us, And so much bad in the best of us, That it hardly becomes any of us, To knock about the rest of us. The fact that Mr. Harry (note the compromise here with Andy Offutt's astute observations) has never ever printed anything by the winners in his annual best volume is, let his admission be emphasized, a quintuple-edged sorcerer's sword which reflects his taste - which some unkind folk might think prejudiced and narrow, or even lousy. For instance, he has not yet picked up any work of mine. The inference is plain. Thank you, Mr. Harry.

Some of us are so bad that we don't even get nominated for the prizes that we might cherish as a seal of affirmation upon our badness.

"I've won a Nebula," he said.

His friend gives him sympathy. "That bad, huh?" Still, it's recognition.

At least two people in this world have become so incensed by the flagrant puerility discovered in works of mine, that they have been roused to pen vitriolic missives to accord me pre-eminence as The World's Worst S-F Writer. In such case, of course, being a sensitively religious person, I have made the usual gestures towards Mecca, and have prayed for the unabated activity towards fecundity of my wail-wishers. But nevertheless, the appeal of the negative being seemingly what it is, perhaps we could get some place if we awarded a Nadir instead of a Nebula. Our enthusiasm to condemn might be more productive than this reluctance we have to praise.

I can see it all now. There he stands, the leading crud-churner-outer, winner by 653 votes out of a total of 1,035,672 eagerly cast, The W.W.S.-FW. 197-, clutching his trophy (which might well be a phallus non-rampant before crossed legs) and heartily wishing that he (or she? Never forget the girls, bless

'em, equality, viva equality) had not accepted this particular invitation. Cheers from the audience, stamping of feet, ecstatic happiness and relief from all those who might have doubts about their own superlative skill.

The standard for nethermost rubbish might be a criterion easier to establish than that elusive one of excellence. "This story is as bad as one by The W.W.S.-F.W's," the editor proclaims ominously.

"My God!" and the latest candidate challenging for the Title pales, "Give it back, quick, let me work on it some more, remove the cliches, deodorise the crap..."

Incentive. It's a tough business, and we want the gee-up, don't we? Why not let's be revolutionary, and at the same time freer to declare what we really think - that it is the other guy who is giving the game a bad name.

A Nadir. It could be nicknamed a Ralpie. Cast in brass, coated in verdigris. Who knows? There's even a chance I could make the short list. It would look nice on the mantelpiece beside the busted clock.

\*\*\*\*\*

DAMON KNIGHT ANNOUNCES:

THE CLARION WORKSHOP WILL BE HELD AT TULANE UNIVERSITY UNDER THE DIRECTION OF JAMES SALLIS FOR SIX WEEKS BEGINNING JUNE TWELFTH, VISITING LECTURERS WILL BE ROBINS WILSON, CHIP DELANY, HARLAN ELLISON, DAMON KNIGHT, AND KATE WILHELM. THE TUITION OF TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS COVERS HOUSING BUT NOT FOOD. THREE SEMESTER HOURS OF CREDIT WILL BE GIVEN. FOR INFORMATION WRITE TO JAMES SALLIS, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (ARTS AND SCIENCES), TULANE UNIVERSITY, NEW ORLEANS, LA.

"The 1970 SFWA Directory should get to you sometime before 1971, holiday mails and rail strikes permitting.

The directory has the addresses of all members who were active while Anne McCaffrey was Secretary-treasurer (except those members who only wished to be contacted through their agents). It also has a list of agents who handle SFWA members, and other handy information.

Please regard all of the addresses in the directory as confidential information -- i.e., don't let any of your fannish friends incorporate it in their mailing lists. Otherwise, we'll all be getting dunned by the Famous Writers' School by and by.

Many thanks are due Anne McCaffrey, who tracked down everybody's latest address (and we're a mobile group) and set up camera-ready copy for the book. Also many thanks to my brother, Jack C. Haldeman, who did the mimeography and one heck of a lot of collating, stapling, etc.

If you desire a copy of the directory and haven't gotten one yet (or if the Post Office managed to destroy yours in transit), drop me a card c/o Keith Laumer, Box 972, Brooksville, Florida (33512). We have an overprint of about sixty copies.

-- Joe W. Haldeman  
(SFWA Treasurer)"

DORIS BUCK SAYS:

This is sent to the Forum wishing influential voices may be raised against increasing the SFWA dues beyond ten dollars. Surely valuable members would drop out. Perhaps some Forum contributor already has a plan for getting maximum benefits out of what we now pay. Here's hoping to see it.

VONDA N. MCINTYRE SAYS:

Just to set the record completely straight, David Gerrold has paid me in full for my story in GENERATION. With the exception of one short period of time--not his fault, but the U. S. Post Office's--we are and have been on good terms about the delay, which I agreed to in the first place.

If anyone needs further proof that David Gerrold, "grandstanding" anthologist, has my good faith, I've submitted a story to his second anthology as well. If the Beabohema article was in fact written by Perry Chapdelaine, I'd like to respectfully suggest that he stick to his country-music-star biographies and whatever other vast untapped markets he can find and leave the rest of us in peace.

Tom Purdom might like to know that because of his bookmarks the Kirkland Public Library wants to know who I am; in addition I've been invited to address the creative writing class at my high school alma mater. (I'm going to do it as soon as I decide where to send them.)

STEPHEN GOLDEN SAYS:

Two of the most controversial questions that are being thrown around in SFWA these days are: 1) who qualifies as a member?, and 2) what should we do about the dues increase? In relation to the first, more established types want to tighten up the membership in order to eliminate the one-time writers and make the organization more effective, while the newer writers don't want to be excluded from the help they need while they're still struggling upward. The second question is being argued by the officers, who want more money in order to bring the organization up to the working level they think it should reach, and by some members who are asking, "What has SFWA done for me, lately?" In attempting my own solution to these problems, I have devised what I modestly call the GOLDEN PLAN FOR THE REDEMPTION AND SALVATION OF SFWA. The points of this plan are as follows:

1. ACTIVE MEMBERS are defined as those who have sold one piece of short fiction--any length--per year, or one novel every two years. To make it a uniform criterion, the important fact is when they received the money for their work, not when it was published or when it was accepted. Publishers can go out of business before or after acceptance, before or after publication. It is the payment that makes one a professional, after all.
2. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS are former active members who have not sold anything for the past five years. If they haven't managed to sell something else after five years, they should be dropped.
3. BASIC ANNUAL DUES are paid by all members. The exact figure will have to be determined by what the officers think they need. For the sake of argument here, let's assume they are \$10 per year. For this money, a member gets the privilege of writing "Member, SFWA" on his manuscripts, a year's subscription to the Bulletin, the privilege of attending SFWA functions, certain minor services of SFWA (e.g., the mail-forwarding service), and if he is an active member, the right to participate in SFWA elections, including Nebula balloting.
4. Certain suborganizations of SFWA, like the Nebula Trustees and the Speakers' Bureau, will hopefully be self-sufficient. I don't know how the laws are on this, but maybe the Nebula Trustees could handle all the financial details of Nebula balloting, taking the burden off the organization per se.
5. THE FORUM would cost an additional sum of money for a year's subscription. Again for the sake of argument, say \$3. Only active members may subscribe. (Many people have said repeatedly that they think the Forum is a waste. If enough of them feel that way, then

the magazine will fold from lack of funds. Personally, though, I like it and would subscribe.)

6. RECEIVING BOOKS FROM PUBLISHERS would also be subject to a slight change, to help pay for the Secretary's addressing labels. People who don't wish to receive the books need not pay. Only active members may receive the books. (This will help cut expenses for the publishers and may keep out some of the fannish types who are only joining because of the "free books.")

7. COMMITTEES will charge a set fee for services rendered. If a member wants a question answered by the committee on Contracts, he pays them a fee for the service. If a member wants in on one of our Vice President's promotional gimmicks, he pays for it. If arbitration between writer and publisher is desired, SFWA will charge both parties a fee for mediation.

8. COLLECT LONG-DISTANCE TELEPHONE CALLS TO OFFICERS are out. If a member needs official advice on a matter, he can do it at his own (tax-deductible) expense.

The plan I have just described is far from perfect. For one thing, it will require far more recordkeeping than we are doing at present, and will probably raise the cost of everything slightly. For another, it will leave the officers and committee chairmen open to charges of influence-peddling and nest-feathering. But it does, I feel, deal effectively with the question that I hear more and more these days: "What is SFWA doing for me? What are they going to do with all that money?" Under my system, a person would pay for exactly those services he uses, and he would know precisely where every penny is going.

I think these new procedures would be fair to everyone concerned and I would like to see some ways of improving them. I hope there will be a lot of constructive criticism of them in the Forum.

ARTHUR C. CLARKE SAYS:

I'm happy to see PITFCS back, as I dedicated PROFILES OF THE FUTURE to the membership. Have to update that book some year.

I stopped writing non-business letters rather abruptly, back in the 40's, when I discovered how Lovecraft starved to death shooting off 20-page epistles in all directions. But you've triggered some reactions with #148.

Where did you dig up Charles Willis and E.G. O'Brien? I thought they were safely buried. Anyway, C. W. wants to resign because there's too much sex, EGO'B ditto because there's not enough.

You do Keith Laumer an injustice with your analysis of The Plague. Keith has very subtly indicated his opinion of the whole proceedings by his neat choice of name -- Kaka Nine. Surprised you didn't spot the use of this word, which has been popular in the

nursery at least back to Aristophanes:

And you could hardly say "Cacca!"  
when through the door I flew  
And held you out at full arm's length  
your little needs to do.

(The Clouds, lines 1381-5)

So Keith is clearly telling us that the story is a pile of shit.

Fascinated by your extracts from The Night Land. It has some marvellous passages, but I guess I skipped the soppy stuff. Obviously when he wrote it, Hodgson's craft was ebbing.

Sorry about that.

p. 50. Wish you'd made it clear that the Clarke referred to isn't this one (unless my memory is even worse than I think.) God - I hope we don't have to go through the Pierce confusion again.

That's all for now. Have just been showing Gore Vidal around - says he's sold Messiah to the movies. I'm off to India any moment to film the comsat section of my TV special THE PROMISE OF SPACE. Expect to arrive in NY early March, based on Hotel Chelsea as usual. Will be lecturing in Cal mid-April.

POUL ANDERSON SAYS:

Though all the discussion of Nebula rules, membership requirements, etc. in the current Forum is very worthy, it is also rather dull. The most interesting letters were from Alfred Bester and A. E. van Vogt, because they dealt with writing, which after all is what most of us do.

(Well, there was also your dissection of that Keith Laumer story, but really, Ted, that was shooting fish in a barrel; we all have our off days, even writers as good as Keith normally is. I do feel that if you had to make your remarks, they should have been in among the letters rather than up front - but seeing as how the Forum is unofficial, and will obviously become still more so under your editorship, this probably isn't important.)

There are fascinating implications in Van's remark on the language used in the Null-A books. What are the appropriate vocabularies, sentence structures, etc. for various types of sf? Nearly all of us are still using everyday mid-20th century American. That's not necessarily bad - at least, I do it myself most of the time - but there are other possibilities to explore. Some are available in the real world; e. g., Cordwainer Smith drew much of his style, unique and influential in our field, from the Chinese language, and in my smaller fashion I have often found useful usages in foreign tongues

(especially Scandinavian and Spanish) and in older English (especially Elizabethan, the high point of our linguistic history). Other possibilities can be found in major literary works; e. g., John Brunner has made good use of Dos Passos' discoveries. In this connection, I maintain that Karel Capek is an absolute master, even in translation, from whom we all still have much to learn: in the fantasy field, consider especially "Kraakatit" and "Meteor." And, of course, still other possibilities can be created de novo. Various sf writers are trying it. For the most part, the result is merely pretentious unintelligibility, but that's all right; in the nature of the case, most experiments are bound to have negative results, and we learn from the failures as well as the occasional successes.

Alfred Bester, as goes without saying, did some dazzling things in this line years ago. Please, sir, won't you do more? And this brings me to his remarks. He's obviously correct and astute when he points out the literary usefulness of an obsessive-compulsive character. No doubt he will agree that this, like everything else, can be overdone; but writers might do well to consider using the device once in a while.

I must disagree with his statement that "Today we seem to have exhausted the ingenuity that went into the creation of novel physical worlds." For immediate disproof, look at the latest Hal Clement and Larry Niven books. It's true that such virtuosity is rare. But then it always was; just take one of the sf indexes and see what the proportion of real science fiction has been at any given time. Being a strong fan of it, I'd naturally like to see more, and do my own best to produce some. It seems to me that this need not, in principle anyway, conflict with the values of story-telling, characterization, philosophical significance, and what have you. In fact, quite a few classics have settings which were exotic even to the author's contemporaries - the Odyssey, the Divine Comedy, "Huckleberry Finn," "Moby Dick," to pick four at random - and (pace Tom Disch, whom I note I forgot to mention earlier as having also contributed an interesting letter) the strange settings and stranger encounters are integral to these works, allowing an exploration of character which would not otherwise have been possible. For that matter, the same is true of most of the fondly remembered Bester stories.

Our problem is that the "creation of novel physical worlds" isn't easy. A few years ago I did an article for SFWA on the very elementary physics of a planet; and that, of course, is the bare beginning. You go on to chemistry, biology, natural history, xenology (if you postulate an intelligent species), the histories and cultures and languages and religions and Lord knows what of the natives - and then you still have to do your human characters and everything else demanded by traditional literary canons. There are some tricks and shortcuts (maybe this is worth another article?) but they don't get you out of the basic work. On the other hand, doing the work is an enlightening experience, mind-expanding in the proper sense of that term. You may even, like me, acquire a taste for it.

At least writers should avoid elementary mistakes - for instance, a planet which is all sterile desert, yet supports an oxygen atmosphere and native race. To argue that this is mere detail compared to

the real literary values is a copout. As Sprague de Camp has often said, the reader's suspension of disbelief is a fragile thing at best. The writer who, by sheer sloppiness, allows it to be shattered demonstrates his own incompetence.

This brings us to John Campbell and Analog. Since what follows may be taken for sycophancy, I call to witness anyone who has ever dealt with him that sycophancy is wasted on Campbell; he'd buy a story from his worst enemy (I am told he has, now and then) and reject one by his sainted grandmother, if those were his editorial judgments. Anyway, I no longer write enough for the magazines to make any practical difference.

So: evidently all the fansies - to judge by their publications, though I don't see many - and a good many SFWA members consider Analog bad, evil, terrible, unreadable, the last being of course the worst possible indictment. Greg Benford recently wondered publicly who was buying such tripe; he couldn't imagine the phenomenon would continue very long. Now Greg, who is a good scientist (and a good friend of mine), really ought to have borne in mind the scientific principle he otherwise lives by: when a hypothesis won't fit the facts, it should be discarded together with any predictions it makes, and a new hypothesis tried on for size.

The facts are that, if you don't count the various and often tottery reincarnations of Amazing, ASF has survived by far the longest of any periodical in the field, that it continues to enjoy far and away the largest circulation - and a little arithmetic will show that its gross intake is by no means negligible to its publisher, who continued it alone of the Street & Smith chain when he bought that out - and, in consequence, pays far and away the best rates.

Another fact is that many of its stories are indeed terrible. As stories. I will come to that in a moment; let me here simply point out how many top notch ones are still being published there. Obviously Campbell gets first look at a lot of things, simply because he can pay more. The point is that he does not reject good material just because it's good. (Does anyone seriously believe an editor could operate for close to 40 years on any such basis?) Nor does he demand agreement with his own ideas. Besides myself - JWC and I are often at ideational loggerheads - I may cite of my certain knowledge certified liberals like Jim Blish and Harry Harrison.

Therefore, why does Campbell print things that would never get by, say, Ed Ferman? Well, to start with, any editor has a magazine to fill, deadlines to meet, ec; he often has to settle for what he can get, knowing he'd really rather not accept it. Obviously every editor would like every story to be in an absolutely beautiful style, psychologically penetrating, philosophically significant, jam-packed with sparkling new ideas, and just sheer fun to read on top of everything else. I suppose he counts himself happy if he can get one like that once every five or ten years.

So he chooses among the MSS actually on his desk. And so the question arises: What virtues compensate for what flaws? In Campbell's case, the idea - the scientific, technological, sociological, etc.

puzzle or unconventional approach or what-have-you - covers a lot of sins.

And to come to the point of this overly long discussion, his approach seems to work. There is a market for the idea. Just the naked idea, devoid of any literary trappings except the most elementary. In the magazine field, at least, it seems to be the biggest market. I don't know about comparative sales of novels, but suspect a similar phenomenon could be shown. If so, the reasonable hypothesis would appear to be that sf remains at the core a literature of ideas.

Now this does not mean we should all go back to Gernsback; and Campbell was among the pioneers in introducing basic literary standards to the field. And even if the demand for it is smaller, I for one think the kind of thing Ed Ferman does is beyond praising and quite essential to our continued vitality. I merely repeat that (a) a good, solid, intriguing idea is not incompatible with literary virtues, being indeed a literary virtue in its own right; (b) it sells.

The proposition looks too elementary to be worth stating, but in fact a number of our members seem unaware of it. Ladies and gentlemen, for your own good, I suggest you give the matter some thought.

So much for the official part, if you care to print anything this long. It did get rather out of hand, mostly as an excuse not to go out and grub crab grass. On the personal side, we're all well. Very sorry to learn that you evidently had another attack - may it be the last in a long and dissipated life. Hope my recommendation to your local foundation got through (always an uncertain matter when we're required to use the Puny Express) and that you do get your grant. Love to all.

JAMES TIPTREE, JR. SAYS:

This is a shriek of despair!... Or maybe just the long shuddering bleat with which Sisyphus finally lay down and let the rock roll over him.

Having been raised in the don't-carp-unless-you-have-a-CONSTRUCTIVE-idea school, it's also a proposal.

Look:

I'm sitting with my feet in a duffel and tickets in my pocket and fifteen precious hours of writing time before I have to get on some flying chamber-pot for nowhere---and in front of me is THE NEBULA RECOMMENDATION BALLOT, roughly 4 double-spaced pages of worthy works on which I, as a conscientious SFWAer should vote and/or add other titles.

Have I read them? I have not.

Well, yeah---some of them I must have read in the mags listed, but do I recall their titles? No. Do I even recall the titles of works I wanted to nominate 3 Nixon speeches back? No... In fact, since I've become a writer I've learned what every writer knows, that one reads less, and more capriciously than before.

And, of course, to recheck even a couple of categories of those will kill that writing time.

But I must vote. And to vote I must read them. But I can't.

I WON'T.

So I can't vote.

So I'm a lousy fink SFWA member. So the system collapses because of people like me, after all these good people have done all this good groundwork. And I VALUE SFWA.

So I am snarled into a pretzel shape with my teeth firmly in my own tailbone. And--so---I---SCREAM.

Now, dammit, if I'm alone in this predicament I'll eat the abovesaid tailbone in silence, and all you other better-organised sahibs please excuse me. But personally I bet there's a creeping crisis coming on us all. Consider only: If we all nominate conscientiously this list will be twice as long...And next year?... And next year???

No, man, no. In theory it's great, in practice it just won't wash.

But the Nebula idea is good. Is necessary even. So how to save it?

Well, here's a proposal:

There's one thing I could vote on. I could vote on five or ten people---writers---whom I'd trust to award the year's Nebulas. Really, I could. Different ones this year than I'd have picked in 1968, say, too. Now honestly, couldn't you?

I could even figure out a reasonably fair scheme for them to vote, so that some minority choices would go in.

I could do more than that. I could put up a small MONEY CONTRIBUTION to pay these poor blokes in some measure for using their time and eyes to read and choose.

(The only thing I can't do is to figure where in hell they'd get the time, but who's perfect?)

Now lookee the virtues of such a scheme. The selections would be representative in two ways. (1) We, SFWA, would still nominate the field. (2) The judges would be elected by current SFWA choice.

They would be, in short, our proxies. Our patseys. AND THEY WOULD HAVE READ THE STORIES...As to drawbacks, the chief one I see is that maybe a writer scenting nomination as a judge would decamp for Outer Yakistan...That's why I propose tangible emolument...And there is really an element at least of honour; a judgeship could be viewed as an Award. No?

And (slams Ballot into wastebasket)---the present system is not only dishonest---it isn't working.

And now before I subside into heavy breathing, with the writer's well-known shallow volatility, a word of friendly cheer to you all out there. Though a number of us seem to be chewing on each other at any given time, compared to other orgs I have known SFWA is a crown of singing stars and I cherish it & you.

TOM PURDOM SAYS:

I have an announcement to make as chairman of the Grievance Committee.

One of our members recently had the word count on one of his stories reduced by about ten percent, even though his original word count was accurate. He didn't know the word count was being reduced until he received the check and by then the publisher claimed the story was already set in type and couldn't be withdrawn.

This is the second time in a year this has happened, to this particular member. Before we take any action, therefore, I think it would be useful to know if this is part of a pattern. If any other members have had similar problems, I would appreciate it if they would write me right away.

You don't need to write a letter if you don't have the time. All I need is a sheet of paper with your name, the name of the story, the publication, the word count, and the publisher's word count. I would appreciate it, of course, if you would double check the word count and make sure you're right.

The information should be sent to the address I listed in the Forum a couple of issues ago -- 4734 Cedar Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa. 19143. The address in the directory has the wrong zip code.

JOSEPH PUMILIA SAYS:

When George Zebrowski says that professionalism is a state of mind, a faith in your work, I agree with him. When Pamela Sargent says "Either our writing is the most important thing, or it is not; if it is not, perhaps we have no business in a professional organization for writers," I can only say that a part time writer is not necessarily not a professional writer. From what I hear, most SFWAns don't write SF full time. Their SF is either an occasional diversion, or is a profession co-equal with any other job they hold,

or is their real desire in life--their regular job merely serving to keep them going so they can write SF.

That's why I think that membership criteria should not be so restrictive as to keep from SFWA's ranks the story-a-year man who enriches the field with an annual gem (if he exists), or even the story-a-year man who unloads a literary lemon (we can use his money, and who knows? He might even improve over the years.) I think anyone who can get a story a year published should get to pay his dues and have access to market info like anybody else. As Zebrowski says, that raises the present requirement by 3. Piers Anthony Jacob says it's 10 times the present credential. If the membership feels that this would still not be enough to make the organization more professional, then perhaps we should consider Robert Silverberg's suggestion that full membership be reserved for active pros, and that old-timers and "amateur members who care to hang on" have associate membership (no voting.) Poul Anderson says most of the work of SFWA is done by enthusiastic neophytes. OK.

As for James Blish's proposal that a story be considered SF only if it appears in an SF magazine, this is no more rational than the suggestion of Pamela Sargent that if the writer is willing to call it SF, let it be nominated for SF awards, or submit it as a credential, then ipso facto (presto chango) it is SF; Why not have a panel of judges read the damn thing and SEE if it's SF? (As for the Eternal Question WHAT IS SF? I can only suggest that an organization with "Science Fiction" in its name had better have some kind of working definition. I'd favor admission in borderline cases, especially if it's a good story.)

Speaking of boards of judges, it might not be such a bad idea to choose the Nebula winners using Blish's "jury system." I would be content to be judged by such a distinguished panel. Some problems might yet arise, however. Witness the threatened resignation of some judges on the fiction panel of the National Book Awards in the event that "Love Story" was included among the nominees.

I enjoyed the Blish article very much, and hope for other similarly helpful items. I filed it away until I rack up enough sales to warrant such un-editing.

You know, what Vonda McIntyre says is true. SFWA provides a lot of info that the neo-pro finds helpful, as well as the egoboo necessary to keep going when the going is tough. It would be a shame to cut the legs out from under us dreamers. Whatever provision is made to "professionalize" the organization should take into account the needs of beginners. They shouldn't be cut off from market information, good advice, fatherly pats on the head, and encouraging words.

My pride does not bruise as easily as Vonda's, and I will not be hurt if SFWA excludes me. ("Throw out" aren't the right words, Vonda.) But I will be mad. I am presently writing my ass off, with less to show for it than Vonda. I've been rejected by just about everybody in the business except the novel markets, and as my current ambition is

to write the flipside of an Ace Double (no sense shooting for the stars on the first launch), I may well be rejected there too, But I will not stop writing because I don't know how to do anything else. And I will not stop writing SF because I love SF and I will continue to write it as well as I know how. It's an obsession. Membership has nothing to do with it.

Piers' leaving SFWA and the circumstances surrounding it are very distressing. Didn't Silverberg say that one of the original purposes of SFWA was to suggest strategies for out-witting unscrupulous publishers?

ART PORGES SAYS:

A few comments:

ELIGIBILITY: As one who has sold well over two hundred stories, roughly half in the science-fantasy field, and now relatively inactive, although my agent valiantly sells an item from my backlog occasionally, plus reprints, I feel that people like me ought to qualify for a kind of permanent associate status, at least so that we may enjoy the FORUM.

NEBULA AWARDS: I have been unwilling, unable (alas!) uninterested enough to read more than a few of the unlimited works, and so could not cast intelligent votes. I fear a jury of willing, eager, competent writers that will do the selecting. In any case, the only true verdicts will be delivered by Time -- and on that point, I'd like to see more collections of Hall of Fame "Grats." (I'd pick Stapledon's SIRIUS, for one.)

REPRINTS: There have been a few good-natured clams about frequency of reprints. I don't have complete data, but some of my stories -- I'm thinking of THE ROOM -- have been reprinted at least fifteen times, including many appearances abroad. I would guess that any real champ would have to show about the minimum, of some story, to crush all opposition!

DEFINING SCIENCE FICTION: As the Constitution as influenced, no doubt, by the Supreme Court, so science fiction, in my opinion and Congress, says the field claim to be producing; no to be just what writer will ever hold up. When a biologist (Eisner) much more restrictively that no brain smaller than a golf-ball recall how green nature has tried to teach all of us humility -- how often science has had to admit that some living thing, often of a low order, seemed to have adumbrated a highly sophisticated mechanism of man's, and within a relatively few nondescript cells. I won't say the odds are against a Martian cockroach that solves partial differential equations, but I opt for a probability of .05, say, rather than zero. So, to me, such a biological anomaly in a story is science and not necessarily humor or pure fantasy.

OLD AND NEW WAVES: I'm all for anybody's writing just as he or she pleases; but some trends simply get to be boring. I am tired of wild, black-humor, sex-filled stuff -- a purely personal reaction -- and turn with relief to "good" space-action-sword & sorcery stuff, when available. And while I also graciously permit people to imitate Joyce, I don't intend to read them; there's nothing anybody can say to me in a story that can't be done in clear, limpid prose, of which the greatest exemplar, bar none, is old T. H. Huxley. His dismemberment of Gladstone in the matter of the Gaderene Swine is a wonder and a delight; T. H. is urbane, grammatical, lucid, rigidly-logical, ironic, good-natured -- and devastating: one magnificent, rhythmical, perfect, sweeping sentence after another. (ESSAYS ON SOME CONTROLLED QUESTIONS). To write like that I'd sell my soul to Auld Cloutie. Let me also recommend the later stories of Kipling; incomparably good, especially WISH HOUSE, DAYSPRINGE MISHANDLED, HOUSE SURGEON -- a really fine supernatural story; and AN HABITATION ENFORCED. Compared to these two, many writers are vastly over-rated: Hemingway, Faulkner, et. al. I think that Stevenson is also due for re-evaluation and revival; I particularly like his PRINCE OTTO, romantic, yet satirical and witty; unfairly neglected; and no matter what, stories like THE MERRY MEN have power as well as too-careful (?) writing. While I'm on this kick, who else? Ah, Anatole France! Read his BLOOM OF LIFE, last in the Pierre series. And that greatest of all police-brutality gems: CRAINQUEBILLE; done almost 90 (?) years ago, but current as next week's TIME, and how beautifully written. And the Dreyfus take-off (TRUSSES OF HAY) in PENGUIN ISLAND -- exactly like our HUAC procedure (and the Pentagon on Laos) today.

But enough, and too much.

ANDREW J. OFFUTT SAYS:

Those who use the word "professional" most are those of us who write for a living. We don't do anything else, be it teach or sort mail or whatever (well, we DO edit a bit...), and a tiny few of us go even further (and get snotty, ordering the pecking): it's not only the only occupation we have, it also supports the wholedam family, well. A less colorful and profitable profession, the one that obviously prevails at ole SFWA ranch, is that a professional writer is someone who's sold a story that was subsequently published -- professionally. I can see that, certainly, and as Silverberg said last issue (no, no, TRC, NOT lastish), we were all one-story writers, once.

Some stay that way -- or nearly. I sold my first story 16+ years ago. I did not sell another for four years. Was I a professional writer during those four years? Did I belong in SFWA? Was my judgment in writing and writing-organization matters worth a dime? Hell no! I was a food products peddler for Procter & Gamble who had written a few stories and published one. In my judgment my one sale MIGHT have bought me a membership for one year, after which I'd have been dropped -- automagically -- as having failed to show that I was other than a one-shotter, or occasional writer. Applying that to the Now: I honestly can't see setting an arbitrary wordcount limit. (Suppose someone sells a 15,000 worder, thus qualifying in James Blish's eyes,

and the editor says you can send a hundred or a thousand words out of it? Do you hafta send in the ms for the S/T to count in off-hours? (Gentlemen, I've just lost a volunteer....")

Why not require one published something, in this field, per year? (We won't go into WHERE it was published, or what constitutes sf. I know we have one credentials committee; I think we have two.) I can't see that length matters. Maybe it's a 200,000 word novel. Maybe it's a short-short (please not to bring up Peghoot). If someone buys it, for money, and prints it (professionally) and the credentials committee agrees it is indeed SF, stf, sf, or s-f, that's that. It's a sale. And LORD no, I can't see the publication of that short-short as providing more than a one-year credential. The individual who sold it knows he isn't among his peers: howcum the peers haven't the guts to say so, too? We aren't threatening anyone; we merely say congratulations, you sold and published one of Our Kind of stories, you can be a member if you wish (SEND MONEY) -- for a year. Sell one next year and you're in for another year.

What that does is make SFWA sound like an organization of writers, makes it sound like something to try to get into and stay in; lord, maybe it'd provide the little goose so many need to play typewriter-tag. Otherwise -- well, being a member of SFWA gets to be like being a Kentucky Colonel, which, as any Kentuckian can and will tell you, impresses only you furriners. The Blish plan, though, looks as though it would lead to getting rid of the chaff and maintaining a few fattened heads of wheat, speaking only to one another and to god, not-volunteering as younguns have a tendency to do, and paying fatter dues because of lack of volume.

I also can't see differentiating between novels and shorter work. Seriously. I write few short stories and lots of novels, because the work's harder and the money nowhere in shorter work. As it stands, one of those supersaxy "sf" novels I sold to Midwood under a pseudonym would entitle me to a longer term of membership than, say, Silverberg who wrote Passengers -- pretending that neither of us wrote anything else, you understand. Tain't fair.

That's pretty explicit: more than one year's membership for one short story is nutty, but setting any sort of word limit at all, 15,000 or a hundred thou or 2500, is just as nutty. So is considering (even the worst of) novels as inherently superior to (even the best of) short stories. I am heartily, even hotly, in favor of one-a-year, any length. Last year I sold two shorts and 12 novels, four of the latter sf under my own name. Harlan sold fifty million short stories and all those articles in the Freep and god knows what else, but no novels. Where's the justice in any one of my novels (or LeGuin's, or Brunner's) carrying more credential clout than his stories -- or any one of them?

Of course publishers "help" some of us. Berkley, apparently, will bring out two of my books this year. Dell, which bought one in January 1970, didn't publish it in that year and hasn't scheduled it for this year. IF I had the money, then I could sit on my tail in '71 and '72, even with a one year rule, and Dell would take care of

my credential -- with a novel I wrote back in 1969. (There is the solution for someone such as Vonda McIntyre, who wrote in last issue: she's In now; she's SOLD others; so...she's maintaining herself as a member. We KNOW they'll be published, eventually.)

Well that solves THAT; now this: Once I sent in an article to the FORUM, plainly marked as such, a sort of tongue-in-cheek thing with a tongue-in-cheek title: THE ART OF PERSONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS or HOW TO AGGRANDIZE YOURSELF FOR FUN AND PROFIT. The new mean ornery smartass editor turned it into a letter that made it seem more snotty than tongue-in-cheek (it WAS true, yes), and then had the bodacious awww-dacity to make a snippy comment about it, along with everything else in that issue. And I want to say this about that. Write On, Cogswell! It was a funthing, and the next issue (I can't find a number; the world-famous PITFCS issue) showed it in the responses, and this Cogswell nut and his editorship is the best thing that's ever happened to the Forum and maybe to SFW--no, I won't say that. Anyhow: do it again, Cogswell, and I'm looking forward to meeting you.

Stay well, and please be careful.

STEPHEN TALL SAYS:

You speak truly when you say that if a Forum contribution isn't made within a week of receipt of the issue, it won't be made. Perhaps we should have more dawdlers. I've put off several letters to the point that they never got written, and who's to say that the world isn't a better place because of that?

The matter of membership requirements being based on minimum published wordage, God save us, does bug me somewhat. Why a mass of drivel should suddenly become meritorious when it reaches the 15,000 word mark, or why a worthy year's production shouldn't be regarded as worthy because it's under this arbitrary word count -- I'm lost. Maybe I shouldn't even have come to class.

The basic Reason for Being of SFWA is involved here. If it is an organization of pros who earn their livings entirely from writing, then most of us are under the wrong umbrella. But that was never the intent, as everybody knows. It's still an organization of pros.

When any individual writes and publishes a unit of science fiction in a legitimate publication, he is a Writer. For that year at least, he is a pro. Anything more than that must be determined by criteria arbitrarily arrived at; and those criteria can be as capricious as trying to classify sin. Quantity, per se, is meaningless. Quality depends on the measuring stick, and on who is doing the measuring. What we have left, then, is an individual who is concerned with science fiction, for whatever reasons, and who has proved it by producing and publishing some. The membership of SFWA was envisioned as being composed of such people. They are few enough, at best.

I don't write much fiction. I don't have time, and it's not my way of earning a living. But I read a lot of it, I'm interested in the genre, and over the years quite a number of editors have bought and published my yarns. When they do, I'm pleased, I applaud their good judgement and happily spend their money. Some readers like what I write, others think it concentrated crud. That's as it should be. The point is, my two or three ideas a year are contributions to science fiction, for better or for worse, and production volume has nothing to do with it.

Sorry to sound oracular. I don't, usually. Actually, as Uriah Heep said many years ago, I am a very humble man. Although I am a war veteran, a hawk (with reservations) on Southeast Asia, have a crew cut and bathe, I say to you all, "Peace!". Let's keep the territorial taboos to a minimum, and walk around the temptation to set up a volumetric peck-rank system (I just made that up!). In fact, why not use some of the squabble time in writing, selling and publishing more science fiction? That's what it's about -- ain't it?

BECAUSE OF THE RATHER DELICATE NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL, ALL READERS WHO WISH TO CONTINUE ARE ASKED TO SIGN THE STATEMENT BELOW. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I AM AN ADULT OVER TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF AGE, A MEMBER OF THE SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS OF AMERICA, AND THAT THIS ISSUE OF THE SFWA FORUM IS STRICTLY FOR MY OWN USE. I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I WILL NOT LET THIS OR FUTURE ISSUES BE VIEWED BY, OR FALL INTO THE HANDS OF, MINORS OR OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE SPECIAL NATURE OF THE CONTENTS. I ALSO SWEAR THAT I AM NOT A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, OR HAVE ANY REASON TO ATTEMPT TO USE THE CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE OR ANY FUTURE ISSUE AGAINST THE SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS OF AMERICA AS AN ORGANIZATION OR ANY OF ITS MEMBERS, FULL OR ASSOCIATE, PAST PRESENT, AND/OR FUTURE IN ANY LEGAL ACTION. THE ACT OF READING ANY PART OF THIS OR ANY FUTURE ISSUE IS IN ITSELF AN INDICATION OF EXPLICIT AGREEMENT WITH ALL OF THE ABOVE STATEMENTS.

(signed)

Hi Dev  
ms as

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

TOM PURDOM SAYS:

Here are some more dull, bureaucratic mumblings for the Forum, --some general announcements, some more stuff on PR, and a kind of six-month report to the membership. I'm going to put sub-heads in it here and there so people can skim it and see if there's anything that particularly interests them.

At the Philadelphia meeting for the last two years, we have rented a suite and used it as a place where reporters can interview writers in advance of the conference. This has worked out very well and I'm planning to rent a suite at the Algonquin for April 3 and do the same thing with the banquet. I would appreciate it very much if members would keep this in mind and would let me know if they'll be attending the New York banquet and will be willing to drop by the suite during the day. The New York Times Book Review will probably have somebody there--I've been following up a correspondence Ron Goulart started and they seem to be definitely interested in doing an article--and the results in Philadelphia indicate we may be able to get a worthwhile response from other publications.

Jonathan Ward of CBS radio news is running a series of taped interviews on the future which will include interviews with people like Herman Kahn and with science fiction writers. These will be broadcast over the CBS radio stations in New York, Washington, and a couple of other major cities. He will be writing several authors about this, but he is interested in hearing from anybody who would like to volunteer. The interviews have to be conducted in New York, unless John happens to be travelling through your area; he's a science fiction reader and he wants to do the interviews himself, so he can be sure they'll be done right.

Somebody else may mention it in some other SFWA publication, but in case they don't--Library Journal is apparently going to be reviewing SF on a regular basis. They've already started and one of the first columns has a note asking for volunteer SF reviewers. This seems to be a direct result of Alexei Panshin's articles.

QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE. MINIMUM BASIC AGREEMENT.

Gordie has asked me to announce the formation of two new committees. One of these will be a committee to look into the whole matter of credentials and recommend any changes which may seem to be necessary. Bob Silverberg has agreed to be chairman of this committee.

The second committee is to develop a minimum basic agreement. We don't have a chairman for this committee yet, but we hope to have more to report shortly.

#### GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

Somewhere else in this Forum there should be a letter asking for information from members who have had problems with their word counts. I would also appreciate it if members would let me know if they've been running into delays in getting their checks. Again, I think we should know about this even if you don't want the SFWA to look into it for you. I think the Grievance Committee should be advised of these things so somebody in some central position can see if a pattern is developing.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS

- I've decided to go ahead and see what I can do about the library display project Lloyd Biggle suggested. I've decided the best approach will be to contact several major libraries and then start developing plans (and looking for contributions) if it looks like they're interested; the Boston and Philadelphia libraries have already indicated they'd be interested in such a display, and New York already looks like a good bet, too. For the next few months, I'm going to be concentrating on that, the Nebula banquets, the mailing to book reviewers I've started, and some publicity arrangements for a trip Gordie is going to take through Canada and the West Coast.

The list of PR projects two Forums ago was drafted rather hastily and it may be wise to clarify one point -- this was not a request for funds. The money I'm spending at present is all money donated from publishers. I put the list together so members would know what I'm planning to do and also because I thought it would demonstrate we can do some useful PR work for a moderate cost. I think a two or three hundred dollar PR budget would be reasonable for an organization this size, and would give us something to work with in addition to publisher's donations. But that's something to be considered in the future, not now.

A little project I took on last month may help put the cost of PR work in perspective. Gordie is going to Cape Kennedy for the Apollo 14 blastoff and I decided to put out a one page press release which announced that he would be there and would be available for interviews, and briefly filled in his professional background. I didn't know if this would do us any good or not, but it seemed like a reasonable thing to do.

I still don't know what the final results will be (I'm writing this the Friday before the launch) but the preliminary results look pretty good. The St. Paul Pioneer Press did a Sunday feature on Gordie and asked him to wire them a five hundred word dispatch from the Cape. And because Gordie had that assignment, his agent

was able to put him in touch with a syndicate which has given him an assignment to do a thousand word dispatch from the Cape. And I understand there is also a good chance this may lead to another member doing some book reviews for the Pioneer Press.

I sent out forty of these press releases, which pretty much covered the national market for the thing. It took me about three hours on a Sunday afternoon and it cost the PR fund (not the treasury) \$2.40. If we add in the cost of the envelopes and the mimeograph ink and stencils (which were left over from a previous project I paid for myself), the total cost may come to \$5.00.

Everything doesn't come quite that cheap, of course. I'm going to send out three releases about the Nebula banquets, and these will all be about three pages long, which means I may have to hire somebody to do the mimeographing. But this type of activity is still a lot cheaper than it may look.

For the project described in Dick Peck's letter, Dick put in an evening writing the letters, and a couple of mornings talking to reporters. And that will probably be all the promotional activity he will engage in for the next couple of years, since you obviously can't do this with every short story or book you publish. This may have interfered with Dick's creative work, but I find it hard to believe. He's sold about eight short stories in his first year (while working full time at a demanding academic administrative job) and he seems to be working on something new every time I talk to him.

#### FINANCES. PHONE CALLS.

I have now been vice president of this organization for six months and have spent approximately fifty dollars of the taxpayers money -- thirty-five for stationery, ten for postage, five for phone calls. I've collected three hundred and seventy-five dollars in contributions and spent one hundred and fifty on the bookmarks, twenty on general PR work, and forty on the suite in Philadelphia (for which we received a contribution specifically earmarked for that purpose).

I've received several phone calls from Gordie during the last few months. In almost every case, I feel these were useful calls which helped us to run this operation a lot more smoothly and efficiently. In many cases there is simply no substitute for the give and take of a phone conversation. Issues that might take several letters can sometimes be settled in a few sentences over the phone.

There obviously has to be some limit on the amount of money the organization spends on phone calls. But I don't think six hundred dollars is an outrageous phone bill for an organization which is this big and this widely scattered.

#### MID-TERM REPORT

As the least busy officer, I recently volunteered to write some kind of report on the activities of the organization. I didn't know about many of our activities until I became an officer, and it seemed

to me it would be useful if one of the officers would sit down and give the membership a report.

I didn't know, for example, that two of our senior members have been voluntarily checking all paperbacks for notices of new editions, and advising members so the members will be certain to know the publisher has reissued their work.

A lot of the work of this organization is also done on a one member at a time basis and never gets mentioned in the SFWA publications. In one case, for example, I understand a new member was recently offered a contract with a seven percent royalty rate by a major publisher -- and might have taken it if he hadn't been a member. In another case, an overseas member was warned away from a minor publisher because he wrote one of the officers before he submitted something, and a member checked out the publisher for him. In another case, a new member started politely asking for higher word rates with his fourth sale, and got some advice on how to do that -- something he wouldn't have done otherwise, and the kind of informal action which can help to keep rates up in a field in which new writers and part-time writers will always be tempted to work cheap.

Things like that seem to happen all the time, and in my opinion are one of the best reasons for having an organization like this.

Gordie has already listed many of our activities in the dues referendum statement, however, so I'm just going to append some additional information on the activities of the individual officers.

In my case, I've already described most of my activities. I'm putting in about seven hours a week on SFWA activities and writing about thirty letters a month. Gordie has told me he writes about a hundred letters a month and he figures he's putting in thirty-five hours a week.

Quinn says she puts in three or four hours a week keeping track of the members--keeping records of credentials and sales, changes of address, and related stuff. Her big item is correspondence, which runs about 10-15 letters a week, about 1/2 to 2/3 of which go to the members, the rest being answers to queries about who we are, what we do, how to find "X", what a Nebula is, what we require as membership credentials, etc. She also gets letters from universities, libraries, publishing houses and so on. She estimates correspondence takes up roughly 8-10 hours a week.

In addition, she also has the membership list, the stencils for the addressograph, the labels for the free books, letters and phone calls which plug things like the Hall of Fame anthology and the Nebula Award anthologies, letters which give information about the Speakers Bureau, etc. She seems to be a busy young lady, in short, and is apparently living up to the high standards set by her predecessors.