

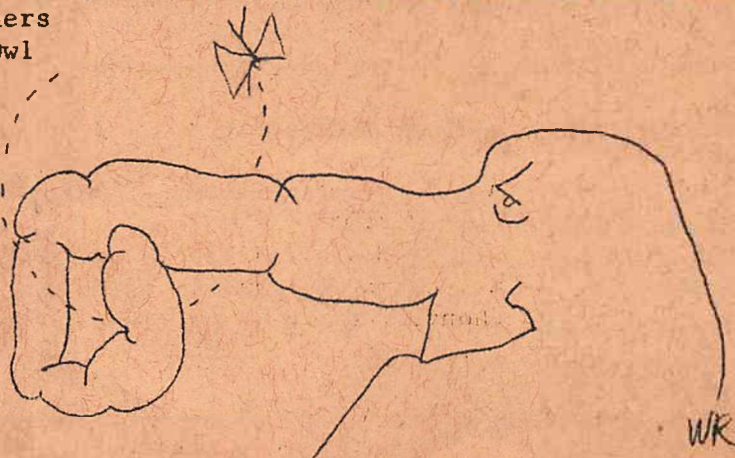
FOCAL POINT, Volume 2, Number 29, a fanzine of news, views, and reviews, is edited by Arnie Katz (59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201). Invaluable Help: Joyce Katz. Editors Emeritus: Rich Brown & Mike McInerney. Australian Agent: John Bangsund (1/8 Bundalohn Ct., St. Kilda, Vict. 3182, Australia 12/A\$3.) Published bi-weekly, it is available for news, all-for-all trades, or 6/\$1. Illustrations by Tom Foster, Jay Kinney, and Bill Rotsler. April 26, 1971.

EASTERCON-22 The annual British SF convention, EASTERCON-22, held at the Giffard Hotel, Worcester, over Easter. By all reports this was the best British convention in some years. For once, glory be, the hotel staff was enthusiastic to see the convention go well. Even the banquet food was edible. The Giffard is a recently-built hotel with a superb view of the cathedral from the restaurant window (it's just across the street). Guest of Honor was Anne McCaffrey; Fan Goh, Ethel Lindsay. St. Fantony held a ceremony at which Bob Shaw and James White were made members of the Order. At the banquet the Doc Weir Award (for services to fandom) was given to Phil Rogers (who was toastmaster this year and Parliamentarian at the BSFA meeting, performing valiantly in spite of losing his voice during the weekend.) The BSFA award went to John Brunner for Jagged Orbit. The Ken McIntyre Award (for fanzine artwork) was not awarded this year.

Eileen Weston appeared at the fancy-dress ball as an excellent Olivia Presteign from "The Stars My Destination" and won a well-deserved prize. There were more entries than usual for the fancy-dress this year.

Films were shown each night through to about 3am. Gerald Bishop performed the remarkable feat of projecting all the films himself, and yet showing up the next morning fully awake. Highlight of the films was "Charly" - others included "Haunted Palace", "Incident at Owl Creek Bridge", and the inevitable Flash Gordon.

The bid of Blackpool for the 1972 site ("Slancon") was confirmed, but no bidders came forward for 1973: a change from last year when four people bid for 1972. There was some discussion of a possible British bid for the Worldcon in 1975 or 1976, but the general feeling was against this and in support of Stockholm in 1976.



John Brunner gave a talk on SF writing, immediately followed by one from Pamela Bulmer on SF criticism. Other professionals present included James Blish, Ken Bulmer, Chris Priest, Don Wollheim, James White, Bob Shaw, and briefly Brian Aldiss.

The convention ended on the Monday morning with a boat ride on the river. It was to have been a 2-hour trip, but when we all arrived at the riverside we found the boat only held 150 people, so it ended up as two one-hour trips. It rounded off the con nicely, though, just as the one at Heidelberg did.

Jack Cohen gave a talk on "Life On Other Planets" saying nothing very new but doing it most entertainingly.

For once, the hotel bar stayed open as long as there were people wanting to buy drinks from it. This was greatly appreciated.

-- Darroll & Rosemary Pardoe

LUNACON BOMBS The Lunacon, held at the Hotel Commodore, April 16-18, retained its status as fandom's largest regional convention with a total registration of 789 and an attendance of over 730. Unfortunately, it almost crumbled under its own weight in the process. The convention was chaotic; nothing came off right, and the committee didn't seem to mind overly. In fact, they appeared more interested in intra-committee power struggles than in putting on an efficiently run convention. (A full report on the Lunacon begins elsewhere in this issue)

FAPA RESOLUTION TO VOTE WORTHY WLERS INTO MEMBERSHIP PASSES, THEN HAS TO BE REVOTED

After a dozen years of talking about the idea, FAPA finally decided to

put the idea that deserving waitlisters should be jumped up the list to membership to a vote. Teller Terry Carr tabulated the ballots and the result was 20 in favor, 19 against, with one abstention. So the motion passed.

Or so it seemed. It has been pointed out, however, that a majority of those voting must cast affirmative ballots for a motion to pass, and 20 out of 40 is not a majority. Furthermore, no deadline was set for the vote at the time the resolution was put up, another violation of the apa's constitution.

For these reasons, the vote must be retaken. Based on votes which arrived after the deadline, it seems a safe bet that the resolution will not survive the re-vote. Which seems a bit of a shame. FAPA could use some new blood.

MARRIED Joyce Fisher and I got married Sunday, April 25, at the Union Temple of Brooklyn. Attendees were almost all Katz relatives, but Jay Kinney, Chris Couch, and Bruce Telzer represented fandom at the event. If you wondered why this issue of FP is a few days late, Now You Know.

AGAIN DANGEROUS VISIONS AT PUBLISHER ADV has finally made it to Doubleday, which will publish it at the turn of the year. The book is illustrated by Emsk and has an introduction by Stan Freberg. Among the 46 stories by 43 writers for a total of 248,550 words are: "The word for World is Forest" (LeGuin) and "With the Bentfin Boomer Boys on Little Old New Alabama" (Lupoff), each of which is 36,000 words. Among the many shorter works are pieces by Ray Nelson, Joanna Russ, Kurt Vonnegut, Piers Anthony, Lee Hoffman, Greg Benford, Terry Carr, James Blish, Tom Disch, and a few dozen more.

ALEX PANSHIN, PEDAGOGUE Alex will be teaching a summer session course in Science Fiction at Cornell University for graduates and qualified undergrads. The course will be given at 8 am, five days a week, from June 30 to August 13.

BOB SHAW FUND \$1,324 is the current total collected by the Bob Shaw Fund to bring BoSh to the U.S. for the Noreascon. Bob informs us that he has already used fund monies sent him just before the U.K. postal strike to buy a round trip plane ticket.

Since the Fund has more than met its goal, and since the TAFF race is going into full gear, it seems best to wind up the auctions as speedily as possible. As it is, items up for bids are being raised \$1 an issue, which could go on indefinitely.

So we've decided that this is the last round of bidding. This is how it will work. All bids for this round must be in writing and no bids will be revealed to anyone until FOCAL POINT #31. If you want any of the items, you'll have to over-bid the current high bid as well as any other bids that come in during the bidding period. One exception: current high bidders can enter another bid, and if no one tops their previous bid, they will get the item for the original bid instead of the latest one. It doesn't seem fair to make people bid against themselves, and I hope this scheme will eliminate that inequity. All bids should be sent to me, Arnie Katz, as co-chairman of the Bob Shaw Fund (for address, see colophon.) The deadline for these final bids is May 20, so you've got three weeks to get those bids in.

Rotsler-Kirk collaboration - \$11 - Joseph Pate
F & SFs - \$70 - Al Schuster
GOON GOES WEST - \$12 - Joanne Burger
DiFate drawings - \$12.50 - Janice Jacobson
QUANDRY 13 - \$15 - Arnie Katz
QUANDRY 14 - \$6 - Arnie Katz
UNKNOWN WORLDS (June.-Aug.-Oct.) - \$6.50 - John Lakeside
FANCIFUL TALES - \$21 - John Lakeside

DC, MARVEL RAISE PRICES National Comics has announced that all their books, beginning with the fall issues on sale in June, will be going to 25¢. In the process, all of DC's marginal titles except Green Lantern-Green Arrow will be killed off. This includes the long-running WONDER WOMAN.

DC's 25¢ comics will be 48 pages, composed half of new material and half of reprints. Reportedly a machine has been developed that can turn out a good black and white page from any old comic page fed into it, which will greatly aid the company in its extremely cynical half-reprint policy.

Marvel is also reported going to 25¢ comics, though their exact plans are as yet unknown.

The reasons for the price rise are rising production costs, a desire to make comics more profitable for retailers in order to keep display space at current levels, and a reaction to reports that many comic sellers are being ripped off by kids hiding existing 25¢ titles in a stack of 15-centers and paying for the whole stack at 15¢ per.

STOP DUPER!

ED BAKER FOUND SHOT Ed Baker, Los Angeles fan and publisher during the 1960's was found shot to death in his car on Friday, April 23. Police said they thought it was the work of a sniper. Andy Porter, who gave FP this news didn't have any further details, but perhaps we'll have more to report by next issue if FOCAL POINT's West Coast readers get on the stick.

nebula awards '71

NOVEL

RINGWORLD - NIVEN

NOVELLA

ILL MET IN LANKHMAR - LEIBER

NOVELET

SLOW SCULPTURE - STURGEON

SHORT

NO AWARD

SFWA HOLDS BANQUETS

The Science Fiction Writers of America, the professional sf writers' N3F, held its annual awards banquets in New York, New Orleans, and Berkeley, on Saturday, April 3.

In New York, the Nebula presentations, which would have been a little dull since all the awards were won by West Coast authors, were considerably enlivened through the kind intercession of Isaac Asimov. Pressed into service by SFWA officialdom to announce the awards in New York, Isaac didn't believe his cue card when he came to announce the winner of the Short Story Nebula. He told the assembly that Gene Wolfe had won for "The Island of Dr. Death". Gene stood up, received his round of thunderous applause, and was then informed that he hadn't won the award after all. "No Award" was the winner.

Another feature of the New York banquet was that Lester Del Rey, non-SFWA member and critic of the organization, was Toastmaster. Or perhaps Roastmaster, considering his comments on the SFWA way of doing things. One of his most perceptive criticisms was that SFWA, which eagerly seeks publicity, did not have a press table and provide press passes for the New York banquet.

In Berkeley, the SFWA banquet had a real live editor in Dianne Cleaver of Doubleday. The authors told her exactly what they thought of the sins of editors and publishers and Miss Cleaver, in the same spirit of good fellowship, told them what they could do with their science fiction if they didn't cool it.

Runners up in the Nebula balloting were: NOVEL And Chaos Died (Russ) and Tower of Glass (Silverberg) (tie), Year of the Quiet Sun (Tucker). NOVELLA The Thing in the Stone (Simak), "The Region Between" (Ellison). NOVELET "Continued on the Next Rock" (Lafferty), "The Asian Shore" (Disch). SHORT STORY "The Island of Dr. Death" (Wolfe).

OH, FAME, TRUE THOU NEVER WERE

My office is less than two blocks away from the Hotel Commodore, site of the 1971 Lunacon, so I decided to get a sneak preview of the convention by dropping by the hotel during my lunch hour. I hoped to spot a few familiar faces among the early arrivals, and so pass the noon hour, which drags for me since I generally skip lunch these days as part of my diet.

I walked around and around the registration area of the hotel without seeing anyone I knew, so I decided the best idea might be to go to the part of the hotel where the Lunacon was actually going to be held, and see if I could find any of my fellow New York fans busily setting up the art show, huckster room, or some such official thing.

Arriving at the proper floor, I wandered around looking for the parlor complex that was to house the convention. I saw an older couple ask one of the hotel staff about the science fiction convention. I overheard his directions and walked along to the hospitality room, followed by the couple.

I didn't recognise the rather heavy-set woman, but the man seemed familiar, especially his voice. With such poor eyesight, I'm afraid my memory for faces isn't all that it could be. Still, he seemed familiar.

I stood in the doorway of the hospitality room and listened to about eight fans from some backwater eddy of New York fandom talk about nothing, plonkingly. There were the inevitable lmj's and in general it seemed like a typical contingent of the anonymous fringe-fringe fans who clutter up the hallways and such at every really large convention.

The older couple came up behind me. The woman decided to wait at the door, while the man walked boldly into the room. "Is this the science fiction convention?" he asked. There was something about the way he said "science fiction" that jogged my memory.

"Oh, yeah," one of the kids said, ignoring the visitor.

"Are any of you with the committee," he said. "I just wanted to let them know I'm here." Then I was almost sure.

"I dunno nothing about any committee. Do you know Lee Smoire?" a kid asked him. He shook his head.

"He certainly looks familar," I thought. I must

ARNIE KATZ



CON VIEWS FROM AN OUTSIDER

have been subvocalizing or something because the woman in the doorway said, "He should look familiar."

I was sure I knew who it was.

He came toward me, the cheerfulness on his face slightly dimmed.

"Hello, Mr. Campbell," I said, extending my hand. "I'm sure you don't remember me, but when I was about 18, I came up to your office and talked with you about science fiction for an article for one of my first fanzines. I'm Arnie Katz," I continued. "I work with Sam at QUICK FROZEN FOODS." He smiled. I told him that Sam said he'd probably drop by in the late afternoon, and John and wife went off to eat lunch.

When he was safely out of earshot, I turned back to the denizens of the room. "Hey," I said. No reaction. They had already forgotten their visitor. "Hey," I said turning my voice up somewhat. "You guys really blew it." There was silence. "I said you guys really blew it. That was John W. Campbell you just snubbed. Maybe you ought to be a little nicer to people who come around; they might be someone you want to meet." To give them credit, several of the kids were taken aback by their missed opportunity to talk to John Campbell in a small group with Campbell obviously in an expansive mood.

One of the female science fiction readers in the room who had been energetically discussing "2001" a few moments earlier looked at me and said, "I never heard of him."

INTO THE CHORP DIMENSION RODE THE INSURGENTS

I suppose my foretaste of the Lunacon 71 should have told me about the weekend to come, but 5 o'clock was hardly struck before I was racing down the street toward the Commadore like some neofan on his way to his first convention.

After checking into the hotel and finding Joyce, I decided to stroll around the con facilities to get the feel of the scene. The strongest impression I had was that I didn't know the overwhelming majority of the attendees. I mentioned this to several fans I know who move in radically different circles and they surprised me by saying that they knew almost no one at the con, too.

It seems to me that the socialization process by which sf readers who encounter the microcosm are acclimated to our traditions, mores, and so on has broken down under the strain of trying to cope with too many newcomers. There are hundreds of people who come to conventions now who inhabit a never-never land, somewhat more than sf readers, yet somewhat less than fans with a bit of the goshwow movie fan thrown in for spice. These people were not only at the Lunacon in force, but they seemed to control it through sheer force of numbers about half the time.

Friday night's costume ball was so poorly planned that it almost didn't come off. The appointed time came and went, and the attendees made no move toward the room in which the masquerade was to be held. As it got later and later, sentiment arose in some quarters, including part of the committee, to forget the whole thing.

It wouldn't have been that much of a loss.

I admit that costume balls leave me cold generally. I like to see the costumes once and then go do something else. But I can tell a good one from a bad one, and this was about the worst I've ever seen. East Coast Fandom is going to have to try a lot harder if it is going to approach the expertise of West Coast Fandom in costume making. Based on this masquerade, I think those in the East who are so keen on this type of activity ought to either try about 300% harder or give up the whole idea.

The parade of costumers started with a flop. Jean Bogart, wrapped in a gold-flecked bedspread was so drunk that she keeled over right on the stage and had to be carried out. One of Art Saha's little kids came as "The Incredible Shrunk Man", which was at least cute and inventive. The rest of the costumes, mostly third-rate and few in number - were largely rehashes of various fan's SCA outfits. As far as I'm concerned, when you've seen one guy in a cape, sword and hood, you've seen them all.

The program, which was put together by Al Schuster in the dead of night to keep the rest of the Program Committee in blissful ignorance of what was to be perpetrated in its name, declined from last year's mediocre schedule of events. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the committee seemed more interested in fighting intra-committee battles than putting on a smooth-running convention.

The hotel also did its little bit to help. The elevators were - surprise! - erratic, and, worse, they wouldn't stop on the same floor as the convention. Some fan got so frustrated that he stabbed the elevator with a knife. Not the elevator operator; he stabbed the elevator.

DON'T PICK THAT WEED, HAND ME THE SALT

Friday night, Joyce and I hosted a small party at which Ted and Robin White, Alex and Cory Panshin, Steve Stiles and Gale Burnick, and Joyce and I sat around and filled each other in on what had been happening since the last time we were all together.

The Whites and Panshins got around to comparing notes on life in rural America. "How are you settling in?" Alex asked. "How are you getting along with nature."

"Great, just great," Ted replied. "We've been getting a lot of wild strawberries. Delicious!"

"Oh, wow, wild strawberries," Cory said. "Do you get onions?"

"Well, we've been getting some onions lately. They're really good and fresh," Ted said.

"And there're dandelions," Robin said.

"Oh, yeah, dandelion greens," Ted chimed in.

"They're full of Vitamin C," Robin explained, probably for the benefit of her city cousins, since the Panshins seemed well versed in dandelion greens. And watercress. And even, so help me, the suburban scourge, chick weed. Ted and Robin would find my parent's front yard a gold mine.

After they left, Joyce and I marvelled over the way both couples had adapted so beautifully to their new lives away from the city.

"How are you settled in," Joyce said to me. "How are you getting along with nature?"

"Well, we ate it," I replied.

(to be continued...)

-- Arnie Katz

PANZONI

About six months ago (October 12, to be exact) I sent Richard Labonte a Christmas card that Alicia Austin had drawn for me. He is able to reproduce things cheaply and I wanted him to run me off 200 copies of the thing.

Michael Glicksohn, stopping momentarily typing ENERGUMEN stencils, said I'd be all set for the next 40 Christmases as he couldn't think of any more than five people who would be remotely interested in a Christmas card from me.

Susan, his wife, threw a bran muffin at him.

Anyhow, there is a story attached to my Christmas card so I'm telling it because Richard is ill with what appears to be an ulcer, and I want to make his life more miserable than it already is.

"Richard, this is Rosemary. Where's my Christmas card?"

"I sent you one already. How do you like Toronto? Isn't the weather seasonal? How are Susan and Michael?"

"RICHARD..."

"Don't yell at me, Rosemary; I'm a sick man. I've..."

"I'll make you sicker," I shrieked ungrammatically. "Where in hell are those 200 Christmas cards I asked you to duplicate for me. I sent the original to you in October."

"But it's only December. Stop screaming obscenities, Rosemary. I'm sick. I have Bright's Disease. You wouldn't yell at a man with Bright's Disease. You wouldn't yell at a man with Bright's Disease. You wouldn't yell at a man with Bright's Disease... would you?" he added pleadingly. "Rosemary, such language. They don't call you Toilet Tongue for nothing."

"Who calls me Toilet Tongue?" I demanded. "Who?"

"Oh... no one."

A COLUMN BY

ROSEMARY ULLYOT



"RICHARD!!"

"Don't yell at me, Rosemary. Remember my condition."

"Richard, I'll fix your condition by doing a nephrectomy with a rusty penknife if you don't get that card up to me before the fifteenth!"

Needless to say, both Christmas and New Years passed without a word from Richard. Except, of course, a rather amusing Christmas card made especially for him by Murray Long. He'd spilled some wine on it and told me to have a riotous Christmas.

It is now March. I haven't heard from Richard since December. My telephone rings.

"Hello, is this the beautiful and exotic Rosemary Ullyot?"

"Richard, where in hell is my god damn Christmas card?"

"Rosemary, you've got a one track mind. But, rest easy, that is why I called. I am sorry to say that your Christmas card..."

"Your goddamn puppy ate it!" I screamed. "Richard..."

"Rosemary, please don't scream. Remember my condition."

"Don't tell me you still have Bright's Disease?" I asked.

"No, I've..."

"Then where in hell is my Christmas card?"

"I'm trying to tell you. I had it run off on yellow stock with purple ink so you could send it out as an Easter card. Rosemary, stop that. What if my line is tapped? What if someone's on the extension? Think of my condition. Rosemary, I was fooling you. You know, like in April."

"This is March," I snarled.

"So I'm early. I just called to tell you that I'll send the card to you as soon as we find the key to the desk I put it in for safe keeping. Rosemary, I'm not going to call you anymore if you persist in using that kind of language with me. Oh yes, and Rosemary, I'd like you to do a column for my new fanzine the... Rosemary... Rosemary, are you still there? Rosemary..."

-- Rosemary Ullyot

COA's:

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NEBULA 7 AWARDS

There is something dreary and unpleasant about the Nebula Awards Banquet in New York City, something unimaginative and unappealing which nevertheless draws us all like moths to the flame, year after year, hoping that vain hope that this year will somehow be different. It never is.

This year, the attendees at the NYC banquet paid some \$4.50 a head more than west-coast attendees, for one of the drabest banquets yet. Can it be that New York City offers no better setting than the Les Champs restaurant and the Algonquin hotel? That the height to which the NYC planners aspire is an expensive cocktail party in close quarters at the Les Champs at 6:30 pm? Why is it that the West Coast Banquet has consistently upstaged the NYC banquet for the last three or four years?

This year at least, we had palatable food for our \$12.50--"Sliced Filet of Beef"--or "steak". Its quality apparently varied--my wife's was better than mine, and mine much better than that offered to another attendee at the next table--but it was head and shoulders above the standard "rubber chicken" that symbolizes most banquet fare. But the service was slower than ever, and when the meal was finally concluded, so was the "high point" of the evening.

There were less people present this year--but the selection still leaves something to be desired. Gone was Edward V. Dong's table full of friends, but in their places were others equally obnoxious. A woman at my table, for instance, admitted--loudly--that she hadn't been to a gathering of sf people in twenty years, and told us all at inappropriate moments how boring she found the various speakers. "I can't imagine why that man is talking," she announced during Dr. Marvin Minsky's speech on the realities of computer-programming (to which I will return in a moment.) "I don't care about computers." No, but she had no business there, either.

The after-dinner program began with a peroration by Lester del Rey, who announced that he was mis-identified as "toastmaster". "Actually, I'm the roastmaster," he said, and proceeded to demonstrate the fact.

del Rey resigned the SFWA several years ago, and I was surprised to see him now as the master-of-ceremonies at the SFWA's Nebula Awards Banquet, but he was in good form as he told all assembled that he wasn't a member and why he wasn't a member. He managed to



TED
WHITE

skewer the SFWA on nearly every point of its recently demonstrated ineptitude, and I found myself laughing uproariously. Most of those around me, however, were silent or squirming. I have the feeling that Lester was not entirely successful at the goal he'd set himself--that too many of those present simply reacted against him and ignored the telling points he made.

Dr. Minsky was the first of two announced speakers. He spoke about the comparative complexity of teaching a computer to work calculus and to manipulate (in three dimensions) children's blocks. The latter is, of course, much more difficult.

The difference lies in the programs--the "software"--since a program which allows the computer to build with blocks must allow for experiential self-correction within itself. As Dr. Minsky pointed out, if intelligence is to be created in a non-living object like a computer, it will arise from the program, and not the computer's complexity of circuitry. Already these sophisticated programs are becoming difficult to create--and eventually they will probably be the work of multiple generations of computer-programming, much-removed from the human who originally began the work. In the process we are learning much about what intelligent thought really is--and losing control over the eventually resulting program, errors in which may not manifest themselves within time for correction.

This is the stuff of sf, and Dr. Minsky was a good choice for a speaker (usually the two speakers are chosen from the sciences and publishing--one each.) SF has used computers so unknowledgably and in such a cliché fashion (even Heinlein has erred in this way)--we needed this speech.

But most of the table of Young Turks to my back passed their time during Minsky's speech writing funny notes to each other and guffawing loudly. Is this the "bright hope of tomorrow"? Or will these new writers simply use computers for "metaphors", and ignore reality in this field too?

The second speaker was Allan Ravage, the editor at Bantam Books presently responsible for sf. His speech was also interesting, but more so for the relatively outside view it offered of our field. He scored several good points--and missed fire completely the other half of the time. All things considered, that's probably a superior score.

Finally, the presentation of the Nebula Awards. Gordon Dickson was listed for this task on the program sheet, but apparently his unhappy performance last year convinced him he was not the man for the job. He turned the podium over to Isaac Asimov, who informed us (again) which pretty girls were or were not wearing bras (it was obvious without your help, Ike), and then bumbled into the awards themselves.

It was pretty obvious that no one at the NYC Banquet would be going away with an award--there were no Nebulas on the table. But when Asimov announced that Gene Wolfe had won the short story award for "Island of Dr. Death", there was consternation at the speaker's table and Gordy rose for a hasty conference with him, after which Asimov said, much perplexed, "I was wrong. The winner is--how can this be?--no award!"

The room was stunned, and I heard much muttering and gasping and groaning among the Young Turks, one of whom had a nominated story in that category. "They can't do that!" he said, angrily.

But "they" could--and after the whole shebang was over, I compared notes with several of my friends in the SFWA and found we'd all voted "no award" in the Short Story category. It was, after all, on the ballot, along with "Abstention", and available for voting.

Dickson said, later, that he felt that it was a mistake--the "no award" votes had totaled only a few more than those for the Wolfe story, which struck him as unfair--"More than a simple majority should have been required," he said.

But that reasoning makes sense only if you require more than a simple majority for any winner. After all, Bob Shaw's "Light of Other Days" lost out for a Nebula by only one vote, the year it was in contention--and then to the posthumous work of a dead man. The race has always been close, and if "no award" only just nudged out the story with the next greatest number of votes--so what?

I confess I was not happy with any of the other winners. Ringworld strikes me as far from the best novel of the year, by many criteria, not the least of which are prose quality and plotting--but perhaps this award will silence Niven's criticisms of Panshin's win

a couple of years ago.

"Ill Met in Lankmar" is a choice I can't directly quarrel with, but everyone I spoke with felt Leiber's "Snow Women" was a superior story, and the reason it was not on the final ballot--nor on the Hugo ballot either, I hear--is that Leiber withdrew it because F&SF (where "Ill Met" appeared) had a better circulation than FANTASTIC (which published "Snow Women"). This sort of calculated move on Fritz's part disappoints me not only because I published "Snow Women"; it's a cynical response to the whole award-gathering process, and bodes ill for us all. If an author can remove from contention the better of two stories because he feels it has had less exposure, what does this do to the awards themselves? Had Fritz let both stories compete, would the voters have picked the better one? Did they not deserve the opportunity? We'll never know.

And "Slow Sculpture" won the Best Novelet category because it was written by Theodore Sturgeon. How sad that he must get his Nebula this way. Perhaps a series of retroactive Nebulas could be voted upon--rather like the selection of the SFWA's Hall of Fame anthologies. Then Sturgeon could win it honestly for More Than Human, and let the better novelets compete as they should.

-- Ted White

FOCAL POINT'S LETTER COLUMN has been non-existent for a number of months. Now that each issue of FP doesn't have to include 3-4 pages of auctions, I'd like to see a letter column every few issues or so, publishing larger issue of FP if necessary. I like to think of FOCAL POINT as a bi-weekly genzine that carries fan news rather than a newszine, since there's a lot of material besides news in its pages. I think this material is as comment-worthy as anything being published in fandom, and I'd like to hear what some of you out there are thinking. So, consider this a plea for letters of comment. To encourage such letters, FP is henceforth also available for substantial letter of comment, whether that letter is published or not. Unpublished comments to a particular contributor will, rest assured, reach that contributor through an "egoboo express" set-up.

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