



Jersey's most popular television show, called variously "Pick Six" or "Pick Seven" or "Pick Something." It turns your television into a Las Vegas casino. How wonderful! Now, it's not that I don't like Vanna White and her imitators. Vanna restores my faith in the American system. Her story is right out of Horatio Alger. When

THE MT VOID

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she got started she didn't even know what a vowel was. She got attention by her trick, which apparently was that she could tighten her arms in at her sides so she could be narrower from side to side than she was from front to back. The executives were looking for a hostess who could be narrow from side to side and after exhaustive measurements verifying her trick, they gave her the job.

But New Jersey has gone in in a big way for lotteries. What is it they say? All you have to do is pick six digits. Hey, even I can do that. There's just one catch. They have to be the same six digits that the sequined Stepford Wife pulls out of the popcorn machine. That means if I bought a million tickets, only one would be right. The rest would be gaudy bookmarks. Okay, maybe they give you something for the 54 tickets that have five out of six right. Big deal.

Well, let's get down to some hard facts. Once there was a state that held lotteries because they liked to see some of their citizens get rich. And in this state lived Little Red Riding Hood and Cinderella and the Wicked Witch. But around these parts, states run lotteries because they take in a lot more money than they give out. And I mean a l o t, since they have to buy the popcorn machines and rent the sequined Stepford Wives and get air time. That money comes off the top. Then they take out the prize money and there is still a whopping big chunk left to make it worth the state's while. Then on top of that, a big chunk of the winnings goes to Uncle Sammy. And if that were not enough, most of the stuff you buy with the winnings has sales tax.

Now I am sure none of this is a surprise to anyone reading this but someone out there is buying those tickets. I guess even the Stepford Wives are one up on some people.

2. Ihor Kinal has donated the following books to the Science

Fiction Club library:

Anderson, Poul      Dark Between the Stars, The  
Asimov, Isaac      Foundation and Earth  
Asimov, Isaac (ed)   Mutants  
Asimov, Isaac      Winds of Change (hardcover)  
Asprin, Robert Lynn   Tales from the Vulgar Unicorn  
Barnes, Steven      Barsoom Project (w/ Niven)  
Bear, Greg          Eon (hardcover)  
Bishop, Michael      Light Years and Dark (trade)  
Clancy, Tom          Cardinal of the Kremlin (hardcover)  
Coyle, Harold        Team Yankee  
Geller, Stephen      GAD (hardcover)  
Gerrold, David      War Against the Chtorr: A Day for Damnation (hardcover)  
Haiblum, Isadore     Transfer to Yesterday (hardcover)  
Haldeman, Joe        Dealing with Futures (hardcover)  
Heinlein, Robert A.   To Sail Beyond the Sunset  
Johnstone, William W. Fire in the Ashes

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McCaffrey, Anne      Nerilka's Story (hardcover)  
McIntyre, Vonda N.   Dreamsnake (hardcover)  
Meyer, Nicholas      West End Horror (hardcover)  
Niven, Larry          Limits  
Niven, Larry          Oath of Fealty (w/ Pournelle)  
Norwood, Warren      Windhover Tapes: An Image of Voices  
Randall, Marta        Dangerous Games  
Roszak, Theodore     Bugs (hardcover)  
Simak, Clifford D.    Shakespeare's Planet  
Streiber, Whitley     War Day (w/ Kunetka)  
Williamson, Jack      Starchild Trilogy (w/ Pohl) (hardcover)  
Zelazny, Roger        Eye of Cat (hardcover)

The following were donated by an anonymous donor:

Blish, James          Spock Must Die!  
Carey, Diane          Dreadnought! (LZ+MT)  
Carter, Carmen        Dreams of the Raven (LZ+MT)  
Cherryh, C. J.         Kif Strike Back, The  
Cooper, Susan          Black Fire  
Dillard, J. M.          Bloodthirst  
Dillard, J. M.          Demons  
Ford, John M.          Final Reflection, The

LeGuin, Ursula K. Farthest Shore, The  
Sky, Kathleen Death's Angel  
Walton, Evangeline Prince of Annwn

LeGuin's F\_a\_r\_t\_h\_e\_s\_t\_S\_h\_o\_r\_e has been sent to Lincroft to complete the "Earthsea" trilogy there. Niven & Barnes's B\_a\_r\_s\_o\_o\_m\_P\_r\_o\_j\_e\_c\_t has also been sent to Lincroft, which has the first volume of the series as well. Similarly, Norwood's W\_i\_n\_d\_o\_v\_e\_r\_T\_a\_p\_e\_s has been sent to Holmdel, to continue that series there. The rest of the books are in Middletown.

Mark Leeper  
MT 3D-441 957-5619  
...mtgzx!leeper

[There are] three classes: those who see, those who  
see when they are shown, those who do not see.  
-- Leonardo Da Vinci

SEA OF LOVE  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper  
Copyright 1989 Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Steamy love story crossed with a  
tepid police procedural mystery. The plot may have been  
intended to be clever but fails somehow to have anything  
very unexpected. There are problems in continuity,

casting, and plotting. Rating: low +1.

There is a serial killer in New York City. Somebody seems to be answering all the rhyming ads men put in the personals columns and killing the men placing the ads. Twenty-year veteran police detective Frank Keller (played by Al Pacino) teams up with Sherman (played by John Goodman). Frank and Sherman decide that the fastest way to catch the killer is to place their own personals ad and plan rendezvous with the thirty or so women who respond to the ad. By getting the fingerprints of each, they hope to get a match with the fingerprints found at the scenes of the murders. One woman who responds is the tall, slim, and sensuous Helen (played by Ellen Barkin). Frank fails to get Helen's fingerprints, but runs into her again and they become lovers. Now here is one failing of the plot. Frank is ambivalent on finding out if Helen is connected with the murders, but on those days he is curious he is willing to steal her Social Security card but not to take her fingerprints. Frank is expert enough to recognize if two prints match, but he never bothers to compare.

Pacino's character is one heck of a policeman. He is an alcoholic, he has a chip on his shoulder, and he is a slob. Even worse, he garbles his lines so they are almost incomprehensible. Barkin makes all the right moves to play a really sexy woman, but somehow she never makes it all the way to actually being sexy. Still, her love scenes are sufficiently steamy to keep the audience staring closely at the screen. Rounding out the cast is the now familiar John Goodman. Goodman has a big St. Bernardish look but is likable as the wise-cracking partner. Also on hand is William Hickey playing Pacino's father. Hickey looks and talks like Pacino much more than some other actors who could have been cast in the role such as Jay Silverheels or Toshiro Mifune.

While this film has been likened by some to B\_o\_d\_y\_H\_e\_a\_t, the story is really just an okay police procedural about the catching of a killer. While the dialogue is often quite funny, particularly in the byplay of the two partners, the script is overall just mediocre. The plot is just not very clever or intricate, and needs a few more twists to keep up audience interest. I rate this one a low +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

## THE DYBBUK

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Capsule review: Paydirt! A Yiddish film made in Poland in 1938 turns out to be a little-known gem. The film lacks a lot of what we might consider high production values, but besides being an unintentional artifact of the culture of Eastern European Jewry wiped out in the Holocaust, it also turns out to be a haunting horror film that deserves to be seen by all fans of 1920s and 1930s horror films. At least one sequence, a grotesque dance, ranks this film up with some of the best of German Expressionism. Rating: +3.

Watching the 1938 Polish-made Yiddish film T\_h\_e\_D\_y\_b\_b\_u\_k, one is only too aware that the film is flawed. Much of the acting is exaggerated as it would be in a silent film. Some of the photography seems poor, as well as some of the editing. At least once the film cuts from a quiet scene to a loud scene and the sudden sound causes the audience to jump. It is true, however, that in retrospect most of the faults seem hard to remember. The strongest memories of the film are beautiful images, some haunting and horrifying. And while taken individually many of the scenes were less effective for me than they may have been for T\_h\_e\_D\_y\_b\_b\_u\_k's intended audience, this is a great mystical horror film, perhaps one of the better horror films of the 1930s.

[Spoilers follow, though as with a Shakespeare play, one does not see T\_h\_e\_D\_y\_b\_b\_u\_k for plot surprises.]

Sender and Nisn have been very close friends since their student days. Now they see each other only on holidays. To cement the bond of their friendship they vow that if their respective first children--each expected soon--are of opposite sexes then they will arrange a marriage of the two children. Sure enough, Sender has a daughter Leah, though he loses his wife in childbirth. Nisn has a son, Khonnon, though an accident claims Nisn's life before he can even see his new son or conclude his arrangement to marry Khonnon to Leah.

Years later Khonnon, now a Talmudic scholar, meets Leah and they fall in love. Neither knows about the vow they would be married and Sender does not know whose son Khonnon is. The intense Khonnon is already considering giving up his study of the Talmud to study Kabbalah, the great book of mystical knowledge and magic. Sender three times tries to arrange a marriage with a rich but rather sheepish young man. Twice the plans fail and Khonnon believes his magic has averted the arrangement. The third time, however, an agreement is reached. Khonnon calls upon dark forces to help him but is consumed by his own spell and found dead. The day of Leah's marriage--in fact, during the marriage

ceremony itself--Khonnon's spirit returns from the grave as a d\_y\_b\_b\_u\_k, a possessing demon, and takes over the body of the woman he was denied. Leah is taken to a great and pious Rabbi, now nearing the end of his life and torn with self-doubts, who alone may have the knowledge to remove the demon.

If some of this smacks of William Peter Blatty, it should be remembered that this is a 1938 film based on a pre-World-War-I play. T\_h\_e\_D\_y\_b\_b\_u\_k by S. Anski (a pen name for Shloyme Zanvl Rappoport), along with T\_h\_e\_G\_o\_l\_e\_m by H. Leivick (a pen name for Leivick Halper), are perhaps the two best remembered (and most commonly translated) plays of the great Yiddish Theater. Why Yiddish folklore has many d\_y\_b\_b\_u\_k and g\_o\_l\_e\_m stories, and the play T\_h\_e\_G\_o\_l\_e\_m was based on an actual legend ("The Golem of Prague"), T\_h\_e\_D\_y\_b\_b\_u\_k was an original story involving a legendary type of demon. The film retells the story of the play, but remains very different. Other than plot there is not much of the play carried over into the film.

All too commonly constraints of budget and even what appears now to be inappropriate style rob some scenes of their effect. Much of the acting is exaggerated in ways that might have been more appropriate to silent film or to the stage. In fact, in some ways this feels like an entire film done in a style much like the early, good scenes of the 1930 D\_r\_a\_c\_u\_l\_a. Director Michal Waszynski could well be excused on the grounds that he was making the film for a very different audience. However, just occasionally, a scene will be really supremely well done. The best sequence of the film is when Leah, just before her marriage, is called upon to dance with the poor of the town, as is traditional. Leah is reluctant and the dance turns into a grotesquery culminating with Leah dancing with a figure of death. The film is a showcase for Yiddish songs, cantorial singing, and dancing, both traditional and modern. Much seems out of place, but this one dance creates one of the most eerie and effective horror scenes of its decade.

T\_h\_e\_D\_y\_b\_b\_u\_k stands as more than a good horror film. It is also an artifact of pre-Holocaust Yiddish film and of Eastern European Jewish village life. Curiously, for a Yiddish some of the stereotypes that appear could be interpreted as being anti-Semitic. We see a miser with exaggerated Jewish features counting and recounting his coins. We see what is intended to be a great Rabbi looking pompous, fat, sloppy, and

apparently lazy. Why a Yiddish film would have such images is open to question. Still, it is a pity that this film is not better known. It deserves to be thought of as a major film of its decade. I rate it +3 on the -4 to +4 scale. Congratulations to the National Center for Jewish Film for restoring this film.

Noreascon 3 '89

Con report by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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(Part 2)

Panel: Things You Should Have Read  
Saturday, 4 PM

Steven Gould, Karen Haber, Fred Lerner, Arthur Hlavaty (mod)

For this panel it's probably best just to give you the list:

Bayley, Barrington J. (Hlavaty)

(Gould) Bester, Alfred, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ t \_ a \_ r \_ s \_ M \_ y \_ D \_ e \_ s \_ t \_ i \_ n \_ a \_ t \_ i \_ o \_ n

Coover, Robert, \_ P \_ u \_ b \_ l \_ i \_ c \_ B \_ u \_ r \_ n \_ i \_ n \_ g (Hlavaty)

Coover, Robert, \_ U \_ n \_ i \_ v \_ e \_ r \_ s \_ a \_ l \_ B \_ a \_ s \_ e \_ b \_ a \_ l \_ l

\_ A \_ s \_ s \_ o \_ c \_ i \_ a \_ t \_ i \_ o \_ n , \_ I \_ n \_ c . ,

\_ J \_ H \_ e \_ n \_ r \_ y \_ W \_ a \_ u \_ g \_ h , \_ P \_ r \_ o \_ p . (Lerner)

Hesse, Herman, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ G \_ l \_ a \_ s \_ s \_ B \_ e \_ a \_ d \_ G \_ a \_ m \_ e

(a.k.a. \_ M \_ a \_ g \_ i \_ s \_ t \_ e \_ r \_ L \_ u \_ d \_ i ) (Hlavaty)

Kinsella, W. P., \_ S \_ h \_ o \_ e \_ l \_ e \_ s \_ s \_ J \_ o \_ e (Gould)

Langguth, A. J., \_ J \_ e \_ s \_ u \_ s \_ C \_ h \_ r \_ i \_ s \_ t \_ s (Hlavaty)

Myers, John Myers, \_ S \_ i \_ l \_ v \_ e \_ r \_ l \_ o \_ c \_ k (Lerner)

Panshin, Alexei, Anthony Villiers novels ( \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ S \_ t \_ a \_ r \_ W \_ e \_ l \_ l ,

\_ M \_ a \_ s \_ q \_ u \_ e \_ W \_ o \_ r \_ l \_ d , and \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ T \_ h \_ u \_ r \_ b  
\_ R \_ e \_ v \_ o \_ l \_ u \_ t \_ i \_ o \_ n ) (Hlavaty)

Silverberg, Robert, \_ D \_ y \_ i \_ n \_ g \_ I \_ n \_ s \_ i \_ d \_ e (Lerner)

Williams, Walter Jon, \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ C \_ r \_ o \_ w \_ n \_ J \_ e \_ w \_ e \_ l \_ s (Gould)



Williams, Walter Jon, \_ H \_ o \_ u \_ s \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ S \_ h \_ a \_ r \_ d \_ s (Gould)

Wright, Austin Tappan, \_ I \_ s \_ l \_ a \_ n \_ d \_ i \_ a (Lerner)

Yates, Alan, \_ C \_ o \_ r \_ i \_ o \_ l \_ a \_ n \_ u \_ s \_ t \_ h \_ e \_ C \_ h \_ a \_ r \_ i \_ o \_ t!

(Hlavaty)

Panel: Sherlock Holmes and SF

Saturday, 5 PM

Thorarinn Gunnarsson, Evelyn Leeper, Tony Lewis,  
Stu Shiffman, Joe Siclari (mod)

Various books were mentioned. I noted only the ones new to me:

Poul Anderson's \_ M \_ i \_ d \_ s \_ u \_ m \_ m \_ e \_ r \_ T \_ e \_ m \_ p \_ e \_ s \_ t (cameo at the end)  
something by Daniel Pinkwater (title not mentioned)

novel  
\_ C \_ t \_ h \_ u \_ l \_ h \_ u \_ b \_ y \_ G \_ a \_ s \_ l \_ i \_ g \_ h \_ t (I'm not sure if this is a graphic

or not; it sounds like a sequel to \_ S \_ c \_ a \_ r \_ l \_ e \_ t \_ b \_ y

\_ G \_ a \_ s \_ l \_ i \_ g \_ h \_ t, which is)

\_ A \_ C \_ a \_ s \_ e \_ o \_ f \_ B \_ l \_ i \_ n \_ d \_ F \_ e \_ a \_ r (graphic novel)

series)  
\_ T \_ h \_ e \_ R \_ a \_ i \_ n \_ b \_ o \_ w \_ A \_ f \_ f \_ a \_ i \_ r (in the "Man from U.N.C.L.E.")

Much of the hour was devoted to listing books (with all the panels scribbling down titles frantically), but some topics were raised. What people liked or disliked in Holmes pastiches was discussed (I said they should take place in Victorian times--Holmes does not translate well to other times). Lewis claimed that Holmes was popular with adolescents because Holmes gets to eat when he wants, sleep when he wants, do what he wants, and be rude to grown-ups.

Gunnarsson has acted in some Holmes plays in Iceland, so some discussion was made of the "visual Holmes." Brett was obviously the favorite actor, and I can't recall any runners-up.

(Since I was on this panel, my notes are spotty, so please forgive the short synopsis. There really was not a lot new added to the opus of Sherlockian scholarship.)

Panel: The Closing of the American Mind

Saturday, 6 PM

Gregory Benford, David Brin, Hal Clement, Joyce Scrivner (mod)

The ironic note of this panel was that Clement talked about how we need to teach more science, but Allan Bloom in his book T\_h\_e\_C\_l\_o\_s\_i\_n\_g\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_A\_m\_e\_r\_i\_c\_a\_n\_M\_i\_n\_d called for more "education" in the liberal arts and less "training" in science and technology. (At least that's how I read it.) It's possible, of course, that the title of the panel was not supposed to refer to Bloom's book, but it is still ironic that the panelists emphasized the engineering that Bloom had such distaste for.

One person claimed that the book A\_l\_l\_I\_R\_e\_a\_l\_l\_y\_N\_e\_e\_d\_t\_o\_K\_n\_o\_w\_I\_L\_e\_a\_r\_n\_e\_d\_i\_n\_K\_i\_n\_d\_e\_r\_g\_a\_r\_t\_e\_n (by Robert Fulghum) was fairly insightful. The room was packed, but it was once again an example of preaching to the choir. We had to leave this early so Mark could go to the Green Room for his next panel, but it didn't seem like much of a loss.

Panel: Arthurian Movie Reviews  
Saturday, 7 PM  
Darrell Schweitzer, Mark Leeper (mod)

The panel was somewhat smaller than usual. Luckily Darrell was able to take up the slack and talk for two, throwing out comments such as "Wearing armor at a banquet in peacetime is like coming to dinner in a welding mask."

For this panel, Mark and I had prepared a handout (Attachment 1) which summarizes a lot of what was said. Several other items were mentioned: a television show called "Sir Lancelot," a Richard Basehart television version of A\_C\_o\_n\_n\_e\_c\_t\_i\_c\_u\_t\_Y\_a\_n\_k\_e\_e\_i\_n\_K\_i\_n\_g\_A\_r\_t\_h\_u\_r's\_C\_o\_u\_r\_t (for which I have searched in vain for references to), T\_h\_e\_C\_o\_u\_r\_t\_J\_e\_s\_t\_e\_r (which is not Arthurian but is always mentioned at Arthurian panels anyway) and a 16th Century play called T\_h\_e\_B\_i\_r\_t\_h\_o\_f\_M\_e\_r\_l\_i\_n.

The background of the Arthurian legends is Geoffrey of Monmouth, who wrote about 6th Century events as if they were taking place in the 11th Century (when he lived). There are some interesting attempts to Christianize the legend--the Green Knight of the legend is merely a version of the Druidic "Green Man," and the whole search for the Grail is added to bring a Christian overtone to the story. Certainly if one looks at how marriage (and sex) was viewed in the legend it is a more pagan view than a Christian one.

Not all the films were commented on, but I made the following notes. BlackShieldofFalworth and FeuerundSchwert got very poor reviews. KnightsoftheRoundTable was an excuse for a spectacle film Camelo was considered grossly inaccurate and almost not even Arthurian; Excalibu was visually interesting but also grossly inaccurate. KingArthur, theYoungWarlord tries to remove all the fantasy elements. Knightriders is much better than people expect. without being very good. LegendofKingArthur is perhaps the most accurate, but a bit dry for some tastes. Everyone likes MontyPythonandtheHolyGrail.

Hugo Awards  
Saturday, 8:30 PM

First the awards:

Novel: Cyteen, by C.J. Cherryh (Warner; Popular Library/Questar)

Novella: "The Last of the Winnebagos," by Connie Willis  
(IASFM, Jul 88)

Novelette: "Schrodinger's Kitten," by George Alec Effinger  
(OMNI, Sep 88)

Short Story: "Kirinyaga," by Mike Resnick (F&SF, Nov 88)

Non-Fiction: TheMotionofLightinWater, by Samuel R. Delany  
(Morrow)

Dramatic Pres.: WhoFramedRogerRabbit

Pro Editor: Gardner Dozois, IASFM

Pro Artist: Michael Whelan

Semi-Prozine: Locus (ed. Charles N. Brown)

Fanzine: File770 (ed. Mike Glyer)

Fan Writer: Dave Langford

Fan Artist: Brad W. Foster and Diana Gallagher Wu (tie)

John W. Campbell Award: Michaela Roessner

Seiun ("Japanese Hugo") for Best Novel in Translation:

Footfal by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle

Seiun for Best Short Story in Translation:

"Eye for Eye" by Orson Scott Card

Gryphon Award: Elizabeth Waters

Lee Barwick (Honor Book)

First Fandom Award: L. Sprague de Camp

Donald Grant

Frederik Pohl

Big Heart Award: Arthur L. Widner, Jr.

Special Awards: Alex Schomburg

SFLovers'Digest

Now the comments: The most comment ( \_ a \_ l \_ l negative) was for the Gryphon Award, given by Andre Norton for the "Best Unpublished Fantasy Manuscript by a Woman"! Her rationale for this was that "the woman" don't win as many awards, so this is needed. Did she ask for Cherryh's or Willis's opinions, I wonder. (Both were too polite to say "So there!" in accepting their awards.) The Con Committee found itself between a rock and a hard place on this one--Norton was a Guest of Honor, and apparently made a fuss when this award was originally

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scheduled to be presented at one of her panels or talks. It is expected (and hoped) that Confiction will feel no obligation to have it presented at the Hugo ceremony.

The prizes for the Seiun were saki sets; I commented to Mark that I wasn't sure what Card (a Mormon) was going to do with his. When he accepted, he said that he couldn't use it for tea (!) but would find some use for it. As someone pointed out, he also talked about how nice it was that cultural barriers are being broken down and people were learning about other cultures. Open mouth, insert foot.

As with last year, I got the definite impression that First Fandom has embarked on a "let's award everyone before they die" campaign--they gave out four awards last year and three this year.

There were twelve Hugos presented in eleven categories, and eleven non-Hugos. While some of these non-Hugos have traditionally been awarded at the Hugo ceremony, I think the Seiun and the Gryphon (and other awards such as the Prometheus Award) should be awarded at a separate ceremony--perhaps during the Masquerade intermission?.

Pohl's stories were enjoyable. He told how the Fantasy APA was founded in the Parker House Hotel Bar. He also told about the time in Cleveland in 1966 when the Worldcon shared the hotel with a group of World War II veterans. When some of both groups got stuck in an elevator, he said the veterans were sobbing and clawing the walls and crying, "For the love of God, Montessor!" and the fans were saying, "Oh, good, let's filk!" (I claimed that the veterans starting sobbing et al \_ a \_ f \_ t \_ e \_ r the filking started.)

Effinger, in reference to his past medical and personal troubles, said, "Some people may say I got a bad break. But today I feel like the luckiest man on earth." (For those who don't recognize it, this is from Lou Gehrig's farewell speech.) In her acceptance speech, Connie Willis said, "After I saw my picture on the cover of L\_o\_c\_u\_s after I won the Nebula, I vowed if I won this tonight I would not grin from ear to ear and look like a deranged chipmunk again. But, aw, what the heck!"

The crowd control was excellent--there were no lines! The decision was made to open the auditorium well in advance of the starting time, so no lines built up. (This was possible because the decision was also made that there would be one setup for everything--they would not try to rearrange the chairs between the film presentations and the Hugos, etc. Wise decision!) Everyone could see; everyone could hear. It was great.

The program ran on time, in part because there was a schedule--to the second--of how long was allowed for each step. I can't recall it exactly, but it had entries such as "Hand over Hugo, not blocking view with podium--10 seconds" and "Winner mounts stage--20 seconds." Each Hugo was scheduled to take 300 seconds (5 minutes) and they kept to this schedule pretty well.

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The processional (in which all the nominees marched in, complete with banners and Hugos leading the parade, was to the music from B\_e\_n\_H\_u\_r. (Mark wants me to point out that I couldn't identify it and had to ask him.)

Panel: Media SF for the Literary Fan  
Sunday, 1 PM

George R. R. Martin, Bill Rotsler, Melinda Snodgrass (mod)

At starting time, only Snodgrass was present. Martin came in about half-way through (his wife's purse had been snatched in Au Bon Pain and they had been filling out a police report), and Rotsler showed up even later (he had found himself next to the Guests of Honor at the Brunch and didn't feel it proper to just walk out in the middle).

I had hoped that this would discuss some of the more literate fantasy and science fiction films, such as F\_i\_e\_l\_d\_o\_f\_D\_r\_e\_a\_m\_s and B\_r\_a\_z\_i\_l,

but instead the hour consisted mostly of people discussing the "Star Trek" and "Beauty and the Beast" television shows and why the scripts aren't better and whether writing to the producers would help. "Max Headroom" was mentioned briefly, but the audience seemed firmly fixed in those other two shows (probably because they came knowing that Snodgrass works on "Star Trek" and Martin on "Beauty and the Beast," facts that probably would have steered me away had I known them ahead of time.

My feeling is that literary television doesn't work because literary people don't watch television; people expect something else from television. And since the major market for films these days is the under-21 crowd, literary films must appeal to all those over 21 to make money, and science fiction and fantasy may have a difficult time doing that.

The panelists claimed that television series also have the problem that characters can't change radically, but I would note that series other than theirs have change. I agree, though, that multi-episode stories or radical changes destroy the interchangeability almost required for syndication.

The panelists finally ended up listing ideas they never wanted to see again: evil twins, shape-shifters (Clive Barker should hear this!), GLAs (god-like aliens), the Enterprise meets God, and computer viruses. (Well, the last is probably topical now, but I suspect the flood of virus stories will pass.)

On the whole, I found this a very disappointing panel, in large part because the description was misleading.

Panel: Historical Fantasy

Sunday, 2 PM

Lisa Barnett, Kim Stanley Robinson, Delia Sherman, John M. Ford

After the usual credentials listing (in this case the panelists

seemed more concerned with establishing their experience with the subject than in selling their books, a delightful change), the panel tried to define historical fantasy, and in particular to distinguish it from alternate history. They described historical fantasy as the underlying story to match the surface story one gets in history class. In other words, historical fantasy does not contradict any known events, while alternate history does. It is for this reason that Barnett classifies her A\_r\_m\_o\_r\_o\_f\_L\_i\_g\_h\_t (co-authored with Melissa Scott) as historical fantasy rather than alternate history--all the events are true, just the motivation and background is based in magic.

Another example is the Lord D'Arcy series of Randall Garrett (and now Michael Kurland). Lord D'Arcy uses magic in the forensic parts, but the murders that he solves are n\_o\_t done by magic but by ordinary means. While this series is obviously alternate history as well (given a real divergence with actual events) the handling of magic as limited in how it is used in the novel was a factor in causing the panelists to rate this book highly. (It also makes them better mystery stories, since the reader has a chance of figuring out the solution, where if magic were used, it would be much more difficult.

The discussion seemed to lead to the conclusion that historical fantasy and alternate history were orthogonal: Ford's D\_r\_a\_g\_o\_n\_W\_a\_i\_t\_i\_n\_g is both, Keith Roberts's P\_a\_v\_a\_n\_e is alternate history without being historical fantasy, and A\_r\_m\_o\_r\_o\_f\_L\_i\_g\_h\_t is historical fantasy without being alternate history (at least according to the panel). Other historical fantasies mentioned were Robinson's "Black Air," Mary Renault's works, and Gene Wolfe's S\_o\_l\_d\_i\_e\_r\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_M\_i\_s\_t. The last, like MacAvoy's "Damiano" trilogy is unusual in that it contains no famous people; most historical fantasies center around famous people and events.

One thing that makes writing historical fantasies both easier and harder is that there were no real historians between the Roman Empire and the French Revolution. Oh, people noted down events, but not really with an eye to recording history for the future. As someone pointed out, this means a lot of things were never written down (floor plans for houses, for example). So on the one hand an author can make up a fair amount without contradicting any known facts. On the other hand, it's almost impossible to find out some things that you may need for your story. (One suggestion was to read fiction of the period for some details, but this is really only applicable after about 1500. Another suggestion was to use children's books, which state the "obvious" a lot more often than adult books do.) All this led Ford to note that "history is not the lie agreed upon because it isn't even agreed upon." And Sherman added (either footnoting or quoting Ford; I'm not sure

which), "Research is like foreplay: it's a lot of fun but you have to get on to the next step if you're going to produce something."

Reading: Lewis Shiner  
Sunday, 3 PM

I don't usually go to readings, but on the basis of Shiner's "performance" on his panels, I decided to go to his reading. He read the beginning of his next novel S l a m (due out May 1990). It is a mainstream novel about a man who gets out of prison (where he did time for tax evasion) and who gets a job taking care of the dozens of cats a rich old lady left her fortune to. (It is n o t a comedy.) The line that stuck me the most was, "The city [Galveston] was like a blonde with dark roots, sitting on a barstool with a line of empty glasses in front of her and an afternoon to kill."

Shiner will also be editing an issue of Pulphouse's A u t h o r' s C h o i c e M o n t h e l y and a Greenpeace anthology (for which I didn't catch the name), and may be writing for DC's H a c k e r F i l e s.

Panel: Phantom of the Opera  
Sunday, 4 PM  
John Flynn, Heather Nachman, Lynne Stephens

I had hoped this panel would discuss all versions and interpretations of T h e P h a n t o m o f t h e O p e r a, but instead it was meant to cover only the musical version. I like the musical, but long discussions of which actor makes the best Phantom in the musical left me somewhat bored. When the panelists asked why people had come to a panel about the musical, I commented that I had expected a somewhat wider scope, and after that other people talked about different versions, including the most accurate film one, the animated special on HBO! There was also some discussion of Erik as someone who was ugly on the outside and beautiful on the inside; Mark drew the parallel to John Merrick (the "Elephant Man").

We did get a chance to buy some nice hand-colored buttons of the Phantom "logo" (the mask and the rose) from one of the artists in the audience.

Dinner was supposed to be at Legal Seafood (about a mile down the road) but someone warned us that it was really crowded, and since we wanted to be back for the masquerade, we opted for The Atlantic Fish Company instead (we being Mark, Kate, Barbara, Dave, Dale, Jo, John, and I--John's friend Marjorie joined us later). The food was very good,



though our table seemed to be in the line of traffic, which made for sporadic disturbances. Since this restaurant was right across the street, we had no problem eating a leisurely meal, complete with dessert and coffee, and still being back in time for the masquerade.

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Masquerade  
Sunday, 8:30 PM

We got our seats (in the balcony rather than on the floor). We ended up sitting almost even with the stage, which pointed up one problem. Many of the costumes, or the skits that went with them, didn't take into account the 180-degree audience. So there were examples of costumed people who were supposed to be hidden behind other people, but were clearly visible to us. There were other instances of costumes where we never saw parts of them because the wearers didn't turn in our direction. Someone pointed out that the costumers are playing to the judges rather than the audience but I suspect that's not entirely true--if there were no audience I don't think the costumers would be as enthusiastic about doing the costumes.

It was in this area that the Con committee made its two "fluffs"--they almost lost the tape to accompany one of the costumes (but did locate it just in time), and they never got the newsletter out announcing the winners. So I can't tell you which costumes won. I can say that there were about fifty costumes, varying in quality from the very good to the really bad ("Merlin" waving a scarf to Kermit the Frog singing the "Rainbow" song).

After the first run-through we left for a couple of parties. (I suspect if the committee scheduled and announced some real entertainment during the judging break, more people would stay around.)

Parties  
Sunday, 10:30 PM

First, we dropped by Lan and Maia's room, consoling him on his runner-up status for the Fanzine Hugo (he missed by \_ 4 votes--amazingly close, though the tie for Fan Artist this year indicated just how close

it can get. Ties in Australian ballots are nearly impossible.) We got to see a few people whom we hadn't seen since Contraption, and it was a very low-key sort of get-together.

I was a bit disturbed by something at this party. The Gaylaxians (a gay SF fan group) had an ad in the Souvenir Book listing their various chapters and mentioning at what conventions they had parties. In particular, they mentioned several conventions in the Detroit area (such as Contraption) and one person present pointed this out to everyone, with comments such as "Who would have expected that this is how Contraption would be advertised?" and much laughter. When I asked (disingenuously) what was so funny, I got a little whispered comment about how the Gaylaxians are a gay group and they were saying they were present at these conventions. (I'm reminded--unpleasantly--of how people used to whisper that someone was a Jew, as if saying it aloud were shocking.) Why is it that I don't think the reaction would have been the same for Christian Fandom (another organized group)? On the whole, I've come to expect science fiction fans to be more mature and

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tolerant/accepting than the population at large, and it always comes as a surprise when I find the same reactions there that I find in the "real" world.

The @ party was held once again in Nick Simicich's room (thanks, Nick!). It was loud, often too much so. After a couple of visits from the hotel security people, we took to shushing everyone on general principles every five minutes or so, just to get the noise level down. The usual one-shot was put together (with emacs, an editor I don't know any better than the IBM thing Nick had last year). We arrived late and missed a lot of the people I had hoped to see, but did have a chance to talk to Tim Maroney, who seems very different in person than electronically. (See, Tim, I didn't say you look different!) Mark spent a fair amount of time talking to a couple of people including someone who works for AT&T in another location about 3 miles from ours. (For this we went to Boston?) The conversation included libertarian science fiction, and since I recently panned a couple of libertarian science fiction books because of gratuitous rape scenes, one of the people was wondering if I was just down on the Libertarians or what. At least he will be relieved to hear than I will not be making the same criticism of Koman's \_ J \_ e \_ h \_ o \_ v \_ a \_ h \_ C \_ o \_ n \_ t \_ r \_ a \_ c \_ t .)

Panel: Editing Reviews

Monday, 12 noon

Donald D'Ammassa, George "Lan" Laskowski, Charles N. Bown (mod)

I probably took the most notes for this panel as for any panel, since I am on both the giving and the receiving end of this. The panelists also covered the spectrum: D'Ammassa writes reviews for

S c i e n c e F i c t i o n C h r o n i c l e, Brown edits L o c u s, and Lan writes reviews and edits L a n' s L a n t e r n.

D'Ammassa specializes in 100-word reviews. He likes to be edited for factual errors, the use of "the almost right word," grammar, and spelling. He does not want to be edited for substantive change in his review. I asked about a middle case: what about if something he feels is important is edited out of a review? He said this was usually a matter of negotiation. (This works if there is an easy communication path between editor and writer. In the case of long-distance editing without benefit of electronic mail, this is harder to accomplish.) His basic philosophy is that the review is not as high a form as the work being reviewed, and so shouldn't be considered as sacrosanct.

Brown edits at several levels. First, he chooses who will review which book, usually on the basis of background or knowledge. (When I reviewed for D e l a p' s F & S F R e v i e w he asked each reviewer for a list of authors s/he felt most knowledgeable about. So when the Olaf Stapledon collection came along, he sent it to me, as the only [I'm sure] person to list Stapledon.) Then he avoids strongly critical reviews (as he said, he basically runs only recommendations, on the theory that there are enough good books that people will miss otherwise to avoid using up

that space for bad books). And finally, he edits for terseness. He wants to run as many reviews as possible, so he doesn't want his reviewers rambling on.

Lan doesn't edit except for obvious errors and typos. Actually, that's not quite true. He once moved a closing parenthetical paragraph from the end of one of my reviews to the beginning. Unfortunately, I

made an error in that paragraph which he didn't catch, but several readers did.

As far as reviewing short fiction, some do it by reviewing individual pieces, others by reviewing the collection or magazine as a whole. Lan also includes reviews of music and other related forms that the professional (and semi-professional) zines tend to bypass.

Brown said he will review small press or books outside the field without being sent review copies, but won't give ordering information for them. He gave some reasons for this, but it still sounds a bit petty. After all, the cost of a single volume sent out as a review copy can put a substantial dent in a small press's profits on a given volume. He also insists on bound books (not stapled)--he finds that a book often changes considerably between advance proofs and the actual text published. And he avoids running multiple reviews of the same book; he can run only about 480 reviews a year and there are about 1200 books published.

While he tries to avoid reviews of fiction that discuss the book as an artifact, the physical book itself is considered if the book is an art book. Similarly, the accuracy and scope of a reference work is what is important in a review of that category. Spoilers are not a major consideration to Brown; since Locus reviews are often what sell the overseas rights to a work, if the reviewer includes the denouement of the plot, that's acceptable.

For most reviews, the panelists seemed to agree that having the reviewer state a clear opinion is important. Is this book the greatest thing since sliced bread or is it just rancid butter? In this regard, Lan likes the capsules that some reviewers put at the beginning--two or three sentences and a rating.

### Miscellaneous

The hotel problems with the Sheraton seemed to have been worked out. Some functions were there, some parties were there, and the staff was polite and friendly. There was no evidence of a feared hostility if they were forced to keep their contract. There was a direct connection from the Sheraton to the Hynes (actually two, one into the Concourse and one into the Dealers' Room), or one could walk outside past the Au Bon Pain, which did a very brisk business.

The elevator situation was no worse than usual, though one elevator in the South Tower of the Sheraton was out the entire weekend and other times it seemed as if only one of the four was running. During the parties, elevator patrols helped keep the elevators from getting jammed up and express elevators to the party floor sped things up considerably.

We found ourselves recognized by many people, both because of S F  
L o v e r ' s ' D i g e s t and because of L a n ' s  
L a n t e r n. We were even asked  
 permission by the folks who run GENIE to download our writings to there!

There were plenty of eating places nearby, both cheap and expensive, and I was very pleased with all the meals I had time for.

My only major complaint was that the beanie propeller hats sold out in under an hour and I couldn't get one.

As usual, I'll list the Worldcons I've attended and rank them, best to worst (the middle four are pretty close together):

- Noreascon II
- Noreascon III
- Noreascon I (my first Worldcon)
- Midamericon (on the basis of the film program, perhaps)
- LACon (I don't fault them just because they avoided bankruptcy!)
- Discon II
- Seacon
- Confederation
- Chicon IV
- Conspiracy (mostly due to hotel problems)
- Iguanacon (partially done in, in my opinion, by politics)
- Suncon (the location change from Orlando to Miami didn't help)
- Nolacon II (see this report for details!)
- Constellation (they over-extended themselves)

Orlando won the bid for 1992. This was no surprise; since DC had to withdraw, Orlando was unopposed. Jack Vance and Vincent DiFate are the Pro Guests of Honor, Walter A. Willis is the Fan Guest of Honor, and Spider Robinson is the Toastmaster. Next year's contest is a three-way race for 1993: Phoenix, San Francisco, and Zagreb.

Next year in Holland!

\* GEnie is a trademark of General Electric.

September 1, 1989 Attachment 1--Arthurian Films Noreascon 3

A Brief Filmography of Arthurian Films  
Compiled by Mark R. Leeper & Evelyn C. Leeper  
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- ADVENTURES OF SIR GALAHAD (1949): Directed by Spencer G. Bennet. Starring George Reeves and Lois Hall. Serial.
- ARTHUR THE KING (1985): Directed by Clive Donner. Starring Malcolm McDowell (King Arthur), Candice Bergen (Morgan Le Fay), Edward Woodward, Dyan Cannon, Lucy Gutteridge, Joseph Blatchely, Rupert Everett. Made for CBS television. Cannon falls down a rabbit hole in Stonehenge to get to Camelot.
- BLACK KNIGHT (1954): Directed by Tay Garnett. Starring Alan Ladd, Patricia Medina, Peter Cushing, Andre Morell, Anthony Bushell (King Arthur), and Jean Lodge (Guinevere). A blacksmith's son becomes a mysterious knight.
- BLACK SHIELD OF FALWORTH (1954): Directed by Rudolph Mat'. Starring Tony Curtis, Janet Leigh, and David Farrar. Based on Howard Pyle's MEN OF IRON. ("Yonda lies da castle of my fodda.")
- CAMELOT (1967): Directed by Joshua Logan. Starring Richard Harris (King Arthur), Vanessa Redgrave (Guenevere), Franco Nero (Sir Lancelot), Laurence Naismith (Merlyn), David Hemmings (Mordred). Musical by Lerner and Lowe, based on the T. H. White novel THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING.
- CAMELOT (1982): Filmed version of the stage play, shown on HBO. Starring Richard Burton (King Arthur).
- A CONNECTICUT YANKEE (1931): Directed by David Butler. Starring Will Rogers (Hank/Sir Boss), William Farnum (King Arthur), Myrna Loy (Queen Morgan Le Fay), Mitchell Harris (Merlin). Based on the

Mark Twain novel.

- A CONNECTICUT YANKEE AT KING ARTHUR'S COURT (1920): Directed by Emmett J. Flynn. Starring Harry C. Myers (the Yankee), Charles Clary (King Arthur), Rosemary Theby (Queen Morgan La Fay), Wilfred McDonald (Lancelot), William V. Wong (Merlin). Based on the Mark Twain novel.
- A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT (1949): Directed by Tay Garnett. Starring Bing Crosby (Hank Martin), Sir Cedric Hardwicke (King Arthur), Virginia Field (Morgan LeFay), Murvyn Vye (Merlin). Musical version based on the Mark Twain novel.
- L'ETERNEL RETOUR (1943): Directed by Jean Delannoy. Starring Jean Marais and Madeleine Sologne. Screenplay by Jean Cocteau. The

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story of Tristan and Isolde in a modern setting. Also known as THE ETERNAL RETURN and LOVE ETERNAL.

- EXCALIBUR (1981): Directed by John Boorman. Starring Nigel Terry (Arthur Pendragon), Cherie Lunghi (Guenevere), Nicholas Clay (Lancelot), Robert Addie (Mordred), Helen Mirren (Morgana), Nicol Williamson (Merlin). A very Germanic interpretation of Arthur with a little Siegfried mixed in.
- FEUER UND SCHWERT (1981): Directed by Veith von Furstenberg. The story of Tristan and Isolde.
- KING ARTHUR, THE YOUNG WARLORD (1975): Directed by Sidney Hayers, Patrick Jackson, and Peter Sasdy. Starring Oliver Tobias (King Arthur). Series made for HTV Ltd. and later condensed to feature-film length.
- KNIGHTRIDERS (1981): Directed by George Romero. Starring Ed Harris (Billy/Arthur), Amy Ingersoll (Linet/Guenevere), Gary Lahti (Alan/Lancelot), Tom Savini (Morgan), Brother Blue (Merlin). Arthur story retold set in a sort of SCA-on-motorcycles traveling fair.

- KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE (1953): Directed by Richard Thorpe. Starring Mel Ferrer (King Arthur), Ava Gardner (Guinevere), Robert Taylor (Lancelot), Stanley Baker (Mordred). Anne Crawford (Morgan LeFay), Felix Aylmer (Merlin). MGM's first Cinemascope film.
- LANCELOT AND ELAINE (1910):
- LANCELOT DU LAC (1974): Directed by Robert Bresson. Starring Vladimir Antolek-ORESEK (King Arthur), Laura Duke Condominas (Guinevere), and Luc Simon (Lancelot). Winner of the International Critics Prize at Cannes.
- LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR (1974): Directed by Rodney Bennett. Starring Andrew Burt (King Arthur), Felicity Dean (Guinevere), David Robb (Lancelot), Maureen O'Brien (Morgan Le Fay), and Robert Eddison (Merlin). Made for BBC television and shown in the United States on PBS.
- "LAST DEFENDER OF CAMELOT" (1986): Episode of the new "Twilight Zone." Based on the Roger Zelazny short story.
- LOVESPELL (1979): Directed by Tom Donovan. Starring Richard Burton, Kate Mulgrew, Nicholas Clay, Cyril Cusack. Also known as TRISTAN AND ISOLDE.

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- MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL (1975): Directed by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones. Starring Graham Chapman (King Arthur), John Cleese (Lancelot), Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Michael Palin, Terry Jones.
- PARSIFAL (1904): Directed by Edwin S. Porter. Edison production.
- PARSIFAL (1912): Italian.
- PARSIFAL (1951): Directed by Daniel Mangran' and Carlos Serrano de Osma. Starring Ludmilla Tcherina and Gustavo Rojo. Based on the opera by Richard Wagner which was based on the epic PARZIFAL by



Wolfram Von Eschenbach. Also known as THE EVIL FOREST.

- PARSIFAL (1981): Directed by Hans Jurgen Syberberg.
- PERCEVAL LE GALLOIS (1978): Directed by Eric Rohmer. Starring Fabrice Luchini (Perceval), Marc Eyraud (King Arthur), and Marie Christine Barrault (Guinevere). Based on Chretien de Troyes's poem.
- PRINCE VALIANT (1954): Directed by Henry Hathaway. Starring Brian Aherne (King Arthur), Jarma Lewis (Guinevere), and Don Megowan (Lancelot).
- THE SIEGE OF THE SAXONS (1954): Directed by Nathan Juran. Starring Mark Dignam (King Arthur), John Laurie (Merlin), and Janette Scott.
- THE SWORD IN THE STONE (1963): Directed by Wolfgang Reithermann. Animated; voices by Ricky Sorensen (Wart), Karl Swenson (Merlin), Sebastian Cabot (Sir Ector). Based on the T. H. White novel.
- SWORD OF LANCELOT (1963): Directed by Cornel Wilde. Starring Brian Aherne (King Arthur), Jean Wallace (Guinevere), Cornel Wilde (Lancelot). Also known as LANCELOT AND GUINEVERE.
- SWORD OF THE VALIANT (1982): Directed by Stephen Weeks. Starring Miles O'Keeffe and Sean Connery. The story of Gawain and the Green Knight.
- TRISTAN ET ISEAULT (1972): Directed by Jean Lagrange.
- UNIDENTIFIED FLYING ODDBALL (1979): Directed by Russ Mayberry. Starring Dennis Dugan (Tom Trimble), Kenneth More (King Arthur), Jim Dale (Sir Mordred), Ron Moody (Merlin). Also known as THE SPACEMAN AND KING ARTHUR.