

THE PROPER BOSKONIAN #22

The Proper Boskonian is the monthly Journal of the New England Science Fiction Association, Inc., and the J. Mark Anderson Fanzine Foundation. The Editor is J. Mark Anderson, who can be reached c/o Mike Saler, 393 Main St., Concord, MA 01742. Special thanks to Claire Gratch (Orville Redenbacher's niece) and Dave Anderson (my nephew).

ANDERSON, MARK: MY WORDS

Reaction to the last few issues of this Journal has been very gratifying to me. George Flynn, a prominent fanzine fan, writes: "Well, the new incarnation of PB is certainly, er, um, interesting. Until I explained otherwise to him, former Editor Mike Blake thought this was the first of several fascicles that could eventually be bound together to form a whole zine. I hope something's being done to send out trade copies to fanzines and other appropriate people who don't get IM. (Then again, maybe it's better if they don't know...)" (APA:NESFA 133). George is also a prominent NESFA, and is obviously bending over backwards to be impartial. I hope to introduce a few more content and stylistic changes, perhaps as soon as the September issue. In the meantime, we have another column by Harry J.N. Andruschak, a concise book review by Richard Miller, and a few critiques by observer-at-large Nathan Childers.

You wouldn't believe all the promises I've had for contributions for the next issue. I certainly don't....

WRITTEN ON A TRIPEWRITER #2 By Harry J.N. Andruschak

THE MENTOR #31, from Ron L. Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA. 20 pages mimeo, 2 offset. Available for the Usual or \$1.00...and that's an Australian Dollar. I'm not sure how a newcomer in the USA can get this fanzine, although it is worth it. Try some IRCS ((International Reply Coupons; ask for them at your Post Office)) or maybe a polite request will do.

Now here is a fanzine worth trading for or otherwise getting. Nothing elaborate in the way of layout or illos. Just solid fan-writing from an old time fan and his friends. Such as Bertram Chandler, who has a regular column. In this installment Grimes talks about GOR; the rejection of one of his Grimes novels by DAW because of...are you ready for this...PORNOGRAPHY!! ((Yes, DAW publishes the GOR books)). Toss in some experiences at a Nudist Beach, and if this isn't enough reason to get this fanzine...

There is the last installment of Vol Molesworth's AUSTRALIAN FAN HISTORY. This work is very much like Sam Moskowitz' THE ETERNAL STORM. Such detailed description of fights and feuds and parties and politics among such a small number of fans. The period covered is from the 1930's to about the late 1950's. A fascinating glimpse into fan history.

As you might expect, the rest of the fanzine cannot measure up to this standard, but who cares. RECOMMENDED.



BOOK REVIEWS

by

Nathan Childers

A Treatise on The Common Hangnail in 17th Century French Literature, in ten volumes. Asa Moff, Gigantic Book Corporation of America, Bog Place, NJ, 1981, \$101.99 for the boxed set.

It is quite surprising how much a determined writer can write on a topic of no consequence whatsoever. -- N.C.

Revenge of the Turtle Necked Aardvarks, B. Goode as told to B. Cairfl, Biodegradable Press, Utica NY., \$4.95 hardcover, \$10.95 paperback, \$22.50 SF Book club edition.

This is the fourth in a series published by Biodegradable Press, the so-called "ecological revenge series". The series is a triumph of the commitment, tenacity, and ill-judgement of the editors. The first three entries in the series, "Revenge of the Snail Darter", "Revenge of the Lampry Bel", and "Revenge of a Clumsy and Rather Ill Natured Monitor Lizard" were distinguished by being released immediately to the remainder tables or rather, more accurately, returned immediately from the remainder tables upon release. Whatever merits these works may have had were lessened by the fact that they were printed on non-absorbant paper.

The current work is not up to the high standards of its predecessors in the series. Nonetheless the publishers have high hopes for it. Biodegradable Press has contracted with Miami Customs to process all seized Marijuana for paper; it seems that hemp is particularly suitable for paper. The hope of the publishers is that the heads of America will rush out and buy copies for personal consumption. This ploy accounts for the twelve page appendix which explains how to put book paper into brownies and other related topics. The publishers are, however, strangely reticent about the fact that the process for converting pot into paper destroys the hallucinogenic properties of marijuana -- no doubt this is an oversight on their part.

Appalling as the idea may be, I suppose I should devote some comment to the contents of the book. We may begin with the proposition that at least one of the authors, and perhaps both, are literate. Our principle grounds for this assertion is that book contains a lot of words. A surprisingly large number of them are contained in sentences. Internal stylistic evidence rules out the possibility that the work was generated by a computer program. On the other hand there is no real reason to rule out the possibility that the original manuscript consisted entirely of type-setting symbols and that the words were supplied by the typesetters, following directions as best they could. On the whole, I think that the balance of the evidence indicates that B. Goode and B. Cairfl were companions in childhood and that B. Goode failed third grade, whereas B. Cairfl passed third grade but could not manage fourth grade. Given modern educational practice, this may mean that they are both college graduates, of course.

Upon reflection, I am inclined to believe that no good purpose would be served by delineating the plot. (You may read this as an admission that the reviewer could not make heads or tails of it.) It begins simply enough. Supposedly a missionary friend of B. Goode encounters some Aardvarks wearing turtle neck sweaters. Naturally their is an attempt to investigate this phenomenon to find out what is going on. From there on things get a bit confusing. I can follow the bit about the mad scientist who increases the intelligence of a band of Aardvarks with his Zapper Ray machine. I can accept the Aardvarkian Brown Shirt movement. I am, albeit unwillingly, able to envisage the ending with hordes of turtle necked Aardvarks digging out the foundations of New York and bring it down in a pile of rubble. The intervening 'plot', however, is confusing. What Richard Nixon and the Duchess of Windsor were doing in the story is beyond me, and I must say that I find their purported affair incredible. I suppose that the inclusion of the CIA was obligatory, but it seems gratuitous to present it as a front organization for the Boy Scouts. Moreover I think it strains credulity a bit to present Uganda as a major nuclear power.

It is only fair, I suppose, to point out that the Times has called this a work of major literary importance, that Newsweek has called it a publishing event, that the Guardian has dismissed it as a Fascist polemical tract, and that it will appear in the Readers Digest as a condensed book. -- N.C.

So much for the hile of the modern book reviewer. I suppose I should point out that Mr. Childer's manuscript, "Revenge of the Mounted Python", was rejected by Biodegradable Press as not being up to their standards.

Giant's Star by James P. Hogan. Ballantine Books #28771, \$2.50

Reviewed by Richard Harter

This book is a must for anyone who can get through it and enjoy it. I couldn't and didn't.

A struggling young artist living in a deserted barn has his work reviewed by art critics in: RAGERS OF THE LOFT ART

Physicists are getting very upset that some baryons are turning into mesons in: RAGERS OF THE LOST QUARK

A police chief and his associate, the captain of the drug enforcement wing of a local police force must chew out a detective who missed directions and was thus late for an important search and seizure in: BERATERS OF THE LOST NARC

Harrison Ford as the intrepid Marlin Perkins of Mutual of Omaha in: ROOTERS FOR THE LAST AUK

THE JOINT NIEKAS / EREHWON MACABRE POETRY CONTEST

Introduction: NIEKAS, a sf/f fanzine, and EREHWON, a poetry 'zine, are co-sponsoring a contest in macabre short poetry, using two forms developed by Rod Walker, the editor of the latter publication. Cash and other prizes will be awarded, and winning (and honorable mention) poems will be published in both 'zines. Prizes will be stipulated in NIEKAS 28 (November 1981) and EREHWON 104 (October 1981).

Contest Rules:

1. There will be two categories, cthulhic and nooze (see below, under Categories).
2. There will be an entry fee of \$1 per category entered. This entry fee is waived if you are a current subscriber to either NIEKAS or EREHWON. ("Current subscriber" is defined as having a subscription to NIEKAS which ends not earlier than #32, or to EREHWON which ends not earlier than #106.)
3. Entry limit is 2 poems per category. In the cthulhic category, you may enter up to two individual poems or a single sequence or cycle of up to four poems.
4. Each entry must be submitted in 4 copies. There must be one original and 3 carbon or photocopies. The original must contain, in the upper left-hand corner, your name and address. Do not place your name/address, nor any other form of identification, on any of the 3 copies. Entries must be on paper 5½" high by 8½" long, and should be single-spaced.
5. If you wish your originals returned, or wish a list of contest winners at the end, please enclose SASE with your entry. In any event, the 3 copies will be destroyed at contest's end.
6. The decision of the judges will be (what else?) final.
7. Deadline: Entries must be received by 1 March 1982.
8. Mail to: NIEKAS/EREWON Contest, c/o Rod Walker, "Alcala", 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas CA 92024.
9. All poems must be original and unpublished. Submission is considered ipso facto the author's permission to print the said poems in both publications. Copyright will be retained by the respective authors.
10. Entries must be accompanied by the attached entry form or a facsimile thereof.

CATEGORIES

1. Cthulhic. This is in essence a perversion of the haiku. It has the same form. It is a 3-line poem of approximately 17 syllables, arranged 5-7-5. The poem may have fewer (but not more) than 17 syllables, and may have fewer (but not more) than the suggested number in each line. However, the relationship of short-long-short must be preserved.

Occidental poetic techniques must be avoided. Rhythm is irrelevant and rhyme is to be avoided. Also to be avoided should be alliteration, onomatopoeia, allegory, simile, hyperbole, metaphor, and the like. Language should be plain, simple, and direct.

Like haiku, the cthulhic is a seasonal poem and uses the kigo (season-word). This may be the name of a month or season, but may also be the name of something which relates to a season... such as the crocus for Spring, the pumpkin for fall, snow for winter....any bit of flora, fauna, weather condition, or whatever which denotes a season or time of year.

The cthulhic should not consist of a single complete sentence. It should be at least two sentences, and in fact uncomplete phrases serve it better.

Another element of haiku is sabi: the inevitability and sadness of the passing of time. In the cthulhic this element is replaced by the mordant fear that time will continue to move forward, by the implied wish that time would stop.

A sequence of cthulhics would consist of 3 or 4 poems in which the month or season changes, but may be otherwise unrelated. A cycle would consist of 3 or 4 poems which, although each stands alone, might be read together as an implied story line. Individual cthulhics are never titled.

Here are two example sequences, the first published in AMANITA BRANDY 1, the second in WEIRDBOOK 15.

LITTLE COUSINS OF CTHULHU

- I. Wary dragonfly--
Tongue that shares it in the swamp:
Black, and ten feet long.
- II. A flight of herons?
Red-stained feathers and black beaks
Holding strings of flesh.
- III. Clumps of summer grass--
Between grow pallid fungi:
The first from Yuggoth.

ARKHAM SEQUENCE

- I. Cold Spring drizzle--
Last month' s suicide still han,
But does not decay.
- II. Summer pond- lilies--
Amid them, flexing slowly:
White claws, long and sharp.
- III. Autumn funeral--
Eyes stare out, not wholly blank
From the cracked coffin.
- IV. Winter snowstorm- -
Dim shambling shape leaves red drops:
Blood, but not its own.

2. Nooce. The plural of nooce is nice. Correct usage here will prevent a nocturnal visit from something you'd rather not meet. "Nice", by the way, ~~not~~ be pronounced to rhyme with the French city, or with "lease" or "police". Anyone guilty of pronouncing it to rhyme with "nice" or "lice" will be locked in my dungeon and forced to listen to 1000 repetitions of my recording of Roddy MacDowell reading Lovecraft's "Psychopompos". At a high volume.

The nooce is a shaped poem of strict meter and scansion. It has exactly 19 syllables in 6 lines, distributed 1-2-4-6-4-2. Line 1 should consist of a stressed word. Lines 2-6 must be in iambic meter (da-DAH, da-DAH, &c.). The lines are all centered on the page so that the completed poem should look, roughly, like a rope that means business. The poem must be titled. Rhyme (internal or external), alliteration, onomatopoeia, and all that may be used if the poet feels like it. But sparingly, please.

The nooce should build up to a climax, to some degree unexpected, which occurs in the last 6 (or even the last 2) syllables. It should bring the reader up short, like the aforementioned rope. Essential to the best effect of the nooce is a degree of grim, macabre, dark, utterly perverted humor, or perhaps irony. The humor of, say, Sweeney Todd or Love at First Bite.

Two examples from NIEKAS 27:

And an unpublished one:

TOO CLOSE TO NATURE

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

O GRAVE,
WHERE IS THY VICTORY?

There
are trees
nearby that move
without a wind. I wish
I had not seen
their teeth.

Jobs
are hard
for me to keep.
I always quit the school
after I eat
one child.

There
he lies,
transfixed by sharp
spikes driven in his hands
and heart and throat,
and waits.

ENTRY BLANK:

I am enclosing ___ cthulhics and/or ___ nice/nooce for the NIEKAS/EREHWON contest. I have read and understand the rules and accept their provisions.

(CHECK ONE:) ___ I enclose the required entry fee. ___ I am a subscriber to NIEKAS through #32. ___ I am a subscriber to EREHWON through #106.

(CHECK IF APPROPRIATE) ___ I am enclosing SASE for return of my originals plus contest results.

(DATE)

(SIGNATURE)