

INSIDE: An  
Interview with  
Michael Bishop

--Reviews  
--& More

**Future Retrospective 9-10**



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Cliff Biggers: 7, 13, 19, 27  
Wade Gilbreath: cover, 4, 8, 10, 17, 25, 29, 36, 39  
Don Herron: 22, 38  
Barry Kent MacKay: 15, 42, 44

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As you should be able to tell with this issue, we've gone to electrostencilled rather than handstencilled art; this procedure will continue indefinitely, so all artists who wish to contribute can be assured that their art will be accurately reproduced. We still need artwork, however; if you have any spot illustrations to contribute, please do!

Due to the time his own fanzine should take, Wade Gilbreath hasn't found it possible to work with us as FR's art director; he is, however, supplying us with a steady supply of spot illustrations, covers and reviews, so we don't have anything to complain about. Wade will work with us on layout, etc., when he makes a trip over here to the wilds of northwest Georgia, or when we drive over to Birmingham for a weekend, though, so he'll be giving us some aid there..

Last minute news for the Michael Bishop bibliography: Gollancz will be publishing a British edition of STOLEN FACES when the novel is released in America.

Some material promised for this issue that didn't get done due to lack of space, lack of time, or unread books; but with the next issue, we should be able to offer reviews of the Ace SF Special series and of the new Ballantine Adult Fantasy series.

Speaking of Ballantine, a news note that didn't get in the editorial pages: Ballantine will be releasing its sf under the name "Del Rey Books" starting with March, 1977; this is well-deserved recognition for a superlative editor, and the event will be marked by a release of 12 f&sf titles.



## PERSPECTIVES IN RETROSPECT

It's really a shame that I find it impossible to keep to a schedule when it comes to FR--but try as I might, it always seems that I'm about 3 or 4 weeks late. I won't apologize any longer, though, I'll just urge you to expect FR to be late, and then maybe I'll surprise you from time to time.

A lot has happened since the last FR came out; for one, the man I urged everyone to vote against in the last FR is about a month away from becoming President; so there goes FR's future as a national political force to be reckoned with...

I'm not that disappointed; in fact, truth to tell, Ford wishy-washed and changed his policy so often there at the end of the campaign that I reluctantly ended up voting for Carter also. Not that I think he's particularly better than Ford, but (as Michael Bishop said in a letter) things are just bad enough right now that it's worthwhile to take a gamble on a dreamer with some good ideas than to stick with a status quo that hasn't done much against the major problems these last two years. See? I can be swayed by logic...

## BAD MOON RISING

The bad moon referred to is a rather lackluster and senseless publication called THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO THE FANTASTICS, compiled by Michael Resnick. I had once considered reviewing this, but my tendency to rant and rave against the book led me to save my comments for the editorial pages instead.

Quite simply, Resnick's trash is the worst thing I've seen happen to sf in many a year, and it's very reminiscent of the "price guide" syndrome in comics fandom. I used to be an active part of comics fandom, until the money-grubbing attitude these guides represent turned me away from it. And Resnick's book may do the same with a large portion of sf fandom, simply because it may, if used liberally by sf bookshops, dealers, etc., eliminate the possibility of acquiring an inexpensive but sizeable sf library.

My biggest complaint isn't the existence of a price guide, however; instead, my biggest complaint is Resnick's fraudulent representation of it as a carefully researched and compiled guide, and his hard-to-swallow statement that he has drawn his prices from figures given him by a number of notable dealers who wish to remain unknown, but are experts in the field. The expert dealers--Dick Minter, Bob Weinberg, etc.--have disavowed any connection with it, so Resnick's story seems a little vague (intentionally?). And prices seem to have been arrived at in a haphazard manner, with no real accounting of the present average price for the items.

I could go on for pages, as I said; but to do that would be a little ridiculous and give more attention to this publication than it's worth. I do recommend that you refuse to buy it, though; simply passing it up as worthless may be the best way to prevent other such outrageous "guides" in the future.

## WHY A DOUBLE ISSUE?

I'm doing this simply to answer the question before it's inevitably asked; this double issue isn't done just as a lark, I assure you. Due to more obligations than we had time to honor, plus the Christmas season eating into our time; we didn't get as much stencilling done on FR as we'd have liked. The reviews kept getting written, though, and as a result we found ourselves with a great deal of material, some of it quickly getting dated as it sat in the FR files.

Around the first of December, I did a tally and came up with approximately forty reviews in the files, plus at least six or seven more reviews waiting to be done. Plus, we had the Michael Bishop interview ready for use, and I didn't want to sit on it for too long.

And I think you begin to see the answer. This double issue came at a convenient time--we both had a good deal of time off for Christmas, making stencilling convenient indeed--and it gets us caught up on our reviews,

I've talked with a few people about making FR a regular review-interview-article genzine and publishing a 34-36 page issue approximately bi-monthly, but that's something I'm unsure of as yet. I'm open to recommendations, however...

## SUSAN'S SECTION

One of the first things you'll notice about this FR, I predict, is that it's done in green ink; right now, we're using a Gestetner 320 with a green ink gun to print FR, and I'm pretty sure we'll continue to do it in green in the future. We're also doing the zine on a variety of different colors of paper, just to see which combinations are readable and which are a little hard on the eyes.

If you have any recommendations or advice, drop us a line and let us know about it; the first few pages we've done seem to be extremely readable, though, and I don't foresee much of any trouble (the green on blue paper is a little tough--we've done a sample for our own satisfaction--but it may not even appear in FR).

Also, as you saw when this came in the mail, we're using NCR envelopes; the NCR stands for 'Nother Colorful Review-zine, so don't confuse it with the corporation of identical initials...



I've been most pleased with the letters we received from folks assuring us that FR was not a "godd quality counterfeit" of Dick Geis' SFR (Frank Love gets a dubious honor award for his response, "it certainly isn't--who said it was good?" Thanks, Frank, and I hope all the maple syrup will wash out of your Olympus OM-1 any day now...). I'm afraid that I've made Taral Wayne MacDonald seem like much more of an ogre than he could ever be, though; Taral is a talented reviewer, and I'm not slighting him on that at all. I didn't feel his criticism was necessarily true, though, and I wanted to see if I was prejudiced, or if he was...

On the convention front: Cliff has been asked to be the fan GoH at an upcoming Atlanta convention; according to the chairman, Mike Weber, the con is tentatively named Attention, is held at the same hotel that held last year's DSC, and cost for membership is \$4 now, \$5 at the door. For details, write to Mike at 1870 Dresden Drive NE, Apt. B-2 / Atlanta, GA 30319. There will be a professional GoH, but he's unconfirmed as of yet.

In the random news items section, we have:

--Gahan Wilson's 1st WORLD FANTASY AWARDS anthology isn't published yet because Wilson was slow with the manuscript. Doubleday will publish it this year.

--Doubleday will continue to put interior art in some sf books; some special anthologies will have anywhere from six to a dozen drawings (most of these will be out late next year).

--Dell Books will be handling the paperback of DEUS IRAE in late '77.

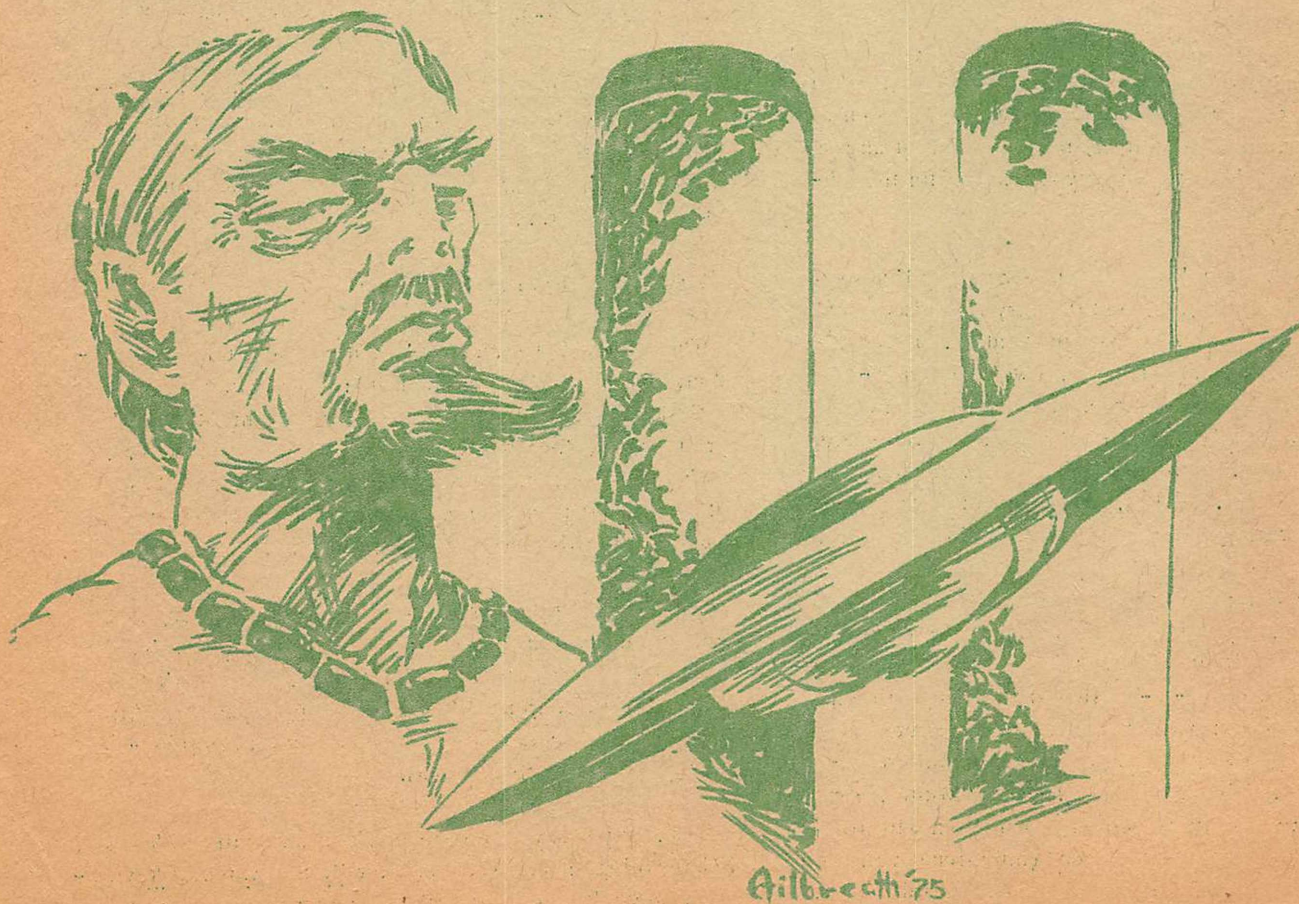
--Berkley Books has the rights to the REH Conan novels and should begin issuing them in mid-'77.

--Karl Edward Wagner's BLOODSTONE and DEATH ANGEL'S SHADOW should be reissued this year from Warner Paperback Library.

--Ken Moore's Kwintus Kublius has been moved up to May 6-8; GoH is Harlan Ellison. Write Ken at 647 Devon Drive, Nashville TN 37220.

--Wade Gilbreath (1629-B Cripple Creek Dr., Birmingham, AL 35209) will be publishing a fanzine of his own in the immediate future; write Wade for details.

And that's it for this issue's editorial/notes section. Now, let's move on to the remainder of FR--there's a lot to go yet...





# INTROSPECTIVE

## AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL BISHOP

((As an author, Michael Bishop has firmly established himself in science fiction; he is a Hugo- and Nebula-nominee, and his output ranges from brief short stories to long, involved novels. This interview gives insight into Michael Bishop as an author and a person, and as such it speaks for itself--cb.))

CB- Were you always interested in science fiction, going through the typical fan routes, or did you come into the field from the outside?

MB: I suppose, really, I backed into the field. What contact I had with science fiction as a young person--ninth through twelfth grades, say--was that exemplified by the reading of Ray Bradbury. I have wonderfully battered copies of Bantam's A MEDICINE FOR MELANCHOLY and THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES, as well as one of the early Ballantine editions of THE OCTOBER COUNTRY. These books were magic to me. I bought them, if my memory serves me correctly, at discount houses and supermarkets in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and I had no idea at this time--late fifties, early sixties--that any such thing as "fandom" existed. It wasn't until I was in my early 20s, teaching at the Air Force Academy Preparatory School in Colorado Springs as a green-gilled, wet-eared shavetail (or second lieutenant), that I knew that people actually got together for the sole purpose of talking about and criticizing science fiction. I attended a couple of meetings of the Denver Area Science Fiction Association, or DASFA, with my office-mate at the Prep School, a young captain with the unlikely monicker Klaus Krause who had a strong intellectual interest in science fiction (he had advanced degrees in both physics and English, I believe), and I'm afraid that my first impression of these meetings is that the people who came to them were too diverse and strange a lot to fit together without fisticuffs beneath the same roof. There were Trekkies, comic freaks, teenyboppers, librarians, would-be artists, one-shot writers, fanzine publishers, snake handlers, hippies, and dull-witted hangers-on. With my Air Force haircut and cuffless civilian bellbottoms, I felt myself horribly straight and square, observed the alien goings-on as something of a detached observer, and wondered a good bit if these people were really happy in what they were doing.

By this time, however, I had placed one very literary poem with the Georgia Review and submitted several overtly serious pieces of fiction to the more prestigious slick magazines and the virtually anonymous university-connected reviews. With no luck. The most encouragement I ever got was a brief typewritten note from the editor of the Virginia Quarterly. About this same time I subscribed to FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION on a whim and at Klaus Krause's

urging began reading sf novels as part and parcel of my literary diet. On trips to Denver I picked up old copies of Sturgeon's MORE THAN HUMAN and Clarke's CHILDHOOD'S END and found myself responding to these as I had once responded to Bradbury's short stories. I began to think about trying to write science fiction or fantasy as a means of achieving a breakthrough into print.... It wasn't until I had sold seven or eight stories that I began to understand the extent to which "fandom" existed in these United States as a great and pervasive underground culture. You see, people began sending me fanzines in which my work was actually mentioned as if it had some importance and people were really and truly giving over a small portion of their lives to read it. This was a weird and gratifying development.

CB: Did you deliberately intend to write sf, or do you hope to use it as a foothold into writing fiction of other sorts as well?

MB: Well, I have been accused by at least one reviewer of harboring an overweening and presumptuous ambition, and to a certain extent he is right. My favorite writers as a young person, Bradbury aside, were Jack London, Jonathan Swift, Somerset Maugham, Carson McCullers, John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway and J.D. Salinger. When I began to think that I wanted to write, it was these people rather than Robert Heinlein or Frederik Pohl whom I hoped to emulate. Later I developed a rather fanatical appreciation of D.H. Lawrence, William Faulkner, Jorge Luis Borges, Dos- toevski, Tolstoi, etc., etc., and with tastes like these and just a small talent for writing it may be almost inevitable that one--especially if he or she is young--comes to cherish a longing to produce work of similar quality and merit. So yes, I do hope to write--and have in fact written--fiction that is neither sf nor fantasy, and I would like to think that some of it will be good enough to elicit comparison with the best. Don't misunderstand me, though: I haven't yet written any that good, and my ambition, whether realistic or perversely overweening, is far from being achieved.

CB: You obviously feel that Ray Bradbury is not a writer who's sold out his sf background to attempt pretentious literature, as some claim. What is his principal appeal for you, his ability to create images, or something less literary and more personal?

MB: First, my fondness for Bradbury, as I've said, is predicated almost entirely on his short stories--not on a poetry collection like WHEN ELEPHANTS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOMED or his various attempts to adapt his short stories or an epic science-fictionalization of Herman Melville to the stage. I just don't know very much about these aspects--latter-day aspects--of his career. Second, it's hard to see from such recent collection as I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC! and LONG AFTER MIDNIGHT (which include stories from the late forties and early fifties, by the way, as well as newer ones) that Bradbury has "sold out his sf background" especially since he has always been primarily a fantasist rather than a science fiction writer. Bradbury's "pretentiousness"--and I don't like this term at all; use it



only to dispel a general misapprehension--may be in reality a simple function of the fact that he is, and always has been, a lover of books and of other writers. He naturally, and innocently, equates himself with those writers who have given him the most pleasure. That's why he can fashion a short story with, say, Charles Dickens as its protagonist--or G.B. Shaw, or Ernest Hemingway; or Ernest Hemingway's parrot--and somehow, incredibly, bring off that kind of self-indulgent impertinence. How does he do it? The answer, as you suggest in your question, is both by and with style. Imagery, cadence, music, mood. And that, I suppose, has always been the source of my fascination with Bradbury's work, even if I am now frequently conscious of its excesses, its sentimentality, its implausibility. So what? Most of Bradbury's stories work, and they work because of rather than in spite of his preoccupation with language and style. It may be that Bradbury almost singlehandedly brought style to science fiction (even while working principally as a fantasist), and that is no small accomplishment, even if he would concede--as I imagine he would--that Theodore Sturgeon ought to share in this honor.

CB: What were you doing when you made your first sale to GALAXY?

MB: I was teaching in the service, as the answer to your first question might indicate. That sale was a story entitled "Pinon Fall," and it had been gone about six months when the former editor of GALAXY, Ejler Jakobsson, placed a long-distance telephone call to my home in Colorado Springs while I was at work. My wife Jeri, whom I had married during the summer of 1969, took the call and sheepishly told Jakobsson that I was "at work," as if real writers didn't have to have jobs outside their homes. Jakobsson told her he wanted to buy it for GALAXY, and Jeri, as excited as I was a few minutes later, gave him my Academy telephone number and got through to me very quickly before he could place his own call. (Maybe my memory fails me here; maybe Jeri called me after Jakobsson had talked to me; this was a confused, almost surreal several minutes.) Anyway, once the Good Editor had me on the phone and asked me if a hundred dollars would be all right, I was babbling like one of those mountain brooks the Coors Co. plunders to make their beer. One of the people I taught with at the Prep School told me after I had hung up that an appropriate response would have been, "Sure, that's fine. You'll let me pay it off in installments, won't you?" but I wasn't self-possessed enough to come up with anything as witty or as on-target as that. What I did afterwards, wearing my Air Force uniform and my silly second-lieutenant bars, was hop about the office like a robin with the first worm of spring in its beak.

CB: Oddly, many of your early stories--"If a Flower Could Eclipse," "A Tapestry of Little Murders"--show the same depth you possess today. Did you write for the sake of writing before you sold your first stories, or is it just a "natural talent" with you?

MB: I don't know whether it's a natural talent or not. I first began to think that I wanted to be a writer when I was in the eighth grade, when the best grades I could manage in English were Bs. Spelling threw me, and it still occasionally throws me. The impetus for wanting to be a writer, though, came from my reading--teachers refused to call it that--of Classics Illustrated comic books, the kind kids used to crib from when they had to read novels like THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES and then write a book report. The first one I ever encountered was an adaptation of Jack London's WHITE FANG, and I was hooked. I went on to collect over 150 of the damn things, and they are still cluttering a closet shelf in my parents' home in Albany, Georgia. (Classics Illustrated, baseball cards and books are just about the only things I've ever worked up enough enthusiasm to actively collect, by the way.) If I was any different from the kids who bought these comic books to crib their English reports, it was probably in the fact that I usually went on to read the book from which the Classics Illustrated had been adapted. That was how Jack London came to be the first writer whose life and work I wanted to emulate, and that, by a rather round-about route, was how I came to start writing myself. I wrote terrible Robert Service-like ballads, three or four lousy imitations of London's "To Build a Fire," a sheaf of facetious and equally lousy "odes," a horror story about what the afterlife may hold entitled "Of a Dying God," and a great many heavily descriptive, downright purple sketches that usually went out of their way to express my sympathy for the down-trodden masses, another indication of my debt to writers like London and Stephen Crane. My main problem was that, with only a few exceptions I couldn't finish anything. And, of course, little of what I was doing--if anything--deserved to be finished. Still, not finishing what I had begun was a bad habit of mine that I didn't really break until I was in college... As for the "depth" you speak of in my early stories, the ones that reached print, I really don't know what to say. They're good stories, I think, but they're still the work of a beginner, and they show this most conspicuously in certain stylistic excesses and structural flaws. Still, I'm proud of my early work in a way that a great many writers are not proud of theirs, and maybe it's because I had to work so hard to achieve a private respect for what I was doing. Even if I have a "natural talent," writing has always come hard to me.

CB: Of the popular "new breed" of sf authors--not to be confused with "new wave" writers--you're perhaps the only major, established one without a short story collection under his belt. Is this a fault of the market, or are you simply not anxious to put your stories into print again?

MB: First, so far as I know, good new writers (well, maybe they're not so new anymore; it's hard for me to believe that I've just turned thirty-one, for instance) like Gardner Dozois, Gregory Benford, Jack Dann, C.L. Grant, Vonda McIntyre, Pamela Sargent, and a few others don't have short-story collections to their credit yet, even though they've all published novels. I'm not really alone here. Effinger, who is a couple of years younger than I am, has already published



two short-story collections, it's true, and George R.R. Martin has *A SONG FOR LYA AND OTHER STORIES* in paperback--but it may be that Effinger and Martin are exceptions to the general rule that a new writer doesn't publish a collection until one of his novels has created shockwaves among readers and publishing circles alike. Ed Bryant is another whom I could mention with Martin and Effinger.

Nevertheless, I think it's a shame that Dozois hasn't had a collection yet, because much of his short work is brilliant and original to boot. Even his award nominations, however, have apparently proved insufficient enticement to publishers--because, yes, the mythology of the marketplace says that individual-author short-story collections do not sell as well as novels or anthologies. I may be wrong, but I think a collection of Dozois' work would sell. He certainly has better credentials than most of us, and if the blurb-writing hacks who write dustjacket copy can't do something both truthful and commercial with those credentials, then they probably ought to start looking for work as subway-token takers or filling-station attendants. But now I'm merely raging... it may be that Dozois is purposely withholding these stories until he and his agent believe the time right to spring such a collection on the public. Who knows?

In my own case, Virginia Kidd, my agent, hasn't yet tried to sell a Bishop collection, thinking that it would go down better with both my publishers and readers once my third and fourth novels have appeared. At least, I'm pretty sure that that is her marketing strategy, and I'm willing to trust her judgment. If and when such a collection is accepted, I plan to do a small bit of revision on my early stories, mostly to smooth them out stylistically.

CB: Your stories of "New Atlanta"--the Urban Nucleus series--are very complex and interconnected; in fact, your first novel was tangentially connected to this series. Are you planning a novel revolving solely around the series, or are you hoping to rework some of these earlier stories into a novel?

MB: Both. In fact, a novel with this background is already finished and at the printer's. It's entitled *A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE*, and Berkley/Putnam will publish it in the spring of 1977 in hardback and somewhat later in paper. At the same time, I'm hoping that one day my other UrNu stories will appear together in a single volume under the general title *THE WINDOWS IN DANTE'S HELL*, which is also the title of one of the individual stories, as you probably already know.

CB: In "On the Street of the Serpents," probably the best look into how you function that you've given us so far, you present a great deal of background about the time you spent in Spain. Was this partly based on truth, or is the entire background of the novella created for the sake of the story itself?

MB: The background of the novella is grounded in my actual experience. My father was an enlisted man in the Air Force stationed at Moron Air Force Base (that's pronounced Moh-RONE, in case you're wondering), and we lived in a second-story apartment in downtown Seville on a street called Leoncillos, just as I give it in the story. All of the descriptions of Seville in "On the Street of the Serpents" derive from my experience of the city and my recollection of that experience. There is one scene in the novella in which the viewpoint character--whose name, rather suspiciously, is Michael Bishop--falls with a pressurized seltzer bottle and a bottle of wine while mounting the stairs to his family's second-floor apartment. This actually happened to me, and when my step-mother saw me drenched in wine after hearing the explosion of the seltzer bottle, she thought I had been lacerated to the point of death by the flying glass--when, in fact, the wire mesh around the seltzer bottle had prevented it from filling me with vitreous shrapnel... A great deal of "On the Street of the Serpents" is, as most readers suspect, cunningly transformed autobiography. (Maybe some would not use the words "cunningly transformed.") The third section and the epilogue, of course, are pure extrapolation.

CB: This is almost the only story in which you touch heavily on politics, and here it's not really an in-depth analysis of the situation. Are you politically oriented, moreso than the average person?





MB: I don't think so. At the time I wrote "On the Street of the Serpents," I was awed by the longevity of Spain's Franco and China's Chairman Mao, and I suppose I sought to translate a little of this perhaps pointless awe into a story linking the two men. Like the Not Ready for Primetime Players on NBC's Saturday Night Live, I find it hard to believe that the Generalissimo is really not with us any longer, though I am happy for the people of Spain that Don Carlos has seriously undertaken a program of liberalization and reform, as sluggish as the country's assembly may be in actually effecting it. Franco was a dictator, and there is one scene in the story in which a Spanish laborer puts his small son on the bar and announced that one day the boy will be "presidente--if we have a presidente, ever." That actually happened, and I remember what both the boy and his father looked like. Even in 1962-63, the people of Spain were thinking beyond Franco's death to a time of democratization and unfettered speech... But I am suspicious of any political system pretending to a handhold on Ultimate Truth, just as I am suspicious of religious, economic, scientific, and aesthetic systems pretending to the same thing.



CB: Do you ever see yourself turning out an action-adventure story of the Laser type, or does the idea seem repugnant to you? You seem to represent "Blooded on Arachne" as a sort of simple entertainment/adventure story, but it's nowhere nearly as simple as that. Is "Blooded on Arachne" as close as you'll come to adventure, or do you foresee yourself surprising us all as Zelazny did with the adventure-oriented DOORWAYS IN THE SAND?

MB: I haven't yet read a single Laser novel. Roger Elwood approached me by telephone about writing a book for this line when he had just begun actively soliciting manuscripts, and if I remember correctly his three most important criteria were (a) action/adventure orientation, (b) male protagonist, and (c) upbeat ending. I was pleased that he had gone out of his way to call me, but I told him that very little of my work fit those three criteria and that I wasn't very good at writing to formula--which I genuinely am not. I write what interests me, and, for the most part, I find it hard to believe in stories written primarily as time-passers, with the consequence that they seldom interest me. I don't think this is snobbery, or at least I hope it isn't: it's just that I'm constitutionally incapable of appreciating most fiction of this sort, just as some people never develop a taste for olives, or peanut butter, or guacamole dip. Nor have I yet read DOORWAYS IN THE SAND, which I might very much enjoy for the special qualities of wit and style that Zelazny brings to most of his work... "Blooded on Arachne" was an experiment for men, and I enjoyed the hell out of writing it. If it qualifies by your personal criteria as an action-adventure story, then, yes, it's possible that I'll again write action-adventure. I never know exactly what I'm going to do next, and that's one of the things I appreciate most about being a writer. I don't want to close any doors, especially ones that I haven't been through yet.

CB: Have you found sf to be a frustrating field, or has your writing career progressed smoothly?

MB: Most of the frustrations I've encountered--not all, but most--have been the results of my own shortcomings as a writer. It is embarrassing to me how many pieces I've written since establishing myself as a "professional writer" are, no getting around it, too clumsy and inept to sell. I don't bring off what I set out to do. Several editors have saved me a good deal of personal embarrassment by rejecting half-baked stories whose defects, in the afterglow of false confidence following hard upon their completion, I was unable to see for myself. I didn't always feel very friendly toward these editors upon receiving their rejections, but in retrospect I can see that I owe them my gratitude... Maybe, for the sake of the record, I ought to add that I am quite proud of most of the stories that have been accepted and have seen print. Too, I believe that I'm finally developing a critical sense about even my own work... Still, I remember admitting to George Alec Effinger in Rome, Georgia, the number of crippled and unsold stories that have crawled from my typewriter, and the look of profound incredulity on his face continues, to this day, to humble me. There is a man who always seems in complete control of his material.

Right now, I'm experiencing a turn of sorts in my career because I'm working on a long book that isn't science fiction at all, although it may contain, incidentally, a sf-nal element. Who knows what's going to happen next? Don't ask me, I only work here.

CB: You indicate that writing comes hard; approximately how much of your writing time is spent on stories you regard as failures, or on rewriting material you're dissatisfied with?

MB: Well, I think that the answer to the question would have to be "too much"--since any such time, great or small, is sheer waste in terms of survival in the market place. It's hard to be more exact than this because any story that gets out of the typewriter and into the hands of my agent is a potential



sale, even if I happen to be unsure of its quality. The ones that don't reach my agent at all are the truly lost or failed stories, and I've written one or two that I've yanked from the market after one of Virginia's pointed critiques has opened my eyes to what I should have already noticed for myself. Discouraging, very discouraging; and these occurrences make me doubt my talent, whatever of it I possess. Re-writing? Hard to say. One of my novels has had three different versions, and, one day, I would very much like to rewrite *A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE*, tightening up an overlong first novel and maybe even switching from a first- to a third-person viewpoint. We'll see...

CB: Exactly what makes writing difficult for you? George Martin claims that actually coming up with the idea for a story is in itself simple, that making the words work to tell the story you want is the part that requires talent. Other professionals claim that getting a strong plot is half the battle.

MB: I don't know how to answer this one, since, for me, ideas that I've felt compelled to devote my time to have never been ready at hand. At the same time, I understand that it's the telling, or the dramatizing, of the idea that has the potential to rescue even feeble or stale concepts from their seemingly inevitable unworthiness. How to put this? Simply by saying that both generating and dramatizing story ideas are difficult tasks for me. Once I do have an idea, and once I've actually begun writing, I usually find that the first two or three paragraphs of a story are the ones I have to sweat blood to get down on paper--composing, crossing out, beginning again, decomposing (sorry), rearranging, deleting, tacking about, testing aloud, recasting and discarding. Sometimes it's sheer hell, and I just want to give up. If I can satisfy myself with the opening of a story, however, and have a reasonably clear idea of where I'm going with it, things usually get easier and the story begins to unravel from the intricate, rather misshapen knot of plot-strands, character strands, and even style-strands I've been clumsily juggling in my mind. And that's when writing finally becomes fun.

CB: "Death and Designation Among the Asadi" is chosen by many as your best story; when "Allegiances" came out, some proclaimed it even better. What do you choose as your best story, thus far?

MB: I like "Old Folks at Home," which will appear in Terry Carr's *UNIVERSE 8*. It's a novella in the Urban Nucleus series.

CB: Another one of your stories, "Rogue Tomato," obviously draws a good bit of its strength from Kafka's handling of a similar theme in "Metamorphosis." Do you see Philip K. as another Gregor Samsa, reprimanded and eventually destroyed by his friends, etc., or is the similarity much more superficial in your eyes. Likewise, why the name for the protagonist. Is it meaningful in relationship to the whole of the story?

MB: The mere mention of "Rogue Tomato" makes me grin, and I'd be a fool to touch any of those questions with anything less lengthy than a six-foot cockroach. Pardon me while I scuttle goodnaturedly out of interview range...

CB: In your bibliography, I see "Three Dream Woman," a collaboration. How did you initiate the collaboration, or did Craig Strete initiate it? And how did you and Craig handle this joint effort?

MB: I believe I wrote Craig a letter regarding his magazine *RED PLANET EARTH* and the possibility of contributing books to American Indians in prisons and on reservations. He responded, mentioning that one day maybe we would have to try to collaborate on something. I was working on *STOLEN FACES* at the time, but wrote back saying that, yes, when I had finished that project we definitely ought to consider doing a story together, especially since Craig had already collaborated several times--with sf writers like the young Texan, Howard Waldrop, and with established mainstream writers like the Pulitzer-prize-winning M. Scott Momaday--and therefore knew the ropes of that sort of dangerous teaming. Finally, when we actually began, Craig suggested the story idea in a brief paragraph tossed out in the course of a letter and I wrote the rough first draft. This went back to Craig, who, despite his tender years, knows dreck when he sees it and made a point of rubbing my nose in those sections that gave off the foulest stench. He discarded my ending and wrote another with a more mystical and more legitimately Amerind flavor. I acquiesced in this ending, but attacked it for the vague, telegraphic nature of its style--maybe in part out of pique that a young writer had so acidously dissected the flaws in my half of the contribution, but also because (being fair to myself) I had real trouble visualizing in logical sequence the events of Craig's ending. We were not very happy with each other for a time, and I can't recall whether Craig made some substantive changes in this ending or not--I think he made a few. I believe I can safely say, however, that Craig Strete and Michael Bishop will not be the Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth of the late seventies. The experience was a frustrating one for both of us, and I still have to confess to a bit of surprise that Robert Silverberg like "Three Dream Woman" well enough to buy it for *NEW DIMENSIONS*. Needless to say, I'm glad he did. Craig, by the way, deserves the credit for marketing and selling the story since I was so disenchanted with it for a time that I suggested he just put it away in a drawer and let it mold. Needless to say, I'm glad he didn't--but for a good long while my feelings in the matter were quite mixed. For the sake of our friendship, then, neither Craig nor I have sought to initiate a second collaboration... My non-collaborative story "Collaborating," by the way, was one of the natural outgrowths of this affair. "Collaborating" (which will apparently surface in Scott Edelman's anthology *THE UNIVERSE WITHIN* only if the publisher decides to honor the contract made with Scott) is a story narrated alternately by the separate personalities of a two-headed man...



CB: You seem to be influenced by writers other than the general run-of-the-mill sf authors. Is there any particular author you derive your style and emphasis from, or is there an internalization of all the writers you've read?

MB: I think, finally, I've developed a style of my own, and I'm not conscious of trying any longer to be like somebody else whom I admire. Occasionally, I'll do a deliberate pastiche, as of Lafferty or Borges or Barthleme or maybe even James Tiptree, Jr. (I think "Blooded on Arachne," for instance owes a great deal to Tiptree, as does the ending of "Allegiances.") But it's my hope that I've finally grown enough as a writer to suit my style, such as it is, to the material. Today I find John Barth, Joseph Heller and Thomas Pynchon peeking spectrally around the curtains in my study, but, without being downright rude, I'm trying to ignore them. Harlan Ellison has already slapped my wrist hard for pretending to be both Sir Walter Scott and Henry James, and that, by God, smarts!

CB: Do you feel full-time writing has been a boon to your development, or do you think you would have developed just as well as a part-time author, writing while working at a 9-to-5 job?

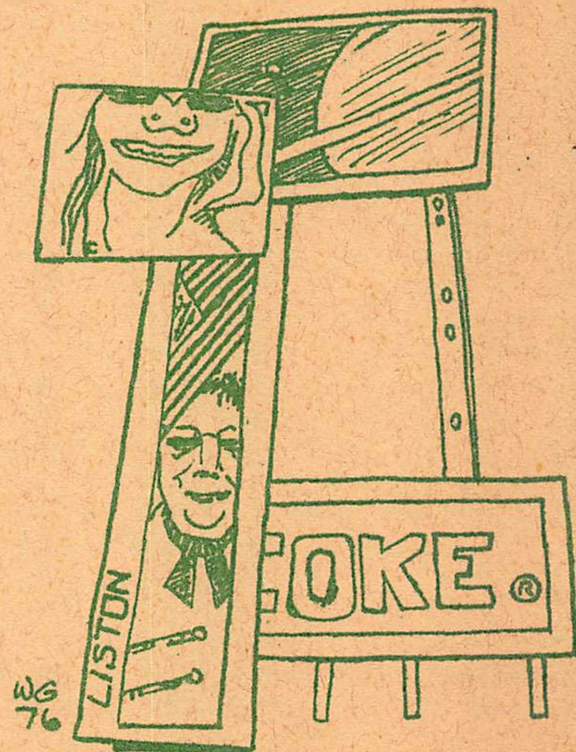
MB: I think writing full-time has helped, but I would have continued writing no matter what the circumstances. The only time writing full-time worries me is when the money isn't coming in; then I fret, and my work suffers. That's one advantage the part-time writer has over the beginning professional; he isn't sweating doctor, food, rent and utility bills.... Conversely, if my time weren't altogether my own, I probably never would have undertaken the writing of my novel-in-progress.

CB: Will this novel-in-progress, COLD WAR ORPHANS, mark your break with science fiction, or is it just another novel to you? Will you move back and forth between mainstream and sf? In other words, do you hope to move into mainstream entirely?

MB: COLD WAR ORPHANS is not just another novel to me, primarily because it contains so much of my own personal and cultural background: small-town Kansas life in 1947-58, the period when the Soviet Union had just initiated the Space Age by launching the first Sputnik. And, as I examined the history of Georgia and of the Cherokee and Creek Indians for my novella "Allegiances," here I have spent a good deal of time researching not only the events of the Eisenhower administration but also the era immediately preceding the Civil War during which "Bleeding Kansas" became a national byword for the divisions already separating North and South. Having said all this, however, I think I ought to add that my hope is that COLD WAR ORPHANS is also a funny book.... But that's not for me to decide, even if I do sometimes tend to snicker while I'm typing.

Earlier I indicated that I don't wish to abandon sf entirely. I don't. COLD WAR ORPHANS, believe it or not, is also intended as partial repayment of my debt to Ray Bradbury and to the field in general. People who ordinarily read nothing but sf and fantasy should not be at all lost in this novel. Nor will those who make their livings sneering learnedly at our "ghetto"--if it really is a ghetto--fail to see that this book acknowledges influences other than Joyce and Hemingway. My fervent hope is that neither group will dismiss COLD WAR ORPHANS out of hand. I'm trying to achieve a sort of synthesis, as a good many other writers have already done.

And now I'd better get back to work. There hangs over my head the old fear that, either by procrastination or surrender, I won't get finished....





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Cabinet Meeting - Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine  
Old Folks at Home - UNIVERSE 8, ed. Terry Carr  
Three Dream Woman - written in collaboration with  
Craig Strete, NEW DIMENSIONS 8, Robert Silverberg, ed.  
Leaps of Faith - F&SF  
The House of the Compassionate Sharers - Cosmos  
Dogs' Lives - THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS, ed.  
Harlan Ellison  
Collaborating - first publication site not known yet  
COLD WAR ORPHANS - Manuscript in progress,  
mainstream novel with SF overtones  
AND STRANGE AT ECBATAN THE TREES, under a different  
title, is due out from DAW in early 1977

### PLUS

At this year's DeepSouthcon, being held in Birmingham,  
Alabama August 26-28, 1977, Michael Bishop will be  
the Guest of Honor. In commemoration of this, the  
convention will be offering, to the first 100 members,  
a limited edition printing chapbook of Michael Bishop's  
poetry. This will be done on highest-quality paper, in  
handset type --a truly fine edition, not a mere offset  
pamphlet --and personally signed by Michael Bishop.  
Membership is now well past fifty, and the edition it-  
self, besides being a fine commemorative work, will  
be hard-to-find once sold out. For those who would  
like a copy, send \$5.00 for convention membership to:  
Penny Frierson (DSC), 3705 Woodvale Road, Birmingham,  
Alabama 35223. This project is most highly recom-  
mended; the printing will be done by Joe Moudry, and  
those familiar with his hand-set-type work will realize  
what a fine chapbook this will be.

### ABOUT THE INTERVIEW

The interview contained in this issue was conducted  
between November 18 and December 1, 1976, via a  
series of letters. Questions have been rearranged some-  
what so that, in certain parts of the interview, follow-  
up questions could follow the original questions; other  
than this, there has been no real editing or altering of  
the text of this interview.

### ABOUT THE COVER

This issue's cover is a pen-and-ink drawing by Wade  
Gilbreath, done in the early part of this year; it rep-  
resents one of the Ouemartsee in Michael Bishop's A  
FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE. It was done espec-  
ially for Michael Bishop, and is used here by the grace  
of the artist.



## HUGOS THERE?

The past year has been a most active one for science fiction and fantasy; new magazines have entered the field, major works by prestigious authors have been published, and booksales have continued to climb. All this activity is a major reason why it's so hard for the average fan to reach a decision on Hugo nominees for 1976--it's always hard, but this year should prove almost impossible for anyone who hasn't read voraciously throughout the year.

In the most important competition to me, the Best Novel, I foresee little problem in making a choice of any sort; the novel that should take this year's award is DEUS IRAE, the collaborative effort of Philip K. Dick and Roger Zelazny. The most serious competition will be Frank Herbert's third book in the Dune series, CHILDREN OF DUNE; the book lacks the complexity and expertise of style to be found in Dick's novel, but it will most probably draw a large number of votes from its fans who had prejudged the book as good. SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE by Robert Silverberg very well may be on the ballot, but it seems to lack the driving force of last year's STOCHASTIC MAN, and if that novel failed to win, I have little hope for this. The double winner of last year, Joe Haldeman, offers little competition with this year's MINDBRIDGE, although he may still get a nomination.

In the novella category, there are few outstanding works to consider; my favorite, and my only real recommendation, is the Gregory Benford/Gordon Eklund "Anvil of Jove" in the July F&SF; I also found Arsen Darnay's "Plutonium" in GALAXY enjoyable, but not really Hugo quality. Other than these, I really know of nothing in the novella category that deserves an award.

Novelette is an easier category to vote on; this year has one outstanding choice, "The Samurai and the Willows" by Michael Bishop. Other stories that deserve a nomination, although they're of varying quality, are "Men of Greywater Station" by Howard Waldrop and George R.R. Martin, "Embryonic Dharma" by Gordon Eklund (I'm a fan of Eklund's work, so more than a little prejudiced), Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's "Dead in Irons" from FASTER THAN LIGHT (this is a stunning story and possibly an even more outstanding choice than "Samurai...") and George R.R. Martin's "Nor the Many-Colored Fires of a Star Ring."

The overwhelming number of short stories makes this a difficult category; I'd be inclined to merely abstain in this choice, but I feel that I've read enough to make a few personal choices. I enjoyed Harlan Ellison's "The Wine Has

Been Left Open Too Long and the Memory has Gone Flat" from Terry Carr's UNIVERSE 6; likewise, I found "I See You" by Damon Knight to be a strong story. There are no other works that come readily to mind--it hasn't been a bad year for the short story, but the fact that so many good ones have been written requires truly outstanding stories for a Hugo nomination.

This year's ORBIT offered George R.R. Martin's "Meat-house Man," and it surely deserves a nomination, but I'm not adept enough at figuring wordage to be sure of which category, novella or novelette; whichever it goes in, be sure to read it.

I don't really favor anything in Dramatic Presentation; I presume that LOGAN'S RUN will walk away with the award, but I was highly dissatisfied with the film, dismissing it as a piece of fluff--expensive fluff, but fluff nonetheless. I was equally disappointed with the much-hyped KING KONG, and while it'll have its supporters, I don't think it deserves an award, either. Unless something more interesting pops up that I had been previously unaware of, I'll vote "no award" in this category.

Best Professional Editor for the past year really should go to Terry Carr, I feel; I suspect Ben Bova will walk away with it again, though. Ted White seems to have passed his prime in this category; I was wholly dissatisfied with his editorial work this past year, since he seemed to be buying anything to fill up pages--his editorials and lettercols remained consistently interesting, but that's all.

Best Professional Artist has one person who truly deserves the award--George Barr. A strong contender should be Michael Whelan, followed by Darrell Sweet or John Schoenherr. I don't feel that Kelly Freas even deserves a nomination, although I suspect he'll get one for "old time's sake."

Best Fanzine? A difficult category, and one I find myself rather torn on. My personal choice is Nyctalops from Harry Morris, followed closely by Linda Bushyager's Karass (I enjoy that zine immensely). I'm also looking rather favorably at Algol, which is (despite its slickness) a handsome fanzine.

Best Fanwriter--I like Bill Bowers, Mike Glicksolin and Dick Geis. Perennial choices, but they're awfully good, and each one deserves it.

In fan artist, I can think of one outstanding choice--Grant Carrington. After that, Shull or Al Sirois. And thassit for '76.



# Reviews

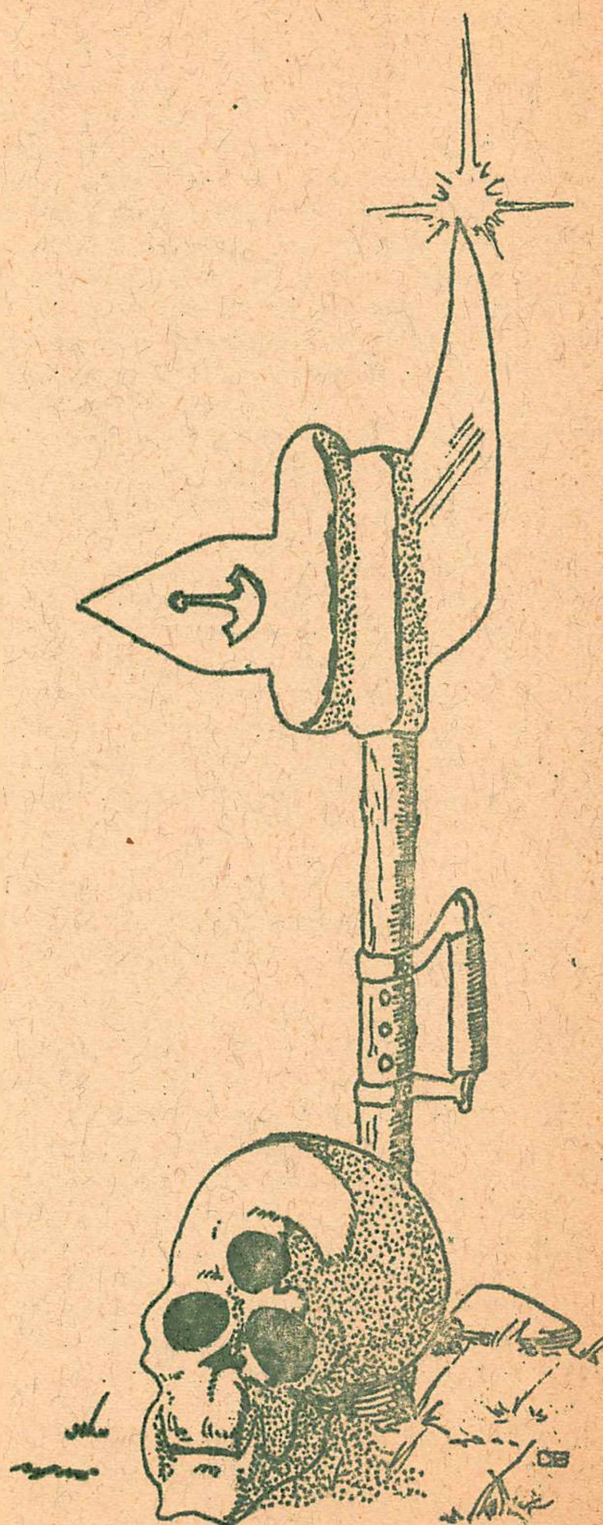
LITERARY SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS: The Makers of Heroic Fantasy. L. Sprague de Camp. (Arkham House; \$10.00). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

There has been an amazing preponderance of non-fiction in the science fiction and fantasy field recently, ranging from the very good to the abominable, with all gradations in between pretty well covered. Until the release of this volume from Arkham, however, the only biographer we could turn to was Sam Moskowitz, and the errors that manage to creep into his works make him a questionable reference. LITERARY SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS is a collection of nine medium-length biographical/critical essays by de Camp, one chapter concerning itself with a great many lesser-known but still important heroic-fantasists, and a biographical sketch of de Camp himself by Lin Carter.

As a biographer, de Camp has been lauded and cursed; his biography of H.P. Lovecraft is still being debated, and the inclusion of a fifty page biographical study of HPL in this volume should add fuel to the fires. De Camp has a somewhat disconcerting habit of skipping from biography to criticism and back to biography again without notice, but once the reader is aware this is coming and has prepared himself for it, this flaw in organization is easily overlooked.

The authors covered in this volume are: William Morris, Lord Dunsany, H.P. Lovecraft, E.R. Eddison, Robert E. Howard, Fletcher Pratt, Clark Ashton Smith, J.R.R. Tolkien and T.H. White. Some of the biographies are rather stale and manage to re-present the same basic biographies that readers and fans have virtually memorized--this is particularly true of REH and HPL, and to a lesser extent of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis--but a greater number of the biographies present fresh material and solid writing, combining it with usually-well-done criticism. The primary fault of the book is its inability to follow a topic to conclusion without digression--the biography of Tolkien manages to segue into a long biography/criticism of C.S. Lewis, and de Camp seems not the slightest bit embarrassed by the transition--but all in all, it's interesting reading, and valuable in what it contains.

LITERARY SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS may not be the final and most well-done word on the subject of fantasy authors, but it's the best thing available at present, and as such is very much worth acquiring.





UPON THE WINDS OF YESTERDAY & Other Explorations.  
George Barr (Donald Grant, \$25). Reviewed by Jessica  
Ain and a Salmonson.

George Barr is a prolific artist, unmatched in the use of ball point pens; a medium which--in conjunction with water colors and occasionally, colored pencils--he uses with magnificent result. Donald Wollheim obviously loves his art; it's a regular feature on many DAW paperbacks. The Ballantines seem taken by his style, and we should all be aware, via the Tolkein calendars, that the Ballantines have the highest standards and taste. Private collectors like Gerry de la Ree and Dr. William Broxon value his contributions to their walls and studios. And Don Grant, publisher, was fond enough of the man and his art to produce a deluxe hardback of full color prints, mixed with a few black & whites, with a forward by Tim Kirk and an introduction by Stuart Schiff (and an afterword by the artist himself).

Most of us are familiar with Barr-the-paperback-illustrator, where his work is overlaid with titles or (as with "The Masked Goddess" on the cover of THE BIRTHGRAVE) reduced to such a small size that it cannot be appreciated to its fullest. Some of us know him from his fannish illustrations of Conan for Amra and even for mimeograph publications--hardly representative of his work. A few of us have had the good fortune of seeing those paintings which were not designed with title overlays in mind.

UPON THE WINDS OF YESTERDAY features a bit of each of Barr's styles: fannish, book covers, private commissions and personal creations (in reverse order of importance).

In the fannish category, the most interesting pieces are the personalized nametags done for conventions: the envy of every conventioneer. In the "commercial" category, especially book covers, we see complete competence, although I've a few complaints. Some of these paintings, despite superb execution, are as uninspired as the books they decorate. "The Butterfly," from Lin Carter's YEAR'S BEST FANTASY, is a gaudy eyesore. The poster for the movie FLESH GORDON is so commercial it seems to have dollar signs dripping off it. There is also a tendency toward repetition in layouts, in the manner of Freas' Laser books (only much prettier): GAMES PSYBORGS PLAY (which interestingly enough includes a portrait of Pam Fagundus), FALL OF MERLIN'S TOWER (for THE WEATHERMAKER), HUNTERS OF THE RED MOON, SPELL SWORD and others are individually excellent pieces, but side by side reveal a dull sameness.

So, as might be expected of any artist, Barr's best works are those commissioned or from his own personal creativity. "A Penny for your Thoughts, Your Majesty" pictures a princess and tree frog so marvelous and captivating that it defies criticism. "Dragon's Ward" is an innocently sensual depiction of a dragon and his lady.

My only real complaint is that Barr's women--and men, too, for that matter--are rarely unique, rarely deeply characterized, rarely as real to me as they might be. The women are perfect sexual images; the men are tough. The viewer must generally look at the creatures and the strange landscapes for any sense of depth or personality.

The book is all in all a superlative piece of bookmaker's craft, displaying a very important fantasy illustrator in the best way possible (next to a live exhibit). But is it worth \$25? Well, no. Not when prints of Gallardo and other fantasy artists of equal or greater stature can be had for a fraction of the price. But alas, \$25 is the price--and you'll have to pay it if you want to view some of Barr's works unblemished by overlays, and pieces you'll never see anywhere unless you travel to numerous private collections. When a book is so costly that it makes me feel like a criminal leaving it out where people can touch it; and it restricts my desire to remove a plate for framing--I don't like it. The price, that is--I like the book. (Available for \$25 from Donald Grant, West Kingston, Rhode Island--~~02892~~)

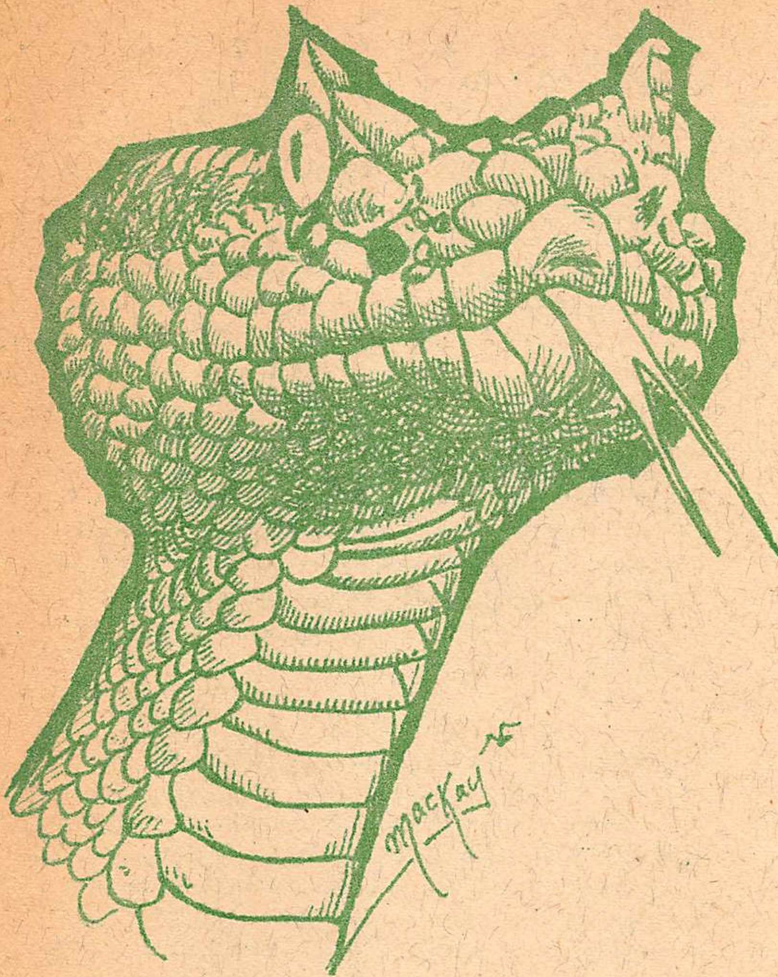
LETTER FROM GEORGE R.R. MARTIN (10-34-76)

"No doubt it will appear very ingracious of me to cavil about a fanzine that is as thoroughly complimen- tary to me and my writing as is the latest issue of FR. If so, I'm afraid I must appear an ingrate. Cavil I must, in fac, Susan's review of "The Storms of Windhaven" (as part of Terry Carl's BEST SF OF THE YEAR #5) was very disturbing.	Burnick/Martin Manor 2266 Jackson Dubuque, Iowa 52001
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"Different writers collaborate in different ways, and the reviewer who tries to speculate about who wrote what in a collaborative effort is playing a dangerous game--such speculations are more likely to be wrong than right. But at least giving the wrong people credit for the wrong passages is harmless enough, in 99 out of 100 cases. However, to say, as Susan does in her review, 'I suspect that George Martin did most of the writing, while Lisa Tuttle supplied the story idea' is quite a different matter, especially to a writer. Instead of simply dividing up the credit wrongly, it gives all the credit to me, and none at all to Lisa.

"For the truth is, ideas are cheap, a dime-a-dozen. Right now I have more ideas in a card file than I could possibly use were I to write full-time for twenty years. It's the act of making those ideas into full-fleshed stories that demands the talent, the sweat, the whatever--in the last analysis, it's the writing that counts. Professional writers often encounter people who tell them, 'You know, we ought to collaborate. I get great story ideas, but I can't write. Tell you what, I'll give you my ideas, you write 'em up, and we'll split what we make.' I know of no writer who has ever accepted such an offer. What the non-writer doesn't understand is that the writer already has a million ideas of his own, that the difficulty





lies not in thinking up possible stories, but in "writing 'em up"--so easy to say, so hard to do well. It is possible that somewhere there exists a collaborative team where one partner supplies ideas and the other does all the writing. But I don't know of any such. And I can tell you straightforward that I would never participate in any collaboration where I was left to do "most of the writing." Why do most of the work for half of the proceeds? I'd rather do all of the work and keep all of the filthy lucre.

((I want to assure you that I had intended no offense or insult in my comment--perhaps such speculative conjecture is something I should abstain from, but I was merely saying what seemed quite possible to me at the time. I'm not a professional writer (and probably never will be, lacking the perseverance), but when I have written in collaboration, I've had a very difficult time with ideas, but once I get a good basic draft of the story from a collaborator, I can take his/her idea and add my writing and come up with what I feel is an adequate, although amateurish, job (after all, I am an amateur). I guess I had projected my collaborative arrangement to your collaboration--the error is mine, but I hope that you can see now that I was basing it on my own experience, and I was not trying to demean Lisa Tuttle's writing prowess (a very impressive prowess, I might say, judging from "Stone Circle," the most recent of her solo stories I've read. Sorry.))

"I've collaborated with two other writers, Howard Waldrop and Lisa Tuttle. With Howard, the basic idea and the universe it was set in were both mine. We talked out the fine details at a con, then went up to Howard's hotel room, got out his portable typewriter, and began to work. We alternated for several hours, and finally went partying with the first draft half-done. Howard took the story home with him to Texas, finished the first draft, and shipped it up to me. I expanded, revised, and polished it. Writing was pretty much shared, an equal task.

"As for "The Storms of Windhaven," I contributed the planet and the flyer culture (in very rough outline) to the idea, Lisa contributed the protagonist and the basic conflict, and we worked out the plot together, mostly by mail. Then Lisa began the story, writing the first dozen pages or so and mailing them up to me. I revised and rewrote her section, and continued onward for ten more pages. She then went over what I'd added, polishing that, and continued still further, and thus we alternated until we had a complete story in our hands. There is virtually no part of the narrative that hasn't been messed with by both of us, at some point. We deserve equal credit, or equal blame, for whatever merits or defects the story might have. We're now working on other Windhaven stories, using the same modus operandi.

"Susan's review also contained one very serious misstatement of fact, by the way. She says that flyers' tradition is to hand down the wings to "the first-born male child in each flyer's family." This is very emphatically NOT the case. Lisa and I considered setting things up that way when we first began working out the storyline, but rejected the idea very quickly. I honestly can't see where Susan could have gotten that idea. Windhaven, as depicted in the novella, is a non-sexist culture, whatever its other faults. Wings are handed down to the first-born child in each flyer family, regardless of sex. Numerous female flyers are named and referred to in the narrative, although I think we erred in making most of the major characters, excepting the protagonist, male. Maris' big problem is not that she is a woman, but that she is an adopted child, and her claim on the wings is therefore inferior to that of Coll, her father's natural son. Although Lisa and I both support the feminist movement, I don't think either of us intended for "The Storms of Windhaven" to be a feminist message story, except insofar as any story that depicts women in responsible leadership roles within a non-sexist society can be said to be conveying a message. Clear? I hope so.

((Cliff's turn--this error is mine, since the work of stencilling is predominantly my chore, and in Susan's typed manuscript of the review, "male" isn't there, merely child. I was stencilling this before I read the story in question, and I merely let my fingers jump to a rather cliched conclusion.))



"Now that all of that is out of the way, let me thank you once again for sending us FR, which--mistakes aside--keeps getting better and better.

"I feel compelled to comment on Jessica Amanda Salmonson's letter; in particular on her discussion of Terry Carr. It is all well and good for her to say that Damon Knight is a better editor than Terry Carr, that being after all a matter of literary taste. But to say that "Carr has a distinct aversion to the fiction of women," as Salmonson does, is balderdash, and sexist balderdash at that. Salmonson here is doing exactly the same as the worst male chauvinist; talking about "the fiction of women" as if it were all of a piece. Women don't all write alike, no more than men. I'm sure that Terry Carr has an aversion to the writing of some women in SF, just as he undoubtedly has an aversion to the writing of many men. But the same is true of Damon Knight and many other editors. The fact is, Terry Carr and Damon Knight publish very different kinds of SF, and I'm sure that either one would eagerly publish the work of any writer, regardless of sex, who submitted an outstanding example of the kind of story they were looking for. If Knight has published more women than Carr recently (an assertion I'm not sure is true, by the way), I can only assume that more women have been writing ORBIT-stories lately than have been writing UNIVERSE stories.

"My wife, Gale Burnick, and myself have had more than our share of trouble this past year with sexists both in and out of fandom, most of whom seem intent on frustrating Gale's efforts to use her own name by converting her either to "Mrs. Martin" or into a nameless "and his wife." We can personally testify that even in the allegedly "liberated" realms of SF, sexism is not as dead as we might wish it. But Terry Carr has never been one of the offenders--quite otherwise, in fact--and I think Salmonson's labeling of him is quite unfair.

"While I'm on the subject of Gale's name, may I draw your attention to the new line we're inserting in our address--"Burnick-Martin Manor." We've had so much difficulty lately with people making the automatic assumption that Gale is a "Mrs. Martin" that we have decided to try to forestall future mistakes by naming our house in such a manner that the name clearly reflects that two people with very different names live here. If we can get the line used universally, it will save us a great deal of difficulty. Those wanting to reach both of us with letters or fanzines or whatever can just write "Burnick-Martin Manor, 2266 Jackson, Dubuque, IA, 52001." Those wanting one or the other should preface that with the name of the person they're writing, but we're asking that they use the "Burnick-Martin Manor" line in either case. You have no conception how many letters we've had to write correcting people who wrote to "Mr. & Mrs. Martin," or "the Martins," or a variant thereof. Would be much appreciated if you could help us publicize this by printing it in FR." ((No sooner said than done!))

STARGATE. Stephen Robinett. (St. Martin's Press -- \$7.95)  
Reviewed by Mike Glyer.

Stephen Robinett, formerly known to ANALOG readers as Tak Hallus, offers STARGATE as the latest in the St. Martin's Press list of original sf novels. Published even as the firm announced its plans to issue a dozen sf books annually, paying top rates, STARGATE is a fully entertaining adventure and evidence that St. Martin's is assembling one of the strongest lists of writers-under-contract in sf.

Protagonist Robert Collins in his first day on the job finds himself forced to fill the shoes of a brilliant engineer, and help discover the man's assassin. His company's stargate can snatch matter from lightyears away, and threatens to steal the interstellar mining business from a rival who uses a drone mining fleet. That rivalry caused the murder of Collins' predecessor--big trouble for the stargate company since the man kept his notes in his head. Collins must sort out the chaos and rediscover the lost knowledge.

Robinett's experience writing for Campbell has certainly left its mark on the way he constructs a story. Collins, for example, is a typical ANALOG problem-solving engineer, and this action-adventure story reaches its climax in a haze of pseudoscientific explanations. There are many good points in STARGATE I'll remark on in a moment, but let me make this point: anyone who rereads 60's ANALOGs recalls the emphasis on plot, and the illusion of scientific plausibility along the way. Yet those scientific justifications usually had a substance that was no more than high school biology and SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN cosmology coated with doubletalk, preached by a man in a white labcoat using an "As you already know, Kimball" tone of voice. Compared to the real science of many Niven and Clement stories the defects are painfully obvious. Yet Robinett is using the same darned technique. In my opinion, if the subject at hand cannot be justified with known science, the writer should simply rely on the reader's willingness to suspend disbelief rather than fall back on this cliché: "I shouldn't have asked. Dr. Perkov started on a lecture that would have boggled Watson and Crick..." Collins, who made the remark, is a well-educated engineer, and I've met a couple of real engineers comparable to him; I doubt they'd be boggled by a scientific explanation of anything. Certainly nothing that I can follow, as happened in that "lecture." The reader wants a self-consistent explanation that doesn't flaunt known science without cause, and he's prepared to accept an impossible postulate. The writer doesn't need to baffle a man in a white coat with gibberish to persuade the reader to accept the postulate.

Regardless, Robinett is really a fine storyteller, a writer of excellent dialogue and smooth prose. Far from a typical ANALOG piece, STARGATE really reminds me of a story-type seen often in the 1960's PLAYBOYS: relying on dialogue and character interaction more than narrative and violence to develop the story. Robinett's characters are three dimen-



sional; they tell about themselves by talking to each other, without resorting to lecture as often happens in sf. Collins, Carolyn Smith--the detective whose search for the murderer embroils Collins in constant mischief--and Collins' wife turn out to be more real than the plot and the stargate. Robinett tries to explain the novel's climax in cosmological doubletalk, though the reader will probably be impatiently waiting for him to get back to the major characters and resolve their personal lives. This is quite uncommon in sf, and is a testimony to Robinett's skill on that level. STARGATE is quite satisfying and I recommend it.

MY NAME IS LEGION. Roger Zelazny. (Ballantine #24867 -- \$1.50). Reviewed by Frank Love.

Warning: this is not a novel. Instead, it's a collection of three Zelazny novellas that rate from good to damn good on my scale.

The first story is "The Eve of RUMOKO." RUMOKO is the project to create a volcano in midocean and thereby make more living room for Earth's population. The trouble is, somebody is out to sabotage it. That, of course, is where our man comes in. Now, despite what I've just said, this story is only peripherally concerned with sabotage and spies. It's really about a man called Schweitzer, real name unknown. Who he is and how he came to be a man with no real identity form the backbone of the story. All in all, it's a fascinating extrapolation into the near future when society is primarily based on computers and all essential information is recorded in central computer files.

Next in line is "'Kjwalll'kje'k'k'oothai'lll'kje'k." This story continues the saga of our nameless protagonist who is investigating the murder of a man... by a dolphin. Everything is not what it seems, of course, but the fun comes in trying to fit the pieces together before the puzzle is complete. This is one of the best blendings of the detective story and science fiction you are ever likely to read. Zelazny has done a superlative job on background, characterization and plot to produce a story worth reading over and over. It really grows on you.

Last, but certainly not least, comes "Home is the Hangman." (Love that title.) Since it made a clean sweep of the Hugo and Nebula awards this year, it really doesn't need much of a recommendation from me; nevertheless, I give it one. Do you like detective stories? Do you like stories with action? Do you like stories that make you think? If your answer is yes, you owe it to yourself to read "Home is the Hangman." Despite the fact that "Hangman" contains our previously mentioned nameless protagonist, the real central character is the Hangman. The only disappointment in the story for me is that the central character doesn't stay around long enough for me to get really acquainted. I feel tantalized--like taking one lick of a lollipop... I'm going to read this one again... and again... and again...

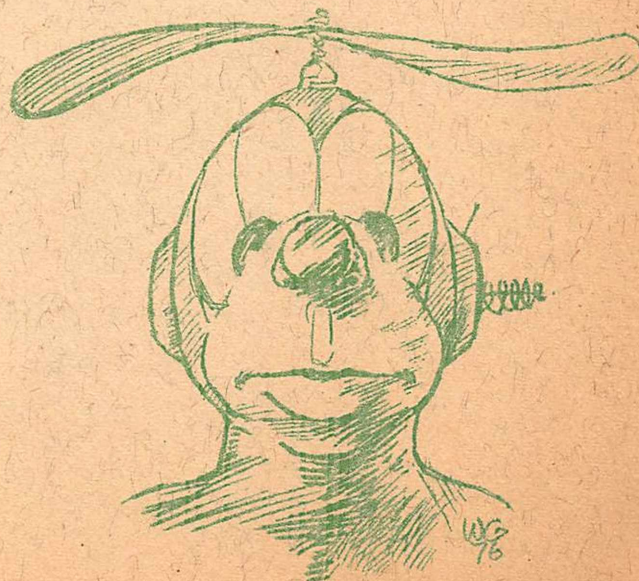
## LETTER FROM BEN INDICK

(10-26-76)

Thank you for FR 8. As a fellow Lovecraftian, I was pleased by your cover (not for its HPL qualities--which it really doesn't have--Wilbur Whately is not exactly human, but he isn't quite like this--and his brother is scarcely human at all--but the cover was still satisfactory on the emotional level as Drawing) and for your fine discussion. Some of us might quibble about that "revival" because HPL has been growing for some years now--abroad as well as here (I have a fine edition in Japanese, also one in Italian--and Dirk Mosig has many other languages as well of HPL's stuff). Meade Frierson's HPL was thus not precisely a precursor, but it did give an impetus to semi-pro fanpubbing and to generalized Mythos writing by newcomers, some good, some less than satisfactory.

((Jeannie Corbin stated recently that her cover wasn't intended to present a precise physically-accurate-to-description drawing of Wilbur Whately as much as a similar feeling of horror--I have few objections to such "essence" art, and it seems that you have the same feeling as I, but others were more perturbed by the not-wholly-accurate rendition. As to "revival," I was speaking more in terms of a Ballantine revival than anything else; they did in actuality revive some of their HPL-related titles that had been out of print for half a decade or so, which indicates an even more widespread awareness of the salability of HPL.))

"For me, pleasure in ERB's Martian tales is a "revival" of sorts--except that I never read them as a kid. I started on them because the SFBC was offering them in Frazetta jackets and illos, and I love his mightily thighed women with their





sultry faces (like 'em even better than St. John's! Heresy!). What happened was that, foolish as they are, they turned out to be fun -- and quite inventive, too...

"Logan's Run: Nolan is, for goodness sake, writing a sequel. Why must people sequelize parables? They did it endlessly with the Apes series, and since the Nolan flick is doing so well, I guess they'll do it here. I hope they do it better; the film had good things going for it, but it took every easy copout possible, especially the ludicrous ending. Donn Albright, who read Nolan's own screenplay, tells me it was far superior to the filmed version.

"The letters from Frank Long and Sprague de Camp are witty and humorous, as one might expect from two genuine classics of our genre. These men have contributed so much to all of us, and remain good-natured and generous to their fans. Mr. Long couldn't say a harsh word if you twisted his arm, whereas Mr. de Camp can be most sly--but never malicious."

((As you no doubt realized when you asked your rhetorical question, they sequelize parables because the originals make Lotsa Money, and the authors/producers/studios are working for that. I have nothing against Nolan writing a sequel if he so wishes, but I expect little from it, for the reasons you give.))

THE DISCIPLES OF CTHULHU. Edward P. Berglund, ed. (DAW UW1258 -- \$1.50). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

With the sudden marketability of HPL, publishers are beginning to give horror fiction a second look as having sales potential. Don Wollheim has been aware of the potential of modern horror for quite a while--DAW's YEAR'S BEST HORROR remains one of the most powerful horror-anthology series published--and this new anthology of HPL-related horror fiction is a strong entry into the horror market.

The book has one primary fault--the editor, it seems, has a real inability to sort strong material from trite and maudlin works that imitate without originality. The stories remain rather mercurial in quality, ranging from extremely good (the Leiber, Brennan and Lumley are totally adequate and enjoyable stories) to hopelessly cliched and derivative (the James Wade "Silence of Erika Zann" and, to a lesser degree, Campbell's "The Tugging" are weak, ineffective and unenjoyable stories that really shouldn't be included in the volume--and Lin Carter's story is another weak montage of "quotes from forbidden tomes" with a hackneyed plot--his story reads like a mad occultist's Who's Who in Cthulhu-fiction). This flaw in editing detracts from the overall value of the book--in effect, the reader becomes the editor, confronted with manuscripts of varying qualities.

DISCIPLES OF CTHULHU also suffers somewhat when read at one sitting--it becomes almost too much of a good thing,

and it leaves the reader less able to appreciate the not-to-be-underestimated quality of the good stories.

DISCIPLES OF CTHULHU is DAW's third venture into the realm of Lovecraftian fiction, and even with its flaws, I hope further anthologies of this sort will be forthcoming. The overall feeling the book leaves is a positive one, and the horror/Lovecraftian fiction fan will find this a delight to read.

DOWN HERE IN THE DREAM QUARTER. Barry N. Malzberg. Doubleday -- \$6.95. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

As an avid reader of science fiction, I couldn't help but be aware of Barry Malzberg's notoriety; yet, by coincidence, I have read virtually nothing by Malzberg prior to this volume. As a result, DOWN HERE IN THE DREAM QUARTER was a success and a failure, a powerful work and a self-indulgent game.

The book is comprised of all Malzberg's recent short fiction that has remained uncollected until this time; it is prefaced by a long introduction in which Malzberg presents his reasons for leaving the sf field (something we will hear repeatedly by the end of the volume) and a view into the persona of Barry Malzberg.

In a way, I'm pleased; Malzberg's fiction varies in quality tremendously, with some stories being utter wastes of space when viewed through my somewhat more technological-sf-oriented eyes, and others are extremely successful--but the stories suffered what I haphazardly refer to as the DANGEROUS VISIONS syndrome--many of them function well only with the afterwords to each story. "A Galaxy Called Rome," my personal favorite, loses much of its strength without the afterword; "Redundancy" is a story that accomplishes nothing for me unless I view it along with its afterword.

DOWN HERE IN THE DREAM QUARTER is interesting; I use the ambiguous word very much aware of its lack of value judgment, because this is a difficult book to judge. To me, it fails overall as interesting reading; to one more oriented to Malzberg's passive, removed style and low-key storytelling, it may be a worthwhile book. I can't recommend it, but Malzberg fans should judge for themselves.

LETTER FROM IRA THORNHILL

(10-20-76)

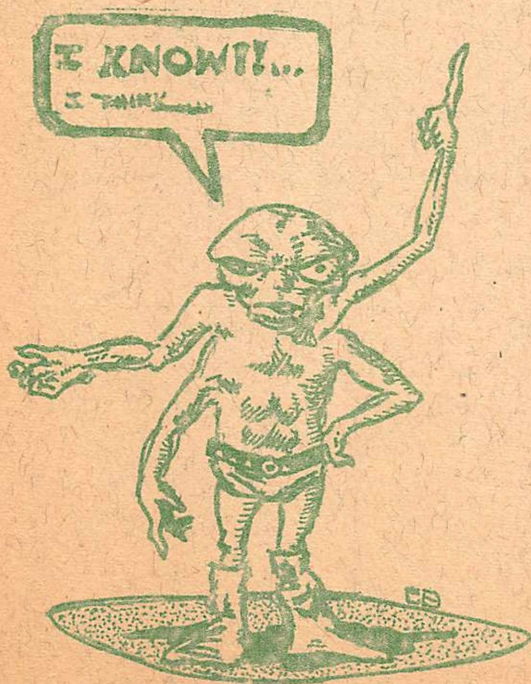
... "I suppose I'm one of those who first heard of FR through TwMacDonald's SFR "counterfeit" review in Shadow. I'm not exactly sure what I expected after reading that, but I wound up somewhat confused as to exactly what my feelings are on the matter. The format is so very much like SFR that I kept flashing SFR-memories and wondering when REG/Alter was going to step in with one of his/their usual comments. On the other hand, you do manage to keep the overall tone suf-



ficiently unique that we are constantly reminded that this isn't SFR after all. To take a format that is as widely associated with one particular zine as this format is with SFR & REG and to try to use it so exactly in another zine is extremely dangerous. At times you succeed--at times you fail. The final balance this time comes out just slightly on the positive side--largely as a result of some very well written book reviews. It will be most interesting to see how you handle this in future issues...

((Consciously, there was one major imitation of SFR--then known as TAC--and that was the mixture of reviews and letters, simply because I find that it breaks the monotony of too much of either one. But it just so happened that we ran into the micro-elite Executive shortly after our first year, and that resulted in another similarity--and the basic fact that both SFR and FR are basically review zines adds more similarity. I find the overall tone quite different, as you did with the last issue, and I think this in itself is sufficient to keep the two well-separated. I cringe, awaiting response to this issue's interview with Michael Bishop; I'm doing it to help end some of the similarity, but a few people seem to fear it will merely add to the comparison.))

"...I'd not read any of the Burroughs' series-continuation books (well, I did read Farmer's TIME'S LAST GIFT, but you didn't mention that one anyway) and was therefore very interested in this particular group of reviews. I had been afraid that these books might lessen my fond memories of enjoying Burroughs as a youngster. Maybe I'll have to try them after all.



"So Jessica doesn't like Frazetta (and, I suppose, "broad with fat asses"--at least in fantasy art). I have a great and abiding love of broads with fat asses. And I enjoy some of Frazetta's art. About the only point I would agree with her on is the Frazetta Worship Syndrome is too much evident in many other artists--and that's a real pity because many of them could be doing fine fantasy art if they'd get out from under Frank's thumb and do something uniquely their own. For example--anything of Jeff Jones when he isn't doing a Frazetta. Then too, it would help if paperback publishers weren't so impressed by the popularity of Frazetta's work that all they want any more is for somebody to do a Frazetta cover for them.

((I hadn't noticed Jeff Jones' work being imitative of Frazetta for years now--it was very much so to start with, but his style has shifted into something uniquely his own--but you seem to be right about publishers wanting more Frazetta covers than Frazetta could do--witness the popularity with publishers of Boris Vallejo, who does a very precise--although often cluttered--imitation of Frazetta.))

"Yours is the first review of DEUS IRAE I've seen that hasn't pointed out its striking similarities to Dick's earlier DR, BLOODMONEY. And I've yet to read one that really gets into how the collaboration actually differs from their individual stories--how do Dick's dark helplessness and Zelazny's fascination with myth and its creation combine (if at all)?

((The entire religious premise of the book, along with the insect cultures, their worship of the "Beetle," etc., is very much Zelazny in feel--the cynicism of the characters, the bleak perspective of man given in the book, that seems to be Dick's. It's not as simple as that, really, but superficially, that seems to be the most noticeable of the two styles.))

"THE LAST CELT is the most disappointing book Grant has yet published. It manages to gather together a good deal of bibliographical data (at least as far as it goes), but it doesn't really tell us anything new about REH. It's sad to think that with his access to REH's papers, etc., Glenn Lord was satisfied with nothing more than this. And the jacket is plain ugly!"

(1900 Perdido Street, Apt. B97 / New Orleans LA 70112)

WORSE THINGS WAITING. Manly Wade Wellman. (Carcosa Press, Chapel Hill, NC -- \$9.50). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Carcosa is a limited edition publisher devoted, like Arkham House, to weird and fantastic fiction; WORSE THINGS WAITING is the first volume in their line, and is a remarkable beginning.

Manly Wade Wellman is a talented writer of horror fiction, and use of dialect and local color make his horror stories some of the most suspenseful to be found. This volume is a massive collection of some of that horror fiction from Wellman's beginnings as a writer; as a result, there are a few stories in here



rely too much on gimmick ending or "shock" climaxes that fail to shock; but this is very rare and there are (thankfully) few of these types of stories in here. This is a stunning collection of some of the finest in well-written horror, and the 28 stories and 2 poems included in here make a good evening's reading.

In addition, the Carcosa volume is illustrated by Lee Brown Coye, the unique artist best known for his WEIRD TALES work; I remain not wholly impressed by Coye's line work, but his overall effect is one of heavy mood, and as a result, the illustrations manage to complement the fiction rather well.

Wellman is relatively obscure in the horror fiction field, due to the relative difficulty of finding his material in print; furthermore, WORSE THINGS WAITING won't remain in print for a great deal longer, so it's recommended that you get a copy now, before the book sells out and the price rises considerably. It's a well-made, handsome book filled with good reading.

WALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD. Suzy McKee Charnas (Ballantine 23768 -- \$1.25), TWO VIEWS OF WONDER edited by Thomas Scortia and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (Ballantine Books 23713 -- \$1.25). Reviewed by Richard L. Tierney.

Science fiction has, since its inception, been largely the domain of male writers and masculine opinions, though there have been several outstanding exceptions to this rule--Catherine Moore and Judith Merrill spring readily to mind as examples. But in recent years the rule itself seems to be crumbling as more and more female authors of high literary aptitude appear in the genre.

The Ballantine anthology TWO VIEWS OF WONDER illustrates this very pointedly. It contains ten never-before-published tales of science fiction, five by women and five by men. It was designed by the editors to illustrate the differences between men and women in the way they view world problems and the future extrapolation of those problems. Five challenging themes were chosen, and each theme was assigned to a pair of outstanding writers--one male and the other female.

I doubt this small sample proves anything scientifically as to male aptitude versus female, yet I feel the women came out somewhat in the lead. Consider for example this problem: "A newly-discovered serum that confers near-immortality." Female writer Sydney J. van Seyoc responds to this theme with a sensitive and impassioned account of what such a discovery would mean to terminal patients in rest homes: perpetual death-in-life as human vegetables. This is an issue very much alive as a matter of serious contemporary controversy. By contrast, male author R. Bretnor gives us a humorous and entertaining tale (the feminists will certainly find it frivolous and chauvinistic) of an eccentric scientist who invents a potion guaranteed to prolong his sexual

ability eternally!

WALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD by Suzy McKee Charnas is one of the best anti-utopia novels to appear in recent years. It portrays a post-atomic-war world reduced to pre-technological barbarism in which women are reduced to beast-like slavery, prevented from learning to read or think. Men are divided into rigid "before thirty" and "after thirty" castes--though exceptions are made for homosexual lovers. The protagonist is an under-thirty man who learns who his father is (parentage is kept secret due to a known "natural" enmity of sons and fathers) and sets out to kill him--a dramatic extrapolation of the tension between today's generations.

These two books are a sample of the quality science-fiction works being brought out by women today. The above works were brought out in paperback not as reprints, but as originals. Other publishers besides Ballantine are also coming out with quality "first-time-in-print" paperbacks in the sf genre, offering thought-provoking reading at a reasonable price.

TIME OF THE FOURTH HORSEMAN. Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. Doubleday -- \$5.95) Reviewed by Susan Biggers

I have just recently become acquainted with the fiction of Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, so I was most anxious to read this new sf work by her; her mood-creating fiction caught my fancy in FASTER THAN LIGHT, and I was eager to see if she could sustain a mood over a novel-length work.

I have mixed feelings; yes, TIME OF THE FOURTH HORSEMAN indicates that Chelsea Quinn Yarbro can hold the reader with her masterful control of the story; but the book, overall, fails to deliver what it leads the reader to expect.

TIME OF THE FOURTH HORSEMAN is a modern horror tale of a plan to solve overpopulation; by vaccinating people with ineffective vaccines, doctors are secretly re-introducing many diseases as a "controlled epidemic" that will kill a certain proportion of the population--that proportion that is, in reality, unprotected from the almost-nonexistent diseases. Dr. Natalie Lebbreau loses her child to the disease, then finds out that the conspiracy extends much farther than she'd ever expected; she chooses to fight the plan and try to help the common people who have no idea what's happening, making her an "enemy." But shortly, it becomes obvious that the "controlled epidemic" is out of control...

As an author, Yarbro is extremely good; she manages to hold reader interest with a not-quite-morbid telling of a grim and dismal future; but Yarbro leaves the reader on a very ambiguous ending, leaving the reader feeling cheated and confused as to the protagonist's ultimate fate. This is the book's main flaw, and it's one that is wholly dissatisfying. Had it been corrected and/or clarified, TIME OF THE FOURTH HORSEMAN would stand as one of the year's best books; in its present form, it's just another near-miss--but a near-miss so promising I find myself eagerly awaiting Yarbro's next book, to see if she hits the target with it.



**DANCE OF THE APOCALYPSE.** Gordon Eklund. (Laser 71016 -- \$1.25). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

As it turns out, one of the best story-tellers emerging in science fiction is Gordon Eklund; even in the action-adventure format, he manages to tell a story that has character development, strong plot and enough style to carry it all off without mishap. **DANCE OF THE APOCALYPSE** is a novel that offers the reader some lean story-telling and some strong characterization in a rather hackneyed (but, for Laser's aims, suitable) plot.

**DANCE OF THE APOCALYPSE** is a brain-and-brawn novel of America of the future; Michael makes his living as scavenger, selling and bartering remnants of America's glorious days to eager collectors. Bill Stoner is a rather docile man who's lived a peaceful life in the east, and finds the wild and savage life of the Washington/Oregon area. As Michael takes Stoner under his protection and tries to acquaint him with the necessary skills for survival, the two experience a series of adventures and predicaments that make up the major portion of the book.

A simple adventure plot, and one very reminiscent of the Burroughsian stories of grand adventure; but Eklund manages to avoid the stereotypes, to add a little political ideology, and to move the book to a rather unexpected ending, one that is more satisfying and believable.

Eklund isn't a heavy-handed writer; his style is very lean and to-the-point, and he wastes little words in telling his story. He uses real motivations to give the reader wholly believable characters, and the end result is a book that is certain to entertain.

**BLOODSTAR.** Robert E. Howard, John Jakes and Richard Corben. (Morningstar Press -- \$14.95) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

With the sudden Howardia craze becoming a boon for the small-edition and specialty publishers, and with Marvel Comics' "Conan" and other Howard-inspired heroes and adventures becoming so popular with comics fans, it's about time we got a synthesis--a limited edition hardcover comic book.

And that is exactly what the book **BLOODSTAR** consists of; a very freehand adaptation of Howard's "Valley of the Worm" in Rich Corben's heavy-airbrush, "realistic" style. The basic story has been updated and "heroized" by John Jakes, who succeeds in transforming an enjoyable story into a series of comic book clichés, so the plot remains weak and meandering throughout the adaptation.

And artistically, I find Rich Corben's overmuscled hero and pendulous-breasted women to be a little out of place in the "realism" Corben strives for; he tends to use reality as a tool to be used and abandoned as the artist sees fit, and I dislike seeing the visual mish-mosh spread out for such a length as

this.

The basic tale is one of Howard's better ones, and the confrontation between the primitive hero and the enormous worm-like creature is a much more powerful scene in REH's prose than it is here (and I will always wonder at the Freudian symbolism of this story).

To be fair, the book is moderately enjoyable for comic book work, but the price is far too high for such a venture, and the use of typeset word balloons and captions makes the careful layout of art look cheap; a small \$5-\$7.50 version of this would have been much more reasonable. Between the Howard fans and the Corben fans, though, I anticipate an early sellout of the 5000-copy edition, so if the book interests you, order soon. It's an expensive reminder of how simplistic most comic art adaptations are, though--and Marvel Comics did this same story much better five years ago--for 20¢. Now that's inflation...

**POSTCARD FROM ROBERT SILVERBERG**

(10-29-76)

"Andy Whitehead's weird notion (in FR#8) that **STOCHASTIC MAN** was expanded from its serial version for the book edition deserves comment. The truth, of course, is that the F&SF version was abridged from the book manuscript--not by very much, 5000 words or so. No writer is going to turn out a 55,000 word magazine novel and then pad it by a few thousand more for the book; the only time you see expansions is when novellas, as "Hawksbill Station," are transformed into novels--20,000 words turned into 50,000 or so."

((Just out of curiosity--do you abridge the manuscript yourself for magazine serialization (I realize this isn't normal, but I seem to recall you doing that with **UP THE LINE** in **AMAZING**), or does the editor do the cutting? And what sort of say-so does an author have over what's cut (or does he relinquish control when he sells the serial rights?))? I believe Andy's mistake is one of wording; while I can't speak for him, I'd assume that he merely considered the end result--more words in the hardcover--and phrased it as an expansion, when what he meant was that the novel was longer than the serial. I really can't see the use in chopping 5000 words out of a novel-length manuscript, though--it seems like token editing. I guess the desire to have numerous stories in a given issue of the magazine is the motivating factor, though...))

**A GALAXY OF STRANGERS.** Lloyd Biggle, Jr. (Doubleday -- \$5.95). Reviewed by Sue Phillips.

I remember the first book by Lloyd Biggle I ever read--**THE LIGHT THAT NEVER WAS**. It was a library copy and upon finishing it I promptly went out and ordered it from a local bookshop. Although this book is a collection, the two share a number of traits that make Mr. Biggle's fiction a delight to read.



The former deals with the softer sciences and the arts. This is also true with the eight stories here. Both have a deftness of style that creates pictures and feelings in words. Both deal with character, showing how one would act in a certain situation rather than telling. Both are highly professional.

These stories date from 1958 to 1974; "And Madly Teach," the first tale in this volume, is the story of an old-fashioned schoolroom teacher forced to work in a television medium. Through her confusion, or maybe despite it, she forces her superiors to recognize that tv learning is more harmful to the young, opposing the accepted belief.

"The Double-Edged Rope" is a peculiar tale of aliens amid a soviet-style society. It tells its story through exaggeration of a government's love forced rape, until it becomes laughable.

"Eye for an Eye" is an amusing tale of how misunderstood and supposedly inferior an alien society becomes when viewed

through human mores and customs.

"First Love" is just as its title suggests but with a haunting horror twist.

"Who's on First?" is the oldest of the eight and takes its name from the old Abbott and Costello routine. As might be imagined, it is about a baseball team that is losing miserably until five strangely contoured (as wide as tall) men show up and give exhibitions of ball handling that are just short of miracles.

"Round Trip to Esidarap" begins with the owner of a travel agency puzzling over a rival company just across the street. Customers of the two keep getting confused and asking him for itineraries to places such as Kroywen and Dnalsi Yenoc. Finally, he has to find out for himself and the results are hilarious but almost totally expected.

"No Biz Like Show Biz" details the reaction of a sensitive soul caught working in the penal system of a society that kills its unemployed. Criminals are taught, by him, some kind of act and leased out to various public and private exhibitions; the government gets the revenue.

The last tale, "What Hath God Wrought?" is, in some ways, a reaffirmation of the existence of some kind of omnipotent force. The characters' hoped-for scenario calls for the destruction of a national lottery, thus saving the country's economy. The actual scene is a new religion that seems to be doing more harm than its predecessor.

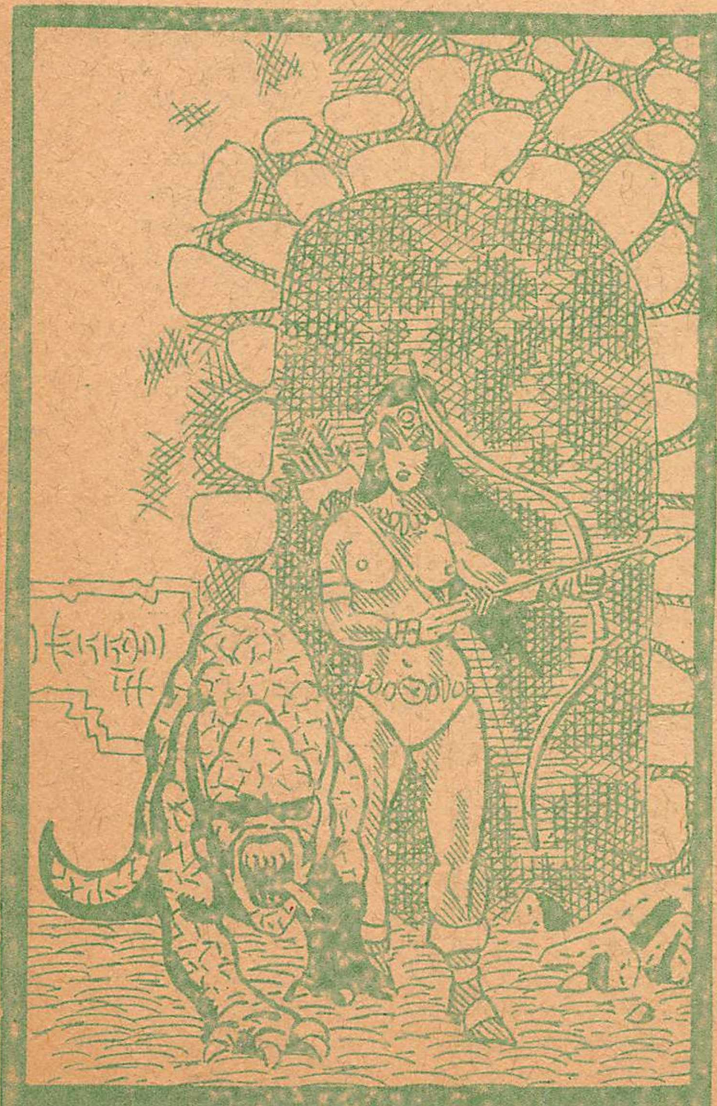
I have always admired Biggle's ability to handle aliens with a great deal of feeling. Now I rediscover the same ability with people; for the fan of "soft core" science fiction, this is a collection not to be missed.

A WORLD OUT OF TIME. Larry Niven. (Holt, Rinehart & Winston -- \$7.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Doubtlessly, I can say that there is no sf author writing more powerful hard-science sf than Larry Niven. Niven is a writer who has perfected his craft, explored it to its limits, and has now settled down to the task of using both his scientific knowledge and his keen sense of storytelling to turn out excellent science fiction.

As far as actual storytelling, A WORLD OUT OF TIME represents Niven's best work thus far; his pacing never falters and as a result, the reader never feels that the book is padded (and this is a problem Niven had in earlier novels; he tended to add passages that dragged and thus detracted from the overall work).

The protagonist of A WORLD OUT OF TIME is Jerome Branch Corbell--a moderately distracting name, since it derives itself from fantasist James Branch Cabell without real reason--who is (or more aptly, was) a corpicle. He is reawakened in a convict's body in a time when the State rules everything--and a





person like Jaycee Corbell is brought back to life only if he can be of value to the state. Corbell quickly finds out what is intended for him--he is to pilot an exploration ship to find new earth-type worlds for the State. Plans are altered, however, when Corbell decides to explore for himself instead and heads toward the center of the galaxy. With his only companion a symbiotic merging of his trainer/guide, Peerssa, and the ship's computer, Corbell travels to the center of the galaxy and back, to a drastically altered solar system and an earth still ruled by the vestigial remnants of the State; the new earth, though, is a hotter planet that orbits Jupiter, and the life Corbell finds there, along with the humans who populate the planet, make up the remainder of the book.

To be sure, *A WORLD OUT OF TIME* is epic adventure, just like Niven's famous *RINGWORLD*; but where *RINGWORLD* dragged in many places, *A WORLD OUT OF TIME* is taut and entertaining throughout. Niven works his craft masterfully, and the book grabs the reader from beginning to end.

But still, even when faced with the awareness that the book is good, I wonder why Niven is content to write the same type of story again and again; this is no challenge to Niven as a writer, and for all its entertainment value, the book itself is nothing more than standard sf adventure. I have no doubt that you'll enjoy it, but I keep hoping that Niven will tackle something heavier soon.

**STRANGLER'S MOON.** E.E. Smith and Stephen Goldin. (Pyramid -- \$1.50). Reviewed by Frank Love.

Here we have the second volume in the Family D'Alembert series; the first volume (*IMPERIAL STARS*), was reviewed in FR#8. As you may recall, our intrepid protagonists Jules and Yvette D'Alembert are not only ultra-intelligent but born and raised in high-g conditions; they are also the top two secret agents in the Empire.

In this episode, the two come up against one of the ugliest crime setups I've seen postulated in quite some time; there's a moon, called Vesa, which is a popular gambling resort. People from all over the galaxy go there to have fun and to relieve the pressure in their wallets and purses. When an influential person disappears, records are checked, and it's discovered that, over a period of 20 years, two hundred and fifty thousand people have also disappeared without a trace. At an average of thirty five people a day, it's definitely a large enough percentage to be disturbing.

Who does it and how it's being done form an interesting and rather gruesome tale. I won't say the book is perfect--my willing suspension of disbelief was strained several times--but it's entertaining and worth the cost.

**ALTERNATE WORLDS: THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION.** James Gunn (A&W Visual Library--\$7.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Brian Aldiss' *BILLION YEAR SPREE* was recognized as a superb history of science fiction when it was first published; even though Aldiss allowed a lot of his opinion to enter in the book, sometime interfering with the historical perspective, the book was a good job of fact-compilation, and as such deserves to be in every good sf library.

James Gunn has done the Aldiss book one better in *ALTERNATE WORLDS*, though; he's not only given a pretty much straightforward, non-opinionated (as non-opinionated as any study of a literary genre can be) history of the field, he has managed to pack the book with hundreds of photographs, and not merely photos of the dreary Frank Paul covers you see in so many sf-art books; no, instead, he's offered the reader a marvelous selection of photos of authors, magazines, books, scenes from conventions, etc; and the result was published at a \$30 pricetag over a year ago. Naturally, few people could afford it; the book was marvelous to have, but the expense was totally unreasonable.

It's unreasonable no longer; this \$7.95 edition retains all the impressiveness of its hardcover counterpart, but manages to knock \$22 of the price by substituting paper binding for the cloth cover; the photos, both black and white and color, are still here, and the text is still here, and the book is undoubtedly one of the best buys you can find.

While I happen to feel that Gunn spends too much time discussing the work of the early sf authors, particularly Verne and Wells, he doesn't sacrifice any discussion of modern sf to make room for it. I'll admit the book began slowly, but once you work your way into it, it's a pleasure to read; Gunn's light, informal style is perfect for the subject at hand--history almost requires such a style to sell to the average reader--and the photos manage to complete the book very well, complementing the text perfectly. The only problem with photos is that, at times, they tend to be out-of-date, but this doesn't occur too often, and when it does, Gunn makes it clear that this is an earlier photo.

At its new low price, I don't think any collector should be without *ALTERNATE WORLDS*; it's a good basic history of sf, and it's as informative as it is enjoyable.

**LETTER FROM DON D'AMMASSA**

(12-4-76)

"This was another interesting issue of FR, although I discover to my dismay that I've read a relatively small portion of the books discussed. I'm a bit behind in my reading, as a result of too complex a mess of incidents to mention here.

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"Bits and pieces, then, of response. I believe that Belmont-Tower published an edition of *CHARLES DEXTER WARD* about two years ago, but their distribution is so bad it probably isn't worth mentioning.



"TRADER TO THE STARS is the first collection of Poleotechnic League stories to see print. The three novelets are the fourth, fifth and sixth stories to be published in that series; they were preceded by "Wings of Victory," "Margin of Profit," and THE WAR OF THE WING MEN. I agree pretty much with Gary Steele's evaluations of the stories themselves.

"There was an earlier continuation of the Tarzan series, although they were not authorized by the estate, which eventually stopped them through legal action. They were authored by "Barton Werper," and consisted of five novels published by Gold Star Books. The first three were absolutely terrible, but the last two began to show some promise.

((I've heard some Burroughs fans praise the Werper books, but I had little hope for quality from them; I've not located copies of the books, simply because I'm not about to pay the high prices that ERB fans are asking for copies of them.))

I can't agree with the review of DEUS IRAE at all. I found it immensely dull.

((Dull?! I'm flabbergasted; I've read the book twice, and was engrossed in the plot both times. And the writing itself was rather straightforward--moreso than I'd expect from a collaboration of Dick and Zelazny. ))

"With reference to Andy Whitehead's letter, I don't believe that the book version of THE STOCHASTIC MAN was an expansion; I think the magazine version was an abridged version. ((see Robert Silverberg's card)) And I don't think it's invariably true that expansions are not productive. To use his own example, I found the novel version of HAWKS-BILL STATION better than the shorter version, though I agree with him on FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON.

"I beg to differ on the subject of the FAAN awards. They weren't meant to reflect the opinions of most fans, just the opinions of the most active fanzine fans. The second year saw well over 100 votes cast, and I suspect the number will increase in time. I doubt that there are more than 500 active fanzine fans, so at least 20% of the eligible vote was cast. This is a smaller percentage than votes for the pro Hugoes.

((The fact that it is such a small number is the reason I place less-than-absolute faith in the FAAN awards; when only 100 people are voting on something, it's very easy to have block-voting take place and thus unfair winning. I don't feel that this has happened, mind you, but what I'm saying is that, right now, the FAAN awards seem to accomplish little more than would be accomplished if I sent out award ballots to the amateur press alliances I'm in and got a total tally. Of course, I'm planning on voting in the FAAN awards this year, and hopefully enough fanzine fans will do so that there'll be a more representative total for 1977.))

THE SECOND EXPERIMENT. Janet O. Jeppson. Fawcett-Crest 2-3005-8 -- \$1.25. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

THE SECOND EXPERIMENT is one of those century-spanning novels; although no dates are given, it begins around the time of Earth's infancy when the planet is just beginning to cool down from the holocaust of creation to the infinitely distant future when Earth as the home of man has been almost forgotten. However, the protagonist of this novel is not Man, but R'ya, the only surviving offspring of the Roiss, a race so old that they have evolved into forms of energy.

THE SECOND EXPERIMENT gets off to a rather slow start while background information about the Roiss is given, but begins to move more quickly once R'ya in the company of her faithful robot companion Tec continues her quest through the universe for a suitable mate. As might be expected, R'ya encounters trouble in the form of a malicious computer intelligence that wants all the secrets stored in Tec's memory banks. The ensuing battles result in the creation of an Earth legend, the mating of pure Earthmen with mutant Earth colonists, and Tec's final discovery of just what the Second Experiment was all about.

Despite a slow start, THE SECOND EXPERIMENT was an adequate first novel; I was rather surprised that Jeppson, who, we are told, is a practicing physician, didn't call upon her medical background to write a medically-oriented sf story. The parts of the book which were related to medicine were among the more interesting portions of the story. Perhaps a future book by Jeppson will incorporate more of her medical background; it would likely be more successful than THE SECOND EXPERIMENT, and should prove popular, as there never seems to be enough future medicine sf stories.

ORSINIAN TALES. Ursula K. LeGuin. (Harper & Row -- \$7.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

ORSINIAN TALES is accurately blurb'd by Harper & Row as a collection of mainstream stories; and mainstream is exactly what they are. But if any author could handle the transition well, it would be Le Guin; and the short stories in ORSINIAN TALES contain the same force and vibrancy that makes her science fiction so memorable.

Each of these stories concerns humanity; how man lives, and lives with himself, in the face of adversity; in "Brothers and Sisters," the adversity is sudden injury and human sacrifice of that most important; in "Conversations at Night," the love of a girl for a blind young man brings hardships upon both of them; in "The Fountains," a man's desire for freedom finds an outlet. But in every story in ORSINIAN TALES, Ursula LeGuin paints sensitive pictures of men and women choosing the direction of their own lives, rather than letting themselves be cast about by fate.

The style is almost reminiscent of Tom Swann's; sensitive and delicate, gently brushed with a careful insight of human



nature; yet LeGuin's writing has a strength and a force that few authors can achieve, and she presents it in such a simple and straightforward manner that the reader is amazed that each story works. But the stories do work, and as a result ORSINIAN TALES is an enjoyable and memorable collection.

I feel certain that most LeGuin fans will get this book, but it shouldn't be overlooked by anyone genuinely interested in quality fiction.

THE MAKING OF SPACE: 1999. Tim Heald. (Ballantine 25265 -- \$1.95). Reviewed by Gary Steele.

"2001: A Space Odyssey" is responsible for many things, including, it seems, a new type of sf book, the "Making of..." book. THE MAKING OF SPACE: 1999 is the newest addition to this sub-genre of books. Seemingly patterned after the Star Trek books, the volume covers the creation of the TV series, a history on its creator, cast, and production staff. And what book of this type would be complete without a "photo section?" Yes, this book has one, and it's one of the book's highlights.

I wish I could say the same about the text, however. The author seems to have had some difficulty in deciding how to handle the book; he jumps from dealing with the overall series to dealing with it in relation to one particular show. Also, he often wastes space by going into great detail on things irrelevant to the purpose of the book. For example, he traces the history of the buildings the special effects are shot in back to Roman times. He carries on in great detail about two men walking down a London street; it turns out that what he is describing in such graphic detail is two musicians walking to work. He spends time and space discussing other films and/or shows that have been/will be shot around the studios there at Pinewood Studios. He continuously wastes space on these irrelevant digressions.

The book also delivers a lot less than it promises. For example, the promised "schematic diagrams of the stages and sets--plus a detailed layout of Moonbase Alpha!" are to be found nowhere in the book. There was a skimpy, tiny drawing of the stages and sets, reduced to such a minuscule size that it requires magnification to be read. And the "detailed plot synopses with casts of characters of the episodes": I don't know if the author was responsible for the synopses or not, but I get the impression that whoever did them gathered his information by watching the shows on television while reading a newspaper, and then turned the set off before the last ten minutes were shown. Also, the promised "eyes-only memos" were very trivial, useless things; the only one that even seems to fit the description of "memo" was one item concerning personnel safety on the set while animals were being used in filming, and I would hardly call a list of safety regulations a "controversial, eyes-only" subject!



I fear that the bad points of this book far outweigh the good points; it's a good source of information on previous Gerry Anderson ventures, however, it has little real value as far as SPACE: 1999 goes, and after all, that's what the book is purportedly about.

DEATHBIRD STORIES. Harlan Ellison. (Dell 1737 -- \$1.75) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

DEATHBIRD STORIES is perfectly timed for paperback release; it fills in the gap in the Pyramid Ellison series, and it also manages to surpass all previous volumes from Pyramid in quality; Dell has published Ellison's most powerful collection in DEATHBIRD STORIES, surpassing even his ALONE AGAINST TOMORROW in both strength of story and impact of emotion.

DEATHBIRD STORIES covers almost all aspects of Harlan Ellison the storyteller, from his introspective, world-weary stories like "O Ye of Little Faith" and "The Face of Helene Bornou" to his bitter, sardonic looks at man, as seen in "Along the Scenic Route," "Rock God" or "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs." This is also one of the few recent Ellison collections to contain virtually no prefatory material by Ellison himself; instead, Harlan Ellison lets the stories stand alone (or virtually so), and the impact of each one is so strong that the author's advice is recommended: "it is suggested that the reader not attempt to read this book at one sitting." Good advice, because the only way you can appreciate the value of each story is to read it and allow it to sink in.

There are some stories that come across as weak--perhaps it's because they're in such strong company--but not even



they are failures. There are no failures in DEATHBIRD STORIES. "Bleeding Stones," a tale of gargoyles coming to life (ah, but much more than it sounds) seems weak after "The Face of Helen Bournouw." "Along the Scenic Route," with its savage version of life on the highways in the future, seems farcical and superficial after the heavy "Whimper of Whipped Dogs." You tend to compare, and each story needs to stand alone; reading this book in segments helps each story achieve individuality.

If you're going to read a Harlan Ellison book, make certain it's DEATHBIRD STORIES; you can begin there, but make sure you pick it up first. It's undoubtedly one of the most carefully-selected, powerful collections of Ellison fiction to be had.

RISSA KERGUELEN. F. M. Busby. (Scribner's -- \$10)  
Reviewed by Mike Glycer.

Devices for measuring the extent of science fiction's readership are, at best, crude. The circulation of the most affluent prozine, the print run of sf's novel-of-the-year, are over a hundred thousand, but obviously far smaller than the total buyership of sf. I have always assumed the readership of sf to be far smaller than for gothics--yet how to explain RISSA KERGUELEN. It's a bad book, but its existence and size and theme are remarkable compared with average sf. If a failure in itself, it might be a symptom of shifts in the market.

This is a big, mediocre sf book in a genre whose hefty books have previously all been great (or allegedly great): DUNE, DAHLGREN, TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE, DANGEROUS VISIONS. Yet many mediocre gothics run into the hundreds of pages--just look over your newsstand. RISSA KERGUELEN's comparison with the gothics extends even farther than mere size, or the use of a woman's name for its title. RISSA KERGUELEN wallows in the same homey detail about its characters' daily lives that many gothics dwell on. And I suspect Busby sold this book not so much for what it accomplished but for what it attempted. RISSA KERGUELEN is the fictional biography of a self-reliant, whip-smart heroine shaped by a traumatic, orphaned childhood, and her escape into a society that really takes her "liberated" (a la 1970s womlib) lifestyle for granted. In assuming that the future will take its shape from topical politics, RISSA KERGUELEN either fantasizes, or extrapolates recent trends, as you will. But Busby does manage to incorporate many social and sexual matters normally relegated to "women's fiction" (romances, gothics) into an sf novel.

Quite possibly the publisher sought to attract the gothic audience; or perhaps the author is trying to introduce some real liberation into sf, whose supposedly limitless room for experimentation is often spoken of by sf writers and seldom taken advantage of. But whatever the intent, and however imaginative Busby's plan, his execution was so crude as to render the book a failure.

When Rissa Kerguelen's parents are killed by UET police, she and her brother are enrolled in Total Welfare. Rissa grows up alone in a socialist cliché: uniform clothing, barracks and loveless bureaucracy. But in her late teens she is the lucky winner of a giant lottery and on the advice of the Underground buys her way free from Total Welfare then escapes to South America. There the matriarchal Hulzein clan is in power and for a considerable fee they conduct survival classes for UET escapees, training them in survival techniques which range from sociable conversation to sexual persuasion. Her education completed, Rissa escapes into space seeking a new life among the Hidden Worlds--breakaway colonies beyond the grasp of UET. Finally reaching Number One, a hidden world, she joins up with a cadet branch of the Hulzeins, sharing their byzantine family life and squabbles until she marries a spaceship captain whose scheme to overthrow UET will come to fruition in the sequel. (RISSA KERGUELEN is the first of two related novels)

To some, RISSA KERGUELEN's obsession with homey detail rather than well-plotted action may seem only a matter of taste. Humanizing characters through descriptions of their mundane daily chores is all very well: we've outgrown superheroes who never need to use the bathroom. But it is no exaggeration to say that fifty meals are mentioned in this book, that every time a character sits down to a cup of coffee it's noted, though ironically the heroine doesn't have to visit the facilities until page 196.

Yet with all the wordage lavished on coffee breaks, Busby chose not to explain some of the most important elements in the story. UET, the all-enveloping corporation in control of North America, is badly and tersely dealt with. Treated like a combination of the Nazi Party and Orwell's Oceania, UET inspires a hatred and desire for revenge that touches every major character. Yet after 400 pages the reader knows nothing concrete about UET: how it grew, who runs it, what relation North America has with the rest of Earth, what economic needs initiated UET's inhumane practices (Total Welfare, forced breeding for Space Colonies). It's no more than a bogeyman, and UET's unreality undermines the credibility of all the congruent institutions we do learn of.

There also is ham-handed plotting, which results in Rissa Kerguelen seeming nothing more than an arrogant fool. She no sooner lands on Number One than she's trading insults with a planetary official; he promptly directs a blood feud at her. This is grossly inconsistent with the year's survival training the reader has just witnessed her taking. It's a hundred-page digression that contributes nothing to the book, as does the duel between Rissa and the official which follows; with 300 pages left in the book, one hardly expects the title character to be killed.

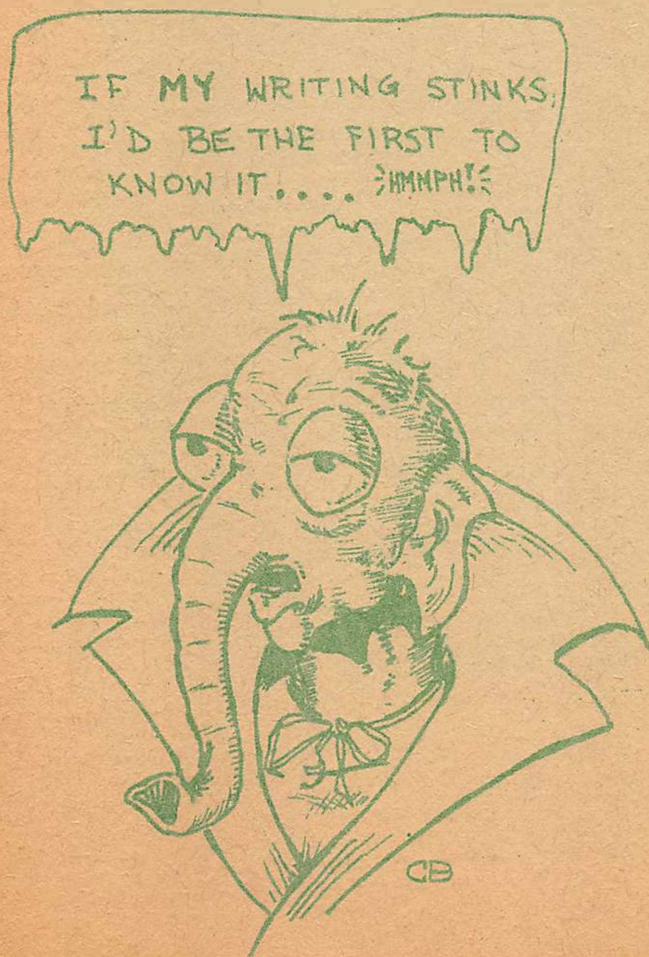
Erratic as the plotting are the dialogue and characterization. The rapidly developing friendship between the Hulzeins and Rissa fails to convince. Each incident treated as a step towards that friendship would more logically make enemies of



the two. There's so much tension, Rissa and the Hulzeins testing each other, every family member playing politics against the rest, it's hard to believe that Rissa would trust them so quickly. Liesel Hulzeim tells Rissa on page 79, "Number One's a chessboard and most people are pawns, if that. I need to know your rank on the board." How soon would you trust anyone who openly regarded you as a playing piece?

Real people would be unlikely to phrase conversational English as woodenly as do the characters of this novel. Says one, "I'm not drinking for drunken, but for the pleasure of good wine in sunlight. Sit and have some? Your walk probably gut-dried you well enough." Another time Rissa ejaculates, "Too bad we're stuck for now with the need to fill that peace-jangling zoom-womb!" (Peace is a slang word substituted for obscenities.) Dialogue like this indicates the writer's tin ear for language.

One hopes Busby, relatively new to full-time writing though a long-time sf fan, will eventually blossom as a stylist. However, his idiosyncratic plotting and sorry dialogue ruined *RISSA KERGUELEN*; its only triumph was being published. Reading it is strictly anticlimactic.



### THE MARTIAN CHRONICLERS: A look at *MARTIAN TIME-SLIP* and *MAN PLUS*.

*MARTIAN TIME-SLIP*. Philip K. Dick (Ballantine 25224 -- \$1.50), *MAN PLUS*. Frederik Pohl (Random House -- \$7.95)  
Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Recently, I noticed that I had read, with only a short space of time intervening, two books about the colonization of Mars; both were written by venerable, established sf authors. One was published twelve years ago, while the other saw print just this year. *MARTIAN TIME-SLIP* by Philip K. Dick and *MAN PLUS* by Frederik Pohl both concern humans living on Mars, but their approaches to the situation come from opposite angles.

Actually, when you get down to bare facts, *MARTIAN TIME SLIP* is more a novel of schizophrenia and the desperate manipulations of those schizophrenics by a big-fish politician in a small-pond Mars colony. It is a story about people, utilizing a science fictional setting: Jack Bohlen, schizophrenic himself and trying desperately to delay the time when those symptoms would once again break through the thin barrier he had erected against them, was a maintenance man who became involved in designing a machine which could help a mentally ill child perceive the world as others do; Arnie Kott, bigoted member of a powerful union, still clinging to the old, wasteful Earthly ways in a colony that was struggling to become self-supportive, used people as if they were disposable products to gain ever more power and wealth; Sylvia Bohlen, her day-to-day existence due to stimulants and depressants, is bored to adultery by the harsh Martian environment which makes normal life just too much of a struggle for her; Manfred Steiner, autistic since birth, lived at Camp-B-G, an institution for defective children born on Mars, and was able to see into the future but unable to communicate what he saw except through crude, childish drawing. These people and their interactions with each other are what make up the bulk of *MARTIAN TIME-SLIP*; once you get into the book, it's impossible to put down until you finish it with a shiver.

*MAN PLUS*, unlike *MARTIAN TIME-SLIP* which deals with a colony that tries to adapt Mars to meet human needs, is about the technical aspects of totally reconstructing the human body to survive in the Martian environment without external aids. This is not to say that that's all there is to the book; characterization is nicely done, as is the suspense element which keeps the reader wondering whether the project to convert a human being to a Mars-compatible being will be finished in time to save the world from another war, and, once finished, will its creation succeed in living unaided on the surface of Mars. Pohl has given his fans another solidly-written adventure sf story which, in itself, would have been sufficient for most authors, but he throws in a bonus in the form of a surprise ending to which he makes allusion throughout the book. It's one of those endings which sends your mind speculating on what the author could have meant and perhaps leaves the way open for a sequel.



I recommend both MARTIAN TIME-SLIP and MAN PLUS; the former for those of you who are fans of Philip K. Dick or who just like a humanistic novel. If you are more in the market for well-written adventure, then MAN PLUS is the book you should read. Either separately or in conjunction, both books should be read and savored for the pleasure they will bring.

## LETTER FROM MICHAEL BISHOP

(10-28-76)

"...I now have a copy of Zelazny and Dick's, or Dick & Zelazny's, DEUS IRAE in the house and will try to finish it soon. After having read the first two chapters, however, I find that I'm surprised by your enthusiastic judgment and your contention that "it just might be the best thing either author will ever write." Two chapters ain't much to form an opinion by, I'm well aware of that, and your enthusiasm leads me to go ahead where I might ordinarily have stopped. Will let you know one of these days if I agreed with you or not. But certainly these are two authors whose capabilities are both comparable and contrasting enough to make their collaborating an event..."

"On page twelve I see a letter from Don D'Amassa who writes, "Disagreed strongly with your review of CLONED LIVES...thought the characterization was the outstanding part of the novel." On this point, Cliff, I'm with Don. Your contention that the clones were undifferentiated, when I went back to check your review after reading the novel, really threw me--especially since I believe Sargent went to great lengths to create entire personalities out of various character traits of Paul Swenson, and succeeded. I'm with you, however, in feeling that Sargent doesn't really integrate all her information about clones and future genetic and astrophysical developments into a cohesive story. The book does not succeed as a novel, perhaps, but as a study in characterization...well, Sargent does a number of quite subtle things. Won't say any more; I've reviewed this book for Delap and better not go on at imtemperate lengths here..."

((Perhaps it's because Sargent draws each character from particular traits of Paul Swenson that I don't feel the characterization is wholly successful; each character has one trait that dominates so strongly that we never see deeply beyond that, and the persona seems to come across just a little flat to me. Oh, to be sure, the characterization far exceeds that in standard adventure fiction--I'm not saying that there isn't any--but it just doesn't have quite as much roundness as I think Sargent intended.))

THE SECOND WAR OF THE WORLDS. George H. Smith (DAW UY1260 -- \$1.25). Reviewed by Gary Steele.

There seems to be something of a trend these days to "retell" or continue previously done works. Philip Jose Farmer is well known for his efforts in this area; now George H. Smith throws his hat into the ring with THE SECOND WAR OF THE WORLDS.

Smith's account concerns Annwn, a parallel of Earth, enjoying a Victorian era of its own, being slightly behind our Earth in development. The Martians, having learned from their first attempt, are holding a couple of aces in their tentacles in this game: they've immunized themselves against germs and have engineered a fourth column in the form of humans who believe mankind's destiny is to be ruled by the Martians.

The hero of this book is one Dylan MacBride, a world-known explorer. They say that behind every good man is a woman, and in this case it's true--Clarinda MacTague, High Priestess of Keridwen. Which brings up one little difference between Annwn and Earth--magic exists on Annwn to some extent. On Annwn, the Martians have a slight advantage, thanks to a connection between Earth and Annwn known as the Shimmering Gates. The group pulling for the Martians originated on Earth. And their leader "is not only a brilliant scientist but is also a veritable Napoleon of crime as well." Does the latter part sound familiar? If not, what of some aid that MacBride and his friends receive from Earth in the form of a man referred to only as Dr. W.? Or what if I mention that Dr. W. has a friend who remains in the background in the beginning, where he shows up periodically in various disguises before coming into the open. He's finally referred to as H. His identity becomes totally clear in the following exchange: "Extraordinary, H' Dr. W said..." "Elementary, my dear W," Mr. H said..."

This little plot twist adds zest to what might have otherwise been a dull and drab rehashing of an old story. Those two characters, Holmes and Watson, give the book the extra impetus needed to pull it up out of a sea of readable but not noteworthy books. In my opinion, Smith handled it very well, although his idea seems borrowed from Wellman's SHERLOCK HOLMES' WAR OF THE WORLDS. He never overplayed their presence, and never let them get in the way of the story. He managed to use them sparingly in conjunction with another literary institution--Wells' WAR OF THE WORLDS--and add a third well-established sf "institution"--parallel Earths--to make it work. Individually, the three would have been just another imitative book. Combined, however, they form an interesting and noteworthy account of what happened when the Martians got a bit of the wanderlust fever again.

THE SPACE MACHINE. Christopher Priest. (Harper & Row -- \$8.95). Reviewed by Stan Burns.

Christopher Priest has managed to write a remarkable novel using the background of Wells' WAR OF THE WORLDS and THE TIME MACHINE. Edward Turnbull is a travelling salesman in turn-of-the-century England when he meets Amelia, ward of a man who has invented a time machine (naturally, from Wells' novel). While demonstrating it to Edward, the two of them are accidentally transported to Mars, where humans are slaves to the Martian monsters who are planning to leave their dying world and invade the Earth. While exploring Mars, Edward and Amelia decide to try and stop the plot

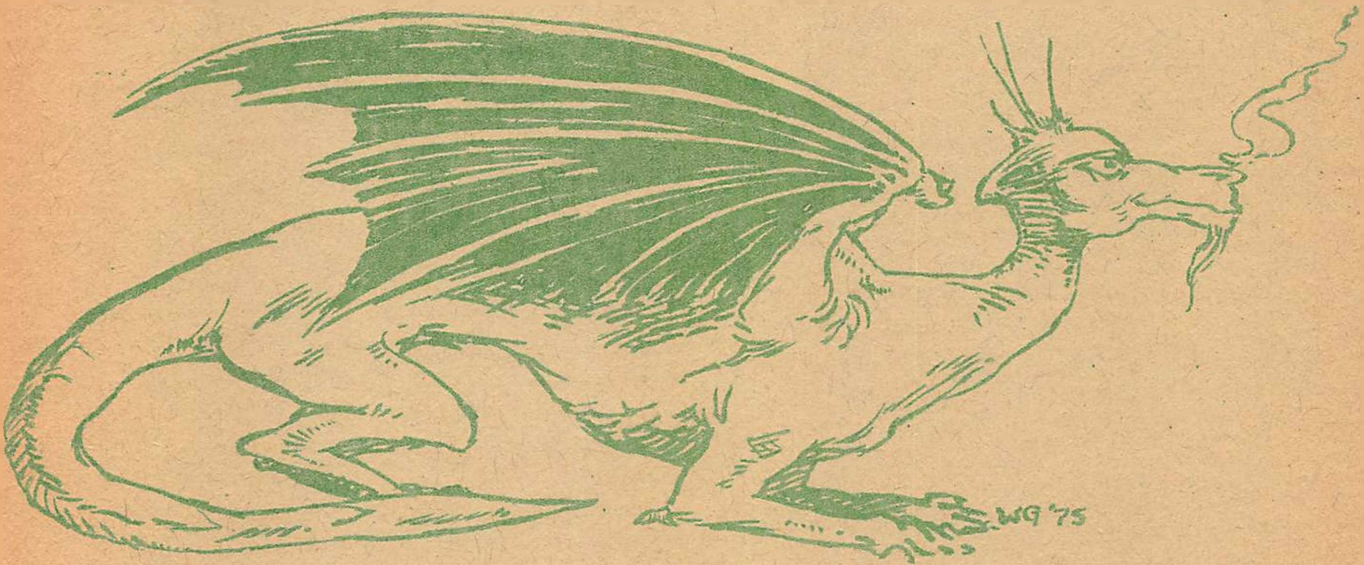


against Earth, and organize the Martian slaves in a revolt against their masters. Sneaking aboard one of the Martian invasion vehicles, they return to Earth to try and alert the authorities about the coming menace. When they are not believed, they seek to get back to the Time Machine (which obviously travels through space as well as time) and use it to defeat the invasion, somehow. Finding that it and its owner have disappeared into the future, they join forces with H.G. Wells to fight against the Martians.

With excellent plotting, elaborate writing and careful research, Priest has written an excellent period novel that incorporates the background of two Wells classics. The Victorian age and its manners come alive, and the scenes on Mars are carefully crafted to fit in with Wells' background. This is an outstanding novel, and deserves reading.

seems to be the primary feeling Dick wants to convey. As a result, *A SCANNER DARKLY*, for all its potential, comes across as an enjoyable but maudlin novel; even the convincing characterization and the strange Dick-view of the near future can't make this book anything more than an enjoyable near-miss.

This in itself is unusual, since Dick loudly proclaimed the book his best thus far in a recent SFR; I came to the novel with a great deal of hope and curiosity, and more than a little expectation; I was let down, and I feel that many other readers will be. Dick's view of the future in *A SCANNER DARKLY* is bleak and almost as paranoid as his characters perceive it. The book deserves reading, but don't harbor any secret hopes of it being a great novel, a pinnacle of PKD's career; it isn't.



*A SCANNER DARKLY*. Philip K. Dick. (Doubleday -- \$6.95)  
Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Philip K. Dick has produced previous works that dealt with a drug culture; *A SCANNER DARKLY* is the latest one, and the most ambitious. But when all things are considered, the book itself is a near-miss; it doesn't quite pull out the feelings Dick wants to pull out of the reader, and it manages to be morbid and depressing instead of sympathetic and poignant.

Basically, *A SCANNER DARKLY* is about a culture heavily involved with drugs; it's about a drug user who is also a police informant. Bob Arctor eventually is assigned to monitor himself, which begins a long series of paranoid fantasies that become more and more indistinguishable from reality. Finally, due to a drug called Substance D, Bob is unable to sort the reality from the multiple perceptions he receives--the ultimate fate for a continued Substance D user.

A simple story, it most assuredly is; but it's a much more personal thing than that for Dick, it seems. Almost every chapter succeeds in impressing upon the reader Dick's total sympathy for the drug users he writes of, and that sympathy

*INTERSTELLAR EMPIRE*. John Brunner (DAW UW1252 -- \$1.50) Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

*INTERSTELLAR EMPIRE* is not one complete book, but is instead comprised of one novel and two novellas written around a basic theme, and an essay/introduction which explains the basic theme and ties all three works together. Brunner's setting is that of a powerful galactic empire with hundreds of planets under its emperor's command. At the time these stories take place, the empire has fallen and most of the worlds have reverted to barbarism. The plot common to all three is that of the struggle to save yet another planet from going the route to savagery as so many other worlds have done.

"The Altar on Asconel" is the longest and by far the best of the three; Brunner seems to have taken more time with this (previously released) novel, because the plot comes across as well-thought-out and moves well with no periods of inactivity. The main characters, although something of a stereotype as a whole (three brothers out to save their home world from being taken over by a barbaric religious cult devoted to human sacrifice; the eldest, a worldly, sophisticated man determined to discover the true meaning of life and en-



joy himself while doing so; the middle brother, a warrior of the highest degree who goes through women like a pair of socks; and the youngest, the most serious of the three who has renounced all worldly possessions to devote his life to knowledge) are so well done that one doesn't notice the familiarity until afterwards. "The Altar on Asconel," as previously noted, isn't new; it appeared 11 years ago as half of an Ace Double.

"The Man From the Big Dark" was the worst of the three; the writing seems hurried and any background information was so obscure as to be almost nonexistent. Basically, it also concerns the attempts of a soldier double-agent character to thwart a fellow soldier now turned enemy. He succeeds in saving the planet and much to his surprise--but not ours--is made ruler. This novella previously appeared in SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES.

"The wanton of Argus" you may know better as THE SPACE-TIME JUGGLER, half of another Ace Double. Once again we have the recurring plot of save-the-planet-from-the-evil-rulers; this time it is the long-lost-princess-returns-to-save-the-kingdom-from-her-evil-sister variation. The character who saves the story from becoming tiresome is Kelab, a conjurer who really can juggle space and time to make events happen the way he wants. There is also a surprise involving Princess Sharla, but I won't spoil your enjoyment of the novella by revealing it. While better than "The Man From the Big Dark," "The Wanton of Argus" would have been even better if it was longer and more detailed.

Read as a whole, INTERSTELLAR EMPIRE was a competent book; however, with a little more effort on Brunner's part to rewrite the novel and novellas, combining them into a connected whole, perhaps it could have been a truly good book.

DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH. Robert Silverberg. (Signet -- \$1.50). Reviewed by Andy Whitehead.

Inflation has eaten away at profits, upped costs, and forced Signet to double the cover price on this book since it was last released in 1971. Despite the increase, DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH remains a bargain. Indeed, the cost would have to be doubled, redoubled, and perhaps even redoubled before it would begin to lose any value at all.

DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH--the title is taken from Ecclesiastes 3:21--is about the return of Edmund Gundersen to the planet Belzagor, 10 years after Earth, in the form of The Company, has renounced possession of it. Once Holamn's World, the planet has now reverted to the control of its highest life-form, the elephant-like nildoror.

In his previous time on the planet, Gundersen was an employee of The Company and unsympathetic to the nildoror. Once he had forbidden a group from going into the mist country of the north to undergo the sacred ceremony of rebirth.

In yet another incident, Gundersen and several others had given three nildoror the venom of the serpents. This venom is used in rebirth and, by giving it to them, the three Earthmen mark themselves as blasphemers. Now Gundersen has returned to Belzagor to make penance--to undergo rebirth.

The characterization in DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH is superb. Through the use of flashbacks and comparisons, Silverberg deftly cuts apart the mind and soul of Edmund Gundersen. Where once was indifference toward the nildoror is now sadness. And the nildoror themselves? They are portrayed as gentle, understanding, forgiving.

Through conversation, Gundersen begins to gain an understanding of the nildoror. The nildoror view themselves as one of two races with g'rakh--that which separates the souled from the unsouled. When Gundersen explains that Earthmen believe they are the only being on their planet with g'rakh. "And so, when you come to another world, you have difficulty in accepting the presence of g'rakh in other beings?... You need not answer. I understand," says Srin'gahar. "As is shown, the nildoror are passive beings who are tolerant of even their own mistreaters.

As Gundersen makes his journey to the mist country, he meets several old friends. Seena, the girl he once loved. Her husband Jeff Kurtz, one of the ones who participated in the Black Mass-style ritual with the venom. Cedric Cullen, who had seen the secret nildoror ceremony of purging.

Between the three of them then, they represent three forms of evil. Kurtz is evil punished. Cullen is evil frightened and running. And Gundersen is evil repentant. Each is a deft, accurate portrayal of ideals and actions.

DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH, at various points in the book, deals with a host of subjects. Drugs, religion, authority, slavery, love, tolerance, and (most of all) racism are ideas touched on in this book. And when we see Edmund Gundersen come out of rebirth, we are in turn forced to look at our past and account for it.

DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH deserves consideration as the finest, most moving science fiction book Silverberg has ever written. It is a novel that should be considered seriously.

LETTER FROM JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON (11-4-76)

"I am not always impressed by Taral's review capabilities, nor his increasing acerbity and tendency to backward compliments. In the matter of his mistaking FR for a good imitation of SFR, or in his words "a good quality counterfeit," you might double-check and see if he got someone else's magazine confused with yours. SFR is a misnomer to begin with, since reviews are almost incidental to Dick's fascinating genzine which specializes in controversy, jabs, bull pen conversations,

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and Dick's weird personality. Had Taral compared you to Delap's, I'd still disagree that FR was a counterfeit, but I could see reason for such a subjective evaluation since both FR and Delap's make an effort to review books...but I see no resemblance between Geis and the Biggers'.

I'll keep trying, but I can't finish the Haldeman *FOREVER WAR*. I wanted to read it because I'm told it contains a rather bizarre, antiquated and piggish depiction of lesbianism as something curable (like a disease), but I find the writing positively devoid of color or interest. I am truly puzzled that it has a Hugo. I received a review copy of Haldeman's *MINDBRIDGE*, a gimmicky thing that a junior high school kid might have stumbled through a typewriter, full of incoherent scenes that don't relate to each other, artsy-fartsy word arrangements, sheet music, office memos, and all kinds of "clever" reproductions. Couldn't finish that, either. It must be subjective, since publishers liked it, and fans obviously like the man's other novel. I suspect most reviewers will find it hard to believe *MINDBRIDGE* was written by the author of their beloved *FOREVER WAR*, but I find it easy to believe both stilted books came from the same man (if I can actually finish *FOREVER WAR*, my opinion may alter for the better--*MINDBRIDGE*, however, I've already traded in)... "

((I began *FOREVER WAR*, but couldn't get into it; Susan did read it, but never got around to reviewing it. I'm just not fond of Haldeman's writing style, as you obviously aren't, also. I've already heard some *FOREVER WAR* fans going on about the greatness of *MINDBRIDGE*, so I'm anxious to see more opinions.))

**THE COMPLETE VENUS EQUILATERAL.** George O. Smith (Ballantine 25551 -- \$1.95). Reviewed by Gary Steele.

I've always said there's nothing better than good old-fashioned hard-science sf, and this book proves it. *THE COMPLETE VENUS EQUILATERAL* is a book of interconnected stories of the highest quality, in the grand tradition of JWC's *ASTOUNDING*. All but one of the thirteen stories are taken out of *ASTOUNDING* from the 1940s, and the one exception was written specifically for the *JWC MEMORIAL ANTHOLOGY*.

All but two of the stories concern the Venus Equilateral Relay Station. The *VERS* is an interplanetary communications relay space station "that occupied the libration point 60 degrees ahead of Venus on the planet's orbit." Its purpose is to relay messages among the three inner planets when the sun intervenes. The station has a crew of approximately 2700 men and women, and is a cylinder 3 miles long and one mile in diameter.

Fortunately for the reader, Don Channing, the director of the station, and the rest of the crew aren't content to relay messages; they're always coming up with new ways to do things...do them quicker, cheaper, easier. And that's where the action comes in.

As you will see in the book, things begin simply. All the crew need worry about is keeping things running smoothly and showing a profit (they're the futuristic equivalent of AT&T). In the first story, "ORM--Interplanetary," their biggest worry is an efficiency expert sent up to run the station, and the plot revolves around the efficiency attempts of a man who's never been in a space station before, which can be amusing, annoying and potentially fatal. With the second story, "Calling the Empress," life begins to get a bit complicated for the people of *VERS*. From here on out, it's a matter of solving a new problem with a new invention/discovery. In this story, Channing must discover a way to contact a spaceship en route from Mars to Venus: a hitherto impossible feat.

In "Recoil," Channing marries his secretary but their honeymoon is cut short when they have to rush back to VE to defend the station from space pirates--much to the pirates' chagrin.

"Lost Art" is the first of the two stories in this volume that doesn't involve Channing and VE directly. The story does, however, have a big bearing on the remaining stories in the series; it concerns the discovery of an artifact from the vanished civilization on Mars.

"Off the Beam" puts Don Channing in the position of being forced to find a way for a ship in flight to communicate with the outside; he's a passenger on a runaway ship.

The turning point in the series is "The Long Way," as it's the start of a conflict that will last for practically the rest of the book: Terran Electric vs. Venus Equilateral. This story involves the conflict over the previously mentioned Martian artifact; it turns out to be a power tube. This results in VE inventing a power generator that derives its power from the sun.

"Beam Pirate" and "Firing Line" both detail the grudge between Mark Kingman, head of Terran Electric, and VE. The latter story also brings back the antagonist from "Recoil," who never learns, it seems.

"Special Delivery" and "Pandora's Millions" continue this fight, and bring into play a new VE discovery: a matter transmitter. It's discovered that VE's matter transmitter is also a matter duplicator, and Mark Kingman screw things up by selling duplicators, which destroy man's economic system.

In "Mad Holiday," the crew has invented itself out of a job. But before they close down the station, they have to contend with Mark Kingman one more time. And much later, we have "The External Triangle," which takes place long after the group has left VE. Channing and friends are grandparents, and the old crew and families get together to build the perfect matter transmitter--one that can transmit people and any type of matter.

There's little reason for the final story in the book, "Identity." It has no real connection to the other stories other than



the fact that it takes place in the same universe as the other tales and involves a "treasure" left by the villain from "Re-coil." It's a very good story, but I think the book would have been just as well-done if it hadn't been included.

This is a great book, even though the stories are a bit dated. Even so, Smith has one minor drawback in his writings; he seems to be trying, from time to time, to give his readers a complete course in electronics. And due to the age of the stories, he's giving antiquated lessons; being an electronics technician, I found this boring, and I suspect that others will find it even moreso.

Another fault with the book is the continuous habit of its characters to always come up with a brilliant solution to the problem. There are too many characters turning out miracle gadgets too frequently; this aspect of the series only becomes extremely evident when they're collected together in one volume. This can be solved to a degree by reading the book over a period of time, but it's still distracting.

The strength of the book doesn't lie so much in characterization or in plotting--especially not in plotting, since it's the same basic plot from story to story. It all boils down to heroes solving the problem and clouting the villain (usually Mark Kingman) and saving the day. There are no complexities of plot, and you know the Good Guys are going to win--but it's fun to sit back and see how they go about it. This is a book you can read and be entertained! And for me, that's the most important thing a book can do. The book makes for wonderful reading, and for its length, you'll get your money's worth, most assuredly.

THE LATE, GREAT FUTURE. Gregory FitzGerald & John Dillon, editors. (Fawcett Crest 23040-6 -- \$1.75). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Science fiction and the future seem to be almost synonymous to many; therefore, the sheer volume of stories in the sf genre relating to the future is something that's hard to imagine, let alone go through for anthology purposes. As a result, FitzGerald and Dillon's anthology THE LATE GREAT FUTURE is more of a sampler of old familiars rather than a collection of new or unfamiliar stories.

The choices are good--but it would be hard to make bad choices in such a wide-open category. THE LATE GREAT FUTURE includes Damon Knight's superb story of an unusual type of crime control, "Country of the Kind;" it gives us Robert Silverberg's awesome short story about tours to the end of the world ("When We Went to See the End of the World"), and it also gives us old familiars by Walter Miller, Daniel Keyes, and Ray Bradbury. There are some less-familiar stories by Brunner, Leiber, MacDonald and others to fill out the book, all dealing with a future-theme (if that's an sf theme at all).

THE LATE GREAT FUTURE is of much more value to new entrants into sf reading than to the older readers, simply because

older readers will probably find most of the fiction is in one or more anthology they already have. If you're just compiling a library and duplication isn't a likely possibility, then you should definitely look this book over; all the stories are proven ones, and the level of quality is high, indeed.

SEEKLIGHT (Laser 72007 -- 95¢) and THE DREAMFIELDS (Laser #72033 -- 95¢), both by K. W. Jeter. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

I've heard and read a lot of good things about K. W. Jeter recently; a famous personage who was a guest at one of the conventions I attended in this area seemed to think he was the new Heinlein, and Barry Malzberg, in his introduction to Jeter's first novel, says that "SEEKLIGHT is one of the three or four best sf novels I have ever read..." After reading both of Jeter's novels, I can agree with the praise this author has been given, but only to a degree. Certainly, his style and command of the language coupled with his ability to tell an interesting and compelling story place him far above the average beginning author, but neither of his works are that outstanding.

SEEKLIGHT, while it was a very nicely done extrapolation on the Dark Seed gene idea with a complicated and suspenseful plot, was not a book which sticks in the memory. I made the mistake of not reviewing the book as soon as I finished it, and found that the plot had already begun to fragment in my mind before I could finish the review, necessitating a re-reading; perhaps the commonness of the plot is the cause for this. The protagonist is Daenek, son of the thane who has been killed in a revolt, and is now, on his seventeenth birthday, being hunted by the men who killed his father, with the intent of turning him into a mindless idiot. Daenek manages to escape them and joins a caravan of landships which "sail" from city to city; while traveling with the caravan he becomes reluctant friends with Rennie, a girl who has disguised herself as a boy in order to sail, and they continue the search for the truth about the murder of Daenek's father. The search is hampered by angels, a type of heavenly reporter who interviews the population and then transmits the data gathered to the true rulers of the planet, bad priests, robots that have inexplicably gone insane, and Rennie's proclivity for stealing with the aid of her seeklight, a device that glows when in the vicinity of valuables. After following many false trails, Daenek finally learns the shocking reason for his father's death, but is nevertheless defeated and banned from the planet. In an epilogue that seems to have been tacked on as an afterthought, the happy, hopeful ending is established with an older Daenek promising to return one day and set things right.

In THE DREAMFIELDS Jeter seems to have concentrated his writing talents on characterization and dialogue and has let plot go to the dogs, so to speak. The hero, Ralph Metric (okay, so the name isn't that great--we've all got to do our part to help along the metric conversion), gives the impression of being a real person, and actually does and says things you might do or say if you found yourself in a similar situation.



The situation being that of dream watcher in an institution for juvenile delinquents; therapy consists of an experimental procedure by which the children live through traumatic incidents in their lives over and over again in controlled dreams until a cure is effected. Ralph drifts along in an almost dream-like state himself until he is approached by a fellow watcher with an idea that there is some other, more sinister purpose behind the dream therapy. Then Ralph's co-worker is killed by the slithergadee, a mythical monster created by one of the dreaming children, and Ralph is swept away on a tide of events which lead to his discovery that his friend's theory was correct and that he is the only one who can stop the experiments. It is at this point that the plot becomes extremely disappointing; Jeter almost had me convinced that he was going to give us an original ending, but instead we're handed one of those alien-being-behind-it-all cliches. If you put his all-purpose explanation out of your mind and enjoy the book for its characterization and mystery elements, then with all probability you will enjoy *THE DREAMFIELDS* as much as I did.

All faults considered, I agree with Malzberg that K. w. Jeter can make a name for himself in the sf field. Both of his novels had some of the prerequisites for a good book--interesting plot, good dialogue and characterization--and by combining these aspects there is no reason why Jeter can't come up with a real success.

**BEASTS.** John Crowley (Doubleday -- \$5.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Crowley's *THE DEEP* was an enigmatic, mysterious novel; *BEASTS* is also mysterious and enigmatic in its way, but it's much more straightforward on the surface. Crowley manages to tell a powerful story in *BEASTS*, and even in the portions of the book that are lackluster, the impetus of the plot carries the reader through.

*BEASTS* deals with a future in which a new race of intelligent beings, "leos" (half human, half lion), have been genetically bred and are now living in a hostile equality with man. The Union for Social Engineering is urging that this equality be eradicated and the leos be brought back under man's domination, however. In this powderkeg situation, Painter, an outlaw leo, is grouping his fellows together; and in the pride is Caddie, an indentured servant sold to a leo and now accepted as part of the leo's family. And the final character who manipulates the other is Reynard (as the name indicates, half-man, half-fox), whose convoluted plan is understood only by Reynard himself.

*BEASTS* is heavy on characterization, and Crowley does a much better job of it in this book than he did in *THE DEEP*. His plot becomes sporadic in places, but it manages to hold interest throughout the book; something that, for all its good points, the author's previous book simply could not do.

Crowley is learning his trade well; as a result, *BEASTS* stands as an sf highlight this year, and is one of the most compassionate sf novels you might find.

LETTER FROM FRANK LOVE

(12-15-76)

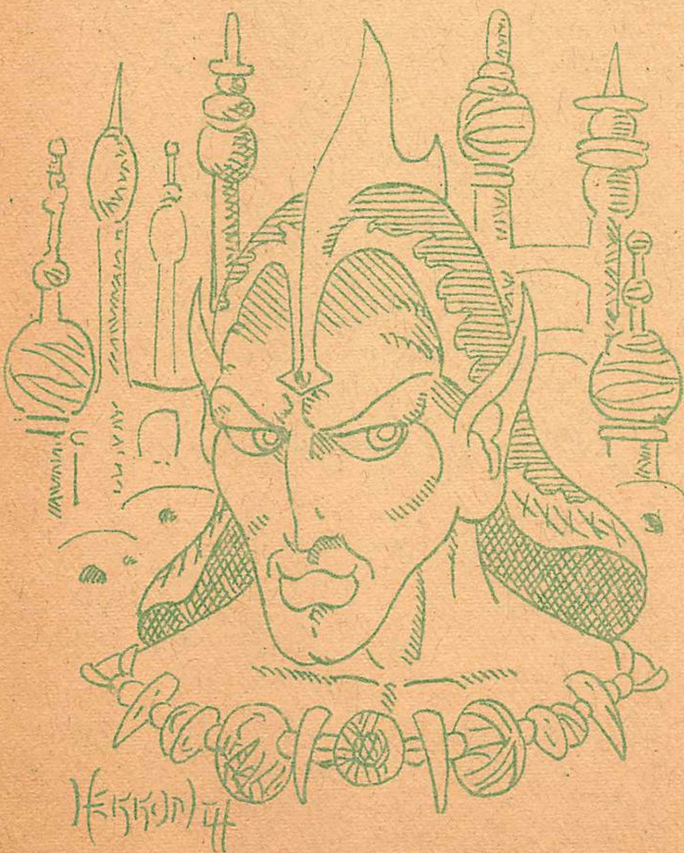
"...I like the new typeface, 1217 Chester St.  
and I find it easier to read than Birmingham, AL 35226  
the old, perhaps because you're  
getting better contrast on the yellow paper. At any rate, the  
type seems much darker than I remember it being before.

((As we experiment with colored ink this issue, I hope you still find it quite readable; I'm pleased with the results thus far, but only time will tell--and locs...))

I am happy to see that you are widening your list of reviewers, but who is this Frank Love, and where did you dig him up? I mean, he sounds like one of those Alabama people. I really think you ought to discourage him as he obviously finds writing hard work...

((Unfortunately, you'll find two more reviews from this same fellow in this FR. I guess you'll have to live with him....))

"I definitely don't think that FR is a counterfeit SFR. True, SFR has book reviews, but they are secondary to the articles and interviews Geis puts in. Also, SFR is very definitely a platform for Geis, whereas I feel that FR is more of a community effort; that is, more objective due to more people involved.





"...I disagree that STOCHASTIC MAN is better than FOREVER WAR. That, however, is primarily a matter of taste. Of course you understand that mine is good and yours is bad in this case."

((I tend to agree with the majority opinion from this issue's locs that SFR is primarily Geis-oriented, with the reviews and the like no longer assuming the dominant role they once had in the fanzine. FR is basically sercon-oriented, and the reviews are the major facet of the issue, with other items being oriented toward printed sf. That will continue to be the major emphasis in FR, and I think that's what everyone is interested in seeing. I'd like to do a fine personalzine, but FR won't be it.))

GHOST BREAKER. Ron Goulart. (Ace Double 11182 -- 75¢)  
Reviewed by Gary Steele.

Troubled with mice, cockroaches, ants? Consider yourself lucky; you can call an exterminator. Consider Max Kearny's friends: they all seem to be troubled by ghosts, goblins, gnomes, black furry things, talking blue fish and things that go bump in the night. For bugs, you call Orkin, but who do these people call? Luckily, since they're friends of Max Kearny, there's still some hope for them.

You see, Max is an art director for an ad agency. What's that? You don't see a connection? Oh, that's easy; Max, you see, has a hobby. Furthermore, his hobby and his friends' problems go hand in hand. Max likes to play detective, and all of his cases involve the supernatural; Max is an occult detective, a ghost gumshoe, a ghost breaker if you will.

One thing about the stories that makes them so enjoyable is the fact that the ghosts and goblins in these stories are real--that is, Max doesn't chase and expose fakes, he tackles the real McCoy. Take the case of the couple who had sea gulls in the kitchen sink, bobcats in the shower, black furry things in the bedroom, and a gnome under the floors. Or the man whose problem was he turned into a medium-sized grey elephant on national holidays. Then there's the case of the mother who calls on a three-man ghost patrol to protect her son, the doctor. And the case of a girl whose dead uncle's ghost haunts her ex-boyfriend's TV set.

Even when Max gets married, he can't get away from the ghost business; you see, his wife has a couple of aunts who are genuine witches. And his wife's not beyond casting a spell now and then herself. Try as he may, Max just can't seem to avoid the business. Often, if he won't help a friend, his wife takes it on herself to help and Max usually ends up having to help her in the end.

Ron Goulart's GHOST BREAKER is a lot of fun; his style and the subject seem to go together marvelously. But come to think of it, I've never read anything by Goulart that was serious. At any rate, I heartily recommend this; for 75¢ it's more than a bargain.

ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE. Spring 1977 (V.I. #1) Davis Publications. Reviewed by Larry Mason.

There was a time, a few years ago, when I welcomed the emergence of any new magazine devoted to sf. But after the disappointment of VERTEX and ODYSSEY, I've become rather cynical toward any new sf magazine; so I approached this one with a bit of foreboding. The cover seemed to support me: no aliens, or spaceships, or naked women, only Asimov himself.

This magazine was the idea of Davis Publications, the same company that puts out the well-known ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE; continuing the name trend, they asked Asimov to let them use his name, and he consented. Davis felt that the first issue would sell more copies with Asimov's photo on the cover; frankly, I don't think much of the idea.

Furthermore, Asimov himself isn't the editor, only the figurehead. The editor is George Scithers, a well known fan and owner of a small publishing firm called Owlswick Press.

But the survival of another sf magazine depends on many things, one of which is the quality of its fiction. Scithers has put together a fairly impressive first issue; it contained a dozen stories, the first of which is by John Varley. I consider Varley one of the better of the new sf writers, and I was somewhat disappointed by his "Goodbye, Robinson Crusoe." It struck me as something GALAXY would have used as filler material in the mid 50s.

Next are some disappointments; "The Doctor's Dilemma" by Martin Gardner isn't really a story but a very short puzzle, and a pretty pointless one at that. After this, we have Asimov doing a story called "Think." It's very minor Asimov, and it was originally written for a laser research firm to use as advertising material. This is followed by Arthur Clarke's "Quarantine," which was originally published on the back of a postcard (yes, it's that short). And continuing the disappointments, we have a very minor tale of a chicken crossing the road (really, "The Homesick Chicken" by Edward D. Hoch).

A previously unpublished writer named Sally A. Sellers contributes "Perchance to Dream," about a woman who keeps trying to commit suicide but can never die. This is one of the best stories in the magazine, and I hope to see more from Sellers in coming months.

"Air Raid" by Herb Boehm is a rather unoriginal time-travel tale. "Kindertotenleider" by Jonathan Fast is a gruesome fantasy concerned with children's television shows. "Period of Totality" by Fred Saberhagen is interesting but uninspired. "The scorch on Wetzel's Hill" by Sherwood Springer is an 'alien visitor' yarn which holds no surprises whatsoever. "Coming of Age in Henson's Tube" by William



John Watkins is a short and uninteresting account of a future sport called Skyfalling.

The last story is Gordon Dickson's "Time storm," about a man's journey across a country that has been changed by time storms which shift various areas of land into different times from their original. This isn't a new idea but Dickson takes it and makes a very entertaining, well written story. The ending is left open for a sequel, and I suspect Dickson will carry the adventures of his protagonist further, perhaps eventually tying them together into a novel.

In addition to the fiction, we have an article by George O. Smith on the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, a book review column by Charles Brown and an introduction editorial by Isaac Asimov.

Overall, I would rate ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE as a not too bad first effort, and I look forward to the next issue. In a field with as few magazines as we have, every new outlet for writers (and readers) is welcome.

THE BOOK OF FRITZ LEIBER (DAW UY1269 -- \$1.25) and THE WORLDS OF FRITZ LEIBER (Ace 91640 -- \$1.95).  
Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

DAW's "Book of" series has published some superlative collections, and this reissue of a 1974 publication is one of the highlights of the series. The new edition is fronted by one of George Barr's finest professional covers to date, and is so impressive that it almost makes the book desirable to those who already have a copy.

The fiction inside is the real reason for buying it, though, and judging it from that viewpoint, this is still a good investment. The DAW book alternates stories and articles, and by the time you finish the collection, you not only have a good cross-section of Leiber fiction (sword and sorcery, weird, suspense, science fiction, humor), but you have a good insight into Leiber himself. The total selection spans 40 years, and as a result you see Leiber in all stages of his development as a writer. While a few of the stories are a little crude, and some of the articles hardly bear reading, the majority of the material is most worthwhile, making THE BOOK OF FRITZ LEIBER a good acquisition.

In sheer volume, though, Ace's THE WORLDS OF FRITZ LEIBER is the more desirable of the two; it's double the pagecount (but not double the wordage, due to increased type size) and places its emphasis on Leiber's more recent fiction, with its oldest story being a scant 19 years old. The stories are enjoyable--my favorite Leiber of recent years, "Catch That Zeppelin", is in here--but contrary to what Leiber himself says, the Ace volume isn't as representative of Leiber as a whole as is the DAW release.

The Ace volume contains no nonfiction (outside of the brief introduction), and the selection seems to be far more random than the DAW anthology; many of the stories are decidedly inferior ("The Nice Girl With Five Husbands," "237 Talking Statues, Etc.", to name two, are not up to the standard quality of Leiber's fiction). The primary reason for this can be seen in Leiber's statement, "(I've tried not) repeating stories from other collections, especially those currently in print. There's no overlap with those whatever." It's sort of like taking what was left after the choice items were gone, then throwing a few new goodies on top to make it all look desirable.

But if reading volume is your worry, you can always go to DAW's SECOND BOOK OF FRITZ LEIBER (DAW UY1195 -- \$1.25), which contains fewer stories by Leiber, but the ones that are there are longer ones, giving more meat for the reader to sink his teeth into. The Fafhrd/Grey Mouser tale, "Trapped in a Sea of Stars" is one of my favorites, and the sf here is light and breezy, but thoroughly entertaining. In keeping with the motif of the first volume, there's a good deal of non-fiction interspersed between the stories, making this anthology once again a well-rounded representation of one of science fiction and fantasy's best.

It boils down to a nice choice, then; if you want to go with nothing but fiction, then the Ace WORLDS OF FRITZ LEIBER is probably what you want; that's a lot of fiction for two bucks. But if you want a good glimpse into Leiber as a fantasist, sf author and thinker, you'd probably be more satisfied with DAW's THE BOOK OF FRITZ LEIBER and THE SECOND BOOK OF FRITZ LEIBER. Personally, I recommend both publishers' efforts; why not take advantage of a good thing?

LETTER FROM SUE PHILLIPS

(10-11-76)

"...I have not read 1870 Dresden Drive NE, B-2  
DEUS IRAE although Atlanta, GA 30319  
Michael got the library's  
copy. I rather doubt that I will as, in my experience, I  
have not liked many of PK Dick's works. Zelazny has al-  
ways been a favorite of mine but I can't see them working  
well together, despite your favorable comments. Perhaps  
I'm prejudiced here. If so, I apologize. I try to keep an  
open mind about authors and their works but with some,  
it's very difficult. Malzberg, for instance... and Dick.

((Both Malzberg and Dick are authors I enjoy; at the same time, I can see that staunch traditional-literature fans might not enjoy the rather out-of-the-ordinary writing style of Malzberg, or the unusual-perception-of-reality of Dick. I think you'll find the Dick material to be rather tame in DEUS IRAE, though.))

"I wasn't aware of all that much underlying symbolism in DON'T BITE THE SUN. I saw all of what Susan refers



to in it, but it seemed pretty straightforward. I do agree with the overall assessment. Tanith Lee is a superb tale-spinner and should be encouraged to do much more."

((The reason you didn't see any symbolism in what Susan described was because she was giving only a plot summary; space was insufficient for an analysis of the symbolic interpretations of what was there. One incident, for instance, would be the raid of the Robotics Museum; the protagonist was trying to lash out against the society that virtually determined, passively, what direction her life would take, and ironically she chose a Robotics Museum--and what is a robot but a mechanical man, a thing controlled by outside forces? This is one minor example of the richness of symbolism in the novel, but in the short space Susan had to review DON'T BITE THE SUN, she could only mention it, not give examples.))

THE FLORIANs. Brian M. Stableford. (DAW UY1255 -- \$1.25). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

THE FLORIANs is the first book in a new series by Brian Stableford; the theme is a variation on the good old space voyages stand-by; a recontact ship with a crew composed of scientists, an anthropologist trained in diplomatic relations, and a young girl with a special talent for languages, which has been dispatched to make first contact with Earth's colony worlds and help the surviving inhabitants--if any--solve any problems they may have.

The first planet the Daedalus contacts is Floria, a world on which the Earth colony seems to have fared well--almost too well, for everything there grows very large--animals, plants, even the people. However, when the colony's leaders are approached with offers of help to discover what could be causing the fantastic growth rate, the offers are rejected and the Daedalus' crew is quickly split up and used as pawns by the two groups which are struggling for control of Floria.

Stableford goes into great detail concerning the political aspects of the colony and the methods by which it is governed (The Planners, a select group of Florian's chosen by rigorous testing, are the real rulers of Floria and decide which inventions will be used by the colonists and which will be withheld; Guns, for example, were never introduced on Floria and any mention of the uses to which they might be put were repressed.), but surprisingly, does not give the reader very much information about what caused the Florian's giantism. Characterization is competent, and hopefully some interesting relationships will develop in future books. My one complaint with THE FLORIANs is that Stableford's characters have the irritating habit of lapsing into very long, moralizing speeches which are rather stilted and tend to slow down the book's progress to its conclusion.

The voyages of the Daedalus promise some interesting reading in the future; I'm curious to see what Stableford will



do with the series; if he devotes as much thought and imagination to forthcoming novels as he did to this one, the Daedalus expeditions could become a first-rate series.

KING KONG. Delos W. Lovelace. (Ace 44470 -- \$1.95) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

With the Dino de Laurentis bastardization of the classic Wallace-Cooper Big Ape story being hyped so heavily now, I knew there had to be some advantages to the publicity; the fact that Ace has just released KING KONG in a paperback edition with a Frank Frazetta cover (albeit one he has copied from his own work--this is a redone cover for an EERIE b&w magazine).

Delos Lovelace's writing style is typical pulp; there's nothing pretentious or literary about it, it's just adventure and action, with little time to catch your breath in between chapters. Lovelace is reminiscent of the hero-adventure pulp authors, and his flourish and drive communicate well. The story of the ape who is brought to civilization where he goes wild and carries Ann to the top of the Empire State Building, only to be killed by the aerial attack that ensues. This is the story of King Kong the film; and this is the story of KING KONG the book.

The \$1.95 price seems to go largely for the Frazetta cover, by the way; Tempo-Books, a subsidiary of the same parent company that owns Ace, has its own edition of KING KONG on the market for \$1.25. It has no Frazetta cover, but it does have crudely-done interior illustrations to accompany the text. So, in effect, the same company has a deluxe and budget edition of the novel out--you can choose the one you'd like most.

If you enjoy pulp writing and the thrill of the era, then you should feel at home in Lovelace's KING KONG; but if not, you'll probably want to avoid this book.



## TREKKIE TREATS

Whether we want to admit it or not, there's a lot of sf fandom (or sub-fandom) devoted to Star Trek, and there's enough of a buying audience to make the Trek-related items excellent sellers. The reaction of the average sf fan towards Star Trek items is disdain; after all, a lot of the large-con, space-opera types of problems in science fiction and sf fandom are related to the Star Trek culture; however, there are a number of items available in the Trek craze that at least merit a little attention, even if you don't run out and buy them all.

I'm not a Star Trek fan to any real degree; but I'll admit that I was fascinated by the Franz Joseph STAR FLEET TECHNICAL MANUAL that's available from Ballantine Books (Ballantine #24730 -- \$6.95). Quite simply, this is an unbelievable piece of work to be devoted to a nine-year-old TV show; even more stunning is the fact that a lot of things you'll find in this book are things you'll wish someone had done for your favorite sf series, whatever it might be.

Oh, the book has its hoke; a letter from Franz Joseph, "United Federation Representative," is the kind of tripe that makes so many sf fans refuse to take Trek items seriously; it's in the same class as Lin Carter's repulsive drek claiming that 20% of everything he wrote is true, just dictated to him by the main character, and you can accept it as fiction if you wish.

The book lays out a lot of material, though, and if you disassociate yourself from the ST craze, you can still find some things in here worth your while. The volume, a large paperback in a black plastic binder, contains diagrams of different spaceship classes, equipment, uniforms, insignia, flags of Federation planets. Rules of Federation--it's an sf universe laid out in black and white, and Star Trek is only tangentially connected. There's no trite Spock worship, no biographies of the Enterprise crew; instead, it's just a book packed full of interesting browsing material. As one critic has said, it's a shame that some series authors could not lay out such a book on their series--it might result in some spectacular space-opera fiction.

Another Franz Joseph contribution to the Trek flood is THE STAR TREK BLUEPRINTS (Ballantine 24471 -- \$5.00), which is basically what the title indicates. This is an item that only the true Star Trek fan would want; \$5 is a lot of money to lay out for 12 diagrams of the Enterprise's layout. I'll confess curiosity: I opened them when they first came in and looked the set over, but when I had spent three or four minutes with it, I had seen all I wanted and was finished with it; it's up to you to decide if that brief pleasure (or moderate interest) is worth the rather hefty cost of this item.

One thing I've discovered is that there are a lot of Star Trek series fans who aren't caught up in the Trekkie fever;

they enjoy the TV series when they see it in syndication, and maybe they even watch the cartoons (or watched, since few areas still show these--I've heard they're syndicated, but can't attest to it), and that's it. For both the hard-core Trekkie, whose blood runs hot as the Enterprise unscientifically whooshes across the screen and this second group, I'll recommend Bjo Trimble's STAR TREK CONCORDANCE (Ballantine 25137 -- \$5.95). This is nothing more than a synopsis of each episode of the live-action and animated Star Trek series, giving a list of characters, etc., plus a bit of information on major characters. It's written in a fairly straightforward manner--no demeaning Trekkie blather and goshwow praise--and you might enjoy it. It's a nice reference work to a series that, for all its faults, is still most probably the most important televised science fiction thus far.

There seems to be a sort of a demarcation line here, however; while the items related to Star Trek are generally of an impressive quality, although of debatable value to some, the fiction and non-fiction this series seems to inspire is usually embarrassingly poor. An excellent (or atrocious, to be more precise) example of this is STAR TREK: THE NEW VOYAGES edited by Sondra Marshak and Myrna Culbreath (Bantam X2719 -- \$1.75). This is, as the cover blurbs it, "8 original Star Trek stories never seen on the screen." How that came about is actually rather simple; this is low-quality fanfiction, and Bantam is trying to make a killing by passing this off as professional-quality material. This isn't high-quality fan fiction, or serious attempts at fiction, this is, overall, a sampler of Star Trek fan fiction, most of which seems to deal with various main characters falling in love or being put in precarious (and awkwardly embarrassing) situations. The real travesty is that this book was published at all; avoid it at all costs.

The late James Blish was actively involved in the Star Trek literary game, also; his involvement was only to the point of doing short fictional versions of the various television episodes from the live-action Trek series, and while the quality is very mediocre (Blish seems to take little time with this, and the majority of the stories are accurate renderings of the television episodes, which is what Trek fans want but Blish fans may be disappointed in), it's such a cut above the Marshak/Culbreath collection that it seems artistic and literary in comparison. Somewhat less enjoyable than the Blish books are Alan Dean Foster's STAR TREK LOG series, which is up to its eighth book now; these are adaptations of the animated series, and many of them are padded out to novel and novella length. Rather than attempt to review each book, let me merely point out that Ballantine's LOG books generally add to the stories they adapt and, many times, this addition helps transform a humdrum story into an enjoyable one.

These are only a few of the Trek items on the market; as indicated, some are worthwhile even to a general sf fan and some aren't; choose your selection with this in mind.



THE LIFESHIP. Harry Harrison & Gordon Dickson. Harper & Row -- \$7.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

This novel, originally serialized as "Lifeboat" in ANALOG over a year ago, is typical space adventure; the plot is, quite simply, survival: first, Giles Steel Ashad, a nobleman, must survive the destruction of the spaceship he was a passenger on, and second, he must survive a conspiracy that places his life in danger.

Even though the title implies that the lifeship itself is the major factor in this story, the important action doesn't take place there at all, but on the planet surface after the survivors are rescued. The scenes in the lifeship are rather humdrum, and there's never a real feeling of tension--you know all along that Giles and the others will survive, so any suspense the authors might build up is thus eliminated before it can reach a suitable level.

Likewise, the microcosm of the lifeship is very stereotyped; there's a drug addict, a dumb but loyal servant, a nobleman, a panicky sort and an Albenareth alien pilot. No one achieves any real degree of character-individuality, and the result is a very drab book, stylistically.

But for all that, THE LIFESHIP is still moderately enjoyable, simply because Dickson and Harrison can tell a story well--even when it's as minor a story as this. The book is paced well and action-packed enough that Dickson and Harrison fans won't feel cheated. If you do pick up this book, though, don't expect any more than light adventure; it certainly makes no attempts whatsoever to deliver any more than that.

TALES OF THE BLACK WIDOWERS (Fawcett Crest 2944 -- \$1.50) and MORE TALES OF THE BLACK WIDOWERS (Doubleday -- \$5.95), both by Isaac Asimov. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

There's no doubt in anyone's mind that Isaac Asimov can write almost anything well; but mysteries are a challenging field, and I had a little apprehension concerning his ability to present a problem in a way that the problem didn't overshadow the art of telling the story. MURDER IN THE ABA proved to me his aptitude at mystery-writing was far higher than I'd anticipated; and these collections of Black Widowers stories show me that while I was right that he could do fine mystery stories, I was also right that he'd have problems keeping the problem itself in balance with characterization and the actual telling of the story.

The Club itself consists of six men who meet monthly for companionship and a meal at the Milano Restaurant; and in addition, they work to solve mysteries. The mysteries are Asimovian puzzles, some simple, some complex, and all interesting. Some of the puzzles involved such things as trying to discover why an editor bought a story and hasn't published it, or finding out why a written combination will

not open a safe, or helping a man find out what's been stolen from him, or even a man who is suspected of a crime but assures the Black Widowers that he didn't take the cash or the bonds--and this man can never tell a lie. These are only a few of the crimes the Black Widowers work to solve, and they have a remarkably high efficiency ratio for so sedentary a group.

And Asimov has a remarkably high success ratio for a writer whose forte is supposedly science fiction; the mysteries in these collections are entertaining, thought-provoking and truly puzzling. At times, however, they become too puzzling--Asimov occasionally gets carried away with the mystery and the story comes across as one of those clever brain-teasers you read in magazines occasionally. "The Three Numbers" in MORE TALES OF THE BLACK WIDOWERS is just such a story, this deals with a safe combination that won't open the safe in question, and it's such a clever tale that the problem overwhelms characterization and narration. But this is a none-too-often problem, and it's one that is easily overlooked in the reading of the books, because TALES OF THE BLACK WIDOWERS and MORE TALES OF THE BLACK WIDOWERS are thoroughly entertaining books.

If your familiarity with Isaac Asimov comes through his sf and his science articles, then I urge you to try both of these books; they each give more than your money's worth of entertainment.

TAU ZERO (Berkley 03210 -- \$1.50) and THE TROUBLE TWISTERS (Berkley 23245 -- \$1.25), by Poul Anderson. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

One of science fiction's more prolific authors is Poul Anderson; he has proven himself a true jack-of-all trades in the sf genre, having written humor, adventure, space opera, hard science, light fantasy and marvelous series. Berkley's latest two Anderson reissues give two totally different looks at the author's fiction, and each deserves comment.

THE TROUBLE TWISTERS is the second book in the Polesotechnic League; this is adventure fiction, just as the first volume, TRADER TO THE STARS (see FR#8) was, and is equally enjoyable. The book consists of three novellas: "The Three-Cornered Wheel," "The Trouble Twisters" and "A Sun Invisible," all involving David Falkayn and the Polesotechnic League. This is typical ANALOG adventure, and enjoyable as a change from heavy science fiction.

And speaking of heavy science fiction... TAU ZERO is the story of the Leonora Christina, a starship travelling the galaxies under the direction of Captain Lars Telander. In a disastrous failure of the decelerators, the Leonora Christina is locked in at near-light speeds, with survival unsure. It's hard-science, a Divenesque story that is, in the words of James Blish, "the ultimate 'hard science fiction' novel." It's also most probably Anderson's pinnacle as a writer, and is a tautly-narrated, compelling story that deserves a place



in every science fiction library. Niven fans will undoubtedly find a great deal to enjoy in this book, and the hard science is mixed with an atmosphere of tension and adventure that carries the reader through the book so quickly that you can hardly believe it's over when you reach the end.

Berkley is in the middle of a Poul Anderson reissue binge, and it's something a lot of traditional sf fans might want to take advantage of; Anderson is undoubtedly a major force in sf at present, and books like *TAU ZERO* and *THE TROUBLE TWISTERS* present you with a few views of his multi-faceted talent.

**INFERNO.** Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. (Pocket Books 80490 -- \$1.75). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Niven & Pournelle produced a pastiche of Heinleinian space adventure with their first collaboration, *THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE*; with *INFERNO*, they produce a pastiche of Dante as seen through a science-fictional mind, and the result is a book that is both highly derivative and wholly entertaining.

Allen Carpentier is a science fiction author who falls to his death at a science fiction convention; rather than the blackness that many people view death as, though, Carpentier finds himself in a decadent, bizarre world where people are tormented and tortured in relation to the sins they committed on Earth during their life. With Benito Mussolini as his guide and companion, Allen Carpentier sets out to travel through all the levels of hell to a sort of salvation.

If Niven & Pournelle commit any real error in *INFERNO*, it's one of being too faithful to the original; *INFERNO* by Niven & Pournelle is totally analogous to *INFERNO* by Dante, and the changes are in the form of modernizations with more graphic descriptions--and that's virtually all the change there is. This will disappoint a lot of readers who don't want a science fiction version of a literary classic (either because they (a) enjoyed the original more and see the sf version as pretentious, or (b) they hate literary classics, and don't want their sf tainted with the stuff), but the simple fact is that *INFERNO*, sf version, is quite enjoyable and is a macabre and spectacular view of afterlife that its readers won't forget for quite a while. Don't miss this novel; it's a new direction for Niven & Pournelle, and this digression will probably never be repeated.

**ICE PRISON.** Kathleen Sky. (Laser 72038 -- \$1.25). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

*ICE PRISON* is Kathleen Sky's second novel for Laser, and like her first, *BIRTHRIGHT* (reviewed in FR #6), is remarkably good sf, entertaining and decidedly well-written. Sky seems to pace herself after Robert Heinlein, and the result is upbeat sf that gives the hero a problem and lets you sit

back and watch the hero solve it. She writes clean, crisp prose with little wasted wordage, and rarely resorts to the trite, coy dialogue so common in this sort of fiction.

In *ICE PRISON*, Captain Burien Howell is put in charge of Mithras, a frozen-planet penal colony that the Confederation is using as a convenient place to put those officers and prisoners who might cause trouble otherwise. Howell is thrown in the midst of antagonism and suspicion, faced with a Confederation Colonial Service conscription policy that is taking the children from the planet and leading the colonists to consider rebellion. In addition, the planet is faced with a revolutionary movement headed by a young girl, Kiedron, daughter of a deceased Mithran revolutionary. Howell has two problems: get the citizens on his side and prevent the Confederation from continuing its oppressive policies in regard to Mithras.

*ICE PRISON* is remarkably good, and it's a shame that so few people are aware of Kathleen Sky, one of Laser's best writers and a talented story-teller who could handle herself well in any authorial company. If you're looking for a good Laser book to begin with, this one won't disappoint you.

**THE HEIGHT OF THE SCREAM.** Ramsey Campbell (Arkham House -- \$7.50). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Ramsey Campbell is one of the most original young authors producing horror fiction for Arkham House, and this volume presents an engrossing collection of Campbell's psychological horror.

Campbell pointedly avoids the overwritten horror that so many of his contemporaries borrow from the older masters of horror; his style is moody and contemplative, but at the same time clean and crisp. His stories are often horrors of the mind, free from the ghosties and ogres that so many less-talented authors use when they think of horror stories. And when he does use the haunting-motif, he does it in a manner reminiscent of Henry James; that is, you're never totally sure of the narrator's sanity and awareness, which in turn leads you to question the existence of the ghost itself. A marvelous example of this is "The Whining" a story of a man faced with the problem of a ghostly dog; also in this same mold is "The Telephone," a short tale of a man who finds himself tormented by mysterious, suggestive phone calls that occur whenever he's near a public phone. This is the horror of Ramsey Campbell, and it's a horror that's much more real than the demons and ogres so popular in much of modern horror fiction.

As with all Arkham House books, *THE HEIGHT OF THE SCREAM* is a quality volume, produced with care on heavy paper with the familiar Holliston Black Novelex binding. For the price, *THE HEIGHT OF THE SCREAM* is a book well worth acquiring.



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## FANZINE REVIEWS

Reviewed by Cliff Biggers

Attempting to review fanzines can be a tedious chore, because there are so many things to be considered; also, because it's so difficult to determine the value of some material. Take Tom Collins' AFOLLO #7 (\$2.50, from 4305 Balcones Dr., Austin, TX 78371). Had this come out over three years ago, it might be a really good fanzine. As it is, it's almost worthless as far as its major features are concerned; in fact, only a sonnet sequence by Manly Wade Wellman makes AFOLLO worth having at all.

I gather that what happened is that Tom simply couldn't get the 7th IS out in 1973, when it was due, so he held the material until he could publish it. Thus we have a 30-plus page article by Alexei and Cory Panshin predicting what Heinlein's new TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE will be like (now hopelessly outdated--and much of this article is a rehash of Panshin's HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION). There are reviews of books, all of which are quite old and most of which are out of print. There is art, which (thankfully) isn't outdated. There is a rather atrocious poetry section by Tom Disch and Charles Naylor, with crude drawings of a girl picking her nose as accompaniment for the poetry. There's... I think you get the idea. All in all, this is a useless fanzine unless you want the stunning chapter-by-chapter sonnet sequence Wellman has done from Wells' WAR OF THE WORLDS--and at \$2.50, that might be a bit steep.

After the letdown of AFOLLO, it was nice to get a fanzine that lived up to expectations; SIMULACRUM 3 from Victoria Vayne is just such a fanzine, and I'm sure it's one of the finest fanzines of 1976 (\$2.50 from Victoria Vayne, PO Box 156-Sin D, Toronto, Ontario M6P 3J8 Canada). I've been an enthusiast of Victoria's fanzines ever since I received her first Simulacrum, and the third issue continues to deliver the quality I've come to expect. Mimeography is impeccable, as usual, and there's enough material in here to make it worth the cost. I'm not awfully impressed by all the sercon--some of it seems shallow and pretentious--but this is personal evaluation, and it doesn't interfere with my enjoyment. Some good religious discussion, humor, personal reactions to fandom and the trip to Worldcon by Victoria, and a lot of nice art make this another impressive issue. Get it!

ASH-WING #20 also came in the mail recently from Frank Denton (14654 - 8th Ave., S.W., Seattle, WA 98166 -- for the usual); it's a nice, low-key fanzine that accomplishes what it sets out to do: i.e., entertains. The personal matter is the highlight of Ash-Wing for me, but it has a number of articles and columns (not all of the high quality of Frank's own writing) and a good review section. I like the feel and atmosphere of ASH-WING, and I recommend it.

Nils Hardin seems to be having problems keeping XENOPHILE on its regular schedule; even so, the adzine is invaluable for science fiction and mystery collectors, and a bi-monthly Xenophile is far better than none at all. This is an adzine, although it does offer a good deal more than ads--for instance, #28 has an article by George Wetzel on "The Pseudonymous Lovecraft," some very good criticisms of the Michael Resnick Price Guide (a travesty--but see my comments on this in the editorial), an article by Bill Blackbeard on upgrading pulps and a number of letters. I heartily recommend Xenophile (\$6 for 12 issues-- PO Box 9660, St. Louis, MO 63122).

Arnie and Joyce Katz are continuing SWOON--the 6th issue is already out, and it's a short lettercol issue this time around, but lots of fun nonetheless--and if you like personalzines that are filled with low-key humor and informal natter, in addition to some enjoyable letters, then you really should get it; the price is steep (\$5 for six issues) but it's also available for the usual (59 Livingston St., Apt 6B, Brooklyn, NY 11201).

This seems to be the issue for big fanzines; the latest CUTWORLDS is available at last, and it's a double issue (#28/29), available for \$2.50 (Bill Bowers, PO Box 2521, No. Canton, OH 44720). From the editorial, it seems that Bill Bowers has gone through a lot of personal changes recently, and the effects of these changes make interesting reading. The rest of the issue is of mixed quality, however; I was most disappointed by an arrogant, swaggering attitude displayed in a column by Andrew Offutt. I find it to display an intellectualism-be-damned attitude that I don't look forward to if it spreads, and I don't find it to be particularly representative of what I've gathered from Offutt's speeches, discussions, etc. as where Offutt stands on many things.

Derek Carter & Barb Nagey contribute a hilarious joint effort of cartoon and commentary on Midwestcon, an interesting column on language and changes is presented by Poul Anderson (as an English teacher, I was even more interested than most and found that Anderson had said some of the same things I've said to my classes many times), a good article by Robert A. W. Lowndes on the Health-Knowledge magazines he edited, a rather poor interview with Robert Shea, a most enjoyable installment of "Energuwoman" by Susan Wood... it goes on. While this isn't as jam-packed an issue of OW as I'd like it to be, it has enough to make it enjoyable. If you like the average OW, you should enjoy this issue: Bowers is in the process of making a number of changes in both OW (it'll be a prozine of sorts) and his new fanzine (unnamed as yet).



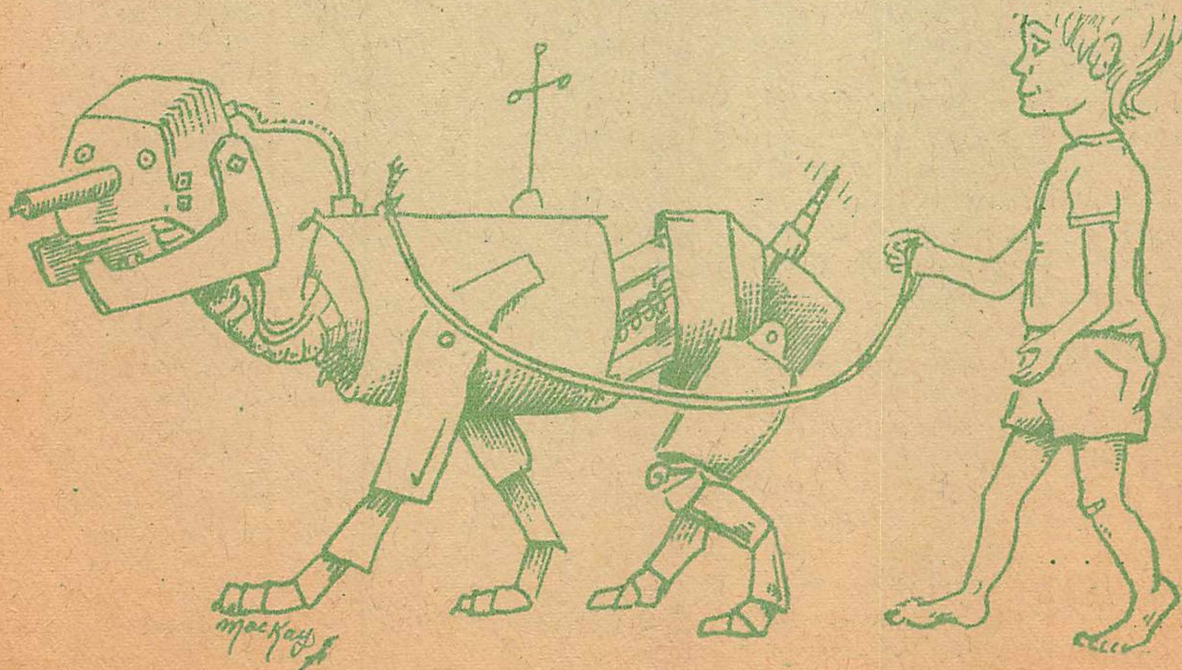
Every now and then, a fanzine comes in that just wasn't made for redding, it seems; just such a fanzine is FANTASY REVOLUTION from Jim Khennedy (sic), at least so it seems. The fanzine is poorly printed--in fact, most letters are so gappy and spotty as to make it impossible to read the zine for pages at a time--and the editor has an irritating tendency to replace the letter "i" with "y" at sporadic intervals, which is more than a little bit of a nuisance when the reader is straining his eyes to decipher the wretchedly printed mass of words to start with. The issue I have, V I #3, is undoubtedly one of the worst fanzines I've seen in quite a while, simply because it's (a) unreadable, (b) quasi-related to HPL: that is, he finds reason to drop the name every chance he gets, but has nothing original to say about his subject matter. There's a mediocre comic strip filling the zine out, and it is (mercifully) quick copied, so you can see what you're looking at, at least. With the exception of a few pieces of Mike Garcia and Jackie Franke art, plus some interesting sketches and letters, this is a worthless fanzine--avoid it, unless you're looking for a sample zine to show you what not to do. (No address given)

Tony Cvetko is continuing the low-key, personalzine orientation of his DIEHARD; the 9th issue arrived a week or so ago (29415 Parkwood Drive, Wickliffe, OH 44092 -- 75¢ of the usual) and, while mostly a letterzine, this is an enjoyable publication. Tony is an interesting writer, and his comments are a pleasant addition to the lettercol; there's a lot of discussion of music in this issue's lettercol, and it's most interesting to me, music fan that I am. Give DIEHARD a try--it's a nicely printed, well-written personalzine worth the time it takes to read it, which is saying a lot.

As the newest KARASS lets everyone know, Linda Bushyager has a new Gestetner and electrostenciller; the result is an even more impressive issue of the #1 fannish newszine (#27, from 1614 Evans Ave., Prospect Park, PA 19076 -- 5/\$2 or the usual). There's a lot of news in this issue, plus a lot of electrostencil experimentation and two-color mimeography; also, Linda announces that she will do e-stencilling for others for \$1 per stencil. If you haven't subscribed to KARASS yet, you really should; it's worth the very small price.

Steve & Binker Hughes (5831 Hillside Drive, Doraville, GA 30340) have announced that their fanzine, PAN, is in a state of limbo and will not be published for at least a year or so, perhaps more. This comes about as a result of mundane pressures, lack of time, etc., and the Hughes regret it as much as the readers of PAN will. The art contributions will see print in FR (the full-page drawing by Wade Gilbreath on p. 40 was originally a PAN cover, in fact).

Looks like Victoria Vayne's SIMULACRUM has brought about a lot of well-reproduced Toronto fanzines; the newest one we've received is ORCA #1 (Jennifer K. Bankier, 485 Huron St., Apt. 406, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 2R5). It's available for \$1 or the usual, and the first issue marks it as a quality publication. There's an interesting editorial section that establishes the orientation of Orca somewhat, a number of nice columns, and an intriguing book review section. Mike Glicksohn's column, reprinted from XENIUM #2.5, is the highlight of the issue, though; at any rate, be sure and get this fanzine.





## FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE--Supplemental

I guess you learn by experience; one thing we learned with this issue is that there's a huge difference between black ink and colored ink--and the way the two different inks go on the page.

This issue of FR was prepared the same as all the others have been; that is, it's typed with both cushion sheet and typing plate, to give what the instructions term "medium copy."

If this medium copy had been any more light, reading it would have been a major problem...

If part of this is printed on black ink, it'll be because I was intensely worried that I wouldn't be able to get any decent copy out of a few of the stencils otherwise; I'm not sure if that'll be the case, but there are some light pages in the mid-30s that may require this to be readable.

This page is being done both as an explanation and as a test sheet of sorts, just to see if the green ink will do any better with this typesetting. I'm not going to go into all the settings, just suffice to say that this is the only way I know of to properly darken the copy.

For those of you who find some of the pages a bit light, I apologize. I do feel that the entire fanzine is quite readable or I wouldn't have mailed it out to you--but I will admit that a few of the pages are far lighter than I would have liked, and I only wish that wasn't so.

Yet another problem to be mentioned--this one more specific--is the faintness of the type on the top half of page 21; if you can figure out why this is as it is, please let me know, because it's puzzling me still. I've tried printing that page twice, and it's still light. \*Sigh\*

Next issue will not have this problem, though; and I think you'll find this issue quite readable all in all--if I didn't find myself in the awkward position of having only the green Gestetner right now (I don't have access to the black Gestetner 360 yet, although I will soon), I'd have done the contents page, for instance, in black.

So how did the cover get to be done in black, you may be asking? The only thing I can say is that I had the foresight to print it on the old machine before it was passed on to new ownership. Why didn't I do the contents page, too? I didn't know what the contents would be, that's why. If I come to any page that would work better in black in the next FR, I will have access to it, though.

Another item I'd like some response on (no sense in wasting this good stencil space): this year's DSC will have a fanzine room, where various fanzines (sample copies only, unless you plan to be there) will be on display. There's been all too little attention devoted to the non-profit fanzine at many conventions, and most publishers don't have the money to buy a dealer's table just to sell a fanzine they're losing money on, anyway. So here's the basic plan: if you will supply one copy of your fanzine, preferably in a plastic cover (the clear binder covers are the easiest, and they'll only cost about 15¢ @ for the faneds), along with an 8.5 X 11 sheet of paper giving subscription rate, name and address of editor, whether you'll trade, accept the usual, etc., I will see to it that your fanzine, along with the vital statistics, is placed on display in the fanzine room at this year's DSC in Birmingham (see page 11 for con information). Furthermore, any other display items you'd like to send down (covers, any striking spot illos that really stand out on a page--anything visually distinctive) will be displayed also. This is a really good chance to get a lot of exposure for your fanzine at no cost, so I hope you'll take advantage of it. There should be someone near the fanzine display room, although theft shouldn't be a problem, since there'll only be one copy of each fanzine on display.

Since this is a display, I'd like to make one request, though; if you generally send your fanzine folded, then I think it would really be nice if you'd take the trouble to mail one flat copy for the display. If you want the copy of the fanzine back, it'll be mailed back to you if you enclose return postage.

One more set of instructions: these are important, so note them, please: the convention is in August, so it would be advisable to wait and send a display copy of the issue of your fanzine that will be most recent at that time. People will be more apt to buy a fanzine if it looks recent than one that looks several years old, so bear that in mind.

I'd appreciate any sort of feedback you wish to give me on this, since final arrangements are still being worked out. If you'll be sending a fanzine down, I'd appreciate it if you'd drop me a postcard as soon as possible to let me know that we can count on a display item from you come August 26. That's not necessary, but it would help in the final arrangements. Give it some consideration! (Note: if you send covers for display, please send overruns, not originals; we'd rather not have anything that valuable on display--and some artists do value their art most highly, and rightfully so.)







One of the more intriguing fanzines I received recently was *REQUIEM* #12 (Norbert Spelmer, 1085 Saint-Jean, Longueuil, P.Q. Canada J4H 2Z3). *REQUIEM* is a French-language fanzine of science fiction and fantasy, and for those of you whose knowledge of French is somewhat better than mine, it's well worth \$1 per issue. It's a handsomely done production--but it took me hours of laborious translation to read most of it, because (as much as I hate to admit it) I don't read French fluently. My favorite feature in this issue is Dirk Mosig's "Lovecraft, Creator of Myths;" this has appeared before in an American apazine, but it deserves the larger audience it'll get here. There's also a report on Eurocon III, with a few photos, plus several other features. You'll have to judge for yourself on whether or not to get this one...

Mark McGarry's *EMPIRE* #7 is not only impressive in layout, content and printing, but I can read it, which made me gloss over *REQUIEM*, which arrived the same day. *EMPIRE* is a genzine that features excellent printing, careful layout and quality material as a regular thing, which makes some of us cringe at the thought of our competition... This issue's highlight for me is an interview with Gene Wolfe that's a little skimpy, but interesting. Darrell Schweitzer's "Notes on Writing About Writing" is most interesting, but a little dated in references, etc. Keith Justice contributes one of the vague, overblown columns I've been seeing from him more and more often, and that's the only thing I really question a need to include in here; the fiction is adequate fan fiction. It's a good fanzine, and worth trying (4/\$3, Mark McGarry, 631E South Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12202).

One fanzine I was once far more impressed with than I am now is *IN THE SHADOW OF THE MONOLITH*, the clubzine of the Nameless Order of R'lyeh. Quality has always been sporadic, since there seems to be very little editing or rejection done, but the past few issues have demonstrated a tendency to include poor fanfiction and even poorer poetry as a major part of the zine; I don't question an editor's right to include it, but I don't have to be in favor of it. The newest issue is 18 pages long (#63) and the high point in the issue is the lettercol; there's a lot of wasted space in this fanzine, though, and I really can't recommend it very highly. As it stands now, *SHADOW* is an adequate zine to trade for, but I'd spend my money elsewhere if you aren't a fanpublisher... (Eric Larsen/Box 16369/NCSSU/Raleigh, NC 27607)

Dick Geis' *SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW* #19 is out, and while not as good as some of the early *ALIEN CRITICS* of bygone days, it's a solid issue, well worth the \$1.25 Dick is asking for it (POB 11408 / Portland, OR 97211). The feature of real importance this issue is the Philip K. Dick interview; the reviews are entirely too lighthearted and superficial to suit me, but that's no longer the prime emphasis of *SFR*, so I have little grounds for complaint.

My one real complaint is that Geis is doing fewer and fewer of the mini-reviews himself; but at least he's made up for it by adding a lot more journal-type text of his own. This issue does detail the death of Dick's father, which is done with a great deal of sensitivity and frankness. An interview with Kelly Freas doesn't say a lot that I haven't heard elsewhere, but if you haven't listened to/talked with Kelly at conventions, you might find it interesting and new. I had begun to get disappointed in *SFR* a few issues back, but this issue partially restores my faith in Geis as a bastion of fannish quality.

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...And with that, we draw yet another issue (or yet another two issues, as the case may be) of *FR* to a close; this double issue does indeed contain twice the material of a single *FR*, so don't feel you're getting your subscription money ripped off unfairly--this'll also help us get *FR* back on the time schedule it should be on, and the reviews are now sufficiently caught up that the next issue should be out by the first or second week of March at the latest.

I'm curious to find out what the reaction is to the green ink this issue; I'm also experimenting with several different colors of paper, so if you have some particular combinations to praise/scorn, let us know.

This issue, we've had a few new reviewers added to our group, most all of them coming from an apa we were formerly OEs of, *MYRIAD*. Hopefully, Mike, Larry, Andy and Sue will continue this trend they've started and send more reviews next time.

After I put into print a statement that we might do a half-sized *FR*, Susan let me know that she thought very little of the idea; when she was backed up by Wade Gilbreath and Gary Steele, who also ixnayed the suggestion, I knew better than to entertain thoughts of it. So *FR* maintains its 8.5 X 11 status for the duration of its lifetime (which will, we hope, be quite a long timespan).

The interview this issue may or may not be a regular feature of *FR*, depending on reader response; also, we're going to try a few SF-related columns, articles, etc. in future issues of *FR*, so as to give a little variation to the review/letter format. And that leads into another situation entirely: should *FR* remain a 34-38 page fanzine, selling for 75¢ a copy, or should we retain the smaller size and keep the subscription rate at 6/\$2.50? The 75¢ rate would necessitate an increase to 6/\$4, but it would allow for the inclusion of non-review material. Again, we're depending on reader response to make this decision, so send those locs in and let us know something, alright? Until next issue, then....



