

ATARANTES

FANNEWS

ASFICON, the Atlanta DeepSouthCon being held at the Northlake Hilton over the August 22, 23, and 24th weekend, has sold all dealers' tables for the convention; the forty dealers' tables will offer a wide variety of material, ranging from new and used books to gaming supplies, figurines, buttons, medallions, and much more. Hotel rooms are still available, but they have been blocked for the DeepSouthCon; to insure getting DSC rates with the hotel, if you phone in your reservation, be sure to mention that you're with the DSC--con rates are \$6-\$10 less than the cost of the rooms if you're not with the con.

The film program has already been announced; highlighted by PLANET OF THE APES and THE TIME MACHINE, it will also include JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, THE THING, ISLAND OF LOST SOULS, SON OF KONG, DR. CYCLOPS, SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD, PLANET OF THE APES and JOURNEY... will both be shown in Cinemascope. The videoroom will run virtually uninterrupted during the convention, also. Banquet tickets are still available for \$10 to convention members; the banquet will be followed by the presentation of the Rebel and the Phoenix Awards and by the Jerry Page Roast, a tribute to one of the earliest members of Southern fandom. Buy your convention memberships for \$10 from ASFICON, 6045 Summit Wood Drive, Kennesaw GA 30144.

Coming up in March of 1981 is Coastcon IV (Mar 13, 14, 15, 1981) in Biloxi, MS, at the Royal d'Iberville hotel. Pro GoH is unannounced, but the fan GoH is James Madden and special guests will be Wendy & Richard Pini (ELF-QUEST). Mike Bledsoe is the convention chairman, and Mike Scott is co-chairman. The convention plans to have a fully stocked con suite, a video room, film program, and other traditional con items. Hotel's rates are \$48 for a single or a double; membership is \$7.50 until September 1, \$10 Sep 1-Mar 1, and \$12.50 until con time. For information, write to Coastcon, PO Box 6025, Biloxi MS 39532.

Vaticon, the proposed ABCcon to be held in Rome and headed by Chris Radney, has already fallen through, along with the latest incarnation of the Rome SF club. Chris will be attending graduate school in Knoxville beginning this fall and would not be in Rome to chair the con.

THE RANDOM HOUSE--it seems like ASFIC members can't stay put. Rich and Angela Howell have moved to 4155 Morgan Road, Tucker GA 30084. Meanwhile, Augustans Janet, Vince, and Chris Lyons are now located in the wilds of Colorado, where Vince is Playing Soldier for a few weeks (to prepare for ASFICON, perhaps?).

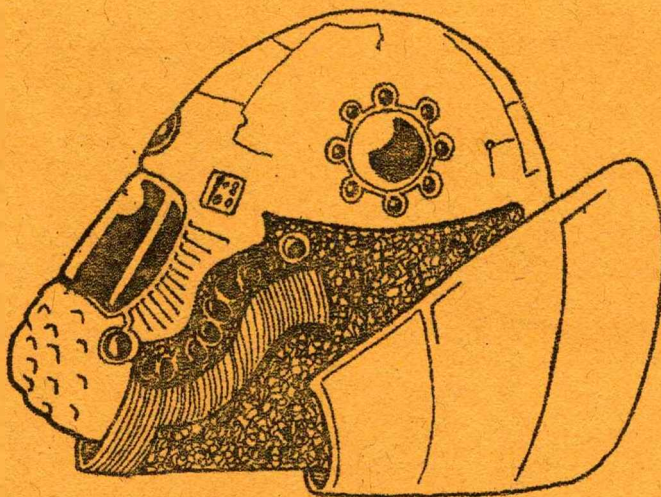
Choice Morsels

Harrison Ford has been signed to star in RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (which George Lucas insists is RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARC); Ford has also signed a contract to appear in future STAR WARS films, although no one knows how many more films he will be featured in. // The Stanley Kubrick film with Stephen King's title, THE SHINING, has been a disappointment at the box office, drawing \$11 million in its first 24 days of release--a good sum, but far less than the studio had hoped for. // Walt Disney studio was so dissatisfied with WATCHER IN THE WOODS that the film has been postponed for reworking, and release date is unknown.

Michael Bishop has begun writing reviews of sf and fantasy works for the Atlanta JOURNAL & CONSTITUTION's books section; two reviews have appeared in those pages thus far.

Robert Bloch will be a guest at the Atlanta Comics and Fantasy Fair July 25-27. Other guests will be Dave Cockrum, Gil Kane, and Al Williamson. For information, contact Marilyn White, 1613D Briarwood NE, Atlanta GA 30319.

On the videotape front, legal videotapes of ALIEN and THE MUPPET MOVIE are now available; according to David White at Foto-mat, legal copies of STAR WARS should be available for sale on videocassette by the end of the summer, with CLOSE ENCOUNTERS to follow in the fall.



AT ARANTES #37 (July, 1980 issue) is brought to you by Cliff Biggers, 6045 Summit Wood Drive, Kennesaw GA 30144; ATAR is the club publication of the Atlanta Science Fiction Club, and is available free to all members. Subs are 12/\$3.50, and A TARANTES is also available for the Usual--news, locs, art, columns, coercion, and odd favors. Not to mention trade, which is the most surefire method of all. Contents that are not credited are written by the editor; all contents copyright (c) 1980 by Cliff Biggers, and rights revert to writers and artists. Is that it, Brad?

Harlan Ellison Speaks Too Soon; it seems that Ellison was a bit ahead of the facts when he said that ABC had signed an agreement to settle out of court for \$285,000 with Ellison and Bova concerning "Brillo"/FUTURECOP. Ellison reportedly went on the TOMORROW show, discussed the case with Tom Snyder (in terms that were rather derogatory towards ABC), said something about "Brillo" not being the first robot cop story, mentioned Hymie the Robot on GET SMART, and suddenly found ABC unwilling to sign any agreement. Further legal action against Ellison for what ABC felt might be slanderous statements may be forthcoming. (news courtesy of Mike Weber)

RANDOM FILM NOTES: Milton Subotsky will not be producing a Thongor film (based on Lin Carter's book) after all, due to financial shortages in the film production line-up at United Artists. // Subotsky is working on a project that might culminate in a feature film version of Dr. Who, starring Tom Baker. // A new film from former Python-people Terry Gilliam and Michael Palin, THE TIME BANDITS, will star Sean Connery, John Cleese, Palin, David Warner, Shelly Duvall, and others. (news courtesy of COMIC READER).

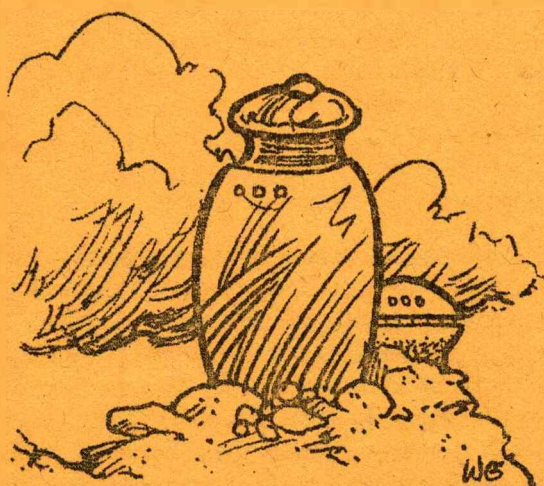
There has been quite a debate over the first edition of Philip Jose Farmer's MAGIC LABYRINTH: While one publisher has claimed to have released a limited edition that is actually a first edition, the Berkley/Putnam edition reached stores first.

Janice Gelb, long-time Atlanta fan (well, she was here for a couple of years, but it seemed like a lot more) will definitely be returning to the United States from Israel to attend the DeepSouthCon in Atlanta. Before she left, Janice (who had been publicity director of the con) gave a list of Things To Do to the con committee, and she says she's now coming back to make sure we did them all correctly. For those who weren't reading these pages back in September of 1979, Janice left Atlanta to emigrate to Israel. Her dates of arrival and departure are unsure right now, but she says she will definitely be here for the DSC.

In September, DAW will release a new Andre Norton Witch World collection, LORE OF THE WITCH WORLD, with an introduction by C.J. Cherryh. That month will also be the release date for Tanith Lee's KILL THE DEAD; Jack Vance's NOPALGARTH, a three-in-one volume that contains "Nopalgarth" (formerly The Brains of Earth), "Son of the Tree", and "The Houses of Iszm."; and STAR LOOT, a Grimes novel by A. Bertram Chandler.

The July DESTINIES (volume 2, number three) contains a lengthy series of excerpts from Heinlein's upcoming collection, EXPANDED UNIVERSE, including a lengthy non-fiction piece prepared by Heinlein especially for the book.

Victoria Wayne and Tazal have announced that DNQ will fold in October of this year; DNQ was a superlative fanish newszine published by the pair for the past three years. It will be replaced with RSN, another fanish-abbreviation-zinetitle that will be a fanish fanzine.



Meeting

The July meeting will be held Saturday, July 19th, at 8:00 pm at the Peachtree Bank at 4525 Chamblee-Dunwoody Rd, across from Georgetown Shopping Center. This will be our regular meeting spot for the remainder of 1980, in fact. To get to the meeting, Take the Chamblee-Dunwoody Road exit from I-285, north of Atlanta. If you're coming from the west, turn left onto Chamblee-Dunwoody Road, and proceed for approximately a quarter of a mile--the bank will be on the right. If you're coming from the east, you have to follow the access road for about a mile after you take the exit; this access road connects with Chamblee-Dunwoody Rd., and you turn right. Proceed for approximately a quarter of a mile--the bank will be on the right.

This month's program will be a presentation on Clifford Simak and his fiction, headed by Ron Zukowski, followed by a discussion of Simak and his work in which all members are invited to participate. Also, the results of last meeting's Hugo voting will be announced--be there and find out how your club felt about this year's nominees!

Pat Morrell's survey last meeting definitely showed a large measure of support on the part of our club for programming; the vast majority of the club felt that our present programming did meet the needs of the club, and only needed a little work on time, organization, etc. to improve it.

Again, that's July 19th, Saturday, 8 pm, Peachtree Bank, 4525 Chamblee Dunwoody Road--be sure to be there, and try to bring a friend!

ASFIC
STRIKES B
BACK!

a trio of reviews
of George Lucas'
new one.....

VIEW ONE: Susan Biggers

I can say that I enjoyed THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK a good deal--no, a great deal--more than I enjoyed STAR WARS. I'm rarely impressed by science fiction films, since they never manage to live up to the pictures I visualize as I'm reading sf; also, I don't care for the tendency to let the visual dominate the cerebral in sf films, as occurred in STAR WARS. But EMPIRE works well as a science fiction story, not just a special effects feast, and I was entertained. That's more than I really expected; I didn't really care for STAR WARS, so my favorable reaction to this film was a surprise to me. The added complexities of the plot, the addition of a major alien character in Yoda, and the hint of some real purpose for The Force all combined to make the film much more than I hoped for.

VIEW TWO: Mary Aileen Buss

Having just seen THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, I'm still in shock. It's terrific! It is also one sequel that cannot be compared with the original. STAR WARS is comic-bookish and superficial, only skimming the surface. But EMPIRE goes deeper, developing plot and character much more fully. The two are very different in impact: STAR WARS is fun, EMPIRE is overwhelming. But, different as they are, there is still basic continuity of story and characters. Right from the beginning the audience can cheer the heroes and boo the villains. And the music is similar, also; in fact, composer John Williams has re-used much of the original score.

EMPIRE has fast action, a gripping plot, humorous moments, and some mind-boggling plot twists. I defy anyone who likes sf, good movies, or rousing adventure tales to dislike it. Viewing it is an experience not to be missed.

VIEW THREE: William Allan Ritch.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK is chapter V in George Lucas' projected 12 part serial ((now reduced to its original nine parts)) set in that far, far away galaxy of Lucas' imagination. As a separate film, chapter V lives up to the action, adventure, and sfx of the fourth chapter, and goes it a few better. As a part of a serial, it's hard to imagine a more amazing chapter. The parallels and contrasts of the two films are great.

STAR WARS can be compared to 19th century physics. It was internally consistent and had only one unanswered question: what will become of Darth Vader? EMPIRE makes you realize how little you know of what is going on by answering that question. Chapter IV is mostly action; Chapter V actually has plot development. There are even unexplained enigmatic things (mostly from Yoda.).

Quite a lot of people are saying that EMPIRE is "better than STAR WARS". Aside from the fact that it is part of STAR WARS, and not a JAWS II type sequel, let's look at a few particular details in which it is better.

1) The outer space chases are great. The chase of the MILLENNIUM FALCON through the asteroid field is a triumph of miniature animation.

2) There is more and better stop-motion animation. The bipedal tauntauns are very believable, with Harryhausen quality articulation and design. Of course the Imperial Walkers are easier to do than the tauntauns, but it was a great bit of sfx to combine the 2-dimensional animation of the fighters with the 3 dimensional animation of the zoo-morphic Walkers.

3) The light sabre duel between Darth Vader and Luke is especially believable. One of the great touches that EMPIRE uses that was missing in the previous film was the destruction of whatever the sabres hit when they did not hit each other.

4) There is some actual character development. Luke gradually becomes genuinely heroic. Han criticises aspects of his former self which he sees in his old drinking buddy Lando Calrissian. Leia discovers love.

5) The workings of the Force are brought out more and can be seen as real!

6) And of course the wonderful plot complications make one truly impatient for the all-too-distant chapter VI.

This film makes one see that there is enough material for the projected nine part series. I cannot wait to see the Clone Wars (alluded to in Ch. IV) and the origin of Darth Vader. Who did Yoda refer to in his last sentence?

The STAR Wars serial has begun to annoy the mainstream New York literary establishment, and even some of the critics within sf. Why? Because it is so Romantic and Heroic, and they are so anti-heroic.

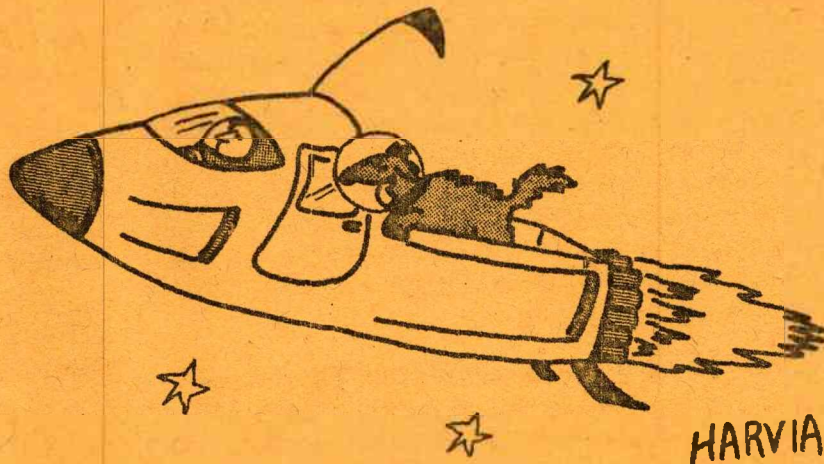
STAR WARS harkens back to the old 1930s sf--back when sf was unaccepted by the literary snobs; it uses many of the conceits of the Doc Smith kind of star-smashing and brings them to life.

One of the ways that SF got out of the ghetto and become acceptable was via the Campbellian approach of deeper characters, more attention to culture, and more believable human reactions. The other was that it sold out.

The Barry Malzbergs and Joanna Russes of sf sold the Romanticism of sf down the river in exchange for the NY literary establishment flavor of naturalism--something anti-thetical to sf. Sf is the literature of ideas, meant to be larger than life. Naturalism has the desire to make literature smaller than life.

A few issues back, in ATAR, Dan Taylor made an analogy to the making of STAR TREK TMP and its plot. STAR WARS as a serial can be seen as an allegory to the history of SF. Chapters I-III are the pre-Gernsback era, when there was no true separation of the mainstream and the sf stories. The mainstream believed in heroism and Romanticism at the time. Then, in
continued on page six, column two

LOTS OF



Merlin Odom
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I read with much interest the review of the TVersion of Aldous Huxley's distopian BRAVE NEW WOPLD. Susan is obviously an intelligent person; therefore I will

not directly comment on her opinions concerning BNW and will instead go on with mine.

Not having read the original novel, but having shen the TVersion, I have nothing to compare it to. It also means that in my eyes it has nothing to live up to or to live down.

Six hundred years has not done a thing for humanity. The consumer society has been perfected. Everything is annsumed, even people. And in many cases, the situation borders on having one's cake and still being able to eat it, especially with a recycling system reminiscent of Frank Herbert's HELL-STROM'S HIVE. Everything is directed towards developing a static-state society, and since the main characters, all but John Savage, are products of such a society, it's no surprise they seem to be lacking in humanity.

Into all of this comes one of Rousseau's "noble savages", a product (albeit unintentional) between a Beta and an Alpha (Linda Lysenko--coincidentally a genetics technician--and Thomas GrahmBell, respectively), the very epitome of society. In a society where there is no reproduction via physical contact and there are only five classes from the top down (Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons, with all but the Alphas and Betas look exactly like all the others in their class) and no breath of mother nature to distract from efficiency, there is this intruder--John Savage, who is the antithesis of all that society represents. John in the course of things creates a small stir, bringing out of the closet a few poets and possibly one radical semi-moron Delta. Naturally, John is forced out of his new-found "home" and winds up being put on public display in the very place he had chosen as a place of refuge. It all becomes too much and he commits suicide, leaving behind the Beta he loves and who finally realizes she loved him, a disgraced father, a disgraced poet, and a born-again poet in Iceland.

Every society, every action carries within itself the seeds for its own destruction, its own undoing. That is what BRAVE NEW WORLD is talking about. The only difference between the "brave new world" that Savage is in and ours is one of degree.

Yes, BNW is a parody. All utopias and distopias are parodies, whether they know it or not. Some are more serious or take themselves more seriously than others but they all say the same thing, "I am the Hyde to your Jekyll!" I enjoyed it.

((I find your analysis of the point of the film entertaining, although you overlook the importance of Bernard Marx; but that isn't where Susan--or I--form our dislike of the tv version. As she said, what of the wooden acting, the superficial portrayal of complex feelings and issues? That was where the tv production failed, I feel.))

Harry Warner, Jr.
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The most exciting thing in the latest issue ((#35)) is the information and review of the new Heinlein novel.

It sounds worth purchasing off the newsstand, something I didn't feel inspired to do with the past couple of Heinlein books. A roman a clef is the last thing I would have expected from a writer of Heinlein's age and attitude toward fandom; in fact, I wouldn't have imagined that he would have ever heard of the lime jello matter.

THE GIRL, THE GOLD WATCH AND EVERYTHING apparently attracted a lot of interest among television station authorities. It was run three times within two weeks on channels visible in the Hagerstown area. One curious thing about it was the complete absence of mention of its fantasy theme in the advance publicity on it; you'd think that this would have been considered a selling point, now that fantasy is so prevalent in the movies. I decided to watch it one evening, and the violence in the teaser scenes at the very start angered me so severely that I turned it off in disgust before the real beginning.

I'm pessimistic about the future of reading. Schools are to blame in one respect: most textbooks nowadays seem to be about one-third text and two-thirds pictures. If kids were forced to read words without help from pictures except where a diagram or sketch was essential to understanding, students would willnilly develop at least a slight habit of reading for information. But the trend shows up in so many ways. Consider the increasing trend to put comic strips or photostories into paperbacks, and to include dozens of pictures in some editions of novels or novelettes. Highway signs are being changed from words to dia grams. The local public library has severe financial

troubles but it still maintains a full-time artist on its staff and seems to put more stress on its lending of films, records and art than on its book collection. Maybe the fact that the nation is now in its second television generation has something to do with it. Television arrived shortly after WWII, so by now there is a complete crop of kids who are being reared by parents who grew up watching television; for the first couple of decades of the television era, parents had grown up with nothing visual in the home to distract from books and magazines for entertainment.

I think I prefer reviews over criticism as a practical matter, as Sue Phillips does. Theoretically the critics should be better than the reviewers. But the way things really are, the critics usually succumb to the temptation to show off. The critics either try to make a sensation by striking out with hammer and tongs at almost everything they write about, or they strive to prove how clever they are by writing a sort of extended Johnny Carson monologue instead of criticism, or they search out the most obscure and unobtainable items to praise while reviling everything that sells more than a thousand copies or comes close to breaking even financially.

DerKrapp was entertaining. I wonder how the people who made those old hack-quality horror movies would have felt if they could have guessed that the films would have such a long life down through the decades. Until television stations began to be lavish with their film scheduling, a movie usually had a life of a few months in the US and after that nobody expected it ever to be shown again except in foreign markets, unless it happened to be a supercostly film which had become so famous that it was worth reviving years later.

Your Jerry Collins covers have been fine, and it's good to know that ASFiC continues to thrive.

Deb Hammer Johnson FANEWS is a ripe feature this go-round.
2 Tyler Street Vince and Janet giving birth to a boy
Rome, GA 30161 sustains the cosmic balance among
the gender of ASFiC babies. There

is truth to the rumor that membership practices have something to do with the baby boom. I became pregnant after my very first ASFiC meeting in October 77. Angela met Rich, came to a meeting, and--pop!--she got pregnant. Ed and Ida McNeil drift through, and Elizabeth McNeil follows. When Vince stood up one meeting and openly defied the tradition, something was bound to happen. Not only is Chris the biggest baby of the four, but he was almost on time, setting a new precedent! Congratulations to the new parents.

Both RSFS and Varicon appear to have died a swift death. I'm tempted to provide some choice anecdotes about the first Rome SF Society group; it would have been good, though, to bridge the years between the old and new groups with an ABCentered con.

The Columns held the zine up. I echo the spirit of Dave Petrus' "Constructive Criticism", but not necessarily the substance. Deciding what falls on the 15/85 split between quality and

crap in any genre is quite subjective. I couldn't agree more in his call for expanding reading horizons, though.

Brad pulls out all the stops in his latest dissection of Bela Lugosi; I'm curious to see what new depths he sinks to next time.

Sue's column can be frustrating at times because she introduces fascinating topics, tantalizes the reader just a bit, then quits. But I always get hooks from the gal. My fanwriting doesn't pay financially, but there are other compensations, such as a sense of creative release and egoboo. Plus, I can do it in near total freedom without editors, and I get practice in writing.

My loc last ish provided a rebuttal of sorts to some points that Scotty makes in her letter. I don't find her aims and desires wrong (commitment is the key--and she certainly has it!), but her attitude that no attempts have been made at recruitment, or programming, or a million other matters by the folks in charge is ludicrous. But, as you say, we, the trio of officers, can only do so much. We get tremendous satisfaction, though, if not thanks, in having a healthy, crazy, volatile buncha people to work with in the club.

A bow and a smile to Fred Jackson³, who graced me with an illo. Naah, his kind is allergic to gafia...

The Collins cover was a pleasant change of pace from the Bambioids, which I have this wrong set of hormones to appreciate. It was nice to see Victoria Poyser's sea illo attached to Sue's column.

EMPIRE STRIKES BACK reviews: Bill Ritch; continued from p. 4

Chapter III, the sf rebellion was formed in response to the naturalism of the establishment. Chapter IV: A New Hope--we are young, the 1930s. SF is fighting the literary establishment. Chapter V: The Establishment Strikes Back at SF with official scorn and ridicule. Chapter VI and beyond: the selling out of the sf rebellion?

The Establishment will hate EMPIRE because it is deeper and less "mindless" than Chapter IV. It is much harder to dismiss as "just fun." It challenges them on moral grounds. There is good and evil in the STAR WARS universe, as in ours. And, in the STAR WARS universe, as in Romanticism, the evil is obvious to detect, not vague and subtle as it is in ours.

NEXT ISSUE: I'd love the opportunity to offer differing views of THE SHINING; that means I need reviews of the film from a few of your out there. I feel this one could generate controversy; Brad Linaweaver praises it highly in an aside in his column, while I found the film most disappointing and lackluster. What do you think? Put it on paper and get it to me by the first of August!

WA HF: Michael Bishop, Perry Chapdelaine, Merlin Odom (again), Alan Barasch, Meade Frierson. Next issue, let us hear from you! Surely someone said something that you (a) heartily agree with, or (b) are offended deeply by. Let us know what it was!

CALABANS and THRANX sue phillips.....

While this column is not normally a review column, that is the gist of this issue's offering ((you can look on it as a semi-followup to the three reviews of EMPIRE elsewhere in this issue)).

The STAR WARS phenomenon is one of the greatest such in the film world. It is successful as to both money and popularity. And, while some reviewers point out flaws, most like it. Most take it for what it is: pure escapism.

There are those, however, who nit-pick. I grant you that there will always be such. "I saw a matte line" or "Princess Leia" is a nag" are types of comments habitually made about this kind of film. The ones I dislike and don't understand are those who go to an escapist, space-opera film and expect logic in every phase.

Particularly since THE EMPIRE STRIKE BACK has opened, a film that everyone should expect to be escapist. Here we have part five of a rousing good serial, opening and ending with a cliffhanger. It has adventure, excitement, and even some (not much) character development. What it does not have, and to my mind does not need, is logic.

Oh, it would be nice if the "walking tanks" were walking tanks. That would make it quite obvious that they were weapons. But they're not. They're impressively pretty constructions; a bit unwieldy, but they put up a good show on the screen. Why expect anything else in space opera?

It would be nice if it was explained how a protocol droid can calculate odds. Personally, I think it doesn't have to be explained; a droid probably has a mathematical basis to his programming no matter what his primary function is; but some people nit-pick.

I'll grant that landing the Falcon in a cave and discovering the cave is the mouth of a space slug is high-grade crap and belongs in the fifties, but what do you expect from a fifties-style serial space-opera?

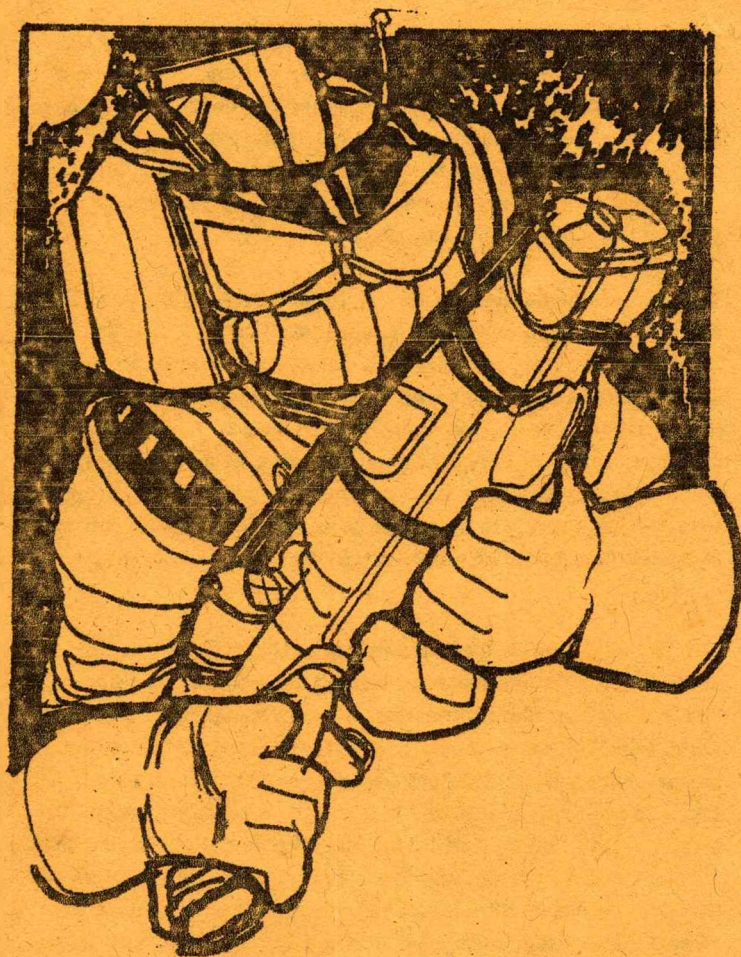
I have seen EMPIRE three times now; the first time, it was as a member of a group of fen and the surroundings and the people had a lot to do with my enjoyment of it. The point is that I went to be entertained, not to think. The second time I enjoyed it just as much but was able to look for and

criticize the flaws I was too engrossed to catch earlier. I found few and those were mostly technical.

The most recent viewing was in the company of my mother and brother-in-law and the worst complaint I heard was that they'd have to wait until the next film to find out what happened to Han. In other words, if non-fen go and enjoy, turn off their brains and experience the film as it was intended, why do we, who know what sf is, decide it's bad if it's basically old?

I don't think any sf film can be evaluated except as an individual work. It can be thought of as a good or bad addition to the genre, but its merits or demerits must be its own. A space opera must be looked on as nothing more than that; a horror movie, the same. Something that doesn't set out to be more than it is should be looked at in the manner it wishes.

We know good sf and bad sf and we know what the Hollywood filmmaker thinks is good and bad sf. Just because we can see many ways to improve a certain film or sub-genre, is no reason for us to expect directors to do it that way. As I said in the first installment of this column, I think, we have to educate them or make the movies ourselves if we want it done right--and then we have to realize that "right" is subjective, in any case.



Kudzu
covering the South...
Cliff Biggers

You may not be aware of it, but last month marked ASFiC's third year of existence as ASFiC--not to mention that the club had existed about six months before that as The Fannish Inquisition. That first month, our club was able to discuss, among other things, a new film that had come out--STAR WARS was the name of it, and I doubt that any of us could have predicted how wildly successful it would be. Now, three years later, we're discussing THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK in these pages, and everything seems awfully cyclical...

... ..

Southern fandom is somewhat limited in its involvement with the rest of fandom, you know. If you don't know that, it may be because you've had so little contact with fandom outside of the South that you haven't the slightest hunch what all is going on elsewhere in the country.

It's a shame, you know. We have a great deal of talent in the South--artists, writers, fanpubbers, editors, loccers--but most of them devote most of their time and energy to Southern zines, for an elite audience, and get little exposure. And the one opportunity we have to gain recognition for these Southern talents--the FAAn Awards--is passed over because so few Southerners take part in them.

The FAAn Awards themselves are floundering, mind you; Taral reports that only about thirty people have voted in the awards, making the winners a choice of a very, very minute group of fans. The Awards might well never become anything more than a token "pat-on-the-back" award by a few fans, to a few fans. Perhaps they won't even survive at all--if Taral's report is accurate, then the participation this year has dropped by 60%-70% from last year, due to the lack of enthusiasm and failure of the Awards Committee to push the Awards themselves.

And it's that Awards Committee that is the crux of this segment of my column--do you realize that a Southerner has never served on that committee, to my recollection? In fact, a Southern fan has never even been nominated to that committee, which is a ridiculous oversight. The awards aren't given to Southern fanzines--well, that's a matter of vote totals, right? But by and large, the awards are given to a few fanzines and fanwriters who are either geographically close to members of the committee (California tends to dominate the awards committee, with NYC and the Toronto area also hav-

ing unusually large representation on that committee). And it seems that it is that closed-nature of the committee itself that is, in part, perpetuating the failure of Southern fandom to penetrate the FAAn Awards.

I would wager that a large--an extremely large--number of ballots are completed by those people who (a) are close friends and correspondents with the committee members, or (b) are geographically close to the committee members, and thus can be encouraged to vote at club meetings, fannish get-togethers, over the phone, etc. There's nothing wrong with that, mind you; in fact, I'd say that the foremost job the committee has is to encourage voting among the fan populace. I'd object if the committee encouraged fans to vote for certain, specific fanzines, but I don't think that is happening. What I do think is happening, though, is that the committee's contacts in fandom are voting to a large degree for themselves--a sort of closed community brought on by the location and nature of the committee.

I'm not sure what a fair solution would be--perhaps a division of the fanzine-publishing community into districts, with at least one Southern district to nominate Southern members to the committee. Perhaps a bloc-vote on committee nominations would be in order, but I'm so reactionary against the very idea of bloc-voting that I'd prefer not to take that route to achieve fairness in the FAAn Awards. I feel, though, that if the FAAn Awards are to be taken seriously, and are to function, that we will have to see fair representation of Southern fans on the ballot, and that will only be brought about by Southern representation on the committee. So long as the committee is dominated by any one geographical area, I feel that the awards will be unconsciously prodded and set off-balance by the tastes of that particular area.

The last time I discussed this with another fan, I was asked, "Are you pushing to get a nomination to the FAAn Awards Committee?" Not necessarily, although I'll certainly admit I think I'd do a good job. What I am pushing for is some Southern representation on that committee so that the board of directors is more balanced. Otherwise, awards that exclude talents like Wade Gilbreath, Charlie Williams, Meade Frierson, Stven Carlberg, and so many other Southern fans are not fair representations of fannish quality at all.

... ..



Atlanta Science Friction Club Happenings and Cash Flow Narrative JUNE '80

Produced by: Cliff Biggers, Sue Phillips, Deb Hammer Johnson and a Host of Other Souls

Starring: Atlanta Fandom at Its Finest!!

Our Scenario: Cliff Biggers, Young Huckster, set up the ASFIC button machine and sold his wares before the meeting. Available were various buttons with the ASFIC logo and other sayings, which netted the club treasury approximately \$12 that evening. At 8:10, however, Cliff altered his facial expressions to ones of determination and futhless fervor, and began the Business Meeting.

OLD BIZ included an update on the club publicity flyer. Now that the location for the rest of the year is assured, we can list a permanent spot for new members to check us out. Sue will be drawing up the layout, and Cliff running it off with his Gestetner. They are expected to be ready by DSC time. There was no report on the status of the M & N fund, since Angela had been called out of town on family business, but Deb was reminded that $\frac{1}{4}$ of auction proceeds would be donated.

PROGRAMMING QUESTIONNAIRES, designed by Pat Morrell, and explained by her proxy, Cliff, were handed out for members to provide some detailed feedback about programming desires and expectations. Deb stated that the Club Treasury was definitely on solid ground; this led Terry Kane to suggest that ATARANTES might be printed on heavier (and more expensive stock) to survive its troublesome transit through the mail system. Cliff replied that he had to use a fuzzy bond stock for his mimeograph, but that he would be happy to mail out anyone's copy in a SASE, provided this was given him at the previous month's meeting.

THE SMALLER MEETING TURNOUT this time was noticed by Bill Ritch, who pointed out that someone should be assigned (or volunteered) the task of calling up members, especially on switched weekends; Bill was unanimously "volunteered" by the club to take on this role. A list was sent around for everyone to ad their phone number. Rich Howell, ASFICtory editor, said that he would have to make up information listings on non-contributing members if they didn't send it to him SOON.

ROBERT'S RULES OF DISORDER were invoked by Prez Biggers when he suggested a method to streamline and shorten our 30 min. business meetings. Members were to submit, in writing, all New Business to him before the meeting got underway. After a bit of discussion as to the beaucratic implications of this, the club gave its unanimous consent to the measure. Our reliable Naysayer, Avery, declined, possibly on the grounds that his role as the newest Club Uncle no longer made it necessary for him to be our primary negative influence. Bill Ritch took up the slack, and kept the measure unanimous-minus-one.

A MICROFICHE UPDATE was then provided by Joe Celko, our eFICHEncy expert. He said that a local library now had a fiche selection of ASTOUNDINGS from the 50's for our perusal. All members interested in this method of storing and archiving sf collections are to see Joe for further information.

YET ANOTHER POSSIBLE MEETING SPOT was suggested by Mike Tippens, who talked about a spot known as THE PUB at Little Five Points, that had a meeting and eating room available on Thursday Evenings, and that this could combine our two most important functions into one spot and save (or cause) gas. Mike Smith and Gail Higgins both gave other information--the place is all too often double-booked, the service poor, and the attitude of the management fickle--from their days of using it as a Libertarian meeting spot. Cliff recounted the old traumas of having the meeting date set on Thrusday, which was a dire inconvenience to out-of-towners. The club voted to keep it with the PEACHTREE for the rest of the year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS were up next. Marilyn White, Big Cheese of the upcoming Atlanta Comics Convention was there with an offer of a discount membership to the club, and an artful spell of the con buildup. She committed the Fun of the Year when she stated that memberships would be available for "gold, cold cash, and checks signed with IUD's..." It only took Marilyn about five minutes to recover enough to continue. Cliff mentioned that the Pizza Inn we regularly eat at after the meetings was no longer giving us the automatic coupon deal. Visitor Jan Matthews, whose husband Gary manages a distant KEN'S PIZZA, said that she could probably arrange a better deal for us with him. Bill Ritch said that he had a mess of old Atlanta CONSTITUTIONS with coupons that we were welcome to use. Mike V. G. Smith suggested we form a Pizza Spot search committee, much like our old Site Selection Group that would search the Buford area for a New Spot. He also said that he had a t-shirt silkscreen setup, and needed some help in learning how to use it for club projects.

AFTER A SUITABLE BREAK between the Business Meeting ending at just over 30 minutes (8:41 to be inexact), members launched into a busy evening. Brad Linaweaver and Mike Weber alternated as auctioneers, and kept the pace going smoothly and briskly. Item varied from choice Ballentine Adult Fantasies, to some Jeannie Corbin-Whitley portfolios, the usual SFBC editions, miscellaneous paperbacks, posters, and magazines, and one water colored ASFIC button. Big spenders of the evening were Marilyn White, Bob Jarrell, Terry Kane, and Mike and Sue, whose diverse views on bidding were the highlight of the auction ("...take my wife, please!" "...what am I bid..."). Total auction intake and button sales included \$67.11, which is a hefty intake.

AND IF THAT WASN'T ALL, the Hugo ballots were passed out to members, and a lively discussion of the nominees ensued. The generally known categories--novels, movies, editors, and Achievement Awards--were most ardently discussed. Brad, Rich, Mike Smith, Gail, Cliff, and Terry Kane all kept the momentum moving along. One sideline of special interest was the controversy of block voting, and the justification of Perpetual Winners in the fan categories; a special pitch was made for our Fan GOH at ASFICon, Mike Glycer, who is as true a Southerner as one can find in California. Votes were then collected and handed to Rich Howell to Tally-ho before they are turned in to the NOREASCON panel. By 10:30, the growling in everyone's stomach overcame our urge to discuss sf, and everyone high tailed out for p*i*z*z*a.

Wall Street Weak (from the asfic perspective): In June, we started out with \$195.59 in the bank, but this didn't last for long. The editor of ATARANTES cropped \$30.00 from the top, and \$169.59 was left behind. The cost for drinks, procured by Sue Phillips, was taken from the m & n fund, and I'm only mentioning it here out of habit. Dues income (how due you dew??) was \$17.00, and auction and button sales netted \$67.11, with $\frac{1}{4}$ of this (approximately \$16.77) going into the m & n fund. The July balance (hold your breath!!!!) is the highest of the year--\$236.93!!!!!! Summer party, anyone????

AND WHILE WERE WHOOPING IT UP--say hello to newcomer MARY AILEEN BUSS

New member dues for July are SIX BUCKS.
First meeting free; second meeting I will start looking wistfully in your direction.
If you are having a money problem or are short on cash that evening--no problem. Just let me know and pay when you can. But dues still start at the second meeting. End of SOS (same ole spiel). Thank you one and all!

1779 Ridgewood Dr.
Atlanta, Ga. 30307
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Done up and Dishdout by Deb
Hammer Johnson. All typos, inaccuracies, and idiocyncrasies are strictly her doing.

DER KRAPP

brad linaweaver

As readers of this column know, I find pleasure in the two extremes of art: the best and the worst. Quality needs no excuse and crap speaks for itself. It is the middle-ground of mediocrity that draws me into the Land of Nod. I avoid the so-so, the insincere, the trite.

This issue of ATARANTES will probably run a series of glowing comments about a recent masterpiece in SFantasy film. I refer to the latest Lucasfilm, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. I will leave it to others who will write of "Der Quality" to supply the requisite adjectives. I have already seen the picture four times and have left on each occasion with my Sense of Wonder freshly stimulated. EMPIRE is clearly an example of the best. (And so is another release many of you will have seen by the time you read this: Kubrick's THE SHINING, one of the most intellectual horror films ever made.)

To do my job, I will devote the next few columns to the worst. Originally I had intended to start my Godzilla series this month, but the big fella is just too much of a class act for what I have in mind. I'm going to the bottom of the bucket this time. Toho will seem like George Pal after that.

When I was an undergraduate at Florida State University, I belonged to a peculiar cult that revered the worst sf movie of all time: ROBOT MONSTER. This was before it was chic, before that 50 worst movies book gave it new exposure. One tv viewing of the "classic" in 1974 made such an impression that I wrote a 2,700 word article about it. The piece was published in the semi-professional sf/popular arts journal in newspaper format known as SQUONK (originating from State College, Pa.) in 1977. I intend to serialize the whole damn thing right here. There's no escape! (Cliff should run Copyright (c) 1977 by SQUONK" on each installment. That should be as much fun as doing the colophon. Didn't think I could answer what you say in the colophon in my column, did you, Cliff?)

And now, hold onto your hats, 'cause here (with a minor alteration or two, and elimination of SQUONK's typos to make room for new typos) it is, complete with the original title:

FALL OF THE RO-MAN: OR WHAT DO YOU SAY TO A
GORILLA FROM THE MOON?

Hung over on Sunday--I didn't have too much wine or beer on Saturday evening, in and of themselves, but the combination did something watery to my knees. It is the aftermath of the night's giddy dizziness...empty stomach, light head, and thin blood in veins. The happy tensions of earlier revels has been reduced to the prickly-skin feeling one gets from a low electrical field. I am ready.



What does one do on a Sunday evening at 11:00, with five other guys, all crowded around a twelve inch television screen? William Buckley has just wrapped things up for the night, so we flip elsewhere and get CHANNEL SEVENTEEN! That's a Georgia station specializing in movies, movies, movies. Our hopes are high as we pick up 17 on our little TV in north Florida. In Tallahassee, where the college community throws creaking bromides at rednecks who scrawl and spit back, we live with the incredible. It will take quite a film to excite our jaded senses.

An announcement. A science fiction movie is coming up--a 50's bomb for sure. A hoh-hum voice announces that, "ROBOT MONSTER is next on..." A cheer goes up. Ecstasy! Nostalgia, even. God bless America's cable system. You see, we're science fiction fans, steeped in that esoteric tradition; and we just happen to really cherish bad examples. There is nothing more marvelous for six of our persuasion than ROBOT MONSTER. Unique of SF films, it is perhaps the worst, hence a contender for the All Time Turkey Crown.

(The only possible competition in the fellow-abomination category is ASTRO ZOMBIES, but it's hardly fair to consider it. Only nominally SF, it is a horror flick shot inside a seedy motel infested by goons wearing rubber masks who recharge their drained batteries by pressing flashlights to sockets painted on their foreheads, and starring the most haggard John Carradine to date. When he says something scientific, the camera pauses lovingly on his furrowed brow. The bemused expression can only mean one thing: "What did I just say?" Can't you see the director encouraging the performance of the year with, "That's great Johnny, now let's see more of that introspection stuff." Ever wonder why it is that Carradine, severest critic of horror films among the horror actors, chooses to degrade himself so often? Anyway, to wrap up this rambling aside I'll make a silly comment and say that ASTRO ZOMBIES is too arty to be considered science fiction.)

ROBOT MONSTERS, on the other hand, is a very speculative work of fiction. It stars no slumming pros. It stars slumming amateurs. (I mean, who the hell ever heard of John Mylong, or would want to after seeing his performance?)

It is possible that if you've seen ROBOT MONSTER only once, you may not have fully appreciated the exploits of Ro-Man. I trust that my observations will serve to illuminate the otherwise dark corner of your film viewing. Some deductions to start:

Imagine a script written for a robot with anti-social hangups, and a producer/director (Phil Tucker) with no money but who firmly believes that where there's a will, there's a robot suit. Well, there happens to be an old gorilla costume available. The director is nothing short of genius auteur. When he's finished being creative, we have no mere collection of tin cans to amuse us. We got Ro-Man! The villain of the piece is still a robot, behaves and talks like a robot, but he looks like a fat and unkempt ape... except that he's simian only up to his neck. The makers of ROBOT MONSTER didn't want to stretch our credibility too far. The monster wears head-gear-- looks like a space helmet right out of a kiddy matinee complete with antennae. Or is it a modified diving helmet? (Author's note: I've looked it up in THE FIFTY WORST FILMS OF ALL TIME--mentioned earlier--and they report that it is a "plastic deep-sea diving helmet." No wonder it looked so fake.) The brilliant touch is that you can see part of Ro-Man's very human face through the visor. That's acceptable because

he's wearing gauze over his features and the delicate illusion of alienness is preserved. (Author's Note Again: The 50 WORST book reports that it is a nylon stocking mask.) Ro-Man gestures a lot when he talks.

There is a special flair to the incompetence of ROBOT MONSTER, a weird kind of charm. It has something which few films can boast: Total Consistency. In fact, it's difficult to discern one part of the production from the rest. Beginning, middle, end, all merge into one phantasmagoric whole where climaxes and lulls are fused. The only thing that holds it together is the singularly pretentious figure of Ro-Man sauntering in and out of a rock valley, fiddling with a set of rabbit ears atop his devilish machine--a bubble maker right out of Lawrence Welk--and seeking, every five minutes or so, invaluable advice from his overlord on the moon, the Great Guidance who directs cosmic traffic with the aid of electrical Jacob's ladders and a violin bow.

NEXT: The Diabolical Plot.

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Deadline for ATARANTES #38: Monday, August 4, 1980-- after that, I'll be too busy worrying about the convention.

ATARANTES #37/July 1980
Cliff Biggers, editor
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