

the
SKYRACK
NEWSLETTER

This is SKYRACK number 74, dated 31st January, 1965 and published by Ron Bennett under the sign of the thickening correctine at 52 Fairways Drive, Forest Lane, Harrogate, Yorkshire, England. 2/6d for 6 issues; 6 issues for 35¢ in the USA (6 issues sent air mail for 70¢) where subscriptions may

be sent to the man on the spot, Robert Coulson, Route 3, Wabash, Indiana 46992. Contributions included from Burkhard Blum, Tom Schluck, Alan Dodd, Peter Weston, Ken Chaslin, Betty Kujawa, Michael Moorcock, Graham Hall and Archie Mercer.

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NEWS FROM COMPACT BOOKS. From the present month's issues both New Worlds and Science Fantasy are to be published monthly, indicating that present editorial policies are proving highly successful. In addition, the publishers, Compact Books, will be shortly introducing a special series of science fiction which will cover about six titles per year. The first book in the series, The Sundered Worlds by Michael Moorcock, will appear in March and it is probable that this will be followed in May by Philip E. High's The Prodigal Sun. New Worlds is reported to be now in a position to compete with American publication rates and is accordingly vying for leading American authors. Already accepted has been a new Jack Vance story. In addition the magazine has a good chance of a wide U.S. distribution in the very near future. (MJM)

DEATHS OF OLD TIME FANS. On 30th November Myrtle Rebecca Douglas Nolan died in California, aged 60. Myrtle Forest In the late thirties and early forties Los Angeles fandom was greatly dominated by two Esperantists, Forry Ackerman and Myrtle Nolan (Mirta Forsto) who was hyper-active under the name "Morojo," a name to be conjured with in fan history. On 30th December, old-time NFFF member Bob Farnham died in Dalton, Georgia, a week before his 59th birthday. (Ratatosk)

SKYRACK ANNUAL COMPETITION. A record number of entries have already been received. Competitors are invited to devise a programme of 6 items to be presented at the 2065 Galactic Convention, the LonCon XVI. Entries which show originality in siting the convention, as shown in the programme will be regarded favourably. Closing date 15th Feb. Prize is a year's subscription to Skyrack and 3½d in cash.

FURTHER TO THE QUARK ARTICLE MENTIONED OVERLEAF, a further note from Walt Willis: I gather through Arthur that you are printing letters of comment on the last Skyrack, so perhaps you would allow me space to say this. I accept that in my phrasing of that sentence in my article in Quark I betrayed unconscious conceit about the importance of my fan column in Nebula, and to that extent your reproof was fully justified. However, I don't feel you were justified in using that to quibble about my statement of an incontrovertible fact, viz, that the closing of channels of recruitment to fandom by the general cessation of fan columns in pro-zines was to most established fans the *raison d'être* of the BSFA. Nor to misrepresent as hostile to new fans and to Phil Rogers as a TAFF candidate an honest attempt to explain their existence to people who had never heard of them.

• Mercer's November 8th Centenary Competition was won by Ron Bennett (gee!): Gene Kujawa have been invited to a Feb 23rd Kingston, Jamaica ball in H.R.H. Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

LAST MONTH I MENTIONED that Walt Willis' column in Tom Perry's Quark (the Election Day issue, which I believe is number 8) contained a surprisingly narrow opinion of present day fandom as well as a factual inaccuracy on the time the BSFA was formed and the reason for its formation. I have since received a little correspondence on the matter, as follows:

Arthur Thomson: You seem a little harsh on Walt. To me fandom in Britain these days isn't the fandom I knew and loved. And certainly I am somewhat 'out' of whatever era of fandom is in existence at present in Britain.

Ethel Lindsay: I was slightly staggered at your words on Walt. So muddled in layout, that part. I reckon that you wrote it straight on to stencil. I kept losing my way among the brackets. I don't think that Walt was meaning to be snide (I suppose you do know that he will be in agonies over what you've written). He was just honestly reporting the reaction of an older fan to that of a new one. After living through one era of serious-constructive fanzines it must seem weird to him to watch it all happening all over again.

Archie Mercer: I agree with you re Walt's article in Quark of course. I've written to much the same effect in my l.o.c. What a contrast that article makes to the Willis-Harbottle dialogue in Gestalt.

Walt Willis: How can you possibly see that Quark article as being snide or funny at anyone's expense except my own? I simply came to the rather rueful conclusion that the Alien editor was a BNF in another fandom, and implied no more against Phil Rogers. I think a chip on your shoulder must be getting in your line of vision.

And, on a slightly different topic, and with apologies to Messrs. Graham and Carr from whom I filched the idea which resulted in the following, a letter from Mr. Michael Moorcock: Thank you for letting me have advance news of your 400 word novel about Father Christmas being mistaken for an alien. Unfortunately, we are stocked up on Father Christmas stories for the next twelve years, and do not anticipate the continuation of the magazine or the world beyond that point. However, if you would care to submit the story, changing the words 'Father Christmas' to 'Easter Bunny' we may just have room for it. Could you do it in three parts of 133 1/3 words? ~~¶~~ I've tried to do just this, but the Cheslin influence has been too great. The words keep coming out as 'Easter Brummy.' ~~¶~~

NEWS FROM BIRMINGHAM or "Have an official press hand-out," as follows: "The Birmingham SF Group is looking for a clubroom and would like interested parties to take out a 5/- per year subscription, which will be used to finance the clubroom. This will make you a member of the Group; you will be entitled to attend all meetings and programme events if you wish. You will receive a regular bulletin-cum-newsletter if the project comes off, and there will possibly be other advantages. Anyway, we need the support which you can give us. Visiting fans will of course be welcomed to drop in on meeting nights and we hope that the clubroom, if we get it, will be an advantage to fandom as a whole. Money is not wanted as yet, but we'd be grateful if you could drop Charles Winstone a note to say that you'll be willing to sub if and when you are asked. That's at 71 George Road, Erdington, Birmingham 23." And, as Pe' Weston adds in a personal note, "We have high hopes on this one, Ron, but obviously we need the cash to get the project launched."

GARBISTAN 1 (Dec 64; Charles Platt, 18E Fitzjohns Ave., London NW 3; a PADS magazine, available for letter of comment) A lively first issue with a novel quotation quiz, articles, fiction and verse. Highlight is a commentary on the London fan scene viewed with a jaundiced but critical and observant eye. This is by the editor and like much of his writing is somewhat controversial but definitely readable. A good and balanced first issue.

LINK 2 (Nov 64; Another PADSzine from Beryl Henley et cie, 59 The Fearnings, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, Worcs; 1/-) A fantastic melange of the way out. Nay, the Way Out. Not quite my own cup of tea, but should that worry anyone?

ZENITH SPECULATION 7 (Dec 64; Peter Weston, 9 Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Birmingham 31; 7Opp; 2/- or 5 for 7/6) Primarily a science-fiction fan magazine and an excellently produced one with artwork and criticism of a high professional standard. Articles on Heinlein, Pengborn, Bloch and Farmer, with a bonus of book reviews, letters, excellent fan commentaries from Walt Willis and Ivor Letto. A perfect example of Dick Howett's Garbistan comment that magazines like Zenith seek originality whilst Vector drags.

FUSION 1 (Jim Grant, 7 Sydney Road, Fairmile, Christchurch, Hants; 18pp) An excellent if somewhat slim (by today's standards) first issue with an article on writing sf by Chris Priest and an appraisal by John Berry on the works of Rbt. Silverberg, amply answered by the author himself. Good stuff this.

HAVERINGS 18 (Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Longley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey. 1/6 or 50¢ (!) for two issues; 1Opp). The fanzine reviewzine, a must for every Trufan.

POT POURRI 34/37 (John Berry, 31 Campbell Park Avenue, Belmont, Belfast 4, N.Ireland) I don't know what I've done to deserve John sending me this bundle of copies of his excellent SAPSzine, but I'm grateful. Comments, opinions and commentary on subjects ranging from the Rolling Stones to fan visits at John's home, Mon Debris. And yes, there's a Goon story thrown in for good measure. About time that Retribution was revived. Monthly.

LES SPINGE 14 (Jan 65; Dove Hale, 12 Belmont Rd., Wollescote, Stourbridge, Worcs; Available for trade, contribution or letter of comment; 105pp) A fantastic start to the year's fanzine pile, but how does one review something like this? Particularly after editorial comments about my reviewing capabilities. Allow me merely to list some of the contributors (Ted White, John Berry, Terry Jeeves, Beryl Henley, Mike Moorcock, Jim Linwood, John Baxter, Jim Cawthorn, George C. Smit_h, Alan Burns, Ian Peters, Charles Platt, Ken Cheslin) and slide quietly away with the remark that a fanzine like this is unfair to lesser editors who must be discouraged even in trying to pick it up.

THE GRYPHON 13 (John Posyter, PO Box 50, Geelong, Victoria, Australia) 27 pages of comment of the Australian and world fan scene, with Australian fan history thrown in, as are Mike Baldwin's comments on a world tour (too much covered in too little space here) for good measure.

DOUBLE BILL 11 (2nd annualish from Bills Bowers & Mellardi, 214 Mackinaw Ave., Akron, Ohio 44313. British agent is Charles E. Smith whose new address appears overleaf, I hope) An excellent Stateside zine which needs no boosting from me. Harry Warner on fandom, Judith Merrill or Mark Clifton and much more.

YANDRO 142 (Juanita & Rbt Coulson address elsewhere. British agent is Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd., Hoddesdon, Herts; 1/6. 4 for 5/-. 12 for 12/-) Monthly -- and how do they keep it up! The mixture as before -- entertaining.

An X here means your subscription expires this issue ; next issue

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: Redd Boggs, PO Box 57242, Los Angeles, Calif 90057, USA.

John Foyster, 4 Edward St., Chadstone SE 10, Victoria, Australia.

Bob Lichtman, Box 1102, Berkeley, Calif 94701, USA (from 10th Feb).

Keith & Wendy Freeman, Flat C, 11 Castle Cres., Reading, Berkshire (to 21st

--- from 21st Feb: 2 Walmer Close (Off Severn Way), Tilehurst, Reading.

Chas. E. Smith, The School House, The Village School, Culford, nr. Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.

1965 GERFAN CON will be held the weekend before the London Worldcon in Oberursel, near Frankfurt. Little settled to date but there hopes that overseas fans will attend. Hotel prices will be around the DM 8 (c. 14/6 or \$2) per mark.

SNIPPETS: Burkhard Blum reports that a German Why is a Fan? may soon appear:: Tom Schlück and Wolfgang Thadewald are planning a trip to the British south coast following attendance at the Worldcon:: Des Small says that the recent Gold Star Tarzan book is terrible:: Birmingham Eastercon Programme Booklet ad. rates have been fixed as follows: £1 per page; 10/- 1/2 page; 5/- quarter page for fans. Double these rates for professionals. Deadline for copy 14th February, so get busy. Copy to Ken Cheslin, 18 New Farm Road, Stourbridge, Worcs:: BBC Home Service 16th Jan ran a special sf critique in the World of Books programme with Gerald Leach praising three new anthologies (amongst them Carnell's New Writing II and the Aldiss Introducing SF), and stating, as a possible answer to Liverpool's hidebound Professor Allott, "Man and his infinite expressions are the main concerns of science fiction as of all literature.":: The Kujawa holiday was called off because of family illness:: Phil Davis, reports Bruce Pelz' up and coming Ratatosk, who drew the Mandrake the Magician strips for 30 years died of a heart attack in December, aged 58:: John F. Burke is now writing "book of the film" novels and is story editor for British 20th Century Fox:: Alan Dodd reports seeing a cartoon called Split Level Treehouse about an elephant, says that the story was by one Larz Bourne and wonders whether this is our Eugene Lars:: Alan also reports that due at the National Film Theatre showing of King Kong recently John Ramsey Campbell and Harry Nadler and that the George Pal Company (MGM) has purchased the rights on Stapledon's Old John. M.G.M. have also, it is announced, bought John Christopher's No Blade of Grass (The Death of Grass). I just print the news as it comes in. Readers of The New Futurian will remember the announcement of that very same sale eight years ago:: The London fan house project fell through because of lack of support:: This issue dedicated to Miss Ella A. Parker whose Friday evening BSFA meetings recently came to an end after some four or five years of continuous fabulous history making, a wonderful era in London and British fandom.

SKYRACK 74
from Ron Bennett
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Letter enclosed

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PLOY press



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