

# CHAT

NEWSZINE OF THE CHATTANOOGA SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION  
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY DICK AND NICKI LYNCH  
4207 DAVIS LANE, CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE 37416  
FREE TO C.S.F.A. MEMBERS; 25¢ FOR FELLOW TRAVELERS  
VOLUME 2 NUMBER 3 DECEMBER, 1978

"We think as much with our hands as with our brains, we think with our stomachs, we think with everything." - Pierre Janet

KING KONG INVADERS DECEMBER MEETING....The Chattanooga SF Association met on Nov. 18 at U.T.C. as usual. There was a short discussion of the book of the month, Gateway by Fred Pohl, led by Nicki Lynch. After several announcements, the main program of two George Pal movies (Conquest of Space and Destination Moon) was presented. All in all, an interesting program. Also at the meeting, book procurer Tim Bolgeo said that Icerigger by Foster was finally in, and that it will be the book for December. Lucifer's Hammer by Niven and Pournelle is scheduled for January, and Moorcock's Winds of Limbo is the book of the month for February. Trivia buffs please take note that 'Uncle Tim' will have an Andre Norton trivia quiz in January. The books you should read for it are: The Last Planet (a.k.a. Space Rangers), The Z Stone, Uncharted Stars, The Stars Are Ours, Star Born, and Daybreak 2250 AD. Be there (ready) or be square. The next meeting of the Chattanooga SF Association will be Saturday, Dec. 16 at 7:30 PM. Icerigger by Alan Dean Foster will be discussed, and the 1933 movie classic King Kong will be shown. The meeting will be back at the First Tenn. Bank in Brainerd for this month only. To get to the bank, out-of-towners from Knoxville, Cleveland, Atlanta should take I-24 west to Belvoir Ave. exit, then North Terrace (parallels the interstate) to Germantown Road. From Nashville, take I-24 to the Germantown Road exit (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)

BIRMINGHAM SF CLUB FORMS....The Birmingham Science Fiction Club held its first meeting on October 14, according to their clubzine Anvil. The newly formed club will meet on the second Saturday of each month. For further information, contact the editor of Anvil Wade Gilbreath, at 4206 Balboa Ave., Pinson, Ala. 35126. He would appreciate book reviews, criticism of classic SF, articles of interest, and letters of comment, as well as spot and cover illos. (NWL)

SF WRITERS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT U.T.-KNOXVILLE....The University of Tennessee at Knoxville will sponsor a five day writers conference and workshop, June 11-15, 1979. TENNECON ONE will have on hand Theodore Sturgeon, Lester Del Rey, and Judy-Lynn Del Rey as 'lecturers and literary advisors'; according to advance publicity we have received, they will "advise on the marketing of SF and Fantasy fiction and will provide individual guidance on literary manuscripts submitted by the participants." A prize of \$150 will be awarded to what they consider the 'most outstanding literary entry.' In addition, the UT Department of Art will award a prize of \$250 for the 'most striking poster to advertise the conference'. The registration fee for the conference is \$100 (ouch!), with \$25 rebates for students enrolled in "any recognized institution of higher learning in Tennessee" and also "wives of students". The conference will be restricted to 150 enrolled. For more info: Dr. Don R. Cox, Dept. of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee 37916. (DL)

MASS MAILING MESS MEMORABLE....The Chattanooga Board Mass Mailing and One Shot Party was a success, drawing a record 21 persons, 13 of whom also worked on the one-shot. The postcards, 800 of them, were addressed in record time, and a one-shot, The Mass Mailing Meeting Mess, nattered on for five pages and had a Shelby Bush cover. For those who wish copies of the one-shot, please contact Mike Rogers or Nicki Lynch. The next ConCom meeting will be Dec. 16 at 11 AM ((cont. on page 2))



MASS MAILING MESS (cont.)....in the home of Colin Wright, at 8803 Lake Villa Lane. To get to his house take Hwy 153 to Hwy 58 North, pass all the shopping plazas & Krogers and look for a 7-11 store on the left. Turn there onto N. Hickory Valley Rd. Go about 1 mile and make a left turn at Faith Baptist Church onto Wooten Rd. About 150 feet later, turn left on to Lake Villa Lane and go up the hill. It is a yellow house near the top of the hill on the right, with ham radio call letters on the mail box. His phone number is 344-2184. After the business meeting, the name badges will be done. (NWL)

CSFA TREASURERS REPORT....The balance from last month was \$176.42. Receipts were \$15 from dues; expenditures were \$4.95 for CHAT #14. The balance as of November 28 is \$186.47. (RM)

CHATTANOOGA CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL SF CLUB REPORT....On Saturday, Nov. 18, the Chattanooga Central SF/F Group met.

Members attending were Colin Wright and Lee Miller. We had the company of Julie Wilhoit and Bill Hedrick to pass the time. Rich Morehouse also showed up. Hopefully the next meeting will be better. Elected officials are Lee Miller - Head Anarch, Colin Wright - Vice Head Anarch and Book Procurer, David Martin - Treasurer, and Cheryl Harris - Secretary. Regular meetings will be 30 minutes before CSFA meetings. (CW)

ONE-SHOT PARTY ANNOUNCED....CSFA member Lee Miller will host a one-shot party on Dec. 8 at his home at 6532 Waconda Road in Harrison (take Hwy 58 to Tyner Lane -- at Big-K store across from Brown Middle School/Central High. Take Tyner and stay to the left as it turns into Waconda. Or call 344-9482). Lee says that the one-shot party is to celebrate his birthday on December 4 ((ed. note: which is the same day as one of the editors of CHAT)), but don't bring gifts "unless you really want to", just bring munchies and other refreshments, and (of course) yourselves. (DL)

BITS AND PIECES....Dave Hartwell has left Berkeley Books to become SF editor of Pocket Books.\*\*Athenium Press will introduce a hardback line of SF and Fantasy in early 1979, under the name of Argo Books.\*\*CSFA member AJ Barker has moved; her new address is c/o Wilhoit, 705 Elinor St., Chattanooga, Tn. 37405.\*\*There will be not one, not two, but three Bob Tuckers at Chattanooga in January.\*\*Fritz Leiber's novel Our Lady of Darkness was the Best Novel when the 1978 World Fantasy Awards were presented on Oct. 15 in Fort Worth, Texas.\*\*The Lord of the Rings movie premiere in Atlanta was sold out, and the movie has been playing to large audiences since.\*\*The first issue of OMNI was reportedly a sell-out, on a press run of 1 million.\*\*Arthur Clarke's new (and last?) novel, The Fountains of Paradise, will run in the Jan.-Mar. issues of Playboy; the Dec. issue will feature a preview to the novel.\*\*Little Rock fan Margaret Middleton will be Fan GoH at OKon in Tulsa in July.\*\*And CSFA member Shelby Bush is Fan GoH at Roc-Kon in Little Rock in February.\*\*The 1st issue of the Ace Books paperback magazine Destinies is out, with fiction by Zelazny, Benford, Niven, Simak, Robinson, Sheffield, and articles by Pournelle, Robinson, and Anderson. Worth getting.\*\*Galaxy magazine has reduced publi-  
((Cont. on page 10))



BRIDGET



THE ENEMY WITHIN--AND AMONG US!  
DON'T DOUBT MY WORD! I ALONE HAVE  
STUMBLERD ONTO THE TRUTH ABOUT A  
VAST CONSPIRACY IN OUR VERY CLOSETS!



MORE AND MORE  
ARRIVE ON THE  
SHORES OF EARTH  
EVERY DAY!

AND  
THOSE THAT  
WALK AMONG US  
BREED LIKE RATS!



AND YOU'RE ONLY A FEW  
FEET FROM A WHOLE  
NEST OF---



(Another paranoid mind-trip with Charlie Williams)  
10/19 © 1978  
suggested by E. David Wood

# COATHANGERS FROM ALTAIR 4!!

I FIRST NOTICED THE CASES  
OF POSSESSION NOT FAR  
FROM A SHOP THAT I FREQUENT--



"FRANK WANG, MY DRY-CLEANER  
OWNS THE PLACE. I NOTICED THAT HE  
GIVES OUT COMPLIMENTARY COAT-  
HANGERS TO HIS MANY AND FAR-RANGING  
CUSTOMERS...



"ONE COULD TELL AT A GLANCE  
THAT HE WAS-- ONE OF THEM.

"THEN I REALIZED  
THAT HOTELS AND MOTELS  
AND CLOTHING STORES  
HAVE THE SAME PRACTICE!



"CUSTOMER SERVICE?  
---OR A PLOT TO SUBJUGATE  
MANKIND?"

"YES! FOR, SOMEDAY SOON, ALL OVER,  
THOSE INTERTWINED MASSES OF TANGLED  
ALUMINUM AND STEEL WILL RISE FROM  
THEIR MOTH-BALLED HIDEOUTS--



"...AND CONQUER US ALL!



"IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME!"





# CHAT Interviews: JACK L. CHALKER

Jack L. Chalker has a long background in science fiction, as a fan, publisher, and writer. In 1961, he founded Mirage Press in Baltimore, whose first publication was The New H.P. Lovecraft Bibliography by Jack himself. As a SF writer, Jack draws upon his background as a history teacher; in an article, the Baltimore Sun referred to Jack as "America's leading 19th century science fiction writer", due in part to his history background and, according to Jack, "the fact that I like riding ferryboats."

The following interview is an outgrowth of a casual discussion held at Kubla Khan past, during which Jack was talking about two upcoming projects -- a time travel novel ("...in which I'll murder Karl Marx not once, but twice."), and a Sherlock Holmes western ("...written as a response to Nicholas Meyer. One of its events is an 1894 train robbery in which, in a space of 3 hours, 8.2 tons of silver bullion is lifted. Try that with 1894 technology."). We invite everyone to meet Jack at Chattacon in January.

CHAT: Let's go back a while. You've been a publisher since 1961 when you founded Mirage Press. Your first professional sale was A Jungle of Stars to Del Rey in 1976. Why did you decide to write rather than continue what you were doing?

Jack: Well, there's a long story on that. First of all, I haven't stopped publishing; the only I stopped doing was teaching.

CHAT: Where did you teach?

Jack: Inner-city Baltimore. I quit teaching mostly because the writing was so lucrative that I could afford to stop. And the fact that I got the hell beat out of me by a teen gang. But I enjoyed teaching, and I miss it.

CHAT: But you don't miss getting the hell beat out of you.

Jack: No, I don't. That was the third time I came very close to getting killed in the last four or five years. I got to the point a couple years ago where I had four or five consecutive downer reverses. At that point, I had just come out of the hospital with about eleven stitches from having my skull cracked open by a kid. My partner had just suffered a nervous breakdown, and he was the money source for Mirage Press. I was discovered to have a lymphatic disease that could have been fatal. It required three consecutive operations, not to mention loss of upper teeth and part of the jawbone. They caught it anywhere between days and weeks, where the next stop was collapse of your kidney followed by collapse of your liver and then you're dead. I had a waiting period on that, to find out if it really did get anywhere else. And between all those things, I had a break up of a romance of several years running. All this happened in a period of about six months. So I said, 'What the hell? The way it's going, I'll walk outdoors and get hit by a truck.' So rather than sit around waiting for something else to happen, I decided I'd write. And A Jungle of Stars was the easiest thing to write; I'd written a short version in a 1962 or '63 fanzine.

CHAT: Did you have any trouble getting it published?

Jack: Well, I sent it originally to Don Wollheim, who had liked some of the ideas, but sent it back with the comments that he liked the book, he thought it would sell, but it didn't fit his 'formula'. So I sent it to Judy-Lynn Del Rey. I didn't hear anything for about six weeks, but finally ran into her at a convention and asked her about it. She said she had avoided reading it,

because, well, I've known Lester for, I guess, 15 or 20 years and Judy Lynn for over 10 years; she was afraid that if it was a turkey, it would be the end of a friendship or something. But she finally read it, liked it, and bought it.

CHAT: Have you ever thought of publishing your own work at Mirage Press?

Jack: No. I'd get more money with Del Rey, for example. In terms of money, Judy-Lynn has been offering three things. First, there's extremely good money, much better than apparently she pays a lot of people. Secondly, she's agreed that if I continue to submit a minimum number of books, essentially one every eight months, she'll keep the entire backlist in print. And third, the Ballantine sales force at the moment is probably the best in the field, just in aggressiveness, in going out and selling them. If your book doesn't get on the stands, nobody will read it.

CHAT: Looking back on your personal history as a publisher and fan, undoubtedly there have been people or events that influenced Jack Chalker, writer. What would you say some of these were?

Jack: I've been reading SF as long as I could read, and that was from about the age of 6. Certainly specific authors have influenced me -- Heinlein, of course, and Van Vogt, Dickson, Anderson, and all the others. Probably the single greatest influence was from the works of Eric Frank Russell, a man far too neglected in this field. Having talked to other writers of my generation -- Alan Dean Foster comes to mind immediately -- I find that they, too, cite Russell consistently. It's a pity he's known only for an abridged version of Wasp while most of his great work is out of print or never published at all in this country beyond the magazines. Aside from writers, my deep interest in history and politics -- I have degrees there and taught it all for years -- is additional influence. An objective -- that is, non-ideological -- historian can analyze and teach his field through SF quite well, since social science is, after all, the study of human behavior. All of my books are based in social science areas and draw on the vast amount of study in the disciplines that make up the social sciences for their basic background. Dancers in the Afterglow, for example, consisted of my reading, in translation, the goals and theories of the men who run North Korea and Cambodia as well as French radical theorists who were their mentors, taking them at their word, and showing just what sort of system they idealize. Even a very non-serious book like Web of the Chosen which is basically a satire of Eric Frank Russell and a lot of '40s and '50s Campbell ideas, has corporate syndicalism as its root system and examines a lot of its strengths and weaknesses.

CHAT: Do you correspond with other authors?

Jack: Not really. Actually, from being a correspondence fiend in my younger fan days I write few letters these days for sheer lack of time. I make about a dozen or more convnetions a year and see a lot of authors there, and there are some local ones I occasionally socialize with, but we almost never talk stories or anything like that. Agents, contracts, compare notes on editors and the like, yes, but not creation. I've been around SF for a long time, though, and know most of the people who write it rather well.

CHAT: Have you ever had substantial editorial changes in your novels?

(cont. on page 5)



## JACK CHALKER INTERVIEW (cont.)

**Jack:** Quite a lot of sex scenes have been edited out of my stuff. On the other hand, Judy-Lynn surprised me with Dancers in the Afterglow, for several reasons. She doesn't like outright political books or downbeat stories. There's politics in the background in all of my books, but it's usually secondary. But in Afterglow, it's right up front. Also, Afterglow is a downbeat story. And not only that, she doesn't like things that have even a soft sex situation, and there's quite a bit more of it in Afterglow than I thought. I really didn't think Afterglow would be her book, but to my surprise she not only bought it, she published it without changing a single word.

**CHAT:** How much advance preparation do you do before sitting down to write? Do you research things?

**Jack:** I'm constantly researching. I read voraciously -- several books a week on all subjects, an average of three newspapers a day, and a lot of miscellaneous material from esoteric social science journals to Scientific American, Horizon, and the like. Sometimes, quite often in fact, something will jog my mind and some factor, theory, setting, or whatever will penetrate, get twisted around in my mind like your image in a fun-house mirror, and come out as a book concept. The concept comes first, then the plot, and finally the characters. I once wrote an account of how the Well World came to be created as an introduction to Quest for the Well of Souls, but Judy-Lynn decided it wasn't necessary. Maybe I should give it to a fanzine to be published. Anyway, once it's all worked out in my mind I do the final research -- checking out the hard science, historical facts if necessary, everything. Then I start writing -- the endings first, by the way, then the rest of the book straight from start to end. I'm aided by my history training as well: historians have to carry an enormous number of little facts, figures, and the like in their head, sometimes hundreds of thousands of them. I tend to be interested in everything from physics to the Neilsen ratings, so I absorb a lot of stuff that just sticks and is ready and waiting for me to call upon in writing.

In general methodology, though, I get the concept first, then the plot, then the characters, and keep sifting it through my mind time and again while researching it until it is a clear novel in my mind. Then I write the thing straight through, usually in four to six weeks.

**CHAT:** You've done some interesting shorter things as well as novels -- for instance, "Dance Band on the Titanic" which appeared in Asimov's. How about some background to that story?

**Jack:** Well, you know one of my passions is riding ferryboats. In mid-1977 I was dropping a friend off in Michigan and decided to ride a ferry I'd seen on the maps in Canada. First you go to Sault St. Marie, then go about 120 miles east on Canadian 17 -- a two-lane road last paved in 1903, I think. Then you stop at Goodman's Motel and buy a ticket, turning now onto Ontario Route 68, a road that makes 17 look good; it has, for example, one-lane mile long car and railroad drawbridges. It's also engineered to miss any and all scenery. About 70 miles down you hit South Beymouth, which has 22 houses, a 10-unit motel, and a very bad family restaurant...and a small ferry dock and terminal. I got there on a Wednesday evening, hardly prime travel time, and as I sat, cars, trucks, buses, you name it, started appearing out of nowhere. It was incredible. I couldn't imagine where they all came from. Now, it's just a 100-minute run across Lake Huron. Suddenly around the corner of the bay comes a 396-foot six-story gleaming white ferry

looking more like a passenger cruise ship. It is exactly as described in the story -- two car levels, elevators, a great bar, huge restaurant, all of that -- even stabilizers. All for a 100-minute run! And they've been doing it since the late 1800's, same company. You cross to Toubermay, a town with about 50 houses, two 10-unit motels, and two bad restaurants -- and you're still a couple of hundred miles from Toronto or Windsor. That ship simply has no right to exist on that run -- nor is there any conceivable explanation for the volume of traffic. The story describes the towns and ship exactly -- Freff even had a photo of it for the illustration in Asimov's. I've given my explanation. I moved the location, by the way, to open up the plot a bit. As for the girl, she is based on a real person very closely, but I prefer not to give anything else on that to protect her. I conceived the story practically on the ferry, had it pat by the time I reached home, and wrote it in less than 24 hours. It is the most totally satisfying story, to me, that I've ever done at any length. George Scithers has been after me to do more on the ferryboat, and I'll admit I had that in mind from the beginning, but what's stopped me so far is the story's perfection in my mind. Although I'd like to restore the parts George cut out, I otherwise wouldn't change a word of it. How the hell do you top that?

**CHAT:** And how about some background on the Well World series?

**Jack:** Well, as I said, there's a long article waiting to be published someplace. In brief, first off, it wasn't supposed to be a series, just one book. It surprised everybody -- me, the publishers, and a lot of folks in the field -- when it took off and sold like mad, becoming the best seller in late 1977 in the Del Rey line except for stuff like the Star Wars books and Sword of Shannara. But those got massive publicity; Well sold 100,000 on publicity of about \$1.98. When that happened, Judy-Lynn pressed for a sequel. I don't like sequels and rarely read them, since they almost never live up to the original, but my agent asked for an outrageous amount of money, they paid it, and I had to come up with one. I did, and I think it's a good novel, as good in its own way as Well, or I wouldn't have allowed it to be published. It's two volumes, of course, although originally written as one. With two volumes it's more cost-effective and also makes it easier for Del Rey to make its money back. There will probably be one more and then I'm through with the Well. It wastes too many good ideas, and I think three good novel ideas is about all I can get with it. After that it becomes "and then I became..." and so what?

As to where the concept came from, it came from a little town in central Washington in the North Cascades called Stehekin, reached only by a 4½ hour boat trip up a 55-mile glacial lake. It's isolated. No TV, radio, telephones, etc. A walk along the Cascade trail to the Pass takes you through climate zones that change dramatically with elevation, almost like going from one world to another. That's where the Well idea came from. As for the hexagons, that was because I needed a geometrical shape. Ben Yalow did the math for me using an Avalon Hill war game board, and I use A-H blank hex grids to map things out. My maps are very elaborate compared to the sterile and boring ones in the two Wars of the Well books. Of course, I think the maps also set the world record for Tuckerisms.

**CHAT:** Are there any other series you have on the boards?

**Jack:** About the only thing that might come close is the possibility of more Orcas stories, although (cont. on page 6)



## JACK CHALKER INTERVIEW (cont.)

I do have an idea for a follow-up to A Jungle of Stars, a second novel at least, the germ of which appeared in my Analog story "In the Wilderness". I haven't gotten around to doing a full outline on it yet -- too busy with other stuff.

CHAT: What are you working on for the future?

Jack: Well, Ace will be bringing out my novel A War of Shadows early in 1979; it's quite different from anything else I've done and will surprise a lot of people. Nobody gets transformed or anything, and it's set in the near future, essentially contemporary. Beyond that there's The Identity Matrix from Berkeley, actually my third novel but Berkeley schedules books longer than Del Rey, so it's two years after writing. And Del Rey will be doing a fantasy, And the Devil Will Drag You Under, next fall -- it's fantasy for people who liked things like "Magic, Inc." I will also be doing a strong and large non-SF historical novel about a World War II true incident and have a couple of others like that on the fire. Additionally, I have a number of novels in my head -- 8 at last count -- so if I get a blank spot I can syuff one in. One of them's a time travel story with a new paradox, and another's a Sherlock Holmes western. As for short stuff, again I have a couple of ideas, but I've really done only four short stories against 12 novels, so don't expect a huge output. Of them all, only one, "Stormsong Runner", has yet to be published -- it's a marginal fantasy, almost a psychological study, that will appeal very much to those who liked "Dance Band", but you'll have to wait until Whispers II from Doubleday in December '79 to read it.

CHAT: At the WorldCon in Phoenix recently, you were one of the two co-favorites to win the Campbell Award for Best New Writer. It came as somewhat of a shock to me that neither you nor Stephen Donaldson won it. Were you personally disappointed?

Jack: I'd be lying if I said I wasn't, particularly since it's the kind of award I now can never win. I have to admit that, deep down, I expected Steve Donaldson to beat me out -- he produced, after all, a really major work that also was promoted like hell. Both Steve and I had agreed that we'd be each other's competition, and, I must admit, the choice of Orson Scott Card was a blow to both of us. Not that the man doesn't have talent and potential -- "Ender's Game" shows that -- but he'd produced only a few Analog stories, nothing really major in work and sales. It's pretty tough to pour your guts into what you and apparently over a hundred thousand other people think is good stuff and wind-up losing to someone much of the audience hadn't even heard of. Steve took it harder than I did, since I did expect Steve would beat me, but it's kind of hard not to take this kind of vote as some sort of vote of no-confidence. Neither I nor anyone else can understand it. At least Steve has another shot, and I hope the voters rectify their error next year. He deserves it.

CHAT: Before we close, do you have any final comments?

Jack: Nothing profound. I'm just discovering there's a lot of money in this business, and a great deal of fun. It beats working for a living.

## TECHNICAL REVIEW

## PROGRAM REALISM AND QUALITY OPINION:

## BATTLESTAR: GALACTICA vs. STAR TREK

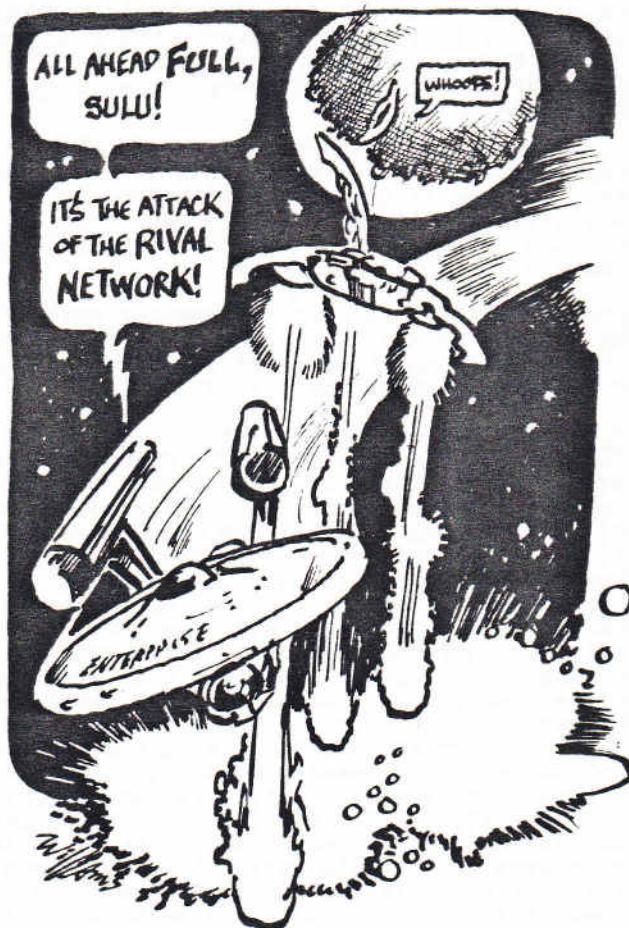
## PART 2: DEFENSIVE/OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES

The Galactica apparently has an artificial gravity field, otherwise the hangar personnel, not to mention the rest of the ship's personnel, wouldn't be getting around inside so easily. It is either this gravity field or a force field that retains the atmosphere within those always open hangars with all those flight personnel running around inside without benefit of spacesuits; the Galactica, with its mass alone, great as it is, is not large enough to create any substantial amount of gravity. In a culture advanced enough to create and control gravity, energy shielding would be far cheaper and more easily producible by comparison. It would not only keep the air in the hangars, but also keep unwelcome visitors out as well! If the Galactica had over-all energy shields as does the Enterprise and the Millenium Falcon, its defensive capabilities could be as much as a thousand times greater than with an armored, smooth outer hull with a reflective finish alone. Along with the type of hull described last month, this would give a Battlestar class vessel an over-all defensive factor of something like two billion, which would put its defensive capabilities up to where it should be for this type of warship.

This type of shielding, running parallel to the contours of a smooth outer hull could be accomplished through the use of cylindrical towers that protrude through the hull bulkheads at many points. Each tower could beam a flat, intense field for a full 360°, with overlap from tower to tower. At what would be the top (unshielded) part of each tower, a laser cannon turret could be positioned.

((cont. on page 9))

BY R. M. SHELTON





# AT THE CO-OP

BY

PERRY A. CHAPDELAINE, SR.

COURTESY OF AUTHORS' CO-OP PUBLISHING  
CO.

SUBSIDIARY OF AUTHORS' CO-OP, INC.

RT. 4, BOX 137

FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE 37064

In the sixties fanzine editors bugged me for stories, articles, comments, anything, just so long as I submitted something with name attached. Mainly they wanted someone who stirred controversy, pushed emotional buttons, scabulated readership, and I complied, sometimes magnificently.

Now here am I, in ultra-conservative *Chat*, a column of my own, and an agreement from Dick Lynch that he will not revise my copy. "Of course" — he adds — "the only hedging we'll make is that we reserve the right to put a disclaimer . . . either before or after!" That, I think, is something like the ultimate in friendship and trust, and me, a trusting, aging writer with weakened eyes, saddened heart, pure of mind and soul. . . !

Very well, let's do this both ways, at the start.

*Chat hereby disclaims any and all comments, words, phrases, thoughts, ideas, emotions, or discolorations made by one Perry A. Chapdelaine, Sr.. In turn, and in kind comity, Perry A. Chapdelaine, Sr. hereby disclaims everything else written, gossiped, or plugged by Chat, no matter how conservatively put, how uncontroversial the scroll, how charged with unemotion the fare, nor how objective and well researched the claim.*

Oh yes, I forgot to mention another of Lynch's fabulous lines: "I assume you won't be too controversial (i.e. — we're not expecting you to start any wars with your columnn)."

Now I'm chagrined.

How am I supposed to know what starts wars, when the species has been striving to answer the same question unsuccessfully for years? One man's (or woman's) button, is another's buttonhole!

What I'd like to talk about is **Authors' Co-op Publishing Company**, a subsidiary of **Authors' Co-op, Inc.**, so the above title does not necessarily mean at the chicken "coop." The hyphen was placed intentionally.

Almost a year ago, when I substituted as MC at **Chattacon**, I reluctantly discussed plans to publish A. E. van Vogt's *The Battle of Forever*, to begin a new kind of publishing cooperative, hopefully to develop a better pay scale for writers and artists, to tackle and to try to understand the distribution system better — the heart of publishing, let's face it, is distribution and sales — and so on. What I've learned since then may not be all factual, may be distorted for reasons unintentional, and may be heavily biased away from the truth, in fact. I can't know the truth about such things until I've exposed my own thinking, and permitted others

opportunity to correct it.

For example, I knew that distribution was a toughy, as it is in music record sales and distribution. I wasn't prepared then to understand just how tough is book distribution.

While it's clear that the New York publishing market dominates book publishing beyond reason, I was never and am not now clear as to why. There was a time in my youth when a Bennett Cerf with some capital could buy his own Random House, and thereafter build up a fine publishing business based on his own decisions. If Cerf liked a MS he need not determine it's sales potential so long as he knew in a general way that he was remaining solvent. In short, a theme that had socially redeeming qualities or was simply good literature, or one that Bennett liked just because it appealed to him intuitively, could be published, could be read by the public, and could satisfy man's craving for other than the lowest purient interests.

Alas! Those days have departed from New York!

The New York publishing market — it is no secret — has been bought up by large international conglomerates. Think of the largest publishing company and no matter how huge, believe that it is simply the back corner pocket of a gigantic multinational. In a sense, that publisher is a large coal field owned by a giant international oil cartel.

Consequences to you and me, those who like good books, is this:

Most manuscripts are screened by committees, not individuals, and the chief determinant as to whether or not manuscripts are converted into books for you and me is whether or not in the eyes of the publisher's accountants and committees the book has money-making potential. Hollywood films got onto that system prior to television. Television has always been on the system. For books, that large money-making conglomerates dominate is a new thing, and dangerous, and sad for you and me.

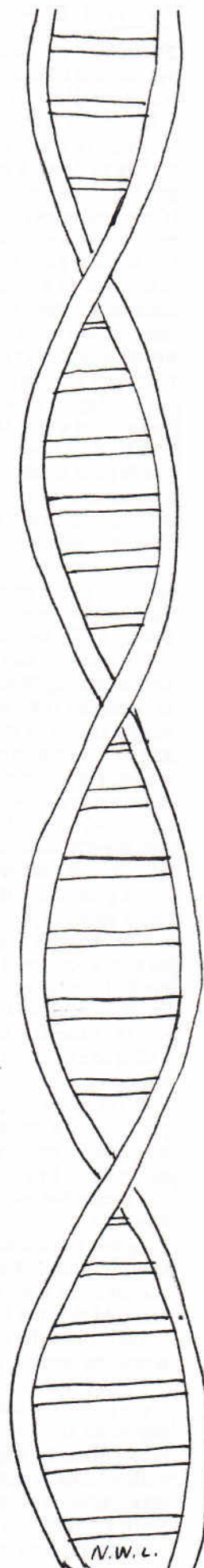
Everyday we are being conditioned by this money-making system. I see it in the face of most fandom, read it in most fanzines, watch it on TV, and understand the ballyhoo quite well. You see, in a nation of hundreds of millions of people, there are almost no readers.

How many copies of hardcover books does it take to make a best seller? What does one sell to make the best seller list? Vincent Campo, who edits a small press magazine called *The Newscribes* (Volume III, N. 1 & 2, 1978, 1223 Newkirk Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11230) asks: "A million? Five hundred thousand?"

Would you believe that "all that is needed is to sell five thousand to 20,000 copies at the right places throughout the country"?

Vincent further says: "How then can you call the book publishing a successful industry when out of

(cont. on page 8)



N.W.C.



## AT THE CO-OP (cont.)

200 million potential readers all you can reach is but one ten thousandth of one percent of that vast audience? How to remain solvent?"

Hucksters take advantage of this knowledge. In the country music industry, having a hit record has mainly to do with getting on the "right label," and getting under a respectable advertising budget, (the conditioner), and whamo!! No matter how poor the voice, or droll the sound, or inconsistent the music, you, too, can become an overnight sensation. (There are slightly more complexities such as the dominate drive for song writers rather than good voices — the money is in the building up of song inventories, not good voices, so therefore song writers have an advantage during the getting-in period.)

I guess one of the things I'm driving at is that we're a nation of huckster-prone ill-educated, well-conditioned reading-drones. If you tell people that someone is a star often enough, he is, because there are just that many of us unthinkers out here who will believe.

Had I more space and time, I could be more specific, more anecdotal, but for the nounce, let me describe some of our experiences with our first book, A. E. van Vogt's *The Battle of Forever*.

We selected van Vogt because his name is well known among librarians and book stores. He has a certain fan following. He's famous for having helped form the modern science fiction literature; and he's a clean writer, a *readable* by juveniles and adults. He has over forty titles to his credit, some earning substantial money year by year, both hardcover and softcover published by biggees. So van Vogt's name is not exactly unknown among distributors and wholesalers.

On publishing the book, we contacted a dozen chain store buyers which includes possibly 80% of the hardcover book business. First I called by phone, contacted the buyer, and described the book. I was asked in every case to mail in a copy for their review. I did so, taking extreme care to see that the United States Post Office official bulldozers could not in any way shred the packages.

After weeks of waiting, I called again. This process took months longer, because the buyer was usually on vacation, sick, out to lunch, or at a conference. But one day I made contact again. In every case but one, *the book had never arrived!* I was told.

Again I wrapped carefully, and paid the extra tab for United Parcel Service. Weeks later, and through the same communication frustrations, I was told that the books were rejected, for no other reason than that the buyer felt that his people would be unable to place the book.

I had taken the precaution to guarantee a bank deposit against returns, this to satisfy the possible argument that we were small, and that the buyer might inwardly argue that he'd not get money back with returns. Tony, my eldest son, and I had also taken time to visit retail stores here and there to learn what resistance, if any, might be to buying one or two of van's books. In cities like

Birmingham and Montgomery, one or two books sold quite easily, while, of course, some book stores were reluctant to buy.

But, some stores in some cities bought without resistance, or expectation of returns, demonstrating that nationwide there was an actual market for van's name in hardcover.

(The cost of going from store to store far exceeds such sales, which is why it takes a \$3,000,000 gross sales to support a skeleton crew going from store to store. And that is also the reason why one must have many titles to offer during such visits.)

I finally got all our review copies back except those "lost" and except from one distributor in Minneapolis who argued that "The book is the property of the reviewer for having taken the time to review it for possible purchase." I told that woman that they'd not get another review book from me on anything, since I wasn't providing free books for people's personal libraries as pay for automatic rejection.

Somebody tell me why we couldn't connect with the biggees!

Meanwhile here is another distasteful anecdote that happened in Nashville, Tennessee:

At a certain book store that caters to SF people, and is well known by Nashville SF fans, its manager invited me for a looksee at van's book. She immediately asked for five copies to distribute among her three stores. When I submitted our invoice, she said she expected those books on consignment. Know you that except for traditional distribution channels, consignment material is a rip-off of small publishers. Big publishers do not put out expensive books on consignment but rather have a return policy which allows return of certain saleable books which are placed on their discontinued list before a certain date, or a policy of trading saleable books for books. None offer cash returns or consignment. *We offered cash returns guaranteed by a bank.*

When a book store offers consignment space, they are thinking of several things:

1. Vanity press books are usually not worth buying, and won't sell. Same with unknowns, and unadvertised materials, no matter how good if unknown, and with poorly manufactured books.

2. They can use small press money without interest, increasing their own inventory, at no risk, no investment.

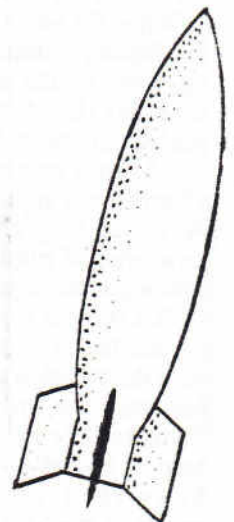
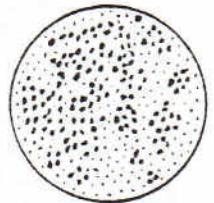
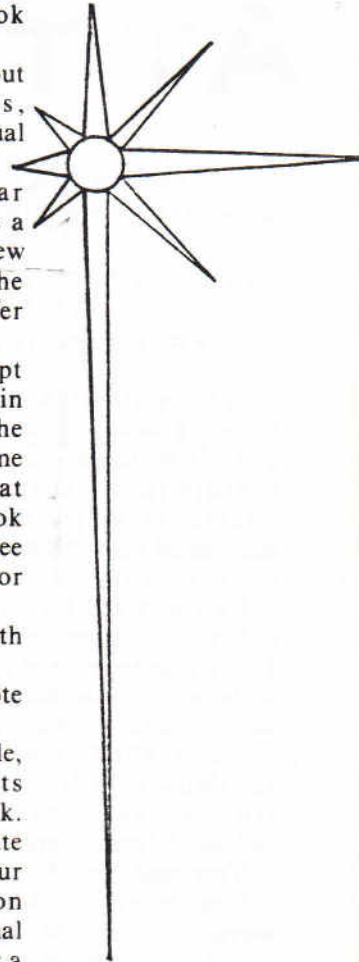
Big publishers don't permit it, but bookstores figure small presses are so desperate, they'll do it.

I told the manager *no*, and that just because we were small press did not mean we wanted to be treated differently from big press.

The manager shifted rapidly, and asked if I'd give them 30 days to pay. I agreed, since that is reasonable, assuming the vendor is honest. This vendor controlled three outlets, and had been in business some time. This vendor also knew of van Vogt, and wanted the books. She signed the agreement.

Now came the wait. First thirty days, second invoice; another thirty, and another, and another,

(cont. on page 9)





# MOVIE REVIEW

## MESSAGE FROM SPACE

by Julia Wilhoit

Message from Space is a masterpiece of the so-bad-it's-good Japanese movie genre. It's so awful, so ridiculous, that it descends into a kind of fairy tale fantasy limbo that provides a veritable fest of special non-effects that help the buttered popcorn slide right down the old esophagus. Go to it if you have an evening to waste and want to leave your frontal lobes at home.



SOME FOLKS CAN'T AFFORD A SCHOONER...

nuts light up and the people get real happy but I never did figure out why. Oh, well.....

The ending of the movie has the earth kids trying to zero in on the planet's atomic motor or something, and blow it up in their little fighters. They have to fly down long corridors on the exterior of the planet. Remind you of anything? The earth's moon is blown up but one seems too upset about it. I loved the part where the earth kids decide to take a spin in space and they get out of their ships to look around and catch space fire flies (yes, space fire flies!). They float around in the vacuum in their futuristic space togs and with little masks over their noses! They didn't seem to have any trouble talking to each other, either.

I guess now you have the idea of the general caliber of the movie. I laughed all through it, but don't go if your feeling serious. Actually it wasn't even worth writing a review on, but Dick and Nicki held a loaded fountain pen to my head and made me do it.

### AT THE CO-OP

by Perry A. Chapdelaine, Sr.  
(cont. from page 8)

and so on, five months, and no pay. Same with phone calls, no pay, no return of books.

We finally went to each of her stores and collected our books. I'd rather have them safe in our sterile cartons then being grubbed through by a public under the unwatchful eyes of those without investment at stake.

Typesetting provided by AC Typesetting Services,  
subsidiary of Author's Co-op, Inc.,  
Rt. 4, Box 137,  
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### TECHNICAL REVIEW by R.M. Shelton (cont. from page 6)

At the very end of the laser barrel would be a field projector to protect the turret, by projecting two fields in different directions -- one to protect the turret and one to provide the unprotected muzzle the maximum amount of shielding from enemy energy weapons. With this system, the guns could still fire and not have their blasts disrupted by their own shields. The power required for such close range armament and shields would be insignificant to that needed to construct another Battlestar when one is blasted to smithereens by a Cylon fighter committing suicide in one of those open, totally unshielded hangars.

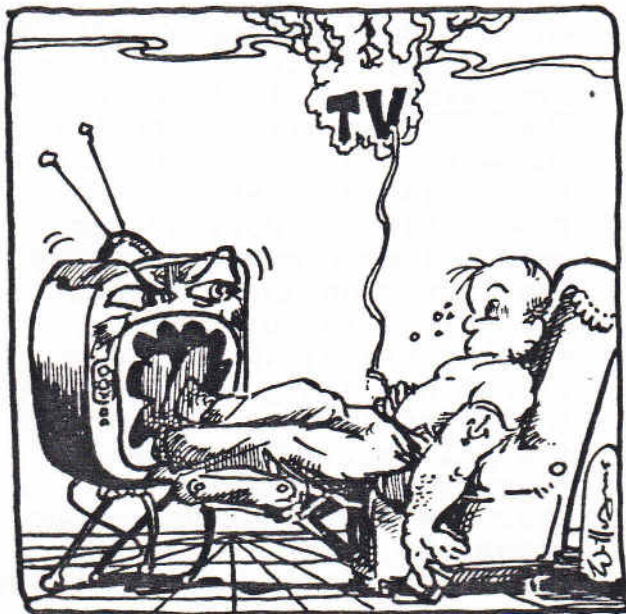
As for long or medium range offensive armament, the Galactica has none! That is, if you don't count those Cadillac-sized Viper fighters that defy the

(cont. on page 10)



**BITS AND PIECES** (cont. from page 2)....cation to 6 times a year.\*\*Actor George Takei will be in Chattanooga on Saturday, Dec. 2, for CARTA.

**N3F ELECTION RESULTS**....The National Fantasy Fan Federation election results are in and Irvin Koch, ChattaCon Chairman and Chattanooga fan, has been re-elected as president. The voting resulted in a 81 to 49 victory over Don Franson. Also elected to the Board of Directors were Joanne Burger, Lynne Holdom, Judy Gerguoy, Harry A.N. Andruschack, and Mike Lowry. A constitutional amendment to raise yearly dues was also on the ballot, but failed to receive the necessary two-thirds majority to pass. (NWL)



cludes Roddy McDowall as Hasan the thief, Peter Ustinov (always worth watching) as the Caliph, Kabir Bedi as Prince Taj, Terence Stamp as Wazir Jaudur (the prince's arch rival) and Paula Ustinov as Princess Yasmine. Bedi is especially good as the prince, doing Errol Flynn stunts with the style of Flynn himself.

The effects are great and range from a flying carpet to a path of truth and a genii. They augment rather than dominate the story and actors, which seems to be the exception rather than the rule today.

If they show this special again, be sure to see it. We aren't treated to good fantasy often.

The NBC-TV movie A Fire in the Sky was a noble attempt by the television industry to bring realistic science fiction (albeit in the disguise of a disaster epic/technological thriller) to the small screen. Unfortunately, there were many flaws, and the movie is a critical failure.

Start out with an egocentric astronomer from an observatory on Carson Peak, who forecasts that a newly discovered comet will impact earth in a mere eight days, in the Phoenix

(cont. on page 11)

## On the Tube SF on TV

**THE THIEF OF BAGHDAD** (NBC-TV)

Reviewed by Nicki Lynch

**A FIRE IN THE SKY** (NBC-TV)

Reviewed by Dick Lynch

Who says there is no Sword & Sorcery on TV? Until Thanksgiving evening, I did. The Thief of Baghdad was a fantasy journey into the Arabian Nights with special effects by John Stears, one of the lesser known Star Wars Academy Award winners.

The story is the classic tale of a prince who is sent on a quest to win the hand of a lovely princess. The cast in-

**TECHNICAL REVIEW** by R.M. Shelton

(cont. from page 9)

laws of inertia so effortlessly, apparently without the means to do so! For a ship the size of the Galactica to carry only a maximum of 75 of these comparatively tiny craft is sheer design stupidity. At the very least, launch ports should be in stacks of five with two hundred launch ports to each bay deck on each hangar pod, for at least a thousand fighters per every Battlestar-class vessel. Offensively, the Battlestars are designed more like modern carriers instead of battleship-carriers. But what happens if they meet ships capable of canceling out those fighters, either defensively or offensively, such as the Enterprise? The answer is simple, they're goners! They need large weaponry capable of 360° horizontal traverse on the upper and lower sides of the craft. An eight turret arrangement (4 up / 4 down), each with two high-powered heavy laser cannons would do nicely. They would only be slightly larger than the individual main turrets on a WW II Yamato-class battleship and thus, small in comparison to the rest of the ship. And with all of those unused energizers (actually miniature fusion reactors!) that they spoke of last Sunday (Nov. 12), really quite affordable. Even with the energy shielding like the smaller anti-fighter gun turrets.

In the third and last installment of this review, I will talk about the drive system, and compare it to that of the Enterprise, and also compare the two shows more in such areas as script and story quality.



## ON THE TUBE / A FIRE IN THE SKY REVIEW (cont.)

metropolitan area. As the crisis builds, the characterizations get more and more stereotyped: the Governor who waffles on the Right Thing To Do, the young woman from a rich family who wants to forsake four years at Radcliffe and a socialite life to marry a rodeo cowboy, the TV station owner whose husband (who runs a local newspaper) is fooling around on the side with his star female reporter, and so on. Many actions by the characters are only too predictable, and many situations' outcomes only too foreseeable.

And the special effects were drab. Apparently no one in the industry knows what a comet actually looks like. Certainly not (for the most part) as it was depicted in the movie: a flashing light trailed by a streaming tail that flowed like water. (A comet is a tenuous, hazy object until the very moment it hits you; it's tail is like the Milky Way -- hazy, undefinable, static.) And after the comet hit, some of the scenes of a devastated Phoenix were all-too-obviously painted backdrops.

A Fire in the Sky was not without its good points, though. Richard Crenna portrayed a semi-convincing astronomer, who did not survive the holocaust. His final scenes in the desert awaiting doom were well done. The disintegration of the skyscrapers looked realistic, as did some of the other special effects like the spacecraft. But I'll never be able to swallow the prediction eight days in advance of the exact impact site by the astronomer (Crenna) early on in the movie -- nobody and nothing is that good, unless you've got a psychic on your payroll.

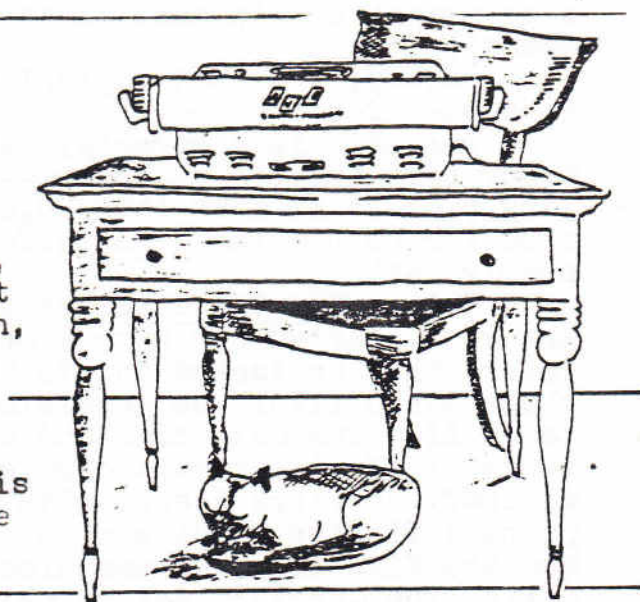
There were a few sidelights to the movie that were interesting, if not humorous. For instance, the observatory was located at 'Carson Peak', while its actual, real counterpart is located at Kitt Peak in the Arizona Desert (Kitt/Carson, get it?). And, of course, Phoenix was the site of Iguanacon, the 36th World Science Fiction Convention, this past September. One scene showed destruction of the Hyatt Regency Hotel, where I stayed during the convention. (It is encouraging to know that we were not in any way connected with its downfall.) And another scene showed the Convention Center and adjoining plaza, in which the Iguanacon hucksters were located; one such table was an advance publicity organ for the new science fiction film wherein earth is devastated by, you guessed it, Large Objects From Space. Its name: Meteor from American International Pictures. We'll have to see if its any better than A Fire in the Sky.

## A. J.'s Corner

by A. J. Barker

Another month and another corner. This month it's a corner of my new apartment. Yes, I finally got a place of my own. An apartment with 4 rooms -- a livingroom, bedroom, kitchen, and fanroom. The fanroom is the place I put the 11 boxes of books and the three boxes of zine materials that have been making walking around my bedroom at home impossible for the last 6 months or so. I would like to take this opportunity to thank people who helped and the

(cont. on page 12)



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 the 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.



## AJ's CORNER (cont.)

ones who offered. Eventually I may get it all unpacked, then again, I don't have enough bookshelves. Maybe Santa will bring me some.

Every fan needs a fanroom. It's really great. The one room in the house totally devoted to doing what I like best and the one room which if I never clean no one will ever gripe. My typewriter is going in there also, but I have a feeling that every time I decide to type it will get dragged back into the livingroom.

I hear of getting even, but did they have to hit Phoenix with a comet? Just because Lucifer's Hammer didn't get a Hugo is no reason to wipe the whole place off the map. Meteor is supposed to premiere sometime next year. I certainly hope it is better than this TV turkey. Perhaps it was better in color, but in black and white it didn't come across very well. The shots of the rockets exploding near the comet were just awful. The destruction of Phoenix was worse. Since when do comets pulsate?

If I can sit through 3 hours of that nonsense, I can finish Lucifer's Hammer and read Fritz Leiber's The Wanderer and have better things to talk about next month.

This column was done this month as a result of blackmail. Dick and Nicki said they would help me move if I would do my CHAT column. They did and I have. Oh, and one more thing. A man called today from an advertising agency. It seems CARTA is getting George "Sulu" Takei to come into town to help dedicate the new bus facilities. We get to ride out to the airport in a special CARTA darter and be on TV (news probably). We will also be taken to the Chat-tanooga Choo-Choo for lunch and a drink. Should be interesting.

And, for anyone interested, APA-Q hasn't really died. The corpse was a Q clone. The real Q is still in there SWINGING.

FROM THE MAILBAG -- LETTER OF COMMENT -- Another View of BS: Galactica

Robert Barger  
P.O. Box 8  
Evensville, Tn.  
37332

I enjoyed R.M. Shelton's notes on the design of Battlestar Galactica, but -- while I don't for a moment want anyone to think I am defending the show, or even that I like it -- I would like to point out a very logical reason why the Galactica isn't a heavily armored ship (aside from the obvious advantages plot-wise, i.e., who's going to get excited if the bad-dies attack a ship that can't be destroyed because of its near-impervious armor?)

Anyway, the most logical reason for the Galactica's unarmored condition is cost-effectiveness.

The ship is a warship; it is designed to fight. Loading it down with armor will protect it, sure -- but will, say, 20,000 more tons of armor plating protect it more than 20,000 more tons of fightercraft? Fighters can be used for both defense and offense, while the armor is good for only one thing, namely defense.

Before BS: Galactica came to TV, we heard the producers and PR men saying the show started off with "Pearl Harbor" and so on, it being obvious that the Powers That Be looked not to SF for their military information (otherwise there would likely be Heinlein Jump Troops and Laumer Bolos in the show) but to WW II. The Galactica and her sister ships are simply space going equivalents of WW II aircraft carriers. And of course, in WW II you didn't see any aircraft carriers loaded with armor, and this is simply because pound for pound a fighter plane was better defense than the inert metal of armor plating, and the fighter plane was also a great offensive weapon. In fact, in the Pacific, the Carrier Task Force was just about the Ultimate Weapon up until the atomic bomb. In WW I the ultimate sea weapon was the heavy cruiser or battleship -- this is the basic logic behind Star Trek, despite Roddenberry having once been a fighter pilot and despite the name Enterprise. In Star Trek, it is always the cruiser class ships sitting a few diameters off some planet and slugging it out. The force-fields of the Enterprise and other ships of her

((cont. on page 13))



MAILBAG (cont.)....size, be they Klingons or whatnot, are apparently so powerful that the cruiser class ships have nothing to fear from smaller ships or fighters. This very closely parallels the the WW I armored battleships: there simply wasn't a whole lot of things back then that could punch through all that armor, and those weapons were so massive that it took another battleship to carry them.

But in WW II improved weapons, and more importantly, improved aircraft made it possible not only to pack more destructive power into a smaller and less massive space, but also to deliver that bomb or shell much much faster than a large ship could sail. It only takes so much force to punch through so many inches of steel -- after all, steel can only be made so tough -- and the improved technology of WW II made it possible for just one fighter plane to carry enough destructive force to destroy the largest battleship. Which is one reason some folks say the U.S. managed to recover from Pearl Harbor: our carriers luckily weren't there, and heavily armored battleships were obsolete from the first day of the war - so it didn't hurt so much losing them.

It appears that BS: Galactica postulates a future (er, past) in which defensive energy shielding does not exist, thus making it possible for a single fighter to destroy a battleship (er, Battlestar). Or destroy all of them for that matter since it would only take one small fusion bomb to vaporize the damned thing, and one freighter could easily carry a dozen or more bombs. Even with today's technology an atomic bomb can be made that will fit into a briefcase -- or so it's said.

But then, one wonders if the Colonies even had atomic power, since they have to have fuel, the name of which I've never heard of before (clearly invented as a plot device to make it necessary for the fleet to set down in orbit around a planet every so often -- say about once a week maybe....) and which, when fired upon with a hand laser, burns. I wonder how they actually use the fuel in the Battlestar. Shovel it into boilers maybe? In any event, the implication is that it is a chemical fuel. (Of course, hydrogen fusion is the logical power source for starships, if only because about 3/4 of the entire universe is hydrogen. Fuel wouldn't exactly be scarce.)

But enough. I didn't intend to start picking holes in BS: Galactica, and I'm sorry. But it is to some degree pointless to make any kind of detailed study of the Galactica for the simple reason that it is simply a space-bound oversized WW II aircraft carrier. The ships and weapons systems in the show make sense only because they are, weapons system for weapons system (and even down to the rivets in bulkheads and catapults for fighters) copied almost exactly from their WW II counterparts. Whenever the show tries to expand beyond the scope of those weapons lifted from WW II, as in the case of the planet-bound laser in one of the shows, it succeeds in being at best simply silly.

#### ART CREDITS THIS MONTH....

Bill Bridget - page 2  
 Julia Wilhoit - pages 9 & 11  
 Dick Lynch - page 8  
 Nicki Lynch - page 7  
 Charlie Williams - pages 3, 6, 10,  
 13, 14

Our art inventory has increased a little in the past couple of months, but we still need more. Those who have contributed art that has not yet appeared, hang on -- it will soon, in all probability.

Say, how about some more letters of comment, gang?

