



FOCAL POINT, Volume 2, Number 25, a fanzine of news, views, and reviews, is edited by rich brown (410 61st St., Apt. D4, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11220) and Arnie Katz (59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201). Invaluable Help: Joyce Fisher. Australian Agent: John Bangsund (1/8 Bundalohn Ct., St. Kilda, Vict. 3182, Australia. 12/A\$3.) Published bi-weekly, it is available for news, all-for-all trades (both editors, please) or 6/\$1. Illustrations by Jay Kinney. March 1, 1971.

BALTICON SCENE OF FLARE-UP For the two dozen or so people in the meeting room who witnessed it, the most impressive thing about the Balticon was reportedly the heated series of exchanges between Ted White and Harry Harrison. (For a TEW-eye view of the encounter, see elsewhere in this issue.) Otherwise, the Balticon, held at the Lord Baltimore Hotel, February 12-14 was generally said to have been a so-so convention, much in the mold of recent East Coast regionals. Total registration was 120, but actual attendance, while no exact figures are known, was well below that figure.

The convention was sparingly programmed, so there wasn't much in the way of Official Highlights, except a Sunday banquet which featured GoH Harry Harrison's speech. Harry spoke about the true story behind the Rio Conference to which so many pros went last year.

FIRST EUROPEAN SF CONVENTION Trieste, Italy, also the site of the International SF Film Festival, will be the scene of the First European Convention, July 12-16. Attending memberships are \$7, and supporting memberships are \$4. Attendees will also be able to attend all screenings of the film festival.

For memberships and further information, contact the convention's American representative, Tony Lewis (33 Unity Ave., Belmont, Mass 02178) or its Canadian representative, Leland Sapiro (Box 40, University Station, Regina, Sask., Canada).

PECON II The Pecon II will be held in Peoria, Ill., April 9-11, at the Sands Motel, according to chairman Larry Propp. Gordon Dickson will be the Guest of



of Honor, and Phillip Jose Farmer will also be among the speakers. Room rates are low; \$11 for a single, \$12 for a double, and \$14.50 for a twin.

Plans have not been firmed up about things like banquets and art shows, but it sounds like it might be an enjoyable convention. For further details: Larry Propp, 3127 North Sheridan Rd., Peoria, Illinois 61604

THUNDER OVER FAPA The big noise in FAPA mailing 134, February 1971, is that President Greg Benford has decided to reopen an argument which took place in late 1969 concerning the validity of the renewal credentials of Sam Moskowitz.

Sam had distributed his annual 8-page FAPazine in November 1969 to meet the FAPA activity requirements for the year of 8 pages. Because six pages of the fanzine were reprinted from a mid-fifties issue of QUICK FROZEN FOODS and only two pages were new material, some members protested that the zine did not conform to specifications as outlined by the FAPA constitution. Dean Grennell, FAPA Vice President at the time and therefore the one to decide constitutional interpretations, ruled that SaM's zine represented substantially new effort as outlined in the constitution, and let the zine count. The Secretary-Treasurer Bill Evans argued that as S-T it was his province to decide what would qualify as renewal credentials and declared that SaM's fanzine didn't make it. Thereupon, Grennell said that, since he was in charge of constitutional questions and had interpreted the section on renewal credentials already, his ruling could not be superceded.

There it stood. Another year went by, and SaM maintained his membership by publishing a FAPazine in November 1970 composed of all new material.

Greg Benford thinks that such a procedural error should not be allowed to go uncorrected. Although feeling he has the right to act, as the officer who is empowered to take care of matters not directly covered in the constitution, Greg has decided to put the matter of whether past errors of procedure and other errors of fact should be rectified by the officers, to discussion by the members.

Vice President Dick Lupoff has promised that, after hearing the arguments on both sides, he will render at least a preliminary opinion in April.

So, when did FAPA affiliate with the N3F?

APA NEWS APA L, the weekly press group which distributes its mailings at LASFS meetings, has just celebrated the occasion of its 300th Distribution.

APA L, founded nearly six years ago, has far outlasted the first weekly group APA F, the Fanoclast apa, which called it quits after 69 weeks. Although there have been times of lean distys, APA L has managed to continue, and it is doubtful if it will cease any time in the near future. :: Joyce Fisher says APA M, the attempt to form a New York area group which would allow some contact between the disparate elements of metro fandom, has fizzled. She got a few inquiries, but unfortunately they were all from places like Texas, California, and Oregon. :: Besides the germs of a nasty feud, FAPA mailing 134 had 277½ pages. Among the major contributions were two issues of Greg Calkins' THE RAMBLING FAP, KIM CHI from Dick Ellington, and fanzines from such as Elmer Perdue, Terry Carr, Bill Rotsler, and Redd Boggs. :: APA 45 mailing 26, January 1971, contained 217 pages, 40 of which were another excellent issue of STARLING from Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell.

SHAW NEWS

#1,221.00 is the new total in the Bob Shaw Fund, up from \$1,050.00 reported last issue. There are no further direct contributions being sought for the fund at this time.

SPECIAL BOSH FMZ The following fmz are those which have been or soon will be published to benefit the Fund. Asterisked fmz have already been published and will be sent to you as soon as your \$\$ is received.

*MICROCOSM #14, 50¢, Dave Burton, 5422 Kenyon Dr., Indianapolis, Ind.
*FOCAL POINT 12.5, \$1, rich brown, 410-61st St., Apt. D4, Brooklyn, NY 11220.
*APA-L #289, \$2, Fred Patten, 11863 W. Jefferson Blvd., LA, Calif. 90230.
*BEABOHEMA #13, \$1, Frank Lunney, Box 551, Lehigh Univ., Bethlehem, Pa.
The Enchanted Duplicator, \$1, Arnie Katz, Apt. 6B, 59 Livingston St. Brooklyn, NY 11201
INNUENDO, \$2, Terry Carr, 35 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn, NY 11201
METANOIA #9, 50¢, Greg & Suzy Shaw, 64 Taylor Dr., Fairfax, Calif. 94930.
INFINITUM #5, 50¢, Dave Lewton, 735 E.Kessler Blvd, Indianapolis, Ind. 46220.
NOPE #12, 50¢, Jay Kinney, 215 Willoughby Ave., Apt.1212, Brooklyn NY 11205.
TRANSLATIONS #2, \$1, John-Henri Holmberg, c/o Thomas Mellgren, Nedre Slottsgatten 16, 752 20 Uppsala, SWEDEN

BOSH FUND AUCTIONS Send your bids (no money, unless asked) to Colleen Brown, 410-61st St., Apt. D4, Brooklyn, NY 11220. We ask that bids be submitted in increments of 50¢ on items under \$10, \$1 on items over that.

CLOSED AUCTIONS Lenny Kaye owes us \$8.50 for MOJO NAVIGATOR R&R NEWS. ## Robert Whitaker owes the fund \$52 for A BOOK OF WEIRD TALES #1, The Boats of "Glen Carriq", and FUTURIA FANTASIA #1. ## Joseph Pate owes the fund \$4 for WARHOON 15 & 17. ## Tom Mullen owes us \$13 for a first issue of UNKNOWN. ## Chester E. Lee owes the fund \$2.50 for NEKROMANTIKON #1. ## Bruce Robbins owes us \$28 for WILD HAIR #3, FANTASY MAGAZINE and "THRU THE DRAGON GLASS" by A. Merrit.

AUCTIONS STILL ON The following items are still receiving bids. Items which are asterisked have not received bids since last issue and will be closed out if no further bids are received by March 9.

*THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, donated by Andy Main. The set is complete from the first issue in Fall, 1949, through March, 1958. 1959 is complete but the set has only 8 issues from the beginning of 1960 through May, 1963. From May, 1963 to the end of 1968 only four issues are missing. Dale Leifeste has bid \$65 for the set.

*SPACESHIP 21, donated by Lee Hoffman. Robert Whitaker has bid \$4.50.

*SCIENCE FICTION FIVE-YEARLY #4, donated by Lee Hoffman. Chester E. Lee is the current high bidder @ \$4.50.

(Continued on second page following)

ABOUT BALTICON.....

TED WHITE

Several distorted rumors about what happened last weekend at the Balticon have already come back to me from New York. In the interests of setting the record straight, here, for FOCAL POINT, are the facts:

Jay Haldeman and I were second on Saturday's program and presented a truncated New Writers Panel (the others scheduled couldn't make it; I was moderator). After we'd done our main stint, we turned to questions from the floor. One questioner asked about amateur sf in fanzines, and I replied to the effect that very few pro writers wrote much fiction for fanzines, preferring to write anecdotes, essays, etc. I added that few pieces of fanzine sf receive adequate or meaningful criticism, making their publication of no real value to the authors.

Harry Harrison then stood and asked me why I was so down on fanzines. I replied that I wasn't--only on amateur sf in the fanzines. He then asked why I filled the pages of fanzines with letters full of lies about him.

At this point I told him that this struck me as an unsuitable topic for discussion, and that everyone would be better off if the topic was dropped. He insisted upon repeating the charge. I told him it was untrue. There followed what degenerated into a shouting match between us, during which on several occasions I asked him to cool it.

The gist of his tirade was that I repeatedly filled the pages of letter columns in fanzines with lying attacks upon him, that indeed I hardly had time for anything else, and that he'd been looking for me for years to punch me in the nose and/or beat me up (I pointed out that I'd been around the whole time without incident), that he'd thought of suing me, and that he was confronting me here and now to demand that I stop.

Since I was unaware of my guilt of most of his charges, I asked him to name a lie--just one lie--I'd ever said about him. This question was evaded until I pressed it to the point where he could not ignore it. He then said, "You said I was nearly thrown out of the SFWA, and that's a ghoddamned lie!"

I corrected him: "I said there was almost a call for your impeachment" (as Vice President of SFWA) "and that is true." (You'll note the two statements are not identical.) "By whom?" he wanted to know. I named the other party (a southern author who resigned the SFWA instead in protest against Harrison) and added that I'd also considered it. I then charged him with trying to get me fired from my position with Ultimate Publications (the editors of this fanzine have seen his letter threatening a SFWA boycott if I was not fired), and with trying to get my agent to drop me. He ignored the first point (which he could not deny, and said he had no idea who my agent was. When I told him, he laughed and said he was surprised such a man would touch me. I reminded him that he'd inveighed against me to my agent before witnesses and that I'd heard about it from several of them. I also charged him with lying about my editorship of the magazines in an anthology he edited--he'd claimed the magazines degenerated into reprint vehicles under my editorship, an obvious and transparent lie. He blustered, but did not deny it.

During the whole of this argument he also insisted I stop addressing him as Harry and call him Mr. Harrison(I didn't), and several times told me he was going to beat me up. Much as I tried, I couldn't get him to admit to any other "lies" I'd told about him than the one about the SFWA-- but he was adamant that I stop!

I've heard rumors that we also traded who's-sleeping-with-whom insults, but this is not true. The gist of the whole thing is as above.

Personally, I find such scenes greatly distasteful. And I do not consider myself in any way responsible for Harrison's behavior. To my knowledge I have never told any lies about Harry. The reverse--as he has himself plainly documented in professional print--is not true. As far as I am aware the enmity between us grew solely out of my article in SFR about Leroy Tanner, which has elicited from Harrison a considerable amount of hate mail, vituperation, and professional slander. My previous contacts with Harry had been friendly.

Finally: As a professional I have no interest in Harry Harrison's personality and will not prejudge any work of his, whether as an editor or as, for instance, a voter in the SFWA awards program. As a private individual, my disgust for the man is complete and total, and I have every intention of denying him any further attempt to grandstand at my expense.

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BOSH FUND AUCTIONS (Continued)

*THE ARKHAM SAMPLER, Winter, 1949, donated by Forry Ackerman. Robert Whitaker is top bidder at \$6.

*FEN CRITTUR COMICAL BOOKS, donated by Richard Bergeron, written by Willis & Shaw. Joanne Burger has bid \$4.

*UNKNOWN WORLDS, June, Aug., Oct, 1943, sewn together, donated by Robert Whitaker. Edwin L. Murray has bid \$5.

*THREE pen & ink drawing by Vincent DiFate, framed, contributed by the artist. One appeared in ANALOG. Joanne Burger has bid \$4.

*REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST VII, 182pp from the pages of SPACEWAYS. Robert Whitaker is the current high bidder at \$8.50.

*FIVE COPIES of Don Ford's TAFF report, two volumes, donated by Lynn Hickman. We have bids from Paul Anderson(\$8), Joanne Burger(\$5), Joseph Pate(\$4.50), John Leavitt(\$4) and Chester Lee(\$4).

*A COMPLETE set of LIGHTHOUSE (#1-15), donated by Richard Bergeron -- in mint condition. Robert Whitaker has bid \$47 for the set.

*QUANDRY #14, donated by Lee Hoffman. rich brown has bid \$3.50.

*THREE COPIES of THE GOON GOES WEST, donated by F.M. & Elinor Busby. The top three bids are from Paul Anderson (\$10), Robert Whitaker (\$8) and Joanne Burger (\$8).

*THE WHITE SYBIL by Clark Ashton Smith b/w MEN OF AVALON by David H. Keller, donated by Forry Ackerman. Robert Whitaker has bid \$8.50.

*QUANDRY #13, donated by Richard Bergeron. Missing page 40, "A Dream" by David English. rich brown has bid \$12 for the issue.

*HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT: A TENTATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY, donated by Dick Ellington. Robert Whitaker has bid \$6.

*FAMOUS MONSTERS OF ILMLAND #2, donated by Forry Ackerman. Robert Whitaker has bid \$4 for the issue.

*FANCIFUL TALES, V1N1, Fall, 1936, donated by Forry Ackerman. rich brown is top bidder @ \$11.

TWO ORIGINAL Rotsler-Kirk collaborations, full page. Both of high fmz quality. Neither have been published. Seth Dogramajian has bid \$8 for the pair.

the infinite beanie



BY
TERRY
CARR

Ever since I let the news out that Leo and Diane Dillon had been "fired" from doing the covers for the SF Specials I've been getting letters about it: people asking if it's true, asking me why, some even cursing my name for being such a low-life bastard. "Just because the books aren't selling, that's no excuse to shaft the Dillons," one letter told me coldly.

It's nice, really, to hear from people who appreciated the Dillons, even though occasionally I'm reminded that most artists -- of whatever discipline -- have to die before people recognize how good they were. (That isn't meant as a Vicious Putdown, only a sad comment; after all, it was only a couple of issues ago that I was writing about Virgil Finlay.)

Well, look, I think the Dillons are incredibly good artists, and it hurt me more than it hurt you when I had to call up and say, "I've been told the Specials aren't selling and it's because of the covers. So we're going to change to a different cover artist." Shafting the Dillons? Hell, Leo had to console me, not the other way around. I loved their covers; the original painting for The Left Hand of Darkness is framed on my wall at the office.

But the sales of the Specials really haven't been what they should be. Oh, they weren't disastrous, no, nor did all the books do poorly by any means. But those books, most of them (I'll admit to a few books that were just mistakes, like mainly The Ring and The Black Corridor), were really good, and it's a terrible disservice to good books and good writers to publish their books in such a way that they don't sell lots and lots of copies. In the last three years there have been 19 novels that were nominated for the Nebula Award: of these 19, 10 were Specials. With a series like that it's just insane that a book by, say, Walt and Leigh Richmond, should sell better.

The trouble was that when we've published space operas we've put spaceships and red monsters on the covers, and it's monsters and spaceships that make the average newsstand browser recognize a paperback as being science fiction. The Dillons aren't interested in painting monsters and spaceships month after month; they took the job in the first place with the understanding that they could paint whatever they wanted, and I didn't want to break that agreement. So we'll get a new artist, who'll paint monsters and spaceships -- though, since this series is still the SF Specials, they'll be classy examples of the genre. Maybe we'll do the monsters in pastels.

Don't weep for Leo and Diane. They're among the most sought-after artists in the book field, and they make a lot more money from the work they do for Time-Life Books or Fawcett Premier than we could ever pay them at Ace. When you visit them and look in on their studio you find incredibly beautiful sketches and partially finished paintings there. "That one was due last Tuesday," says Diane, "and we were supposed to have twenty-five double-page spreads done for a history of Hawaii last month." For the Dillons, the SF Specials were an extra job every month that they didn't need and which they did for less money than they could get anywhere else. They did them out of friendship and love for the freedom to paint what they wanted.

Let me tell you a story about Leo and Diane Dillon, artists. They were given an assignment by Time-Life for three "classic" books, things like Homer and Chaucer that have had hundreds of covers and illustrations done for them. Leo and Diane wanted to do something different. So Leo phoned the art director.

"Listen, on these books you gave us...you mind if we do something that's sort of original? Kind of different, maybe?"

"Sure, I guess so," said the art director. "Uh...what do you mean by different?"

"Well, we were thinking for instance of doing a tapestry."

"A tapestry? That sounds great, but, uh, you know the jobs are already budgeted, so we can't pay you anything extra."

"We know. That's okay."

"Well then, fine," said the art director. "Say," he added, "I didn't know you'd ever done tapestries."

"We haven't," said Leo, and hung up.

So they did a tapestry for one of the books. For the second book they did a bas-relief in wood. And for the third, what the hell, they did a stained glass window.

No, of course they'd never done a stained glass window before. But it was beautiful. All three of the jobs were. What would you expect?

A couple of weeks ago I was talking about the Dillons with someone who said, "I guess with a schedule as busy as theirs they never got a chance to read the novels themselves."

"Never read them?" I said. "They read every one of them; don't be silly. I've had lots of letters from the writers themselves, exclaiming about how well the covers illustrated the books." (That's true.)

The difference with the Dillons was that they didn't just pick out a scene or a character to paint, they read the whole book and illustrated the themes. That, of course, was one of their troubles,

from a commercial standpoint, because your average gook-on-the-street wouldn't know a theme if it bit him in his collective unconscious.

A few examples, from the Dillons' SF Specials covers: On the cover of Lafferty's Past Master, when they were still doing both regular paintings and op art on each cover, the op art square shows a blue disc and a yellow one, each sending out rays of influence to encompass the other: the blue disc is Earth, the yellow is "golden Astrobe," the planet where the apocalyptic battles of Past Master are fought for the salvation or loss of both Astrobe and Earth. The painting is dominated by the face of Thomas More, he of the title, and a profile of a Programmed Person, or android: More's face is dark and lined with experience and humanity; the Programmed Person's skin is transparent pink, showing the too-simple workings within. There's more in the painting, lots more, particularly the three secret rulers of Astrobe, who, strangely, cast shadows that are quite unlike them. Does that sound like Lafferty's Past Master to you? It sure does to me.

Or look at the painting on the cover of D. G. Compton's Synthajoy, his novel about the recording of people's perceptions during peak experiences so that they can be replayed into the selves of those whose lives have no peaks. It's a very simple painting: the main figure wears a complicated helmet that connects to machinery tended by very serious researchers; but the background, the machinery, the technicians, the helmet and even the head of the subject are done all in a pale purple, while the body of the person wearing the helmet swirls with rich colors. How can you illustrate the book more directly than that?

Their painting for Keith Roberts' Pavane, a beautiful novel about an alternate world where the Catholic Church reigns supreme in the 20th Century and a mass revolt is building and bursting, shows a priest blessing the masses ...but the masses are storming out from under his robes, fists and clubs raised. Instead of a crucifix, the priest wears around his neck the insignia that Keith Roberts designed to represent his imaginary world. (Roberts, an artist himself, loved this cover.)

Another Compton novel, The Steel Crocodile: a novel about, among many other things, a computer research center wherein man's pretensions to godhood are brought to a reductio ad absurdum conclusion. The Dillons' painting shows a group of figures who might be human or might be just monkeys reading printout tapes that come from a Tower of Babel. For the cover of Joanna Russ's And Chaos Died they painted the face of the protagonist, Jai Vedh, who in the novel meets the telepathic girl Evne and falls in love, is locked in love, with her: on the cover his mind blows upward and recoalesces into an upside-down portrait of Evne. (Does anybody else besides Bob Toomey remember that great line from the love scene in the movie The President's Analyst? "You are Mrs. Me!") Their cover for John Brunner's The Traveler in Black is a portrait of the Traveler, whose duty it is to bring scientific order out of Chaos; bright, magical colors roil beside him, but he grasps them in one hand and they emerge as straight, coherent rays of color...dull color.

One of my favorites of all the Dillon covers is the one they did for Tucker's The Year of the Quiet Sun. That's a time travel novel,

as I guess you know. So how did they represent time travel? They borrowed some technique from Marcel Duchamp -- sure you know him; he was the artist who shook up the art world fifty years or more ago with his paintings of figures moving in time: Nude Descending a Staircase was his most famous one. So there's Brian Chaney painted in the same technique, moving through time, receding into the distance ...and in his forehead, if you notice, he carries with him the image of Kathryn van Hise, the girl he loves. (Leo and Diane handled the time travel theme differently a little later when they did their cover for Compton's Chronocules: in this painting we have successive portraits of Roses Varco, the figure forming, fragmenting, re-forming; he moves across the painting and is unchanged, while in a small trilogy of profiles below him Liza Simmons, who didn't travel in time, is shown as a young woman, in middle age, and as an old woman.)

And how thoroughly have you explored their cover for Ursula LeGuin's A Wizard of Earthsea? Sure you see the portrait of the wizard. But do you see the shark? The mouse? The sailing ship? That's an appropriately fantastic painting. (The portrait of the wizard, incidentally, originated as a pencil sketch Diane did of herself one night in a coffeehouse, working from her reflection on the side of a glass. I saw this in her sketchbook and loved it, and told her so; and next month there it was as the central figure in the cover painting she and Leo turned in.)

But the flow of Dillon paintings for the Specials has stopped; Mr. Mediocre wants spaceships so we'll give him spaceships. I can't help feeling that a golden period of sf art has ended, a victim of economic necessity, otherwise known as the American Way. I had lunch last week with George Ernsberger of Avon, who said he knew just how I felt because he'd just had to make the same decision about an artist named Punchaz (spelling may be wrong) who'd done a lot of imaginative science fiction covers for his books, including that beautiful one for Bob Silverberg's Nightwings...but every book for which he'd done the cover had been subpar in sales, so back to rocketships goes Avon too. Wowee, gang.

Leo and Diane Dillon were nominated for a Hugo as Best Pro Artist(s) last year, and maybe the year before; I forget. They didn't win, but they'll probably be nominated again this year. May I respectfully call your attention to the very extraordinary qualities of their work, and suggest that you consider voting for them? This year will be your last chance.

(Vote for the Dillons. They've been fired.)

No, really.

Come to think of it, it is Hugo nominating time, isn't it? Everybody in fandom seems to be publicizing his recommendations for Hugo votes this year, so, since I have as many opinions as anyone, let me lay a few recommendations on you.

The short stories are always a problem: so many of them published, and your reaction depends on how you were feeling that hour, or half-hour, depending on whether you were taught to read by phonics or not.

Also, the word-counts are tricky. If R. A. Lafferty's Continued on Next Rock fits in the short story category (it was in Orbit 7, if you want to look it up), that gets my vote. I think it may be a novelette under the Hugo rules, though, in which case I'd vote for either Lafferty's Entire and Perfect Chrysolite (Orbit 6) or Neal Barrett, Jr.'s Greyspun's Gift (Worlds of Tomorrow).

In the novelettes, if Continued on Next Rock doesn't fit there (and maybe even if it does), I'm going to vote for Fritz Leiber's The Snow Women, a beautiful fantasy novelette that appeared in Fantastic for April. Failing that, it's the Lafferty Continued... or Gordon Eklund's Dear Aunt Annie from that same April issue of Fantastic.

I'm prejudiced in the novel category and I may as well admit it immediately. I think Joanna Russ's And Chaos Died may be the best sf novel of the last ten years, not just the last one, but then I published it as an SF Special. Also, I haven't read either Bob Silverberg's Tower of Glass or Larry Niven's Ringworld. I find it hard to imagine another novel published in the same year being better than And Chaos Died, but maybe so. (Actually, I don't expect the Russ novel to win any awards at all this year, just as neither Light of Other Days nor A Rose for Ecclesiastes won awards in their years. Quick, tell me what stories did win the awards those years!) In case anyone is thinking of R. A. Lafferty's Fourth Mansions, forget it; it isn't eligible, having been published in December 1969. The Hugo and Nebula eligibility rules vary by one month.

Best Magazine? Another toughie, but I'm voting for Amazing. It was about as uneven in story content as most of the others, I guess (excepting Analog, New Worlds and Vision of Tomorrow, which were consistent in their awfulness), but the artwork and features have given real life to the magazine. Ted White is a clever editor.

For best fanzine, I wouldn't vote for SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW on a bet this year. Dick Geis publishes a good zine, yes indeed, but that good it isn't: the 13th corollary of Carr's Law of Fanzine Quality states that "the readability of a fanzine diminishes in direct proportion to the swelling of the editor's ego." Dick Geis claims he wants to win a third fanzine Hugo in order to break the previous record and become the best fanzine editor in history; I hope he knows that the record of two fanzine Hugos was set by SCIENCE FICTION TIMES and later matched by AMRA -- if Dick considers Jimmy Taurasi and George Scithers the best fanzine editors to date, I can only shake my head. I'm voting for WARHOON, and aside from that very worthy fanzine I recommend ENERGUMEN, SPECULATION and our very own FOCAL POINT (which probably won't even get nominated).

The best fan artist, I say with some regret, has got to be Alicia Austin, whose work is just incredibly good. (I say this without ever having seen her famous "erotic" drawings, so you know this opinion is pure and untainted as the driven snow.) The only reason I regret recommending Alicia Austin is that Bill Rotsler has deserved a fan Hugo for 25 years -- that's twenty years longer than fan Hugos for art have existed -- and if there weren't an incredible artist in fandom like Alicia Austin I'd be recommending Rotsler. But Alicia Austin it is.

And don't forget: Leo and Diane Dillon for Best Pro Artist.

BOOK NOOK

::::-----Opus Foundation, by Isaac Azzlemute

This grand new work (300 pages) may be called the introspective psychological philosophical "message" finale of Azzlemute's classic "Foundation" series. In it the First Speaker, the Second Speaker, the Third Speaker, the Fourth Speaker, the Fifth Speaker, the Sixth Speaker, the Seventh Speaker, Tris Speaker, and Harry Seldom participate in a multi-level dialogue and the psychological philosophical ramifications of everyday application of the Seldom theories are clarified. After the climactic action scene where a pitcher of water is passed around to wet dry throats, the First Speaker and Harry Seldom launch into a stirring 90-page summary of the gripping conclusions reached earlier. Highly recommended to all Azzlemute buffs. Rating: *****

::::-----More Than Inhuman, by Theodore Lumpfish

Feeling himself called upon to provide a positive exposition of his refreshingly radical theories of interactive protosexual coexistence, Mr. Lumpfish replied with this magnificent 297-page tome. The entire book is concerned with a five hour exercise in Tantric Yoga by Lone and Bonnie. Their subtle dialogue, which justifies all of Mr. Lumpfish's previous philosophical tenets, is conducted without a single vocal word being spoken. The magical prose brings alive the hidden-yet-lucid meanings of bodily touches and pressures, of the exhalation of breath, of skillful movements of the eyes, and of more intimate exchanges. I'll not reveal the climax in this review, but avid fans of Mr. Lumpfish will know what to anticipate. Rating: *****½

::::-----Megalopolis, by Clifford Sidetrack

At last a true scholarly work on the Tales! No longer will an educated man be forced to plod through the Tales themselves in order to understand and discourse upon them. Here is a distilled 568-page compendium of the monographs and treatises of such eminent authorities as Bounce, Rover, Prince, Canis, Spiro, Scottie, and others, edited and annotated by the renowned Clifford Sidetrack. A vast treasury of Doggish wisdom concerning the Tales. Rating: *****

::::-----Mishmash of Gravity, by Hal Clemency

Purely an offering for the "hard science" sf fans amongst us (of which I count myself one) this brilliant new novel is written entirely in mathematical, physical, and chemical equations (32 pages). The book is quite imaginative, with a tight engaging narrative style. It will probably be of limited interest, however; for despite my six doctorates (including degrees in vector calculus and brain surgery), I encountered some difficulties about midway. A profound work. Rating: *****

NOTE: Due to spatial limitations, reviews of Atlas Shrugged and the new Heinlein novel were forced out, though there can be no doubt that they belong in this column. Perhaps next time.

--Ferdinand Freak

LATE NEWS

PRESICON FLOPS The PresiCon (Presidents' Day Science Fiction Conference) scheduled for Los Angeles February 12-15 was a disaster, according to FP's Man on the Aisle Forry Ackerman. It's not hard to believe, considering the outrageous admission price set by Bruce Pelz and the fact that the con had an 11th hour hotel change.

Forry describes the scene thusly: "Six friends of GoH Emile Petaja finally undertook to take him out to lunch when the convention banquet collapsed due to lack of support (14 tickets sold). Underpublicized, underprogrammed, underattended (50 fen?), it was not understood by this reporter why this potentially fine 4-day affair was allowed to degenerate into such a flop. A. E. vanVogt, Robert Bloch, Kris Neville, Horace Gold, C.L. Moore -- you name them -- weren't there, primarily (apparently) because they had never even heard there was a convention going on. Some people, presumably, showed up at the wrong hotel. It was the weekend's best kept secret."

There were some official events, Forry advised, including Emil Petaja's GoH Speech "The Irrelevant Unicorn", relating early fan experiences, his association with Hannes Bok and his attitude concerning the place of fantasy in today's world.

Forry summed it up: "The costume 'ball' was a bomb with half a dozen masqueraders; the huckster room a disaster area; the fan movies were never shown due to operational difficulties. Fans got into trouble with the hotel management and altogether it was a fiasco."

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