

CHAT

MONTHLY NEWSZINE OF THE CHATTANOOGA SF ASSOCIATION
FREE TO MEMBERS OF CSFA; 25¢ TO FELLOW TRAVELERS

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"I dipped into the future far as human eye could see, Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be."Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92)

AUGUST CSFA MEETING - TRIVIA CONTEST & VANCE READING FEATURED....The Chattanooga SF Association met on July 15th in the meeting room of the Brainerd 1st Tennessee Bank. The book discussion this month, Imperial Earth by Arthur C. Clarke, was led by Mike Rogers. A discussion followed about what monetary contribution the club could make to ChattaCon. Resolved was that the CSFA will have a two page ad in the ChattaCon program book. Also, a supporting membership for the 1979 WorldCon, Seacon '79 in Brighton, England, was discussed and agreed on. The next CSFA meeting will be Saturday, Aug. 19, at 7:30 PM in the meeting room of the 1st Tennessee Bank in Brainerd. The program will feature area pro Steve Vance reading from his work-in-progress All the Shattered Worlds, and Uncle Rick's SF Trivia Contest #1 - on the works of Robert A. Heinlein. There will be a prize worth about \$5 for the winner and lesser prizes for runners-up. Come prepared! The book of the month will be The Ship Who Sang by Anne McCaffrey, led by Nicki Lynch. The September book will be Ice and Iron by Wilson Tucker; the book for October will be Icerigger by Alan Dean Foster, and by breaking the 'no author more than once a 12-month period' rule for the second time in a year, the November book will be Orphan Star by Alan Dean Foster. Book orders are taken at each meeting, if you have trouble finding the book-of-the-month. To find the bank meeting place, out-of-towners from Knoxville, Cleveland, Atlanta should take I-24 west to the Belvoir Ave. exit, then North Terrace (parallels the interstate) to Germantown Road. From Nashville, take the Germantown Road exit from I-24 (just past Missionary Ridge). Go north on Germantown to the first traffic light (the one at the interstate doesn't count) and turn right. The bank is on the right, one building past the intersection. For questions: Mike Rogers (266-0298) (NWL)

CSFA TREASURER'S REPORT....The balance as of the last report was \$188.74. Receipts were \$10 for July dues and \$1.81 in interest income, for total receipts of \$11.81. Expenditures were \$5.85 for CHAT #10, \$5 for a supporting membership in the 1980 WorldCon, and \$7.50 for a supporting membership in the 1979 WorldCon (SeaCon '79). Total expenditures were \$18.35, and the balance as of July 15 is \$182.20. Over the past year, club dues have averaged \$21.50 per month. (Mike Rogers)

BEN BOVA LEAVING ANALOG....Ben Bova has resigned the editorship of Analog magazine as of August 17, according to an Analog spokesperson. Bova will become SF editor of the new magazine Omni, to be published by Penthouse publisher Bob Guccione. While at Analog, Bova had won the Hugo Award for Best Professional Editor the past five years in a row, but apparently feels that seven years as editor there is enough. Analog will announce a successor in late July or August. (DL)

RIVERCON UPDATE....Louisville's annual SF convention is almost upon us. Scheduled GoH is Robert Bloch, with Wilson (Bob) Tucker as MC and Ned Brooks as Fan GoH. Information received by CHAT indicates Larry Niven will also be attending this year. Niven was last year's scheduled GoH, but had to cancel at the last minute due to illness. To attend, show up at the Executive Inn West in Louisville on July 28 with money in hand. (DL)

CHATTACON UPDATE....With ChattaCon less than six months away, the Gen Committee is working hard to make the 4th ChattaCon as successful as (continued on p2)

CHATTACON UPDATE (CONT.)....last year's convention. The videotape program, the best attended feature last year, has been expanded with the acquisition of a 50-inch projection TV from Roy Cox Red Bank TV Service, Inc. for the convention. Also, the videotape program will be moved from the con suite to a larger room. In addition, a late night film program will supplement the videotape program. The Hucksters room will be bigger this year as well; all 40 tables will be in one centralized location. The art show, again, is larger; it will have about double the space as last year. ChattaCon will start earlier on Friday and run longer on Sunday afternoon. More pros will be attending this year; other than Featured Speaker Alan Dean Foster, scheduled attendees include Perry A. Chapdelaine, Wilson (Bob) Tucker, and Jack L. Chalker. For the D&D players and other wargamers, there will again be a game room. And don't forget to bring a costume for the midnight masquerade on Saturday night. Membership rates are \$7 until Dec. 18 and \$9 after that. Banquet tickets for the buffet banquet are \$9. Both are available in advance. Write to ChattaCon 4, PO Box 21173, Chattanooga, Tenn. 37421, or speak up at a club meeting. (NWL)

MIDWESTCON REPORT....I learned that I was a dinosaur at the 29th annual Midwestcon in Cincinnati June 23-25, a real party affair run by Lou Tabakow and many others with a smoothness at least equal to their generously run bar.

What's a dinosaur?

That's a person who has succeeded in living long enough to brag that he or she read science fiction prior to the forties. First Fandom Association (FFA) I think it's called, although in my unnatural state - wandering from con suite hither and thither for free refill - I'm not too sure I read the handscripted sign all that clearly.

Let's see. Where was I?

Oh yes. The flyer on the Midwestcon bragged about 50 poolside rooms beside an Olympic size swimming pool, a sauna whirlpool, exercise room, a large game room, six pool tables, putt putt golf course, 30 umbrella chairs, numerous chaise lounges and a snack (ugh) bar, all located centrally, enclosed, and still near umpteen other restaurants of various breeds. Could you believe it? Could I believe it? Could anyone believe it? You better believe it! It was all true, and one of the finest con gatherings I've attended in a long time. Fact is, if Shelby Bush III hadn't showed, I'd have had even finer times. His girl dances swell!

Unlike many other cons, this one was unstructured, very low key, and although biggees like Wilson Tucker, Andy Offutt and Jack Chalker were in attendance, fans treated them like fans, fans treated fans like ordinary people - (now and then a glaze-eyed lass passed wholly uncategorizable.)

Tucker MC'd the banquet. Bill Bowers read his defense against Harlan Ellison, in preparation for Iguanacon. Food was great, plentiful, and Lou and Ken Moore, Patricia Erikson, two whose names I've forgotten, and myself won the last-table-bubbly, lucky us!

Others from Nashville were Charlie and Anita Williams and sister Cecelia, Susan Stockall, John Hollis & Co., Dan Caldwell and Courtney Bray.

Had Shelby Bush the III done the gentlemanly thing and stayed home, I could have hollered WHERE WAS CHATTANOOGA?! (Perry Chapdelaine)
((Ed. note: maybe //hopefully?!//next year for us.))

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED....From Jack L. Chalker, author of Midnight at the Well of Souls, A Jungle of Stars, and Web of the Chosen, all from Ballantine/Del Rey Books, and the novелlette (that probably will be nominated for Hugo and Nebula Awards) "Dance Band on the Titanic", in the July-Aug. 1978 issue of Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine. He writes concerning upcoming projects:

"As regards production, Dancers in the Afterglow will be out in about two weeks from Del Rey, Exiles at the Well of Souls -- the first half of the Well World sequel -- end of August from same, Quest for the Well of Souls -- second half of the novel -- in November also from Del Rey. For 1979, The Identity Matrix will be out from Berkeley, A War of Shadows from Analog and (cont. p. 3)

CHALKER LETTER (CONT.)....Ace, a short story in the Doubleday anthology Whispers II, and a fantasy novel, And the Devil Will Drag You Under, from Del Rey. Works in progress include a Sherlock Holmes western, a time travel book, and Jaws 3 (no fooling), the latter tentative but very much on the fire right now. And no, it won't be hackwork and won't use any of the characters or settings from the previous flings. It will be, in fact, a WW II novel.... And there will be a final Well World extravaganza, Nathan Brazil. I'm keeping busy, anyway...."

((Ed. note: Next month in CHAT: A Jack Chalker interview.))

SCIENCE BRIEFS (A QUARTERLY FEATURE OF CHAT)

A Moon for Pluto....Astronomers at the United States Naval Observatory have discovered a moon circling the planet Pluto. Calculations show the moon circles Pluto every six days, nine hours, and 17 minutes, the same as the rotational period of Pluto itself; with an estimated diameter of 1200 km vs. Pluto's newly revised estimated 3000 km diameter, Pluto's moon is the largest moon in the solar system in comparison to its planet, by a factor of about 5 greater than Earth's moon to Earth. Pluto is now thought to be the smallest planet in the solar system, smaller even than Earth's moon.

And a Moon for an Asteroid?....Results from the occultation of a faint star by Asteroid 532 Herculina give the tentative conclusion that the asteroid has a small moon. Past observations of similar occultations by other asteroids have aroused suspicions that some asteroids may have moons, but the Herculina occultations have provided the first instance of hard evidence of this.

Soviet Space Shuttle....The magazine Aviation Week and Space Technology reports that the Soviet Union is secretly testing its own Space Shuttle. The shuttlecraft is supposedly smaller than the U.S. version, and would be used in conjunction with the ongoing Soviet Salyut Space Station program.

Skylab in Trouble....Unless control problems aboard Skylab are solved quickly, the space station could re-enter and burn in Earth's atmosphere as early as next spring. Skylab needs to be in a low resistance end-forward orientation rather than its current tumble to reduce the minute atmosphere drag at its present orbital altitude. If Skylab does re-enter uncontrolled, there is a 1-in-40 chance that a metropolitan area would be impacted by large fragments. (DL)

NORTHAMERICAN NOTE....The NorthAmerican Special Interests Dept. wants to hear from you if you are a special interest group, organized or informal. We'd like to contact everyone from Aardvark Lovers to Zymagic Runners. The more groups that want mini-events or gatherings, the better. Besides self-run discussion/gatherings, panels, whatever, the Special Events Dept. also wants written suggestions for pro authors, artists, editors, or other pros to be taken out to eat by a small group of fans. We don't know who to ask unless enough people express an interest. Write to: North American; Special Events Dept.; P.O. Box 58009; Louisville, Ky. 40258. SI/SE Dept. is also in charge of allocating time and space to groups wishing to have food functions. Will the International Wizard of Oz Club have an Emerald Tea? Will the Hyborian Legion muster over mustard sandwiches? We'd sure like to know. (IMK)

Artist credits this month: page 4 - Charlie Williams; page 7 - Nicki Lynch (top) and Shelby Bush III (bottom); page 8 - Charlie Williams.

For Sale from CHAT: THE BATTLE OF FOREVER by A. E. Van Vogt, hardcover edition from Authors' Co-op Publishing Co., illustrated by Atlanta artist Bob Maurus. Signed & Autographed copies - \$12 (reg. \$14.96); unsigned \$7.50 (reg. \$9.95). Mail orders enclose extra \$1 for postage, etc.

STAR
WARS
CIRCA
1959

BEN
BOVA'S

Star Conquerors

GUEST
REVIEW BY CHARLIE
WILLIAMS



OFF THE SHELF

Reviews of the Out-of-Print

STAR CONQUERORS / Ben Bova
reviewed by Charlie Williams

Perhaps it's not Ben Bova's best work, but Star Conquerors sure twisted my adolescent brain around. I discovered this wonderful tale in my suburban library's "juvenile" section in about 1960 or 1961, while I was in the fourth grade, I think. Remember Adam Strange in "Mystery in Space" comics; this will show you how my reading tastes led me to this book. Bear in mind also that I was merely a recent graduate of Tom Swift books, and that Ian Fleming was right around the corner.

Star Conquerors is an epic, unlike Star Wars, a mere incident in a vast story we know little about at the end. Take Alexander's conquests, add a happy ending, and that's SC on a galactic scale. There are destinies fulfilled, ruthless nonhuman enemies to be crushed, and needless to say, worlds to conquer. Remember, I could barely hold a pencil at this time, had never heard of Alexander nor of Starfleet Command.

Here's a synopsis if you've not read SC since Jr. High. Several million years ago Terran Homo Sapiens had carved out an Empire in and among the nearby star group. Merciless invaders from unknown space demolished this Empire, pursuing Man to his home system; xenogenocide is employed, blasting the "fifth" planet into asteroids and rendering Mars virtually uninhabitable. Earth is given the last Ice Age, and Man collective amnesia, if any survive. All this is background, developed throughout the story as we, through the first-person protagonist/narrator, discover what we do.

About 300 years from now, we've solved most major social problems and rediscovered a handful of lost colonies from the first Empire. Like ancient Macedonia, Terra consolidates all these outposts into a loose confederation with a defensive military backbone. The Terran Confederation is being attacked on its frontier by alien races in the service of the "Masters", and a defensive posture becomes rapidly critical. Finally, a Pearl Harbor-type attack precipitates all out war. The scope of this short (215 pages) novel is vast. And of course, the Good Guys win. Geoffrey Knowland (Jeff) is not only Alexander the Great/Captain Kirk, he's Tom Swift and Horatio Hornblower, too. As Commander of the Terran Expeditionary Forces, he's been given the Galaxy as a battlefield. The narrator is Alan Bakerman, a close advisor to Jeff; Alan is a refugee from a system under the insidious control of the enigmatic Masters, and is conveniently a telepath, sort of. There are beautiful French Underground Agents -- I mean, Allied Alien Humankind wenches....there's an arrogant Senate, a preposterous feud over a lady (with political undertones), elaborate naval engagements in interplanetary space, hand-to-hand combat with barbarian races, and (surprise!) the secret origin of the Galactic Empire.

Oh, it goes on and on, and so could I. As an artist I've tried to visualize this beautiful story for years, simply because it's so visual! When I do get pro work I intend to harass my editors until adaptation rights are secure. Geez, there's Space Armor, a Doctor Zorba character, Lizard Men, neutron bombs -- what a feast for the eyes, what an education for my hands! Well, until then, Star Conquerors serves as a sourcework for my imagination whenever I'm called upon to draw space opera. Pull this thing out of the library sometime (I defy you to find it in paper!) and see if you don't have the same sense of wonder I felt at eight or nine or ten when I first read this thing and decided right then and there to become a science fiction artist.

CHAT encourages submissions of art, reviews, articles, letters of comment and the like. Written submissions should not be too lengthy--try to keep them under one page as it appears here; also, make sure your name and address is on your submission. While we cannot pay for submissions, we provide a forum for fan writers and artists, and will give a complimentary issue of CHAT to all contributors who aren't already receiving it. CHAT also carries advertising; write for our inexpensive rates.

THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE by Hal Clement; Ballantine/Del Rey; \$1.75
reviewed by Shelby Bush III

One of the science fiction books I grew up reading and re-reading was Hal Clement's Needle. Needless to say, when I heard that at long last Clement was writing the sequel, I was pleased, but not a little worried. What would Clement do with the story? Would it stand up to the original? I needn't have worried.

Needle, as you'll remember, is a tale of an extra-terrestrial detective on the track of a criminal of the same race. Both Hunter and Quarry were symbionts, who lived with a "host"--literally inside the host's body. Very convenient, considering the aliens were the shape, consistency, and color of the Mattel "Slime". Both partners benefit from the arrangement, the alien having arms and legs to get around, and the host getting free medical attention--including small cuts held together from inside, and harmful microbes removed from the bloodstream.

Needless to say, Hunter succeeds in his mission--however, he is now stranded on Earth. So he stays with Bob Kinnaird, his earthly "host". Which is where Bob's problems, and Through the Eye of a Needle, begin. It seems that after several years of having the Hunter clearing his system of microorganisms, Bob's natural defenses and immunity factors start eroding. In order to save Bob's life, the Hunter must find one of the spaceships he and his quarry came to earth aboard--and get a message to the others of his race. How to do this, without alerting everyone else on the island, and without killing Bob in the process (or Bob getting killed, which looks like a definite possibility at times) is the basis of the story.

The book is slow at times, but deliberately slow. It's paced and patterned after the Agatha Christie/Ellery Queen mystery novel--from the red herrings and jumped conclusions to the "I guess you're all wondering why I called you here," climactic scene.

I was not disappointed with the novel, even considering my affection for the original. Clement does leave open for another sequel (or two, or three). I would quarrel only with incidentals in the story--some of the language, and the ignoring of historical events of the period (the books take place circa 1953, although the date is never directly stated).

Also, the characterization of Bob Kinnaird is somewhat shallow. He's been at college for four years, and yet, Hunter muses that he's had very little contact with females. Evidently Bob is somewhat of a wallflower. Sex did exist in the fifties, didn't it, Hal?

Through the Eye of a Needle is an entertaining book, however, and stands in my mind only a little below the original, Needle.

LORD FOUL'S BANE by Stephen R. Donaldson; Ballantine/Del Rey; \$2.50
reviewed by Irvin Koch

Del Rey is a fiend. They send me this free, to review in CHAT, I guess, and now I'll have to BUY the other two books in the "Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever" trilogy. It's that good. It's not Tolkein, but it doesn't have to be. It's great fantasy, but there is a great deal of the real world in it also.

Covenant is "set for life" in our world, but really is as isolated from all other humans as is most everyone. When he contracts leprosy, his wife and child isolate him. The disease blocks out his sense of touch, and he becomes impotent. His bills are mysteriously paid for him to deprive him of his last reason for even walking about in town.

And then he is chosen to become a hero/savior in a fantasy land. They cure him -- there. They drag him into being a savior but never really a hero. He is thrown back to our world when the (first) quest is over. (cont. on p. 7)



A.J.'s CORNER / BY A. J. BARKER

Three weeks ago I walked into the Book Inn and ambled back to my spot. I stood there staring blankly at the SF and fantasy but something was wrong, horribly wrong. There was something missing. I turned and walked as calmly as I could toward the exit, trying not to attract too much attention. A cloud of dull depression followed close on my heels.

After a few days I conquered my fears and headed for Chattanooga and the magical places, Waldens and Gateway. To no avail, for a paul had settled over the shelves, a dull sameness. I knew I had been struck with the dreaded mid-summer dumps. My imagination had grown lax and my sence of wonder and adventure was slowly seeping away.

For days I wandered around, eyes staring blindly off into the miserable space I was being forced to inhabit. SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE!!!

Where would I again find a candle to light my darkened mind? Aspark to light the dying fires of my sole?

Suddenly a magical name was uttered: DARKOVER and that tiny spark glowed in the darkness. I groped outward and found a friend waiting.

"Why, yes," she said, smiling strangely, "I have a few of Marion Zimmer Bradley's books and I'll be glad to lend them to you."

Somehow her tone seemed to have a mystical, haunting quality. Was I imagining things or did I hear lilting music, that seemed to come out of the ether, luring me on?

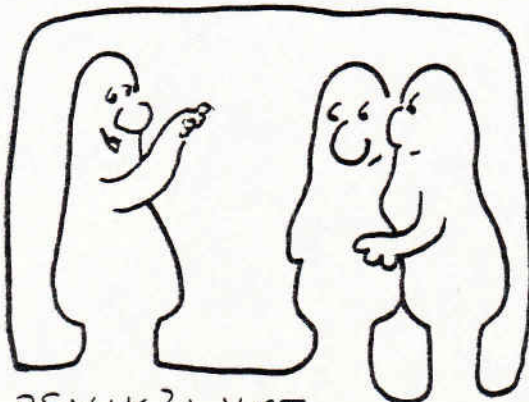
So I began to read. Slowly at first. My mind was so cramped and sore from weeks and months of lying unused and confined in its tiny space. Then soaring and wheeling over the mountains, forrests and plains of that most enchanted and enchanting world.

If you are ever struck with a case of the dreaded mid-summer dumps, try a vacation on that wonderful planet. It's coller there and perhaps the flowers shall bloom just this once more, for you.

LORD FOUL'S BANE REVIEW (cont.)

He must return to being an isolated brain kept alive only by the exercise of surviving.

Super simple. Super complex. This book is one of the first attempts to deal with the modern problems of thought and communication in a fantasy mode. Since it hasn't been done before -- no one is noticing this. You'll have to think about this one. But you can read it as a straight adventure if you are willing to go 480 pp of descriptive work.



REALLY? I JUST
LOVE SCI-FI.

