

ISFJA NEWS

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GLASGOW TO HOST 1995 WORLDCON

**CONVENTION SPECIAL: OCTOCON NEWS,
WORLDCON , IRECON REPORTS**

FRITZ LEIBER REMEMBERED

Limerick competition see page 69

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Fritz Leiber Remembered

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The newsletter editor's plea..

..When appealing for a big entry,
Was "The winner I'll pick,
For her clever limerick,
And not just for being 36D".

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We encourage the sending in of whatever you may put out, whether it be short fiction, sketches, news items, letters, cartoons, limericks, or anything up with which you can come. However, lest you think that the aforesaid contribution will entitle you to monetary recompense, sadly, no dice. When I grow up and have lots of dosh I will be only too happy to splurge it will-nilly on you all, but until then the most I can offer is publication, thanks, and a drag on my Low Tar Silk Cut behind the bicycle sheds (unlit).

NOTE: OPINIONS EXPRESSED ARE NOT THOSE OF
THE ISFA, EXCEPT WHERE STATED AS SUCH

Glasgow To Host '95 Worldcon

Start saving now for the 1995 World Science Fiction Convention, which will be held in Glasgow. The city won the site selection contest at the recent worldcon in Orlando, Florida, beating the other contender Atlanta by only 163 votes. **Intersection** will run from August 24 to 28, 1995, and the Guests of Honour will be Samuel R Delany and Gerry Anderson.

Fritz Leiber Dies

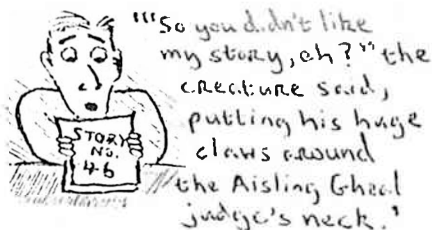
The master of modern fantasy finally succumbed after several strokes on September 5. An appreciation appears on page 5. And Anthony Perkins, the alter ego of Norman Bates in the four **Psycho** movies, died on the 12th, reportedly from an Aids-related illness.

Irish Film Centre Opens

The first film to be shown at the new Irish Film Centre in Temple Bar's Eustace Street was **Psycho**, which was exhibited free in Meeting House Square. The £1.5 million centre was officially opened by the Taoiseach on September 23. It features a restaurant, film archive, and will be the base for several filmmaking groups.

Bujold UK Publisher

Lois McMaster Bujold, who won the Hugo for best novel with **Barrayer**, will have a British publisher, Pan, for her new novella collection **Borders of Infinity**, due out this month.



ISFA News

Aisling Gheal

There were 46 entries for the competition this year. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the winner will not be announced at Octocon, but at some awards night still to be announced.

Sci-Fi-Based Show

Michael Hegarty's exhibition in the City Arts Centre in Moss St, which runs until the end of the month, takes some sci-fi imagery from the 60s as its starting point. The exhibition is free, so there's no excuse not to go.

That's Illogical, Captain

Some confusion has been caused by the leaflets advertising **Timewarp**, a "Star Trek/SF Media Convention", which carry the Octocon name and logo prominently at the bottom. At first glance it would seem that Timewarp, which boasts the appearance of a Starfleet captain, is a con-within-a-con. It turns out that details are available at Octocon, and Timewarp takes place at the Grand Hotel, Malahide, on 6-7 March, 1993.

Inverted Comments

"The major theme of the convention will be Time in all its manifestations, from H G Wells to Steven Spielberg..indeed, we feel it's about time for a Worldcon in Scotland!"
- The Glasgow Con Committee, punning their way to victory

Anyone still expecting to receive a copy, never mind several copies, of FTL is advised to write that part of the membership fee as a bad debt. The committee members I spoke to about it have now conceded defeat, and are trying to put the episode behind them. The magazine was a victim of ambitious planning - it went glossy, and the price was increased, long before the fiction (if not the art, which was often quite professional) justified the move. If it had remained a modest size there is little doubt that it would still be around today. Editor John Kenny, meanwhile, is offering a ten-week workshop in writing, limited to 20 places, at £2 per session, in the Rathmines Inn.

Correction

A thousand apologies to Claire Godkin, newly-installed member of the committee, whose forename I misspelled in the last issue.

Artists for Octocon

Artists wishing to exhibit at Octocon, please contact Paul Sheridan at 6243883 evenings, or 8212990 daytime, before Tuesday, October 13.

Workshop Submissions

Submissions from outside Dublin area are always welcome. Stories and art should be sent to the address on page 2.

November Meeting

Something spooky for Halloween.

Clubs

Six of One, the official Prisoner fan club - I mean Appreciation Society - resides at PO Box 60, Harrogate, HG1 2TP, UK. Annual subscription gets you the quarterly magazine, Number Six, and you can attend the various events including the convention in Portmeirion. Irish applicants should send a banker's cheque or money order for UK £18.

Anne Rice's Vampire Lestat Fan Club can be contacted at PO Box 58277, New Orleans, La., USA.

Competitions

From Pádraig O'Méalóid (who I must thank for several of the items on this page) I received a book called **It Was A Dark and Stormy Night**, and the sequel, **Son of**, which are compilations from the Bulwer-Lytton competition. Apparently, the eponymous writer was the first person to use the above phrase in a story. So a guy named Scott Rice held a competition to compose the funniest opening sentence to a bad novel. The results were published in these two volumes.

Unfortunately I have no information as to whether the contest is still running (**Son of** was published in 1987), but if you're interested, I'm sure Professor Rice would like to hear from you. He can be reached at the Dept of English, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA, 95192-0090, USA.

Sentences may be of any length, original, and can be in any genre. As many entries as you like, but they must be on index cards, the sentence on one side and your name, address and phone number on the other. The prize in 1987, by the way, was an **Apple Mac**.

Some quick examples (some sentences ran to 200+ words): "I was an extremely extremely extremely sensitive child" (Arnold Rosenfeld, Texas); "'The leg, he is fractured,' he said in broken English." (J Baumbardner, San Jose); and the 1985 Grand Prize went to Martha Simpson of Glastonbury, Connecticut, who composed "The countdown stalled at T minus 69 seconds when Desirée, the first female ape to go up in space, winked at me slyly and pouted her thick, rubbery lips unmistakably - the first of many such advances during what would prove to be the longest, and most memorable space voyage of my career."

Please note that due to space limitations the third part of the quiz has been kept over until the next issue.

In Memoriam: Fritz Leiber (1910-1992)

Anyone who is curious about how Fritz Leiber came to be the kind of writer he was is directed to **The Ghost Light**, a unique collection of his best stories (including "Gonna Roll the Bones" and "Midnight by the Morphy Watch") combined with an autobiographical essay. Born in Chicago in 1910, his given name caused much dispute thereafter. Several of his teachers refused to call him "Fritz", because of the association with the Great War enemy. And even today, "Leiber" is mispronounced, the proper way being to rhyme with "Cyber". Leiber's parents were touring Shakespearean actors. At age 12 Leiber was taught chess by one of the actors in the company. The game was a lifelong obsession. A friend at the University of Chicago introduced him to H P Lovecraft, who, he said "gave me an enduring set to my life ways and to my writing ambitions". He corresponded with Lovecraft in the three months before his death. He became an actor in his father's company during the depression, touring the same venues as the Abbey Players on his summer breaks. He graduated as Prohibition was ending, and married Jonquil Stephens in 1936. His first story was "Two Sought Adventure", a fantasy which introduced the characters of Fafhrd, a tall, Nordic adventurer based on himself, and the sly Grey Mouser, a character based on his friend Harry Fischer. It appeared in *Unknown* just as the war in Europe began. At the time Leiber was working for a publishing company in Chicago, but he left the badly-paid job to join his father in Hollywood, where he attempted to emulate his father as a speech and drama teacher. Before long he gave up the college post to take up writing full-time. The Occidental College became Hempnall College in his witchcraft novel *Conjure Wife* (in book form, 1953). This and *Gather Darkness!* (1950) were serialized in the early 40s in *Unknown* and *As-*

tounding. Many of the early stories he produced were rejected, and he found himself having to go back to work, this time as an inspector at an aircraft factory. He also had his first bouts of alcoholism.

(Writers of sf serials [for, at best, a cent a word] were drastically hit by the war. The fighting men were complaining that since they only got copies infrequently, there was no way to follow multiple-parlers. For the duration some editors took complete stories only.)

For the next decade or so Leiber worked for *Science Digest*, and in his spare time wrote the equivalent of a novel a year. This period saw *The Sinful Ones*, *Two Sought Adventure*, exploits of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, and *The Mind Spinner*, among others.

He was introduced to the sf community of writers, editors, and fans at the seventh Worldcon, in 1949. He launched his own fanzine, *New Purposes*, which had a print run of never more than 100, and whose contributors included Robert Bloch. Frederik Pohl became his agent.

In 1969 Leiber began a three-year alcoholic bout after the death of Jonquil in Venice. He moved to San Francisco, where he wrote *Our Lady of Darkness* (in book form, 1977). He discovered an interest in astronomy/astrology, on which he expounded later in a column in *Locus*. A couple of months before his death on 5 September, when his health was declining, he married his companion of 20 years, Margo Skinner. His son, Justin, is a writer and professor of philosophy.

In *The Ghost Light* Leiber listed some of his favourite topics in fiction as: wars; sex; cats; chess; spiders; and "our mistress the moon". One of his greatest admirers was Harlan Ellison, who said he was "one of the handful of writers who can handle the tale of terror in a context of modern society."

His fanzine, *New Purposes* had a print run of never more than 100 - contributors included Robert Bloch.

DIRECON 2: THE WRATH OF TREKKIES

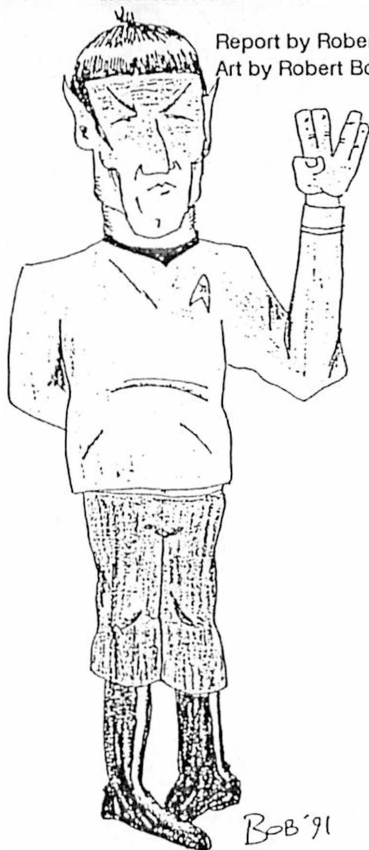
Irecon 2, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin,
12-13 September

Irecon is a *Star Trek* convention run by the NISTS, and as I've never been to a Trek con before, I didn't quite know what to expect. I mean, how many different ways are there to discuss the program, and we've all seen every episode - Kirk knows how many times. But off I went, and handed over my £25 for the two days' membership (a tad expensive, I thought at the time).

And so I entered the convention. 'Twas about 13:00, as I was working in the morning, so I expected it to be in full swing. What I found was people sitting around doing nothing in the bar (the very small bar, which was closed), waiting for the video to start in twenty minutes. Not, one would think, a good sign. Whipping out the program, I took a seat, and endured the smirks and comments from a number of people who saw I'd paid for two days of this. Stoically, I read the convention booklet.

Well, let's be honest, the convention leaflet. Eight A5 pages (five, if you discount the ads), giving two pages of program, a title page, an

Report by Robert Elliott
Art by Robert Bonham



inside title page, a bibliography (sic) of John de Lancie and an ordinary biography of Majliss Larson. Then there's

£25 for the two days' membership (a tad expensive, I thought at the time).

Small suspicions that I'd been ripped off were beginning to formulate

the page telling us about the showing of **Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered County** (sic).

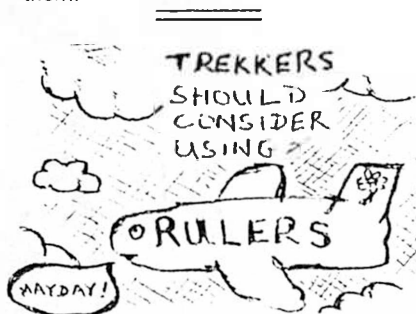
And so on, sic ad nauseam. For this I paid £25? Small suspicions that I'd been ripped off were beginning to formulate. Still, what's on the program? Let's see... we've got TNG videos (I've got them at home), ST films (I've got them at home), TOS videos (I've got them at home), Q&A and autograph sessions with John de Lancie and Majliss Larson. Oh wow! They've got the pilot for **Deep Space Nine**! I go, and find out that they don't have it after all, and when they called it "Deep Space Nine" in the "program book" (snigger), they meant "Let's talk about **Deep Space Nine**". What did I hear? Approximately nothing I didn't know already. Oh, and there was a panel on bio-medicine. That was very interesting for the twelve of us who were there. Also scheduled were 'sales' and a number of 'breaks'. What people were supposed to do during the breaks, I don't know. I went to the cinema.

The sales consisted mainly of **Trek** merchandise, natch. Most of the **Trek** books were on sale, except for the one written by guest Majliss Larson. You could buy a copy of the cover if you wanted, though. However, some people satisfied themselves by buying an 8x10 glossy of John de Lancie for a fiver. Or if you wanted, you could take a large

selection of books, put them into your bag and walk away. Security was not a major part of the con; I had my ID sticker in my pocket because my coat was wet, and wasn't stopped once on the Saturday.

Except for the bad (can I say 'shitty' in a conrep?)[Only a **Trek conrep - ed**] security, there weren't that many organisation problems on the day. But then, what could? Two rooms, which held about 200 between them (and there were over 350 there?) showing mostly videos doesn't require a great deal of planning. It involved taking the video out of its box (which was in a big box on the floor; this in a sometimes empty room with no security) and saying in a loud voice 'This is **Star Trek IV**'.

There were more things to mention; I'm still too upset at paying £25 to mention them.



Oh, and there was a panel on bio-medicine. That was very interesting for the twelve of us who were there

Worldcon News

Please note: A full report on the convention in Florida, by attendee Brendan Ryder, will appear in the next issue.

The winners of the main Hugos were:

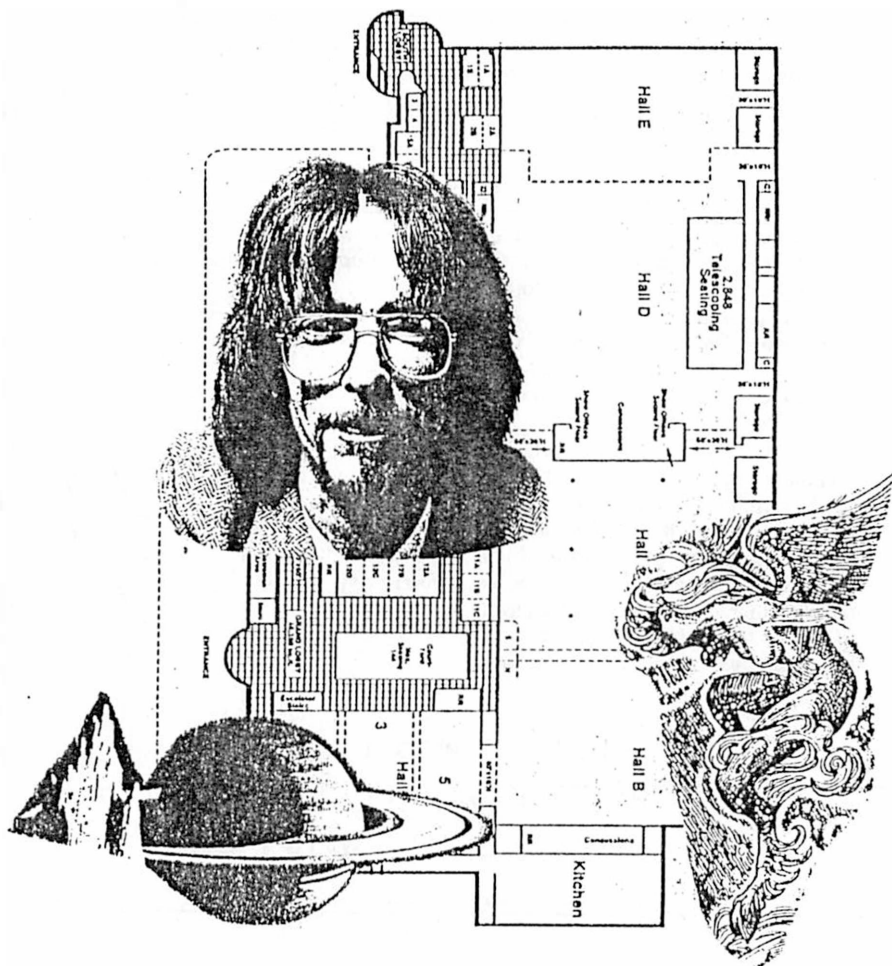
Novel: **Barrayer**, by Lois McMaster Bujold;
Original artwork: Michael Whelan, for the cover of **The Summer Queen**;
Best Dramatic Presentation: **Terminator 2**;
Best Short Story: "A Walk in the Sun", by Geoffrey A Landis;

Best Novelette: "Gold", by Isaac Asimov.

Best Novella: "And Wild For to Hold" by Nancy Kress.

Magicon was the 50th Worldcon, and featured some recreation of panels from the first Worldcon in New York in 1939.

Orlando in Florida was the setting, and the author guest of honour was Jack Vance. Artist guest of honour was Vincent di Fate, and Fan guest of honour was Walt Willis. The toastmaster was Spider Robinson.



Movie Review

California Man

starring Paule Shore and some other guys

Known in the land of the dude as **Encino Man** (for 'twas in that area of California the ex-humed our hero), and in Encino as "That guy down the road", **California Man** is the tale of a cro-magnon man frozen in an ice block and resurrected in present day California. How's that for a first sentence?

Dug up by two geeks, our cave-dwelling dude is cleaned up, dressed in garish outfits and enrolled in the local high school as an Estonian student. Why, so the dork squad can use him as a ticket to popularity. Sounds awful, doesn't it?

Funnily enough, it isn't, at least when Captain Caveman makes it into the film, about twenty tedious minutes after the start. The attitude being, I suppose, if you won't wait that long you don't deserve to enjoy yourself.

Anyway, once he arrives, the film picks up considerably. The jokes are usually visual, and exactly what you expect, but nonetheless pretty funny. Don't expect any witty dialogue here.

Although now that I think of it, it's possible that there might have been some amusing badinage, and I just didn't understand it. One can't make a movie set on the American west coast without redesigning the English language, and **California Man** is no exception. Only in this, the comprehensible/incomprehensible ratio is considerably different. "Savoury babe", is now "Fresh Nugs", but I didn't understand much of the rest, so you're on your own. Imagine sympathising with a straight man when he says "Speak English, Stoney".

In general, it's an enjoyable film, and geek number one gets the girl in the end, as was inevitable. This really pissed me off, as there is no doubt in my mind that the guy is a bigger dork in real life than he was on the screen. This guy deserved kick in the nuts, not a babe

(pardon me, nugs) in the face. May he never darken the walls of the UCI again.

At least it's better than **Carry On Columbus**.

ROBERT ELLIOTT

Television

Fabulous Mamet

One of the highlights of the tv season was the screening of David Mamet's marvellous "American Fable" **The Water Engine** (Channel Four, Thursday, October 1).

The Chicago playwright, who was writer and director of **House of Games**, and the recent **Homicide**, displayed his usual skill in creating a realistic setting, in a story about the way science and creativity are fair game in a class-ridden society.

Charles Lang, a low-income factory worker in the Chicago of the 20s, invents an engine that uses water as its only fuel. He is careful to hide it in an old warehouse, and goes to the patents office to protect his plans. His blind sister dreams of the security the invention will bring them.

But Lang is the most vulnerable of common men: he has something other people want. He soon finds himself being passed around like a lighter in a gentleman's club.

Mamet fills his tale with lyrical resonances: Lang hides out in a science museum, where a disembodied voice describes how by the year 2000 there will be day trips to the moon; a chain letter, promising wealth and warning of disaster, is received by several of the minor characters; a small boy listens to a melodramatic western on the radio, utterly convinced by the plot.

The analogies meet and crisscross like wickerwork. In the end, Lang's invention is a kind of chain letter, promising both success and doom. And many years later, when the day trips to the moon are still science fiction, it waits in a commercial museum to be rediscovered.

Not Just a Stupid Cult TV Review by Simon Webster

Criticise the law if you must, but nothing suits the Bill like a three thousand pound fine. As if they need the dough. No, that's a Baker. Damn.

It was with these lines, on this day in 1937, that Larry Laffs ended his music hall career of seventeen minutes. His dying sentiments are reproduced here as a fond tribute to the man with the gun.

As if linking two dissimilar topics - through the holes of a curly-wurly - I certainly wish I had had a gun gun yesterday afternoon. I was in

the shops trying to buy a pair of x-ray specs (if God was in my heart, I wanted to know about it), and in walks this old lady looking for some batteries. I spent three hours telling her she didn't need batteries for her walking frame, and didn't she have some pension that needed collecting anyways.

But her attitude, if not nothing but annoying, was everything and persistent. I got the famous "Respect Your Elders, Young Man"; the chart-topper "No, I'm Not Talking About Trees, for Pox Sake"; and I could sense "Chim Chim Charee" was not far behind. I hadn't heard

anything so sick since I found out Louis XIV sent French letters through the post.

I find myself sitting here with bruised knuckles and a blood-stained tank-top, writing this in the sticky suite of my holiday home, overlooking the sand, the sea, and the Ballybrack Employment Exchange (oh yes, Mr Reynolds, I can overlook it too). The year is 1536 because I've got a time share.

I've also got a tv.

Before I realised what was happening I had cracked open a Fruit of the Forest and was prepared for some serious viewing. The tv was

on, the light was on, and the settee, I was on. My yogurt was not on. In fact, it was very badly off. My feet, though, they were up, as indeed was my glass of seven.

What a feast! A blob of Geraldo here, a dollop of Sally there, and for seasoning, the slightest dribble of Bob Friend. I thought there was no limit to the televisual delights that was springing from the loins of my remote control. Then suddenly I found it.

Still, don't do one of those ridges on the fingerboard of a guitar[#]. What with clashing with **Smoggies, The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin, and Racing from Kempton Park**, you'd really have to want to watch this turpitude called **Sapphire and Steel**.

The episode I stumbled upon was the last holding-loosely instalment of something I'm sure made sense to at least one of the production crew when pissed. It co-starred Silver who was given a charitable part since his disreputable "association" with the Lone Ranger.

I can't be bothered to tell you about it, not because I didn't understand most of what was going on, but because I didn't understand any of it. There were gadgets of varying sizes where were

I thought there was no limit

Then suddenly I found it.

loins of my remote control.

the televisual delights that was springing from

Prefect during the proof-reading.

to ruin: from reading a few TV Zones behind the bike shed, to

shoved into a few nooks and wobbled into the odd cranny. Rest assured, it was a disreputable "association", and the Lone Ranger got what he asked for. Despite having a budget that rivals *The Tomorrow People*, I found *Sapphire and Steel* to be just as unfathomable as the Lone Ranger's love-decahedron. But then I never understood "A Whiter Shade of Pale".

Sapphire and Steel differs from *Procol Harum* in that there is little content to actually comprehend. The one I was lucky to catch had the characters messing about with a sheet of tin foil for half an hour. I could have been watching a talentless version of

knowing lines and quoting them orally. But our attitude should be, if you're going to watch these "programmes", at least be aware of the risks.

The biggest blow that has occurred is that *Sapphire and Steel* has become a "cult": the convenient tag that makes viewing a shitty programme respectable. It's happened to *Captain Scarlet*. It's happened to *Play the Game*.

Purely for researchable reasons, I accidentally looked up "cult" in the dictionary. You can imagine my stupefaction when I learned that it means "very fashionable"! Now, I may not be as clever as Albert Einstein, or as monstrous as his brother Frank, but as far as I am aware "mainstream" also means "very fashionable". Feeling insecure (daft name for a dog), I wrote to Oxford University Press for a full explanation.

The Board with Directors explained "Todger and Midge sneaked a drop of Ritz past our Head Prefect during the proof-reading. Now that we've been rumbled, we're going to get such a tongue-lashing. Horrah!"

Despair not. There is a foolproof way to kill a cult, and that is to make it widely popular. People should be urged to watch *Sapphire and Steel* every week, in order to make it as mainstream as the Dodder. Only by being popular can a programme stop people from watching.

It doesn't take a pair of x-ray specs to tell you that *Sapphire and Steel* is duff. It takes a damn brave reviewer.

Sapphire and Steel, RTE 1, Mondays 3.30pm.

β Fret
 π of America

How Do You Do.

Now, I used to watch this S & S bunkum when I was younger, and I must admit, I understood it then. Probably because I was a heroin addict in those days (Penelope Pitstop, Lassie, Mother Teresa, I just couldn't get enough). However, these days Joanna Lumpy claims she only did the show because her script misread as *Sapphire and Steel*. These days David McCallum is incontinent¹⁷.

It was once suggested that *Blake's Seven* was axed because it encouraged terrorism. If that's the case, shirley *Sapphire and Steel* was axed because it encouraged jewellery theft. Who cares? The fact that it was axed is the Godsend.

But remember video tape? These programmes still exist and can be repeated in a not too dissimilar style as RTE's present presentation. It's the saddest truism since Farmer Ryan admitted to being a cereal killer.

Okay, hang on, let's be rational for a moment. These sorts of shows are out there. There's nothing we can do to stop that. So it's unrealistic to say that young people aren't going to experiment with them. Yes, it's a seedy lane

The Horror Experiment

Reviews by Robert Neilson

Take three authors, with reputations which vary from up-and-coming to super-stellar (by way of I have seen the future of Horror and his name is...), examine their latest offerings and see what conclusions can be drawn. If any.

Savage Season (NEL, 210pp, UK £4.99 pb) by Joe R Lansdale, author of (weirdo) classic **The Drive-In**, has the words **Nominated for the Bram Stoker Award** flashed across the back cover which would naturally lead one to assume the book is of the genus Horror as would the writer's track record. Now I'm not going to attempt to claim that this is anything but a first rate piece of work, but by no stretch of the imagination could it be considered anything close to the genre. Sure there is plenty of blood, gore, pain and death but that doesn't make a horror - you can get these on the news any day of the week. No, **Savage Season** is a thriller, plain and simple; my complaint being that I felt I was misled. Having said that, Lansdale's latest is well worth the small investment of time it will take to devour this page-turner. Hap Collins, a victim of the Sixties (Flower Power, acid, Sergeant Pepper, peace rallies) is seduced into helping his ex-wife and a bunch of Sixties throw-backs (peace, love, politics of violence) dredge up the proceeds of a bank robbery that has ended up on the bottom of a river. Hap insists that his friend Leonard, a victim of Vietnam (drugs, rock'n'roll, institutionalised murder), comes along. Leonard hates the ex-wife, Hap and Leonard hate her activist friends, the friends don't exactly fall all over Hap and everybody hates Leonard. I know it sounds a bit like the sort of relationships favoured by Ibsen or Eugene O'Neill, but it sure makes an

interesting mixture. And that's before the double- and triple-crossings.

Warning: Joe R Lansdale may be addictive. The latest fix for Stephen King addicts comes in the shape of **Gerald's Game** (Hodder & Stoughton, 342pp, UK £14.99 hb). To lovers of Misery this will be familiar territory, featuring as it does the same claustrophobic scenario - substitute female for male central character; replace implacable human gaoler with an implacable but inert set of handcuffs; re-place in Maine.

If I was in a kinder frame of mind I would say that what King has attempted is a stylistic tour de force, but Stephen King needs no favours from the likes of me to sell his books. As far as I'm concerned he's just playing with himself. What could be more difficult to turn into a bestseller, I could almost hear the author ask himself, than a novel with two characters set within the confines of a house? Picture a light-

bulb lighting above his head. Why, a novel with one character set in...let me see...yes, a single room. Why Stevie you're a genius. Within the confines that he set himself King succeeds on almost all levels, though the pace does tend to drag quite considerably, but then that is the nature of the book he set out to write.

Jessie Burlingame's husband Gerald, into bondage

to restore a flagging sexual appetite, handcuffs her to the bed at their remote lakeside summer home. It's autumn, there's no-one else about and Gerald croaks on the job. And



then a stray dog crazed with hunger wanders onto the scene. And then...

I suppose if anyone is getting paid for writing absolutely anything he likes he will eventually come up with something like this. In effect, the blame for *Gerald's Game* lies with those millions of us readers who have turned Stephen King from a horror writer into a horror institution.

And the future of Horror? Right now it seems to be safe in the hands of Dan Simmons, winner of eight major horror and sf awards between 1986 and 1991. With *Children of the Night* (Headline, 408pp, UK £8.99 tpb) he continues the job of establishing himself as a writer than can be counted upon to deliver the goods, quality goods, every time. Maybe *Children* won't be another award-winner, but if it's not a bestseller there is no justice. Kate Neuman is an American aid worker in Rumania, a specialist in hematology, who is persuaded to adopt a baby suffering from a rare blood disorder. Against the odds she manages to get the child, Joshua, out of Rumania and back to the US where it is discovered that his body's method of battling his sickness may provide a cure for AIDS or even supply the secret of eternal youth. But Joshua's father wants him back. And Joshua's father is not a man used to being denied.

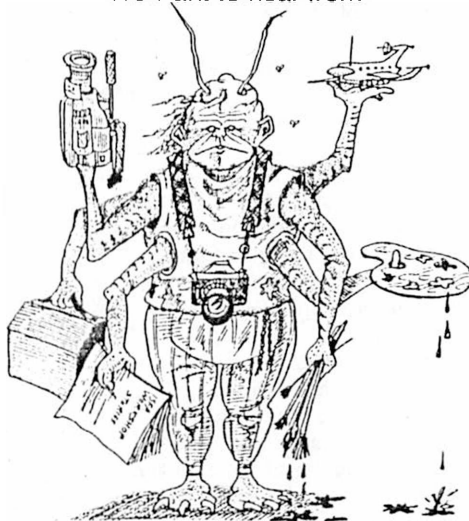
The baby is kidnapped by a group who display incredible strength and recuperative powers, killing Kate's ex-husband and Joshua's babysitter in the process, and returned to his biological father. But Kate is determined to get Joshua back even though it will mean standing almost alone against a corrupt political system which has for centuries been secretly manipulated by an ancient abomination.

Children of the Night is a wonderful twist on the vampire legend, weaving fact and history into one seamless tapestry of delight. Buy it. Conclusion? Two out of three horror novels are worth picking up. If not always for the right reasons. But the question that you yourself must answer is: which two?

We Welcome Everyone

The Artists and Writers Workshop is not just for artists and writers.

We want to hear from



Photographers Video Enthusiasts
Computer Buffs Animators
Sculptors SFX Make-up Freaks
Costume Designers Model-Makers
Calligraphers

Next meeting: Tuesday, 20 October at 8pm.
The Vintage, Camden Street. The workshop
meets on the third Tuesday of every month.

Book Reviews

THE SAPPHIRE ROSE

David Eddings

Gralton, 652pp, UK £4.99 pb

For some reason, possibly something to do with the fact that Bestseller all too often equals Lowest Common Denominator, David Eddings is sneered at by a lot of fantasy readers. This seems a little unfair - if he's not going to win any prizes for Great Literature, at least he knows it and makes no pretence in that direction. (Besides, most books that do win prizes for Great Literature are so Great as to be practically unreadable.) Eddings is simply a competent writer of traditional adventure fantasy.

The Sapphire Rose, which is the last book of Eddings' **Elenium** trilogy, is a perfect example of this. There are no great surprises in the book - the couples we've been expecting to get together since halfway through **The Diamond Throne** finally do so, the Churchmen and the thieves are entertainingly devious, the Church Knights do a bit of hacking and slaying..But it's all good, lively, fast-paced fun: the bad guys get their just (and occasionally gruesome) desserts, the token good guy dies, and the rest of the good guys live happily ever after - at least until the start of the new trilogy, of which I believe the first book is just out.

The Sapphire Rose is a good adventure fantasy story - nothing out of the ordinary, but perfect for a rainy day when you don't feel like putting any effort into your reading. I'd advise you to read **The Diamond Throne** and **The Ruby Knight** first, though: the story will be a bit more sense that way.

DORIAN GRAY

DESTROYING ANGEL

Richard Paul Russo

Headline, 309pp, UK £4.99 pb

I suppose it was only a matter of time until the sf world jumped on the recent serial killer

bandwagon, and in this novel Richard Paul Russo does so with a vengeance. The story concerns a burnt-out ex-cop named Tanner whose last case involved a series of killings where the victims were strangled and wrapped in chrome chains. The murders remained unsolved but stopped just after Tanner's partner was killed and Tanner himself hospitalised as a result of a drugs bust gone wrong. Now it's two years later - Tanner is smuggling drugs to free clinics and new bodies are being found wrapped in chrome chains.

Destroying Angel is essentially a straight detective novel in a very thin coat of "hard" sf. Tanner is smuggling drugs from orbiting factories but it could just as well be from South America.

The storytelling itself is reasonably interesting and gripping but with a couple of major flaws. The first is that a street girl called Sookie finds the killer's hideout very early in the book but simply neglects to mention this very important fact to Tanner during their many conversations!

The second flaw is with the very disappointing ending. The police find the hideout (by a stroke of luck), trap the killer and capture him. That's it. No climactic shoot out, no last minute rescues, no twist endings. The detailed investigation of clue and red herring that has been built up to this point is thrown out of the window and the story just screeches to a stop leaving a flurry of loose ends.

The mixture of serial killer theme and "hard" sf could make a good novel, unfortunately this isn't it.

PAUL MCKINLEY

["Screeches to a stop leaving a flurry of loose ends"? If you say so. For those interested in pursuing the serial killer through the horror if not the sf genre, I'd recommend William Peter Blatty's *Legion*, Robert Bloch's *Psycho*, and of course Thomas Harris's two Hannibal Lecter books.]

ENTOVERSE

James P Hogan

Entoverse, the fourth *Giants* novel has the one strength and several weaknesses of the series. The characters, human, alien or computer-generated, are all equally sub-card-board though the storytelling is a shade less lousy than usual.

It is as a pure sf ideas man that Hogan generates some real excitement. The idea of an entoverse, a complete universe with self-conscious entities and its own "physical" rules, separate from those of the extroverse, generated within a giant computer, is not original but it is worked and detailed in an original way. This is all that one can ask of this particular strand of sf.

The story clips on neatly enough to the earlier *Giant's Star* novel and much of its extroverse is set on a sort of post-Soviet (totalitarian computer switched off) planet.

There is none of the mean "sunken middle class" sniping at English workers that was tacked on to the two earlier books, but there is a domesticated CIA man, presumably brought in to show that (future) CIA men are regular guys, and a girl journalist with a deep subconscious wish to be as good a writer as Ayn Rand, as well as astonishingly ignorant ideas about St (James) Patrick and the early Irish church.

LIAM MCGLOINN

THE FIRST WORLD CHRONICLES 1 - DINBIG OF KHIIMMUR

Philip G Williamson

Grafton, 589pp, UK £4.99 pb

This book is exactly what it says it is, an historical record of the world of Ronbas Dinbig. How his world came about and its social and physical aspects. He himself is a merchant (amongst other things). His women are objects of sex or else they are the mother figures of his "out of his world experience", ie they are mistresses of the "Realms of Non-Being". Ronbas himself can enter these Realms and controls a number of other beings

(sorry, spirits). Which he does frequently in order to find out secrets of war and state. However, this is essentially a record of the Kingdom of Khimmur, its state of nationhood. The army is activated and the Kingdom finds itself at war with its neighbours. The book takes the reader slowly at first and builds up a world of armies composed of human, half-human and indeed spiritual beings. It is well-constructed and while I was impatient with some of the information I must say that having read the story it requires a deep base in order to carry the character of Ronbas Dinbig. This character is the mainstay of the book and I delighted in some of his antics.

NU LYONS

THE MANY LIVES OF CLARE BECKETT

Lisa Tuttle

Grafton, 208pp, UK £4.99 pb

This book is one of the few that makes the little grey cells stand up and pay attention. The subject is the parallel universes of quantum mechanics.

Lisa takes her character through the various streams of time where each choice splits the live fabric and causes a continuum of the character's different life.

She allows each stream to start in different ways but the most popular is that of dreams. Daydreams and night dreams. The night dreams are not remembered but then half-way through the book friends show Clare how to recall them. For moments, for hours and even for days Clare becomes herself in the other universe(s). Or perhaps it would be truer to say that she becomes aware of herself in a different strand of time. She can live only one life at a time. Sorry, perhaps it's that she can be aware of living only one life at a time while knowing that she has other strands of living moving onwards without her knowing the details.

The writing is good but the action is rather slow and at times one has to pay careful attention or else the jump, from one Clare to the other, is confusing. Clare's life in each universe is ordinary, very ordinary, so there are

no thrills for the reader. Rather does the reader have to distance herself from the expectant rush that makes a book a quick read, and think through the possibilities of staying sane, while being whirled from one situation to another, at the same time dealing with the supporting characters who themselves change with each universe.

I enjoyed the read, and the ending was good. It makes one think. Unusual in this day and age of instant brain-fodder.

NU LYONS

CYBER WAY

Alan Dean Foster

Orbit, 306pp, UK £4.50 pb

Elroy Kettrick, a collector of Native American artifacts, is murdered. There is nothing missing from his prized collection and the only evidence as to the possible motive for the killing is the vandalised remains of a strange sand-painting that Kettrick had recently acquired.

Detective Vernon Moody lives in the modern world of computer science and common sense. When he is placed in charge of the Kettrick case he feels out of his depth. This is not helped by his being sent from the metropolis of Tampa, Florida to the deserts of Arizona to search for Kettrick's killer among the Navajo Indians.

Armed with a photograph of the sand-painting he tries to track down the murderer with the help of Detective Sergeant Paul Ooljee.

Ooljee, himself a Navajo, has always been interested in sand-paintings. It is when they enlist modern aid in the form of Ooljee's computer that the truth of the sand-painting comes to light.

This book is an interesting combination of ancient and futuristic ideas. On the one hand there are the history and legends of long-dead culture, and on the other the jargon of modern and future science and life.

Alan Dean Foster brings it all together in a well-written, fast-paced novel that culminates in a gripping climax.

THE FIONAVAR TAPESTRY: THE SUMMER TREE; THE WANDERING FIRE; THE DARKEST ROAD

Guy Gavriel Kay

The main idea behind *The Fionavar Tapestry* is a very old one - C S Lewis used it, for one. It is the good old innocent normal people from our world dragged into one where magic really works in order to save it from some deadly evil. At least Kay gives the unfortunates in this trilogy (five young Canadians) some choice in the matter. They don't have to go, and it doesn't become clear until quite a lot later that they are going to have a large hand in saving the world from Rakoth Maugrim, the Unraveler. (The Universe is a tapestry, and the Unraveler is feared because he is not part of that tapestry, and therefore cannot be defeated.) So they have only themselves to blame when they agree, and get mixed up in all sorts of strange goings-on.

As it turns out, each of the five has a part to play - almost a destiny to follow - which only becomes apparent when they go to Fionavar, and discover the powers of magery, blood-ritual, Dreams, offerings - and big sharp swords and axes.

The Fionavar Tapestry is fantasy on an epic scale (yes, I know that people say that about everyone from Tolkien to Eddings. But it's true). Besides our five "normal" people, we mix with kings, princes and princesses, gods, goddesses, and Andain (offspring of a deity and a mortal), elves, and dwarves, and magic, priestesses and monsters, figures of myth and legend (for once, King Arthur puts in a non-idiotic appearance). There are battles of wit, words, and weapons, battles that cannot be lost and battles that cannot be won. There is comedy and tragedy. There is, in fact, everything you could possibly want in a fantasy story, including a beautifully logical and satisfying way of winning the final battle against Rakoth Maugrim. *The Fionavar Tapestry* is a must. Buy it - borrow it - steal it if you have to, but read it. You won't be disappointed.

DORIAN GRAY

Comics Column by Mark Bagnall

Reviewed this month:

Animal Man #51

DC, £1.40

Star Trek: The Next Generation

#39

DC, £1.60

First of all an apology. The comics column has been rather infrequent recently. This has been entirely my fault, and it won't happen again. Now down to business. Some of you may remember the last time I mentioned **Animal Man** in this column. I've got good news - it's improved since then. Jamie "Hellblazer" Delano has taken over the title and in one issue has made it a worthy addition to DCs dark fantasy titles. Artist Steve Pugh is a worthy successor to Steve Dillon.

Buddy Baker aka Animal Man has a wife, two kids, and the ability to use any power of any animal, which comes in quite handy. Buddy's son Cliff ran away a few issues ago. He was found by his Uncle Dudley. Until now that was all we heard of him. You can often judge a comic by its first two pages, and this opens with a dog crossing a busy road while Uncle Dudley says to Cliff that if he makes it across

they'll watch **Cannibal Call-Girls**, and if he doesn't they'll watch **Autopsy**.

When DC say mature readers only, they mean it.

Of course, Buddy Baker decides that he wants his son back.

This is one of the best horror comics of the moment, not quite as good as **Hellblazer**, but it's only Delano's first issue.

It is also impossible to fault DCs **Next Generation**. All the main characters look and act like their TV counterparts (which doesn't always happen in the novels). **Issue #39** is written by Michael Jon Friedman and is the first of a six-part story. The Enterprise meets a man-made moon-like object, which has more than a passing resemblance to Darth Vader's Death Star. Of course Picard and company must investigate.

What makes this issue particularly good is we get an insight into the crew's personal lives, which are all too often left out of the TV series. For instance, there is a wonderful scene involving Alexander (Worf's son) getting a haircut, which to the average person wouldn't mean much, but fans will love it (of which I am one, and I won't insult you by calling you trek-kies/trekkers).

As it's an American comic it is set in the sixth season, so there are some new characters we haven't seen yet. If you like the TV series and you don't read comics this is the perfect introduction to the medium.

- 1 Danny McMonagle
- 2 Olga Fenning
- 3 Laura MacKenzie
- 4 Nigel Baker
- 5 Michael O'Connor
- 6 Robert D. Elliott
- 7 Padraig O'Méalóid

8 Simon Webster

9 John Kenny

10 Sean O'Méalóid

- Klingon Battle Cruiser
Star Trek : Probe (Book)
Dracula Album
£10 Gift voucher
Xenocide
Star Trek CD
Alex McLennon Framed
Print

Johnny Rothwell Framed
Print

Book - Project Pope

Night of the Living Dead

- Modellers' Nook
Phantasia
Smile Records
Dandelion Books
Scholar Books, Swords
ISFA
ISFA

ISFA

Books & Baubles, Leixlip
Videotown, Leixlip

Quiz

Supernova

Light, by the White mind-prism bent;
Creates a zodiacal "SF" glow.
So, in the watch below, one wonders;
With all judgement fled;
Do the aliens among us;
Accept one word he said,
About questions of cruelty;
By boarding party, on ambulance ship?

Or does a code blue emergency,
On a federation world;
Create the dream millennium;
At curtain call, for a star surgeon;
For custom fitting and a fast trip;
To birth the deadly litter,
Of a dynasty of one;
In a major operation, at sector general?

Can the star healer, with futures past;
And no safe sanctuary nigh;
An outrider, on patrol;
Find assisted passage, to escape orbit;
By lifeboat, from the open prison;
Creating a false alarm;
Because tomorrow is too far;
With the scavengers caught in crossfire,
At starvation orbit?

They red alert the conspirators,
To the secret visitors on pushover planet;
Who stage a disturbing tableau,
In the lights outside the windows,
Their suicide mission, to kill or cure;

A Zodiac of Light

In loving memory of the star walk;
By the ideal captain;
After the trouble with Emily.

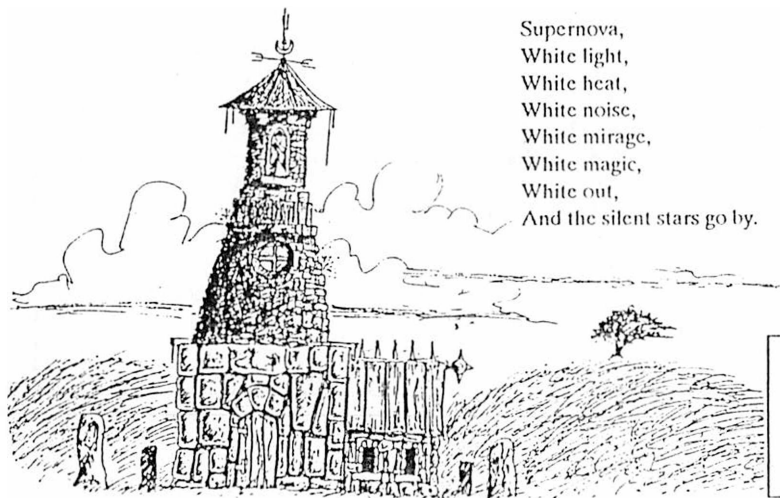
O'Mara's orphan sets a countercharm
Against the dark talisman
Of a blood brother; occupation - warrior.
A visitor at large, from a tourist plant.

A space bird, survivor of the
(wreck.
(A meatball, with nuisance value;)
Who, when answer came there none,
From accident investigation;
Took to the high road
Seeking autopsy on a combined operation.

Delved into the deep silence
Surrounding "Operation Midguard";
Quested Christmas treason
By the field hospital's resident physician;
Who, via a guest editorial
Vis! - encyclopaedia article,
The introduction to "M and M"
Collapsed the cover-up.

The apprentice invader, outpatient;
Dress formal, scourge of counter-security;
Grapeline, demands the answer;
Accusing the interpreters of underkill;
Snatches from the inferno
Something of value.
A second ending__dog fight__vertigo!
Medic! type "genie" - and run - from the fireball!

Supernova,
White light,
White heat,
White noise,
White mirage,
White magic,
White out,
And the silent stars go by.



Words
J Nolan
Art
Edward Byrne

Limerick Competition

An astronaut of morals heinous,
Was the first man to step foot on Venus,
To a tentacled maiden,
He said "Look how I'm laden"
"A thing like this must come between us."

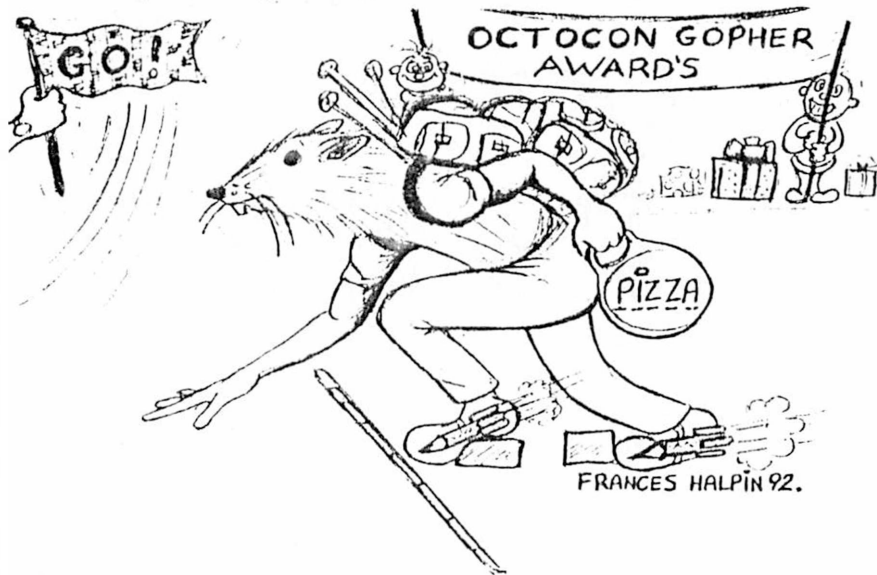
Okay, I'm sure you can do better than that, and how's your chance. Send your entries to us at the address on page 2, and you could win one of many prizes, too generous to mention.

It need not be totally to do with sf or horror or whatever, but as with all the best limericks we must insist that it is at least slightly rude. For further example:

On a space voyage of the USS Reverence,
The all-woman crew expressed preference,
Eighteen months is a pain,
With a crew all the same,
They could really have used a vas deferens*.

* Look it up

Have you got what it takes?



OCTOCON GOPHER AWARDS

PIZZA

FRANCES HALPIN 92.

Not everyone can be a gopher. It takes skill, audacity, initiative, and not least of all, a badge saying "Gopher". You may be called on to do lots of things for other people, but there are some privileges to being a gopher.

For instance, you can, er, is that the time?

See any member of the committee for further details.

Be a gopher at Octocon

FOR THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND TONIGHT'S
MEETING, A FURTHER SCREENING OF
VISUAL EYES WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE
ARTSHOW DURING OCTOCON!



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Science Fiction ☐ Horror ☐ Fantasy ☐

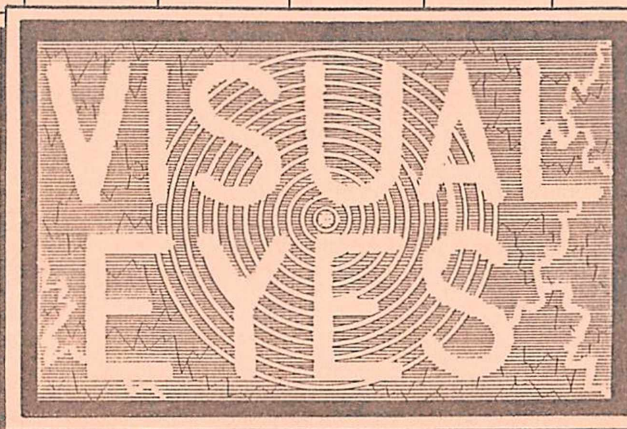
Comics ☐ Star Trek ☐ Fanzines ☐

T.V. ☐ Cinema ☐ Art ☐

Have you previously been a member
of the ISFA? Yes ☐ No ☐

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THE IRISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION



TONIGHT
A SCREENING OF SHORT
AWARD - WINNING
SCIENCE FICTION VIDEOS
FEATURING
NIGHTMARE FIRST CONTACT
MATRIX ADJUSTED NORMAL
REFUGGES SELF-DESTRUCT
DOMINION THE SHAPE
THE THING FROM BENEATH THE BED!!
HORSE & TRAM EDEN QUAY
TUESDAY 6TH OCTOBER AT 8PM

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YOU MAY SEND A PHOTOCOPY OF THE
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THE IRISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION,
%0 VIDEOTOWN, MAIN STREET, LEIXLIP,
CO. KILDARE, IRELAND.

NIGHTMARE

Director: Warwick Davis (GB)/running time: 13 mins.

A miniature Mummy's head, discovered beneath the floorboards of an old dilapidated house, causes mayhem to those who come into contact with it.

REFUGEES

Director: Eileen Kardos (GB)/running time: 7 mins. B/W

A medic is alone in the casualty ward of a space station 50 years hence from which patients, most of them unconscious due to the poisonous atmosphere outside, come and go in capsules. The station suffers a fatal air leak and communication breaks down...

TRACKDOWN

Director: Ian Gamble (GB)/running time: 7 mins. B/W

A stylish short featuring a leather-clad heroine assigned to terminate a band of hi-tech thieves.

SELF-DESTRUCT

Director: Darren Knight (GB)/running time: 12 mins.

A horror story, clearly influenced by Clive Barker's "Hell-raiser", depicting a would-be suicide's torment by a demon to join his loved one beyond the grave.

TAKING STOCK

Director: Kevin Braithwaite (GB)/running time: 9 mins

An ecological science fiction production dealing with the discovery of the planet Earth by an alien archivist.

MISSION 090

Director: Jon Davies

After many years, a wandering space pod carrying the last member of another planet, lands on Earth.

THE CHALLENGE

Director: Kieran McKeogh (IRL)/running time: 8 mins

A computer enthusiast buys a new game for a friend. He tries the "challenge" for himself, but finds he is up against an adversary which refuses to lose.

THE THING FROM BENEATH THE BED !!

Director: Chris Jones (GB)/running time: 4 mins.
Around midnight the mysterious thing that lurks beneath the bed jumps out and goes darting round the house in a state of high excitement. We see everything from the creature's viewpoint, hearing it but never seeing it.

THE SHAPE

Director: Ian Gamble (GB)/running time: 17 mins. B/W
The world of the science-fiction cartoon strip is brought to life in this story of a mad professor who is terminated by his own creation THE SHAPE.

FIRST CONTACT

Directors: Dale McKenna & Jeff Secor (USA) r/time 16 mins.
A navigational error by a crewman on board a spaceship from earth brings about the first contact with people from another planetary system.

PENNY PILOT

Director: Ian Gamble (GB)/running time: 12 mins
A young man is sucked into the virtual reality of a computer game.

MATRIX ADJUSTED NORMAL

Director: Connor O'Mahony (IRL)/running time: 12 mins.
Fresh from it's success in London recently, where it picked up three FUJI awards for 2nd Best Overall film, Best use of sound, and 2nd Best camera lighting. The film stars Brendan Gleeson, seen recently as Michael Collins in "The Treaty", as a scientist who invents a machine to help the elderly and the handicapped. In the hands of the State, it becomes a propaganda machine. Described by it's director as a short look at today's society.

DOMINION

Director: Kevin Hand (IRL)/running time: 13 mins.
Drawn from 'Paradise Lost', this superb animated Super-8 film uses beautifully-crafted plasticine figures and imaginative sets to depict a meeting and power struggle of Demons. The film won the Sullivan Bluth Award in 1990 and a section was screened on RTE to advertise Octocon '90.



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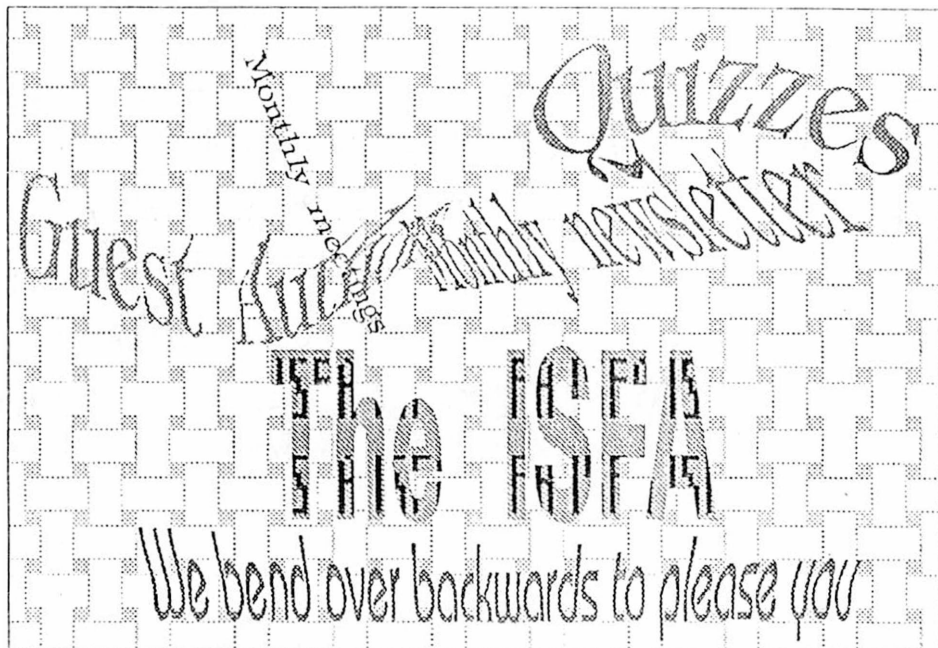
Membership Secretary

ISFA

564 River Forest

Leixlip

Co Kildare



In your newsletter next month:

Full Report from Florida

Worldcon

Plus all the usual news, reviews, and
features.

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Fritz Leiber

by Frances Halpin