

ISFAN NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

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NEWS

HORROR MAGAZINE 'FEAR' SUSPENDS PUBLICATION

Newsfield Publications, publishers of 'Fear' and 'Frightener' have gone into liquidation less than a week after editor John Gilbert resigned his position. Gilbert still retains the title, however, and expects to relaunch the magazine before Christmas. He wants to revert to the original mix of more film background, more interviews, longer fiction and less gore.

PAN BOOKS have just released the 6th issue of their 'Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster'. It's a promotional newsletter featuring Pan authors and books, and it's free from Pan Books Ltd., 18-21 Cavaye Place, London, SW10 9PG, U.K.

Since Gene Roddenberry's death last month there have been a few changes at the Star Trek offices in Hollywood. Richard Arnold, a long-time employee and advisor to Gene has been fired. Also to be let go is Susan Sackett, who co-wrote a number of books with Roddenberry. It remains to be seen the direction the series will take in the future, as

Arnold has been quoted as saying that he was looking forward to guiding the series through the next few years. (*News courtesy of Diane Duane & Peter Morwood, and computer net GENie*)

According to a report in *Science Fiction Chronicle* there were 44, 218 titles published in the US in 1990, down from 53, 446 in 1989.

Keep an eye open for the new Mercedes Lackey book, *'Born To Run'* it's a story of hot cars, fast elves (?) and rock 'n' roll!

Sony have just released the first Cyberbook in the US - it's a CD-ROM reader which uses a 3" disc. It includes discs for an Encyclopedia, a World Travel Translator and many more titles will be released shortly. At present the asking price of \$550 may be a bit steep, but within five years they're guaranteed to be less than £100.

David Eddings will have a fantasy mainstream novel published in the US next May entitled *'The Losers'*.

Robert Silverberg has just finished a new novel called *'Kingdom Of The Wall'*.

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monthly newsletter, FTL quarterly, an
Introduction to Science Fiction, discounts in
the Alchemists Head Bookshop and the
Modeller's Nook model shop, and a
membership card and badge.

The *First Fantasy Competition*, run jointly by BBC Radio 4 and Gollancz, attracted over 700 entries. A Picture in *Locus*, November, shows the Gollancz offices swamped by the manuscripts, but the judges are still saying they will announce the winner on time.

A new postmark in the US shows the USS Enterprise with the words "Journey to a New Frontier... Collect Stamps"

FAN NEWS

Octocon is pleased at the memberships already coming in for the con next year, and expect to announce their major American Guest Of Honour in January. At present the attendance rates are £10, and the dates are Friday, Saturday & Sunday, 16th, 17th & 18th October. Rumours of the con taking over the entire Royal Marine Hotel are true! PR 0 should be enclosed with this Newsletter (if you were a member of Octocon '91, or are a member of '92).

A RECENT CONVERSATION AT HILLCON IN THE NETHERLANDS -

David Stewart: "Mr. Scott Card, would you like a copy of FTL from Ireland?"

Orson Scott Card: "Oh, yes! Incidentally, do you know Robert Elliott?"

Congratulations to members Jim & Judith Smith on the birth of their baby girl, to be named Catherine Eleanor, early in November. Ronan Kane in Drogheda would like to contact other fans in the North-East with a view to perhaps setting

up a local group. He is also offering regular lifts to ISFA Dublin meetings. Contact Ronan on 041-38087.

CONVENTIONS:

EUROCON 1992 -

Originally slated to be in Zagreb, for obvious reasons this has had to be changed. It will now take place in Germany, and be known as Freucon, around the middle of April. For more details see Locus.

TRINCON 400 -

The truly amazing guest list for Trincon is as follows: Iain Banks, Greg Bear, John Brunner, Ramsey Campbell, Storm Constantine, Diane Duane, Stephen Gallagher, David Garnett, Mary Gentle, Katherine Kurtz, Anne McCaffrey, Ian McDonald, Peter Morwood, Nicholas Royle, Terry Pratchett, David Pringle, Bob Shaw and David Wingrove. There will also be role-playing, films, MUDS, Virtual Reality, a dealers room and plenty more. The location is Trinity College and Powers Hotel, and the dates 7th - 9th February 1992. This promises to be a great weekend and it's well worth the attendance fee of £10 (until 1st January) or £15 adults afterwards. (Children under 14 half the above rates). More details etc from The Secretary, TrinCon 400, 75 Kincora Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3, telephone 7021827.

MASQUE

THE FIRST BRITISH COSTUME CONVENTION

14th - 15th February, 1992

Following the success of the fancy dress/ masquerades at Octocon and the Star Trek days members might be interested to hear of this unusual convention. Workshops, three masquerades (historical, sf/fantasy and the 'anything goes' of the Galactic Fashion Show!) as well as various exhibits and displays will be present. The location is Birmingham's Cobden Hotel. For more information write to MELUSINE, 27 Coltsfoot Drive, Waterlooville, Hants. PO7 8DD, England.

CONTAGION - THE SCOTTISH ADVENTURE CONTINUES

18-20 July 1992 The Central Hotel, Glasgow

With guests from both classic and the Next Generation this well-organised committee look like having another successful con next summer. For more information contact Contagion, PO Box 867, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 4HR, Scotland.

INVITATION TO A LATE CHRISTMAS PARTY

To all ISFA members! Diane Duane and Peter Morwood will open their house to any ISFA member who wants to pay them a visit on Sunday, December 29th, from 12 noon to 8 pm. Russian hors d'oeuvres will be served. Bring your own alcohol! The

address is Kestrel Ridge, Avoca, Co. Wicklow.

LETTERS

(From a good friend of the ISFA that we haven't seen for far too long...)

Dear Brendan,
Glad to hear that the con and the award was a success. And thanks to you and your mates for keeping ISFA going. I remember well that first meeting at Buswells where the whole thing got started.

See you in the new year.

All best,
Harry Harrison
UK

(From the editor of a small press collection of the best stories from the New Science Fiction Alliance magazines - if you're persuaded by his argument send your cheque or P.O. to the ISFA a.s.a.p)

Dear Chair (I),
Please find enclosed New SF Alliance catalogue, for the use of your group. I hope you and your group take the opportunity of discovering the new markets available for writers and new stories for readers by buying the Pseudo-Nymph - this catalogue features a unique deal for bulk orders (ISFA members will save about 10% on the cover price, making a total of £2.80).

It is an attractive, fully illustrated, A4 booklet which would make an excellent Christmas gift.

Best Wishes,
Chris Hart
UK

(A response to my plea for articles, reviews and letters....)

Dear Sir,

In the November issue of the ISFA Newsletter you make some requests for submissions. Lucky you - your prayers have been answered. There are also some new ideas at the end. You asked for articles from fans on their favourite authors. You also said you would like to feature columns on television, comics, and films. This is a good idea. Strangely enough comics just happen to be my speciality.

Now, before you file this in the bin, muttering to yourself about yet another person looking for free handouts of comics, books etc, hear me out. I think it's time to let a few new people enter the world of ISFA. I would be willing to pay for the comics myself (just as long as I can choose them) and submit a 300 - 400 word column every month. You can hash, slash, cut or edit as you see fit. I enclose an example which you can use.

Now onto other business. Until Octocon '91 (which I really enjoyed) I had no idea ISFA existed, if I did I would have joined years ago. The Newsletter is good. The television, film and especially the comics section, (even if it's not written by me) would round it off well. The only problem I foresee is fitting it all in 16 pages. So, why don't you amalgamate the Newsletter and FTL, making a monthly magazine the same size as FTL, but with only one story per issue and expand the Newsletter to fill the rest of the space. I feel that this would appeal to a wider audience and increase sales. The only problem would be

production costs. Perhaps the Alchemist's Head could sponsor the column?

I hope you read my reviews before submitting them to the bin. I'm looking forward to the next Newsletter (even if I'm not in it!) Eagerly awaiting your rejection note, Mark Bagnell
Dublin

(Editor's note: Look at the results of the questionnaire, Mark! One story per issue would cause uproar, and comics are not rated highly at all. But I do realise that there is a need for a comics angle to ISFA publications, and with some of the suggestions around at the moment it may not be through the Newsletter or FTL, but rather a different publication altogether! The size of the Newsletter is not fixed, and indeed I feel an ideal length would be nearer twenty-eight pages, or even more. But to produce a publication of that size I need quality material, and I am grateful indeed for your reviews, which are elsewhere in this issue. Comments on Mark's suggestions, please...)

Dear Brendan,
In writing news, I am working on a script for Star Trek: The Next Generation, bibliographies on Elizabeth Chater (Greg Bear's mentor), Jack Vance, and Gregory Benford; and several novels and short stories. These projects should carry me through the end of the year.

In acting news, I hope to be appearing on MacGyver this season. Other than that, it's slow. Diane G. Gallagher, William F. Wu, Somtow Sucharitkul (S.P. Somtow), Tim

Sullivan, Mike Jittlov, (and others) and I are discussing starting our own video/movie company, so who knows what might happen?....

Daryl F. Mallett,
California
USA

Another letter (from Wayne Vincent in Hawaii) mentioned his interest in Anime - all forms of animation.

Wayne says his favourite Anime titles are MACROSS, SOUTHERN CROSS, MOSPEDA, MEGAZONE 23, BUBBLE GUM CRISIS AND ICZER ZONE. He's very interested to hear what happens in fandom and animation in Ireland, and anyone interested in communicating with Wayne (or other Anime fans throughout the world) can contact Helen Ryder at the ISFA address).

(We also heard from Eamonn Robbins, Anne Stephens, The National Libraries of Scotland and Wales (who want copies of the Newsletter and FTL, as required under the Copyright Act), William B. Mauk, David Stewart, David Lally, Colum Lavelle, and others).

REELSPIEL

A SEMI-REGULAR COLUMN ON FILMS FROM DES DOYLE

It's coming around to Christmas time again and that can only mean one thing. No, not that it's December (although that's kind of inarguable) but rather that the Christmas blockbuster movies are on their way. This is the second most profitable time of the year for the film studios and they tend to hold on to their big guns for it. For instance THE ADDAMS FAMILY

MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY THIS CHRISTMAS WITH A GIFT FROM THE ISFA

The following merchandise is available from the ISFA by Post or at the General Monthly Meetings.

STAR TREK & SF CAR STICKERS

A/ Reality is a crutch for those who can't handle
Science Fiction B/ To Baldly Go... C/ Make
it so! D/ Vulcans do it every 7 years.

Size 155mm x 65 mm - All only 50p each + 40p
P+P for up to 10 stickers.

1992 CALENDAR OF SF/FANTASY ART

6 of the foremost artists of the Association have
put this calendar together. The art can be
framed. A limited edition of 199

Size 594mm x 210mm - only £5.95 + £1.50 P+P

U.K. MAGAZINES

B.B.R. and SF Nexus for only £4.50 inc P+P

FTL

Issue 11 of this, the only Irish Sf magazine,
includes the Aisling Gheal award winner. £1.95 +
58p P+P (Free to ISFA members) Back issues
available as listed elsewhere in this issue.

STAR TRUCK - THE NEXT GERIATRICS

An A3 poster from ISFA artist Paul Sheridan
poking gentle fun at the Next Gen crew.

Size 420mmx297mm - £1 + 58p P+P for up to 5.

MEMBERSHIPS

As a special offer for Christmas a limited number of
memberships of the ISFA, plus a T-Shirt, are
available for only £10. Membership price is usually
£8 and a price increase is on the way.

*ISFA MEMBERS QUALIFY FOR A 10% DISCOUNT OF THE ABOVE MERCHANDISE EXCEPT,
OF COURSE, FOR THE SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP OFFER.*

PLEASE SEND ME THE FOLLOWING ITEM(S) FROM YOUR MERCHANDISING LIST.

STAR TRUCK ☐ Quantity _____ £ _____

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I ENCLOSE TOTAL £ _____

Cheques & P/O's only, crossed and made
payable to the ISFA

Please return to *The Irish Science Fiction
Association, 30 Beverly Downs, Knocklyon Road,
Templeogue, Dublin 16.*

which opens on December 13th was actually completed nearly four months ago. Purchased by Paramount when Orion went bankrupt they decided to hold onto it until now. Dealing with the return of Uncle Fester (Christopher Lloyd) after a 25 year absence the film was directed by long time cameraman - first time director Barry Sonnenfeld and the advance word is good. Surprisingly enough Paramount are opening STAR TREK VI the same day as THE ADDAMS FAMILY in the States which doesn't sound like good business sense to me. As for STAR TREK VI ... okay you probably know everything there is to know at this stage so how about STAR TREK VII. There is a very nasty rumour going around Paramount at the moment that the film has been greenlighted into a story involving the Classic trek crew being timewarped into the future to meet up with the Next Generation crew and have an adventure together. This is as ridiculous an idea as Harve Bennett's STAR ACADEMY so make your disapproval known now. Also coming this Christmas is HOOK, Stephen Spielberg's much talked about film of the story of what happens to Peter Pan when he grows up. Thankfully not casting WACKO JACKSON in the role we instead get Robin Williams and Dustin Hoffman as the nefarious Captain. There are a large number of surprise cameos in the film including Glenn Close as a murderous pirate. Apart from the all-star cast the film also boasts some of the most amazing sets ever constructed. In fact there is talk of Amblin leaving the Neverland sets up and opening them as a theme park if the film is the big hit

everyone thinks it will be. Recent ISFA visitor TERRYBROOKS is doing the movie novelisation. Then we have AN AMERICA TAIL II: FIEVEL GOES WEST in which the Mousekevitz family tire of the rat race (I'm sure that should be mouse race) of urban living and head west where Fievel inadvertently finds himself cast in the role of a gunslinger. Hollywood's most inspired piece of casting ever is on its way this Yuletide with Leslie Nielsen as Santa Claus in ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS. Be warned however that the film's ending is said to be so sickeningly sweet and sentimental that sick bags are being provided as mandatory in the foyers. Last but not least is HOT SHOTS! This visual masterpiece brings new meaning to the terms epic, narrative cinema. The editing, direction and camerawork are all sure fire Oscar winners and the acting just has to be seen to be believed. Miss it at your peril. Next month an Exclusive star interview with Stephen Spielberg!!! Or not. Warning: The views of the author of this piece regarding the film HOT SHOTS! should be taken with a pinch of salt as he has not seen the film yet, only the cheque from Charlie Sheen. Amidst crashing phone systems and frantic calls to and from Legend Books in London, the interview with Orson Scott Card took place by phone on 20 November by phone. For the pair of you who don't know, Orson Scott Card is a regular award winner of both novels and short stories ever since he started his professional career in 1979. The

winner of at least four Hugos, two Nebulas, a number of Locus awards, a John W. Campbell award for best new writer and a World Fantasy award, his works to date include the first three (of four) Ender books; Ender's Game, Speaker for the Dead and Xenocide. He is also the author of the Alvin Maker series, the first three volumes being Seventh Son, Red Prophet and Prentice Alvin. He has also recently had published a short fiction anthology, Maps in a Mirror. Described by many as the definitive SF short story collection, it includes nearly all his science fiction short stories to date, including those published under pseudonyms. His non-fiction includes two books on writing, Character and Viewpoint and How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy.

I started the interview on an obsequious note, congratulating him for this year's Hugo award for Best Non-Fiction, for How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy. I asked him how important these 'How To' books are to him.

"Well, they're not important financially; in fact I lose money whenever I take time to write such a specialist book. But they're important to me personally. I got a lot of help from others when I was starting, and I'm just passing it along. I do believe that there is a certain amount about writing that can be taught. Obviously I can only teach what I know, and I hope that I'm becoming a better writer all the time myself".

Does he have any plans to write another book of this type?

"I'm working on one at the moment, which deals with moving from

writing short stories to writing novels, and vice versa. Basically, it's a book about structure in fiction."

Next we moved on to the Alvin Maker series, currently standing at three books. I wondered when we could see Alvin Journeyman, the fourth.

"I won't get around to that until at least next fall. I've got to finish the Columbus book, obviously, or it'll be too late. The thing about the Alvin series is that it's grown hugely since the original idea. Originally, there was no Peggy, no Lolita-Wossiky, no Ta-Kumsaw, no Arthur Stuart. These all came later when I realised that the story would take five books to tell."

I suggested that the Alvin series, while on the one hand was an alternate reality / fantasy, also made an attempt at giving colonial America a mythology of its own, something that was lacking because of its short history.

"Well, obviously it's an alternate reality. The story deals quite a lot with magic, and obviously if you have magic, then history will not turn out the same. It's inconceivable that the same wars would happen, that elections would have the same results, and so on. It's an alternate reality, all right, but in simpler terms it's just a fantasy set in the real world.

"As for the bit about mythology; there was that aspect to a certain extent. I'm weary of European fantasy being written by US authors. There's some wonderful fantasy based on Celtic mythology, but it's got to the stage where we've got fantasy based on fantasy based on Celtic mythology. The Alvin series is uniquely American. It deals with

magic, but American magic."

On the subject of religion, Card has a lot to say. It plays a role in nearly all his books. He includes not just his own Mormon beliefs, but others as well. I asked him why he had a reason for including a subject so often ignored by other writers.

"The inclusion of religion is very deliberate. I think it's dishonest to tell a story without taking account of the beliefs of the characters. To leave religion out would imply that most, if not all of the people have no religious beliefs, no religious commitments at all, and that simply isn't the case. To tell a tale without religion being in there in some form doesn't correspond to real life, which is something a story obviously should do.

The Folk of the Fringe, a book of connected short stories set after a nuclear war. It deals with the events in and around the Mormon Salt Lake City. Was this book written to tell us something about the Mormon community?

"Absolutely not. In fact, a lot of Mormons who read the book were outraged. It contains some ideas that they weren't happy with. For example, when I wrote about the Salt Lake Temple being submerged, it annoyed a lot of people. The temple will survive to the second coming. In the story it survived, but under water. No, when I wrote that book I had no intention of telling people about Mormons. What the book is about is what it's like for an outsider to come into a tightly knit community. As it happens, the community that I know best is the Mormon community, so obviously that's the one I wrote about. It's a story about a community, not a

Mormon community. In concerns the how someone pass from an outsider to an insider, to part of the community, and the sense of belonging they can have, even though they aren't part of what makes up the community. In this case, how someone who isn't a Mormon can feel that he belongs to a Mormon community."

Some time last year, a magazine called Science Fiction Eye reviewed one of Orson's short stories, The Lost Boys. Although the reviewer obviously didn't like the story, he didn't just stop at analysis, he made personal remarks about the author and his religion, none of which was warranted (in my opinion, anyway). When he wrote a letter to the magazine, more abuse followed, both from the review and in the editorial. I asked him his opinion on such attacks.

"Well, -"

Click.

Oh dear. The phone's gone dead. He was offended by the question, and hung up. He's going to send a hit man after me, if the ISFA doesn't get to me first. Not only that, but it soon transpired that an external fault meant that every phone in the area was dead. I couldn't ring back. Eventually, I got through, and he was no longer at the number. I might as well start writing my will now. Fortunately, all was well. A phone call - to a phone I wasn't at, of course - revealed that he was sorry about the disconnection, from whichever end it was, and could he ring me tomorrow? I was safe! (Happiness, by the way, is a phone message that says "Robert - Orson Scott Card rang". I think I'll frame it).

The next day, he rang the number I

had given, and we finished the interview.

"I'm sorry about getting cut off. I was worried that you might have thought I was offended by the question and hung up, or something.

Never, I say. The thought never entered my head. But on the subject of Science Fiction Eye, what did he think? After all, it's not every day one gets called a Mormon Babykiller because of a story he wrote.

"It doesn't worry me. It's strange that they can attribute to me what's happened in one of my stories. If you follow that idea, then all mystery writers are guilty as well.

"I didn't like that they said about Mormons. I doubt that had I been Jewish they would have said the same things about Judaism. But in the end what they said was untrue, and I know it was untrue, so I see no reason to worry about it.

Next, we moved onto the subject of The Abyss, the film of which he did the novelisation. I mentioned that I was surprised to see him do a novelisation.

"So was I. But Jim Cameron wanted to make a good film, and he wanted a good book as well. I was given a free hand because of this; I had access to the film, and not just the script like most writers of novelisations have. But there was a lot in the story that just couldn't be shown on film; the film couldn't deal with the identity of the aliens, for example, without days of film with the audience sitting around talking to each other. I was also given a free hand to give the characters in the story identity; the first three chapters of the book give a background to the Coffey and the

others.

"The problem with novelisations is that producers have a very low opinion of them - they tend to view them as the colouring book of the film. Hence, they usually get new and unknown writers to do the novelisations, which of course means that they can get away with paying less money. If you want to make money out of writing, you won't do it by writing novelisations. That book is the one on which I spent the most time and got the least satisfaction. Even though I was a known SF writer when they asked me to do the book, I still got very little money. They met my advance, but I get nothing by way of royalties."

So why did he write it?

"Basically, I saw Jim Cameron's script, and really liked it. Jim asked me because he wanted to see if it was possible for a first rate film to be made into a first rate book. A book that was good SF, not film SF. Few producers recognise the difference." I mention, going briefly back into obsequious mode, that although the book was indeed first rate, a large number of people, me included, didn't like - I refrained from using the word 'hated' - the film.

"Well, had you seen the three hours and ten minute version of the film instead of the two hours and forty minute version, you would have liked it a lot more. But the producers took one look at the length of the film and said 'No, it's too long. Cut it'. Maybe some day they'll release the full cut."

I mention that rumours are flying about the imminent release of the director's cut.

"Yes, I've heard those rumours from Jim Cameron too, but it doesn't look

like it'll happen any time soon. The problem is it takes a lot of money to recut a film. If it doesn't look like the recut will make that much money, then the recut won't happen. We next moved onto the subject of rewrites, of which Orson has done quite a few. Apart from Ender's Game and Mikal's Songbird being changed from short stories to novels (the latter became Songmaster), A Planet Called Treason was rewritten as Treason, and The Worthing books underwent extensive changes, finally emerging in one volume as The Worthing Saga. Why does he do it? Surely he doesn't think the original versions were that bad?

"No I don't but I have gotten better at writing over the years. And I wouldn't go back to a story if I didn't really like it. When I wrote Hot Sleep and Capitol, I had limited writing skills, and the books seemed very incoherent, the links between the stories tenuous. When I rewrote them as The Worthing Chronicle, I rewrote them to do with the story what I originally wanted, but hadn't got the skills to do properly.

"I would have liked to completely rewrite A Planet Called Treason as well, it's still a story I'm very fond of. But when I was writing Treason, I was pushed by the publisher. They wanted the book by this date, and it absolutely had to be out on time. That's the only book I've had published by St Martin's Press, TOR publish all my others [in America - Legend publish his books here]. I had to settle for rewriting it page by page. This meant it was a lot better than the original, but it definitely could be better. I've finished with Treason now, though. I won't be going back to it again.

"There are still stories that aren't perfect. Hart's Hope has a very slow beginning, but I'm going to leave that alone."

There we had to leave it. I'd like to thank Orson Scott Card for agreeing to the interview, and to Cathy Schofield in Legend Books for arranging it. Thanks also to Portable Software Solutions for lending a helping phone.

REVIEWS COMICS:

I hope all you readers out there will enjoy this new section and I hope you don't just skip it. If I can persuade one person out there to buy one comic - my mission here is done.

What with Terminator 2 coming out not too long ago I thought it was appropriate to start with the Dark Horse version. If you want to see Arnie, or liquid metal don't buy this as Dark Horse only have the rights to the first film. (You could instead purchase the new Marvel series T2 - I dredd to think what they will do to it!) Terminator: The Enemy Within (Dark Horse, £2.15) is a four issue limited series, it is also the third instalment of a trilogy. New readers needn't worry as there is a more than adequate summary of the story so far on the first page. The Enemy Within of the title is Dudley or 1825M to give him his terminator name. He is half human/ half terminator hybrid, battling against his cyborg half which is ordering him to kill one of his comrades - Mary (a soldier from the future) which his human side loves. This love triangle increased to a rectangle/ square as

they are joined by a young scientist who also loves Mary. Apart from this they are trying to find Sarah Conner whilst running away from a Terminator. I have read the series from the start and I enjoyed *The Tempest* (now available as a graphic novel) but I was disappointed by *Secondary Objectives*, but the *Enemy Within* restores my faith completely - buy it.

Now let me recommend a Marvel Comic. O.K. now that you've stopped laughing let me explain. It's written by Peter David (he of the *Star Trek* books and comics). The artwork is above the usual low Marvel standard. You may have already guessed - I'm talking about the *Incredible Hulk*. First let me shatter some myths - he does not burst out of his shirt when he's angry, he is not wandering across America being chased by a reporter. He is big and green all the time. He is now a member of a highly suspicious superteam known as the *Parthenon*. In the most recent issue (388, 95p) we meet a character called *Speed Freek* who violently kills before a showdown with the Hulk. In between battles Peter David deals with the AIDS problem in a skillful manner. Buy it.

MARK BAGNELL

BOOKS

PRIME DIRECTIVE - Judith & Garfield Reeves-Stevens
Pan SF

This is a *Star Trek* novel of epic proportions. The basic plot concerns, as the title implies, a catastrophic breach of the Prime Directive itself. The world of *Talin IV* is at a technological development

roughly equal to humanity c. 1975 - 2000 AD. Starfleet's First Contact Office has an observation outpost on *Talin's* moon, monitoring the *Talin's* development. The *Enterprise* arrives to assist the FCO with intrusive data collection expeditions, and a chain of events occurs that culminates in the world of *Talin IV* being laid waste by its own nuclear arsenal. The *Enterprise* is itself almost destroyed during the disaster. Captain Kirk is banished from Starfleet, and the rest of the crew are scattered throughout the Federation.

Reading this book is like watching a good episode from the classic *Trek* series. That is to say, it's well written, portrays the characters perfectly, gives you a lot of information about the Federation and Starfleet to chew on, has a bit of humour, and the storytelling and suspense is so good that you totally overlook the gaping holes in the plot.

The story opens in the aftermath of the *Talin IV* incident. Kirk has ended up working on the frontier worlds, trying to make his way back to *Talin IV* and prove his crew's innocence. At the same time, the rest of the crew (except Scotty, who's been assigned to fix up what's left of the *Enterprise*) are also making their way back to *Talin IV*. As you can see, the first half of the book is composed primarily of flashbacks. The section describing the actual events leading up to the disaster at *Talin IV* is so good it should almost be a book in itself.

There are a few fairly improbable coincidences, particularly when Bones and Uhura meet up with Chekov and Sulu in two separate pirate ships. But the overall story (and the telling of it) is so good you

just ignore the plot holes and settle down to enjoy a feast of Star Trek. At some points, the book literally parodies the classic Trek. For example, in the old series, if a new alien life form is discovered (one that has been seen to be dangerous), who always beamed down to have a look? Kirk, Spock and Bones. Don't send down a security team as an escort, whatever you do lads. There a lot of little plot devices like this in the book to keep you chuckling. The authors have gone to great pains to ensure that the background is authentic and conforms to the existing Star Trek universe. It's very well researched. Obscure references all over the shop. Even the tribbles get a mention!

It was inevitable that someone would eventually write a book about a complete and total contradiction of Starfleet's General Order Number One - the Prime Directive. Well, this is it, and it's brilliant. The best Trek book I've read in a long time.

COLM RYAN

THE SAPPHIRE ROSE - David Eddings

HarperCollins, 525 pages, £15.95

And so another David Eddings fantasy epic reaches its conclusion. With the Elenium series he's managed to do it in merely three books instead of the usual five and maybe that's why this book feels a little jam-packed with events. The story begins with Sparhawk and his companions returning to Cimmura in possession of the magical Bhelliom (the Sapphire Rose of the title). With Bhelliom's aid they free Queen Ehlana from her crystallised throne and cure her of the poison that had threatened to take her life.

On awakening she is understandably peeved and issues warrants for the arrest of Primate Annias and his cohorts.

Annias however is far away in the city of Chyrellos awaiting the death of Archprelate Cluvonus so that he may begin his takeover bid for the Prelacy. By buying support from his fellow churchmen he hopes to win the vote. What he doesn't expect is the arrival of Sparhawk and a large number of Pandion knights carrying the bad news about Ehlana as well as the Bhelliom. But Annias is always one to have a trick up his sleeve and it is Sparhawk's turn to be surprised when Chyrellos is put under siege by the armies of Otha, who are supporting Annias' attempts at the prelacy.

As I've mentioned an awful lot happens in this book and because of it the characters do get a little bit lost. This is unfortunate as characterisation is Eddings' strongest suit. He also spends a lot of time in this novel expanding his theological ideas which tend to hold up the story rather than provide the interesting diversion they were meant to be. On the plus side however there are enough decent action sequences and a reasonable enough climax in the ancient city of Zemoch to keep the devotees happy. As well as the return of Flute in rather unusual guise in the epilogue and the introduction of a new character who gives us our first glimpse into the next trilogy set in this world, The Tamuli. If that isn't enough to make you want to read it then nothing is.

DES DOYLE

MINDSAIL - Anne Gay

Orbit, 378 pages £4.99

Tohalla's world is the small area of terrestrial vegetation known as the Green which is surrounded by the hostile and alien Red. She is due to marry a drooling idiot for genetic reasons but she is spared this fate by the capture of two prisoners from the red, Edrach and Ain Tsui. These take her with them when they flee into the wider world where she learns about the origin of humankind on the planet, Rosario. The first two thirds of the book are taken up with this search for the past and the lost starship. this is the best part of it because Anne Gay takes great joy in describing the alien red landscapes, crystals, plants and animals and in delinating the differences between the two societies which are driven by the necessities of survival to be equally nasty in their own ways. It also opens wonderfully with a midwinter scene which is very claustrophobic and sums up the life in the Green.

The last part where the mindsailing of the title and a new society are introduced is far weaker because, while it resolves the story of Tohalla, nothing more fundamental is learned and it feels like it is just tacked on to make an ending. For all that this is a good first novel which should be read if only for the colourful use of English.

RORYLENNON

THE REVENGE OF THE ROSE -

Michael Moorcock

Grafton, £13.99

It's not hard to see the dichotomy of Moorcock's work. The swift, slim, highly coloured fantasies of the Eternal Champion .. and the dense, gritty, elusive others: Hawkmoon versus Pyat, weeks of instinctive

writing against years of controlled planning, (seemingly) dreams against research. Those fantasies which come closest to using the other approach (WARHOUND, GLORIANA) are among his best work, but they were set essentially outside the multiverse .. until now. THE REVENGE OF THE ROSE is a tale of Elric 'in the years of his wandering', after the death of Myshella in THE VANISHING TOWER, when his quest for the imprisoned soul of his father becomes entwined with the mysterious plans of The Rose, who travels the time-streams in search of vengeance. The Rose overwhelms the book with her vibrancy, intelligence and power; beside her, Elric (once seen as Moorcock's most distinctive and bleak character) seems almost a shadow - his querulous soul-searching (sorry) a waste, because we know the questions weren't answered before his death; Elric wants a meaning to life, the Rose wants to live. THE REVENGE OF THE ROSE strains the boundaries of the series with the introduction of the poet Wheldrake and the family Phatt, the preponderance of female characters in major and supporting roles (a deliberate policy), a subtle attack on a certain political system, and humour that ranges from irony to farce; it will split fans into at least two camps - It's What The Elric Series Should Have Been.. or, I Wish He'd Invented A New Hero.. IAN COVELL

A TIME OF EXILE - Katharine Kerr, Grafton, HIB, UK£14.99, 353pp

"A Time of Exile" is the first volume in The Westlands Cycle, the follow-

up to Kerr's Deverry series. Before commencing with this tome, you should have read the first four, starting with "Daggerspell". Actually, it's not so much a sequel as a parallel story. It concerns the Elves, aka the Westfolk, aka the Elcyion Lacar. In the first volumes, we met them briefly, but they were little more than Tolkienesque elves, with pointy ears and names of about a million syllables. In this book, they're given the depth of character and tradition afforded to the human races in the first series.

We are first introduced to Rhodry, who has been Head Honcho at Aberwyn for many years now. And having a wee drop of Elvish blood in the veins, he looks a lot younger than a man of his years ought to. So to stop people talking, he arranges an accident for himself. With everybody convinced he's dead, he rides off to the West with Jill. There they meet Aderyn, the main protagonist of the book.

Nearly four hundred years before, Aderyn was a student under Nevyn. When his studies were complete, his Wyrd led him to the Elves, despite his being human. There he meets Dallandra, a female elf and, along with every elf in the tribe, falls in love with her. But, lucky sod that he is, she fancies him in return.

All is happy until Dallandra encounters the Guardians, a race of almost forgotten people who were honoured by the elves of old. She pops off to their realm for a few days, but guess what? Don't worry, you'll figure it out long before the surprise revelation.

Ms. Kerr's seems to be getting better and better. Her first four books were enjoyable, and I particularly liked

the last one. With this one she has improved again, and it was a real pleasure to read.

Unfortunately, now that the Elves' characters have been beautifully expanded on after the first volumes, the human characters have reverted to more simple types. Aderyn, for example, seems to be a clone of Nevyn. The two seem to have the same character. And as he's the main character in the book, as Nevyn was previously, this does tend to be a bit obvious. It does little to detract from the enjoyment of the novel, however. I had to wait a long time for her last book and after reading this it'll be a long wait for the next one. If only she could write faster. All I can say is that Katharine Kerr has been promoted to the list of people worth buying in hardback.

Oh, and there's still no hint as to what that bleedin' magic ring is for.

ROBERT ELLIOTT

MEDIA

Video review: 'Star Trek V: The Final Frontier'

Excellent, excellen, excellent! It took a quarter of a century for someone to kick ass into Kirk, Spock and McCoy but it was well worth the wait. The character interaction in the opening and closing scenes is perfect cinema. I awaited the credits with baited breath... and of course, it had to be: let the actors do the writing, they know how to run the show. Shatner's ideas were truly excellent - backed up by twenty-five inside the skin of Captain James T. Kirk. The humour was refreshing - the almost slap-stick style sitting in beautifully with usually dour acting. Special effects were as razor-sharp as

ever, and the plot probably the finest of the five films so far. Full marks to all concerned and let's hope there's another five where that came from! **THE SILVER SURFER**, Malahide

(Editorial note: hold on a second! You are talking about the most recent ST film, where the best part was the end credits? The one that had ST fans cringing in their seats? The one that was - quite properly - awarded the worst film of 1990? Ah, you're joking - that's alright then. For a minute I thought you were serious!)

CLASSIFIEDS

RED DWARF FAN CLUB

The Red Dwarf Fan Club is personally supported by Rob Grant and Doug Naylor. Membership (which entitles you to a quarterly newsletter 'Better Than Life', a badge and a membership card). For more information contact 52 Granville Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Telephone: 284 0201.

HORIZON, the Blake's Seven Appreciation Society. Founded in 1980, Horizon is a friendly club and welcomes new members, who will receive 4 glossy, A4 size, 70+ page newsletters (containing interviews, LOCs, articles, news on the cast etc.) plus free photo & membership card. Also vast range of fanzines & merchandise (incl. photos, scripts, notepads, mugs, badges, photo stamps & special deal on the BBC B7 videos) and regular London and regional meetings and outings. Please send 2 IRCs for application forms, current rates &/or further information to: Miss Ann Steele,

Horizon Club, 66 Sherwood Park Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 2SG, England.

Wanted by ISFA member: A4 typing paper and ribbon for old manual Olivetti typewriter. Also envelopes of any size. Due to being a learner writer funds are almost non-existent, so your help will be very much appreciated in my alien world.

John St John, Arbour Hill Prison, Dublin 7.

STEPHEN DONALDSON - THE PERFECT WOMAN?

by Des Doyle

On Friday the 15th of November last a small gathering of devotees were gathered to an all too rare occurrence. Stephen Donaldson, creator of the Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, was in town to promote his new book - Forbidden Knowledge, the second in his Gap series. Waterstones was the venue and very cosy it proved to be with free glasses of wine or minerals for all in attendance.

It began with the Master reading the first chapter from his new book, most eloquently I might add and then we proceeded to a Q & A session which revealed some interesting facts. And these I present below:

Things you are not very likely to know about Stephen Donaldson:

1. ACCORDING TO A PERSONALITY INVENTORY TEST HE ONCE TOOK HE IS IN FACT THE PERFECT WOMAN. HE BELIEVES THIS MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIS ABILITY TO WRITE CONVINCING FEMALE CHARACTERS.

2. YES HE HAS THOUGHT ABOUT WRITING MORE THOMAS COVENANT BOOKS. THE SO CALLED "LAST CHRONICLES" HAVE A STORYLINE ALL WORKED OUT AND ENOUGH HOLES LEFT IN "WHITE GOLD WIELDER" TO MAKE THEM PLAUSIBLE. HOWEVER HE'S NOT GOING TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO WRITE THEM FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS.

3. IDEAS COME TO HIM FROM SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE. WHEN HE BUMPS INTO ONE HE STORES IT IN A PLACE IN HIS MIND CALLED THE IDEAS SHELF. NORMALLY THERE ARE NEVER MORE THAN THREE THERE AT ANY ONE TIME. HE CURRENTLY HAS AN IDEA FOR SOME FANTASY SHORT STORIES WHICH HE WILL PROBABLY DO NEXT.

4. HE IS A BIG DOCTOR WHO FAN AND APPEARED SPORTING A TARDIS BADGE. WHEN ASKED WHO HIS FAVOURITE DOCTOR WAS HE REPLIED COLIN BAKER. I'M STILL TRYING TO WORK OUT IF THAT WAS A JOKE I DIDN'T GET.

5. HE THINKS DAVID EDDINGS SHOULD HAVE STOPPED AFTER THE FIRST BOOK.

Afterwards there was a very entertaining book signing and then the Master departed into the night to attend at the UK FantasyCon. Their gain was our loss.

THE ISFA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will take place in the Horse and Tram Pub on Tuesday the 28th of January, 1992. Nominations to the committee and / or motions to be discussed at the meeting MUST arrive at the ISFA address, in writing, by January 1st. This is your chance to talk about the ISFA, what

you like or don't like, and what you'd like to see us doing or not doing. If you're not there (and you don't live in Leeds) you have no excuse!

FUTURE MEETINGS

January: 7th, The Horse and Tram, Eden Quay,
COMEDY IN SCIENCE FICTION -
HITCHHIKER'S, RED DWARF
STAR TREK ETC.

19th, The Vintage Pub, Camden St.
WRITERS AND ARTISTS
WORKSHOP

28th, The Horse and Tram, Eden Quay,
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

29th, Terenure House, Terenure,
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE TABLE
QUIZ

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The ISFA questionnaire was sent to approximately 250 people, 220 ISFA members and 30 attendees of the ISFA monthly meeting.

NUMBER OF REPLIES	TOTAL REPLIES	PERCENTAGE OF REPLIES
	52	20.8

This is about what we expected. We have no faith, and we were right.

AGE

AGE GROUP	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Under 21	8 (21.1%)	3 (21.4%)	11 (21.2%)
21-30	15 (39.5%)	5 (35.7%)	20 (38.5%)
31-40	11 (28.9%)	3 (21.4%)	14 (26.9%)
41-50	3 (7.9%)	1 (7.1%)	4 (7.7%)
Over 50	(0.0%)	(0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

'Over 21'	1 (2.6%)	1 (7.1%)	2 (3.8%)
MYOB	(0.0%)	1 (7.1%)	1 (1.9%)
No over 50s! Come on, dodder along to a meeting some time all you elder SF fans.			

SEX, OR HOW MANY MEN TO ONE WOMAN?

GENDER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Male	38	73.1
Female	14	26.9

PEOPLE WHO WROTE 'OFTEN' IN THE BOX MARKED 'SEX'

GENDER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Male	4	10.5
Female	1	7.1
Total	5	9.6

*Or 'Yes', or 'Not often enough'...

MAIN OCCUPATION

OCCUPATION	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Professional	6 (15.8%)	2 (14.3%)	8 (15.3%)
Education	1 (2.6%)	1 (7.1%)	2 (3.8%)
Civil Service	3 (7.9%)	3 (21.4%)	6 (11.5%)
Arts	1 (2.6%)	(0.0%)	1 (1.9%)
Computer	4 (10.5%)	(0.0%)	4 (7.7%)
Technical	3 (7.9%)	(0.0%)	3 (5.8%)
Student	10 (26.3%)	2 (14.3%)	12 (23.1%)
Business	(0.0%)	1 (7.1%)	1 (1.9%)
Service	2 (5.3%)	3 (21.4%)	5 (9.6%)
Other	8 (21.1%)	(0.0%)	8 (15.3%)
Not Entered	(0.0%)	2 (14.3%)	2 (3.8%)

Anyone who put 'professional' and something else is in the something else. Almost a quarter are students - this, we would suspect, is higher than the actual figure.

Just In case we start a dating agency.

EDUCATION COMPLETED:

STATUS	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Primary Ed.	3 (7.9%)	1 (7.1%)	4 (7.8%)
Secondary Ed.	18 (47.4%)	5 (35.7%)	23 (44.2%)
Tertiary Ed.	16 (42.1%)	7 (50.0%)	23 (44.2%)
'Witty' answer	1 (2.6%)	1 (7.1%)	2 (3.8%)

MARITAL STATUS

Married	8 (21.1%)	4 (28.6%)	12 (23.1%)
Any Sprags	7 (18.4%)	3 (21.4%)	10 (19.2%)

ACCOMMODATION

Own House	6 (15.8%)	5 (35.7%)	11 (21.2%)
Rent	12 (31.6%)	2 (14.3%)	14 (26.9%)
With relatives	18 (47.4%)	6 (42.9%)	24 (46.1%)
Share House	2 (5.3%)	1 (7.1%)	3 (5.8%)

ANTISOCIAL HABITS

Smoker	2 (5.3%)	1 (7.1%)	3 (5.8%)
Drinker	14 (36.8%)	8 (57.1%)	22 (42.3%)
Both	8 (21.1%)	2 (14.3%)	10 (19.2%)
Neither	14 (36.8%)	3 (21.4%)	17 (32.7%)

FILMS SEEN IN THE LAST MONTH

NO. FILMS	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
0	5 (13.2%)	1 (7.1%)	6 (11.5%)
1-2	3 (7.9%)	1 (7.1%)	4 (7.7%)
3-5	15 (39.5%)	3 (21.4%)	18 (34.6%)
6-9	6 (15.8%)	1 (7.1%)	7 (13.5%)
10 +	6 (15.8%)	3 (21.4%)	9 (17.3%)
Don't Know	3 (7.9%)	5 (35.7%)	8 (15.4%)

The questionnaire didn't specify which type of films, so most (if not all) assumed it meant both Cinema and Video. Some probably didn't, but what's life without a little ambiguity?

DO YOU OWN...

ITEM	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Car	7 (18.4%)	3 (21.4%)	10 (19.2%)
Typewriter	17 (44.8%)	5 (35.7%)	22 (42.3%)
CD player	10 (26.3%)	2 (14.3%)	12 (23.1%)
VCR	23 (60.5%)	8 (57.1%)	31 (59.6%)
Computer	21 (55.2%)	4 (28.6%)	25 (48.1%)

Among males, the most common selection was Typewriter VCR and Computer. Among females, it was VCR alone. Couch potatoes of the world, unite.

WHAT TYPE OF COMPUTER?

TYPE	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL COMPUTERS
IBM PC Compat.	14	50.0
Apple Macintosh	1	3.6
Amiga	3	10.7
Atari ST	1	3.6
Amstrad CPC	1	3.6
Amstrad PCW	4	14.3
Spectrum*	1	3.6

Commodore 64	2	7.1
Other	1	3.6

Some people had more than one computer, so both were included. The percentage is on 28 computers, although there were only 25 owners. The most popular type overall was IBM 386 (including 386sx) with 7. The 'Other' was a Smith Corona word processor, by the way.

*Remember them?

ISFA AGM

your chance to
have a say in
the future of
Science Fiction
in Ireland

HORSE AND TRAM
EDEN QUAY
28 JANUARY 1992

DO YOU...

INCLINATION	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Write Fiction	19 (50.0%)	6 (42.9%)	25 (48.1%)
Write Articles	15 (39.5%)	3 (21.4%)	18 (34.6%)
Write Reviews	16 (42.1%)	7 (50.0%)	23 (44.2%)
Draw	6 (15.8%)	6 (42.9%)	12 (23.1%)

Who'da thunk it? Such a high proportion of female artists, yet none ever contributes anything...

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A COLLECTOR OF...

COLLECTED	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Paperbacks	27 (71.1%)	10 (71.4%)	37 (71.2%)
Hardbacks	15 (39.5%)	3 (21.4%)	18 (34.6%)
Magazines	18 (47.4%)	2 (14.3%)	20 (38.5%)
Comics	11 (21.2%)	1 (7.1%)	12 (23.1%)
Everything	6 (15.8%)	1 (7.1%)	7 (13.5%)

The 'Everything' category is a separate entity; the totals are included in each of the other categories. I just included it to show how many people (bloody few) there are dedicated to literature in all its myriad forms.

PETS

PET	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Canine	7 (18.4%)	3 (21.4%)	10 (19.2%)
Feline	9 (23.7%)	5 (35.7%)	14 (26.9%)
Rodent	1 (2.6%)	(0.0%)	1 (1.9%)
Other	4 (10.5%)	1 (7.1%)	5 (9.6%)

The 'Others' category, if you're interested, contained mainly fish, but the odd pheasant did creep in.

DO YOU LIKE...

DO YOU LIKE THIS	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Hard SF	20 (52.6%)	2 (14.3%)	22 (42.3%)
Social SF	22 (57.9%)	4 (28.6%)	26 (50.0%)
Adventure SF	22 (57.9%)	11 (78.6%)	33 (63.5%)
High Fantasy	17 (44.7%)	5 (35.7%)	22 (42.3%)
Humorous Fantasy	22 (57.9%)	8 (57.1%)	30 (57.7%)
Romantic Fantasy	8 (21.0%)	6 (42.9%)	14 (26.9%)
Psychological Horr.	17 (44.7%)	4 (28.6%)	21 (40.4%)
Vampire Horror	8 (21.0%)	4 (28.6%)	21 (23.1%)
Supernatural Horr.	17 (44.7%)	4 (28.6%)	21 (40.4%)

Media	16 (42.1%)	5 (35.7%)	21 (40.4%)
RPGs	10 (26.3%)	8 (57.1%)	18 (34.6%)
Science	18 (47.3%)	3 (21.4%)	21 (40.4%)

Comics	11 (28.9%)	1 (7.1%)	12 (23.1%)
Genre Art Books	8 (21.0%)	5 (35.7%)	13 (25.0%)
Star Trek	25 (65.8%)	10 (71.4%)	35 (67.3%)
Graphic Novels	11 (28.9%)	3 (21.4%)	14 (26.9%)
Computer Games	14 (36.8%)	2 (14.3%)	16 (30.8%)
Mystery Books	12 (31.6%)	8 (57.1%)	20 (38.5%)
Mainstream Fiction	18 (47.3%)	6 (42.9%)	24 (46.2%)

Star Trek tops the poll, even though Adventure SF was more popular amongst females. I guess Picard doesn't really have it the way Kirk did.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN INTERESTED IN THIS SUBJECT?

TIME	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Less than 1 Year	1 (2.6%)	(0.0%)	1 (1.9%)
2-5 Years	1 (2.6%)	2 (14.3%)	3 (5.8%)
6-10 Years	15 (39.5%)	2 (14.3%)	17 (32.7%)
More	19 (50.0%)	8 (57.1%)	27 (51.9%)
Don't Know	2 (5.3%)	2 (14.3%)	4 (7.7%)

HOW MANY DO YOU BUY IN A MONTH...

NUMBER	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
PAPERBACKS			
None	9 (23.7%)	2 (14.3%)	11 (21.2%)
1-3	9 (23.7%)	5 (35.7%)	14 (26.9%)
4-6	10 (26.3%)	4 (28.6%)	14 (26.9%)
7-10	5 (13.2%)	3 (21.4%)	8 (15.4%)
Over 10	5 (13.2%)	(0.0%)	5 (13.2%)

HARDBACKS

None	28 (73.7%)	11 (78.8%)	39 (75.0%)
1-3	9 (23.7%)	3 (21.4%)	12 (23.1%)
4-6	1 (2.6%)	(0.0%)	1 (1.9%)
7-10	(0.0%)	(0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Over 10	(0.0%)	(0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

MAGAZINES

None	22 (57.9%)	7 (50.0%)	29 (55.8%)
1-3	8 (21.1%)	6 (42.9%)	14 (26.9%)
4-6	5 (13.2%)	1 (7.1%)	6 (11.5%)
7-10	3 (7.9%)	(0.0%)	3 (5.8%)
Over 10	(0.0%)	(0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

NUMBER	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
COMICS			
None	31 (81.6%)	13 (92.9%)	44 (84.6%)
1-3	2 (5.3%)	1 (7.1%)	3 (5.8%)
4-6	3 (7.9%)	(0.0%)	3 (5.8%)
7-10	(0.0%)	(0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Over 10	2 (5.3%)	(0.0%)	2 (3.8%)

BOOKSHOPS, AND FREQUENTERS THEREOF.

BOOKSHOP	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Alchemist's Head	21 (55.3%)	5 (35.7%)	26 (50.0%)
Dandelion Books	9 (23.7%)	4 (28.8%)	13 (25.0%)
Eason's	23 (60.5%)	7 (50.0%)	30 (57.7%)
Forbidden Planet	22 (58.0%)	7 (50.0%)	29 (55.8%)
Hodges Figgis	16 (42.1%)	5 (35.7%)	21 (40.4%)
Phantasia	8 (21.1%)	1 (7.1%)	9 (17.3%)
Waterstones	21 (55.3%)	7 (50.0%)	28 (53.8%)

Only 3 people regularly visit all shops.

MODEL / GAMES SHOPS REGULAR ATTENDEES

SHOP	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Alchemist's Head	9 (23.7%)	3 (21.4%)	12 (23.1%)
Mark's Games	3 (7.9%)	(0.0%)	3 (5.8%)
Modeller's Hook	3 (7.9%)	(0.0%)	3 (5.8%)
Virgin	11 (28.9%)	5 (35.7%)	16 (30.8%)

MEETING ATTENDANCE

NUMBER WHO ATTEND MONTHLY ISFA MEETING

Male	26 (68.4%)
Female	10 (71.4%)
Total	36 (69.2%)

People living in Leeds have an excuse, but what about the rest of you?

LOCAL MEETINGS

We asked would people attend meetings if they were arranged in their areas, but seeing as only eight people lived outside Dublin, it's hardly a representative sample. For the record, five people would attend (that's 62.5%).



WHICH DO YOU LIKE IN THE NEWSLETTER

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Reviews	39 (75.0%)
Cartoons	23 (44.2%)
Art	20 (38.5%)
Con Reports	29 (55.8%)
SF news	39 (75.0%)
Media news	34 (65.4%)
Fan news	26 (50.0%)
Fan club address	17 (32.7%)
Letters	30 (57.7%)

WHICH CATEGORY WOULD YOU DROP

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Reviews	4 (7.7%)
Cartoons	7 (13.5%)
Art	6 (11.5%)
Con Reports	-
SF news	-
Media news	-
Fan news	5 (9.6%)
Fan club address	1 (1.9%)
Letters	2 (3.8%)

That's All Folks

A quick word - obviously, the more questionnaires filled out, the more representative the sample. The total figure of 52 can be taken as fairly representative, but neither of the gender figures can be taken that seriously, especially the female figure, where one answer meant over 7%.

A lot of suggestions were made in the questionnaires on the various aspects of the ISFA. Some were impractical, but there were a number of good ones in there as well.

Finally, most humble thanks to those of you who filled out the questionnaire; it really is appreciated. We'll probably make it an annual questionnaire, so fill it out again next year. You know it makes sense.

Robert D. Elliott

COMMENTS MADE ON GENERAL MEETINGS IN THE 1991 ISFA QUESTIONNAIRE

These are all the comments, in no particular order, and are taken from the questionnaires verbatim.

Okay as they are.

Ufology

Timetable? Get more authors if possible. ISFA Field trip -? Dunsink

A vampire meeting, a meeting with Morgan Llewellyn.

More authors in interviews or science/supernatural talks.

Tolkien. Maybe a field trip (to the observatory?)

I would like if there were more talks on different subjects [referring to science talks].

A talk from Morgan Llewellyn (who is the best Irish fantasy writer ever!)

More horror, horror and horror along with a few horror authors and horror anthology squiggle unintelligible squiggle Dark Side - Monsters etc.

They should be held somewhere that serves drinks late.

More films and videos eg ST:ING; more media nights similar to B7 night.

Any kind of core [it looks like core to me, anyway. Maybe gore?]

More media nights. Famousish people example Judith Cross Not just centering on one type of SF but all types.

SUGGESTIONS ON IMPROVING ART WORKSHOP

More Demonstrations	3
More Talks	2
More Exercises	2

Ronan's Obligatory Horror Comment

Bewley's inappropriate for Art Show

Encourage artists to come regularly

Less Noise

More visiting professional artists

SUGGESTIONS ON IMPROVING WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Discussing book 7 liked, 1 didn't

Exercises 6 liked, 2 didn't

Ronan again

Talks by authors, agents, publishers

Design a character, more info on worldbuilding, more info on publishers.

Rather diquey, very sf short-story oriented - this isn't a good market in Europe.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FTL

More participation in letters by ISFA members. A readers' forum. Maybe even a highly abusive column. More response from editorial staff. Feedback.

More pages. Publish bimonthly.

How about putting the best of the year's fiction from FTL into a booklet for sale to members and specialist shops?

Make it more like ISFA news.

More horror feature's (sic).

How about a regular horror feature.

Strong editorial and wild column.

Possible media section concentrating on film and video releases with news and features.

Better proofreading. Possibly more biographical info on contributors and old 'names' in the field. Also reviews could be a bit harder: we're all too nice.

More letters - perhaps a general correspondence on specific topics or concepts and their treatment in books and media etc.

More good Irish fiction, serialisation of old out-of-print fiction.

More often would be very nice, but probably not possible.

I find the comic strip lacking in something - perhaps in time it will improve.

Vary the internal layout to define fiction from articles from reviews etc. 1 page or 1/2 page should be ISFA merchandising - FTL has a wider circulation than NL.

Suggestions for Newsletter

Return to A5 format

More detail in relation to conventions

More horror features!!! Make the books received column easier to read.

More horror features

Return to small format

Back to A5. Don't put books received in all caps - hard to read. Justify it!!

Not gone on the A4 size unless it's four pages on A3 paper and folded. But I prefer 12 pages A5.

Edit or request shorter letters.

Better laid out, less cluttered.

Increase in pages and kept in A5 size. Could you explain what BOOKS RECEIVED means exactly.

Some mention of horror.

I think it's great the way it is. I have no complaints.

News for the people from the people, ie keep it on track as it is.

Go back to A5 - spread the print out.

Shoot the editor.

Longer and better reviews

More pages

POPULAR EVENTS - WHAT DO PEOPLE LIKE AT THE MEETINGS?

EVENT	NO. MALE	NO. FEMALE	TOTAL
Table Quiz	20 (52.6%)	8 (57.1%)	28 (53.8%)
Author Visits	19 (50.0%)	9 (64.3%)	28 (53.8%)
Films/videos	17 (44.7%)	10 (71.4%)	27 (51.9%)
Parties	21 (55.2%)	8 (57.1%)	29 (55.8%)
Science Talks	13 (34.2%)	4 (28.6%)	17 (32.7%)
Comics Talks	10 (26.3%)	1 (7.1%)	11 (21.2%)

The percentages given are for the total number of questionnaires. Even though 16 people don't attend the meetings, most of them listed the items they would/did like.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MEETINGS

Most people left this blank, and a number wrote that the meetings were fine as they were. Other people said things like "More horror" without being any more specific. I'm not sure if we could have meetings around a subject so broad, but any more specific suggestions would be welcome. Several people (ok, two) suggested a field trip to Dunsink observatory. The science talks should be more varied, it was suggested. If anyone out there can talk about something relevant, we'd appreciate it if you'd let us know. We can't rely on Astronomy Ireland for everything. A timetable of meetings was suggested. This may not be practical as we often have to shuffle the meetings at little notice, but we'll look into it. A number of people were looking for more authors - unfortunately, our budget doesn't stretch to importing speakers at the moment, but we'll do what we can.

IS THERE ENOUGH TIME TO TALK TO PEOPLE AT MEETINGS

YES	NO	DIDN'T ANSWER
30 (57.7%)	7 (13.5%)	15

Two or three people thought there was too much, but in general people seem to be happy.

DO YOU KNOW / HAVE YOU EVER SPOKEN TO A COMMITTEE MEMBER

YES	NO	DIDN'T ANSWER
40 (76.9%)	4 (7.7%)	8 (15.4%)

Gosh, we're popular.

WOULD YOU LIKE THE MEETINGS TO BE MORE/LESS FORMAL

MORE	LESS	OK AS THEY ARE	DIDN'T ANSWER
4 (7.7%)	10 (19.2%)	16 (30.8%)	22 (42.3%)

'OK..' wasn't on the questionnaire, but a lot of people wrote it in. There were also a few cries to make them more organised.

WHY DO YOU COME TO THE MEETINGS

TO MEET PEOPLE	FOR MEETING TOPIC	DIDN'T ANSWER
31 (59.6%)	23 (44.2%)	15 (28.9%)

A lot of people (ok, 17) wrote in 'both' as the reason.

HAVE YOU EVER ATTENDED AN ISFA ART WORKSHOP

YES	NO	DIDN'T ANSWER
9 (17.3%)	32 (61.5%)	11 (21.2%)

HAVE YOU EVER ATTENDED AN ISFA WRITERS' WORKSHOP

YES	NO	DIDN'T ANSWER
10 (19.2%)	33 (63.5%)	8 (15.4%)

FTL : WHICH DO YOU LIKE

CATEGORY	LIKE	DON'T LIKE
Fiction	35 (67.3%)	
Articles	32 (61.5%)	1 (1.9%)
Reviews	36 (69.2%)	
Comic Strip	14 (26.9%)	2 (3.9%)
Art	24 (46.2%)	
Letters	22 (42.3%)	2 (3.9%)

The Don't Like don't include the people who said they'd drop something - it was written in that they didn't like them.

WHICH CATEGORY WOULD YOU DROP

Fiction	2 (3.9%)
Articles	3 (5.8%)
Reviews	1 (1.9%)
Comic Strip	9 (17.3%)
Art	2 (3.9%)
Letters	2 (3.9%)

Two people said they wanted less reviews, but would still keep them, and there was also one request to axe the editorial.

More letters? (well, we can't manufacture more news).

I'm arrogant but not that arrogant.

Put in another staple

More audience participation - less star trek

Make it bigger.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE ISFA PRODUCE?

A TV series

Possibly a review-only round up (cf Paperback Inferno).

Full-length fiction fanzines

A list of young Irish fiction writers and a review of their books.

Money for contributors

Fiction anthology

Bookmarks as part of memberships/smaller badges and then there is endless potential for posters/t-shirts.

More artwork

Guinness, Jameson (hi, Ronan).

A short story magazine for IRISH writers, with payment, however small. Monthly?
A book!

Small all-metal badges, mugs, a comic

Calender, Chapbooks, bibliographies (the last two might be better done by FTL).

A book

Something with more horror features, artwork, etc

Anything with artwork on it (bookmarks, etc).

Sweat shirts

HOW CAN THE ISFA BE IMPROVED

More local, district ISFA groups for those of us outside of the big cities. I realise that this would be subject to the number of members in a given area.

Start early!

It should be twinned with Octarine.

Introduce more horror and a little more fantasy.

More horror features.

Higher profile so it can increase and multiply

More special events, more support for RPG players.

We should examine where we are going. Do we want to be bigger and bigger or what?

Move about - cons etc - more of the time. Let more people know we're here.

Would like to see ISFA get slowly into selling books, magazines, etc.

More of an angle on horror.

More visiting writers/artists, More merchandising.
Rationalise FTL and newsletter and define a particular style. Pull in other groups, and maybe act as 'parent body'.

Not enough space provided.

Get the ordinary members more involved in the running of things. The same people seem to be doing all the work without help from the rest. The ordinary members can't help unless they are asked and shown what is expected of them.

More meetings with videos/films? Also, what about name badges to be worn at meetings? (I don't know anybody).

More help for Brendan!

Collective cooperation in setting up radio or tv

programmes.

More special event nights, more media nights, more ST:TNG videos.

Your comments

All in all I think ISFA do an excellent job with all their events and publications. Keep up the good work.

Efficient

Seriously, ISFA are infinitely more dynamic, more enthusiastic, more friendly than any non-university SF group I know in UK, and much more efficient than the university groups.

I would like to meet more of the people at the monthly meetings. I'm not shy, but sometimes it's difficult to break into conversations.

The workers are overworked, get rid of hangers-on. When Brendan pulls out, the ISFA will collapse.

Go for it!!

Overall, I think the ISFA is a great club. Unfortunately, I haven't attended a meeting yet - but I will soon. I think you cater very well for your members.

**WOULD LIKE TO SEE ISFA, OCTOCON, FTL, SFEX
OFFICE WITH PERMANENT EMPLOYEE.**

Should do more Star Trek stuff since Starbase Ireland's gone. Bit more to do with comics if possible. Some way you could borrow/lend videos - so to broaden your view.

More computer support!

It is purely a matter of personal opinion, but I dislike Star Trek (TNG) and feel that (in my brief flirtation with ISFA) too much emphasis is placed on it. After all, it's just a trumped-up soap opera!

ISFA definitely needs more horror features.

Things could be a little better organised at times. Also, I want more horror and fantasy!

WHAT DO YOU GET FOR £8 THESE DAYS?

EXPENDITURE

4 issues of FTL @ £1.95 + 58p P+P each

12 issues of the Newsletter @25p + 32p P+P each

Laminated Membership Card

Half price entry to the Monthly meetings 12 x 50p

10% discount on ISFA merchandise and entrance

to ISFA Special Events (assume £20 p.y. spent)

10% discount in Alchemists Head bookshop

and Modellers Nook (Assume 1 Hardback and 4

paperbacks or 2 games per year @ £30)

Members Badge

SAVING

£10.12

£ 6.84

£ 1.00

£ 6.00

£ 2.00

£ 3.00

£ .50

£ 29.46

Membership of the



The Irish Science Fiction Association

You Know it makes sense!