

NOUMENON

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CHRIS HARRIS

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Jim Storey (NZ): pp 3, 6, 9, 14, 15, 18

Colin Wilson (NZ): headings pp 4, 20.

Duncan, Lucas (NZ): p. 5

Mike Willoughby (NZ): p 8

Chris Morris: p. 21

Jim Barker (UK): p. 25

Ralph Silverton (Aust): p 26.

Well, what a large number of changes have taken place since my last editorial. The changes have been extremely important in terms of my personal life and will, soon, have a benefit to Noumenon as well.

The major change has been a change of address. After Dad and I parted ways Wilma Road started to become unsuitable for a variety of reasons. By the time the relationship between Kath and myself flowered into full bloom there was a lot of sense in trying to find a property which could accommodate both of us and our interests.

The new house is massive, with lots of living area and, like Wilma Road, a huge basement. Kath is a potter, so a pottery area, Noumenon area and printing area have been arranged in the basement. A den/library is included in the upstairs area.

But a rather rushed move of house (we saw the place in early November shortly after WallCon and for a variety of reasons moved in early December) and the necessary setting up of work areas has interrupted the plans for a Noumenon until now. I might add that moving two households, plus my huge collection of books and records, plus the printing and Gulf News equipment has taken huge chunks out of every day (and thus every week, every month).

The new house has magnificent views, tremendous living areas and, as indicated, all the space we need. So any week now I should be able to enjoy lots more of it. But first I must concentrate on the next two issues of *Neumenon*, at least, so that I can catch up some of the lost issues from volume four.

I hope you like this issue. I've just finished putting most of it together and reckon it's a beauty. — Brian

Sf is the standard abbreviation used for the term *science fiction* throughout this magazine: *SF* is considered unnecessary, and *sci-fi* undesirable.

WorldCon is the standard abbreviation for the annual World Science Fiction Convention.

GoH is the abbreviation for Guest(s) of Honour at a convention or gathering.

1, *2* (etc) are used as the standard footnote indicators. I feel the asterisk is an under-used symbol and can be used in place of brackets in certain instances.

The following conventions are used in *Numamenon*: The titles of novels or books are in capitals, bold face. The names of films or television programmes are in capitals. The titles of stories or magazines are in capital and lower case, bold face. The titles of articles are in quotation marks. Record album titles are in capitals, bold face. Song titles are in capitals and lower case, bold face. The names of musical groups are in capitals.

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QUIDNUNC'S PAGE

Galaxy Sold to Galileo New Editor

Galaxy, which has been in the doldrums for some time, has been taken over by Vincent McCaffrey, publisher of Galileo, although it will be run as a separate company.

McCaffrey will be executive editor, Floyd Kemske, former review and co-ordinating editor of Galileo, will be the new editor; former Galaxy editor Hank Sline will be a contributing editor.

The new Galaxy will be published bi-monthly, alternating with the schedule of Galileo, and will be a "modular design concept" in a new 11"x8½" format, costing US\$1.50.

In addition to Galaxy, Galileo has acquired rights to other UPD sf magazines: If, Worlds of Tomorrow, Worlds of Fantasy, etc. *

MINIATURES

John Ryan, Australia's leading panelologist, collapsed and died of a stroke in early December. He was a noted authority and his sudden death was a blow to his many Australian friends. His definitive book on Australian comics, **PANEL BY PANEL**, was published in November by Cassell.

New English Library will publish the first edition of Robert Heinlein's **THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST** in February (UK), which will precede the American edition.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK the second **STAR WARS** movie, is planned for August 1980 release in NZ. *

CONVENTIONS

WellCon B: Queen's Birthday weekend (30 May - 2 June) 1980. Wellington, New Zealand. NZ's second national sf convention. No further info received as yet. Contact Bruce Ferguson, 13 Burnside St, Lower Hutt, NZ.

SwanCon 5: 19th National Australian sf con. Aug 22-25 1980. Park Towers Hotel, Perth. Goll: Anne McCaffrey. Membership \$12.50 attending. \$5 supporting. Contact Box 225, Wembley, WA 6014, Australia.

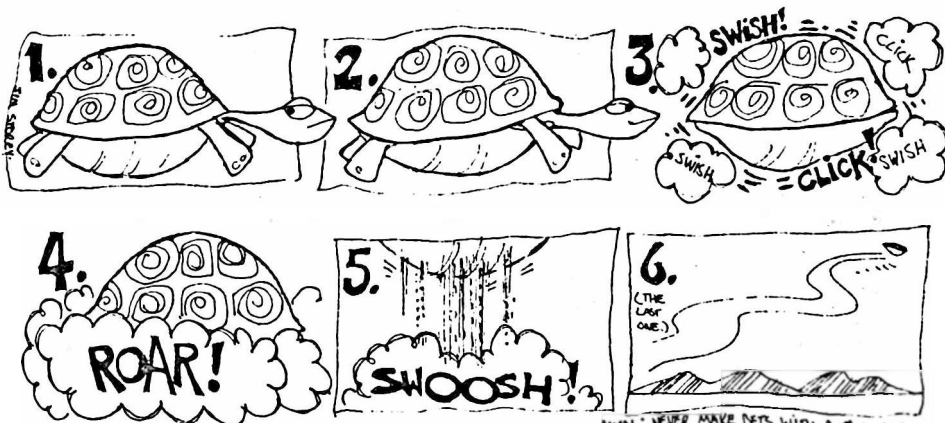
NoreasCon 11: 38th WorldCon, Aug 29 - Sept 1, 1980. Boston, USA. GoHs: Damon Knight, Kate Wilhelm, Bruce Pelz; TM: Bob Silverberg. \$30 attending, \$8 supporting. Contact Box 46, MIT Station, Cambridge, MA 02139, USA.

Advention 81: 20th National Australian, Queen's Birthday (June) 1981. Grosvenor Hotel, Adelaide. GoHs: Frank Herbert, John Foyster. \$12.50 att, \$7.40 supp. Contact Box 130, Marden, SA 5070, Australia.

Denvention 11: 39th WorldCon, Sept 3-7 1981. Denver, USA. GoHs: C L Moore, Clifford Simak; TM: Edward Bryant. \$25 att, \$15 supp. Contact

Noumenon NEW ADDRESS

40 Korora Rd, Oneroa
Waiheke Island, N.Z.



MEAN: NEVER MAKE BETS WITH A TORTOISE
YOU DON'T KNOW.

4 QUIDNUNCS...

Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211, USA.

Australia in '83: bid for the 41st WorldCon. Bulletin published quarterly (4/\$3). Contact Box 1175, Brickfield Hill, NSW 200, Australia. *

NZ FAN HISTORY...

An extensive coverage of fandom in NZ, especially during the 1950's, forms the largest part of the WellCon Convention Booklet. It is 24 pages, Noumenon size and format, with a blue card cover, typeset and offset, with many illustrations (both historical and modern).

Nigel Rowe provides an historical survey of fan activities, clubs and fanzines, along with reference listings of fanzines, dates and clubs. Roger Horrocks provides a personal reminiscence on being a fan in the '50s, a wonderfully warm and descriptive piece.

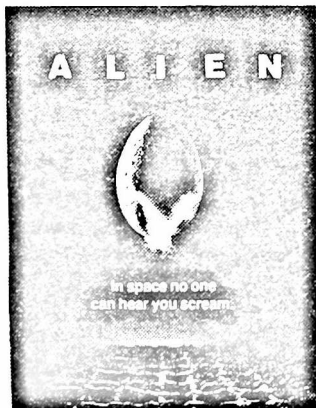
Mervyn Barrett's editorial explains a bit about convention history, plus an outline of WellCon. Don Long examines the recognition of sf by the NZ literary scene, and an introductory article on fandom (reproduced from Noumenon 1) rounds out the booklet.

Available from Noumenon for \$2.00 each (includes postage and handling).

... AND POST-CON BOOKLET

Due to the large amount of comment and interest in both WellCon and the Con Booklet, I will publish a post-con booklet. It will include some con reports, photos, and additions to and comments on the material contained in the Con Booklet.

Deadline for material will be around the middle of March (so it will be out before WellCon B, at the very latest!). *



A 1979 20TH CENTURY FOX FILM



An extensive review will appear next issue.



Cherry Wilder, 16B Egelsbacher St. 6070 Langen/Hessen, West Germany. (18/12/79).

Many thanks for Noumenon 33 and previous issues, especially the one with photograph of Young Hairy Alternative Person standing in midst of wooded landscape. Noumenon, I'll join the chorus and say it again, is one of the best-looking fanzines around. I keep scanning the pages anxiously, like a long-exiled Martian Colonist trying to find out how things are on Earth. I think I am looking for a distinctive N.Z. flavour: articles and opinions that could not emanate from say, California or St Kilda, Vic., and I am beginning to find them. New Zealand is as strong as ever on Rare Natural Phenomena like the Tuatara and Greg Hills.

I'm sure WellCon went off like a rocket and I'm looking forward to the Con report.

We staggered over to Brighton by train, boat and train and scuttled into our small cheap hotel around the corner from the Metropole several days before SeaCon began. This gave us time to eat even more fish and chips, see the Brighton Pavilion, go up to London for the day, and watch the oil-sheikhs move out of the Metropole and the fans move in. All three thousand of them. It was a monstrous con but very well organised, with all the regular Con entertainments such as panels, films, authors reading their own work in yet another cosy little auditorium, excellent book-rooms, a splendid art show, a vast fan room full of zap-the-spaceship-type games machines, and Bob Shaw.

Some fans moaned gently about not seeing enough of the hordes of famous writers who were sitting about but I thought the Big Names were exposing themselves quite adequately. There was at least one (other) card-carrying New Zealander there... I asked this young man in the crowded lobby why he was wearing a T-shirt with some mystic message like Olahuu Football Club or Maungatoto Old Boys and he said that he had a perfect right to such a decoration, being a Kiwi born and bred.

Name-Dropping. Well, I guess this is part of the fun of a big Con. I spent a lot of time vamping on to writers various but cannot think of any dramatic incident. Maybe when George Turner (Aust.)

danced the can-can with Marion Zimmer Bradley, or when R.A. Lafferty sat on my lap, or when Charlie (Locus) Brown tried to swim home, or when Robert Silverberg unexpectedly levitated and a god-like voice with a Polish accent said "That'll teach you to write stories about the Vatican", or when Brian Aldiss directed traffic for two hours, or when Big Name X was so incensed at being called a fascist he ruined a perfectly good pair of jackboots, or when Judy & Ian Watson sent a revolt of all the slot machines on the Palace Pier... But maybe my memory is clouded. You know how writers fantasize.

As the moment I'm running the usual race with Christmas: how much more can I get written before the festive season closes in. I'm working on a novel for Pocket Books. Those who read Locus closely will see a small printing disaster recorded; the paperback edition of **THE LUCK OF BRIN'S FIVE**, also from Pocket, was defective and has had to be reprinted. My hair hasn't actually turned snowwhite overnight but I feel as if it had. The sequel to **BRIN**, entitled **THE NEAREST FIRE**, will be out in January from Atheneum... I have a story in **CHRYSALIS 5** (ed. Roy Torgeson), and there was also one in the international collection **TWENTY HOUSES OF THE ZODIAC** (New English Library) which Maxim Jakubowski edited earlier this year to coincide with SeaCon. Lee Harding's collection **ROOMS OF PARADISE**, which featured Ian Watson, Brian Aldiss, Gene Wolfe (and me), to name but a few, has been reprinted in the U.S. by St Martins and is doing well. I thought this was a very good collection indeed and was delighted by the Gene Wolfe story, although a pastiche of Charles Dickens is not usually my glass of stout.

Are you being macabre about **MISTRESS MASHAM'S REPOSE**, the story about hiliptians (fair dinkum Swift-type hiliptians) by T.H. White, who is dead? So it goes.

If all else fails New Zealand can turn into a vast plantation for the cultivation of the mysterious fruit one used to call Chinese Gooseberries. Do you know their botanical name? Are they in fact natives of NZ? Anyway as 'Kiwis', which isn't altogether a bad name, because they are brown and fluffy and come from New Zealand, they are selling like mad here in Germany for instance. I shall have some in our Xmas fruit salad.

And a happy new year to all at Noumenon and all NZ fans.

*** Well, many thanks for taking time out of an obviously busy schedule and writing to us. The first instalment of the Con report is in this issue, hopefully with some discernible photos.*

Sounds like SeaCon was a great event, while your writing is obviously flowing well. No, I don't know the botanical name for Kiwi fruit and, as most of my books are still in boxes waiting to be unpacked after the move, I can't look it up anywhere.

*Best wishes from the colonies. ***

Chas Jensen, PO Box 434, Norwood, 5067, Adelaide, Australia. (18/10/79)

My God, a **THIRD** anniversary issue! Congratulations Brian.

With your publishing schedule, and the fact that you have some form of income to support it, I suspect that the pace is still pretty crushing at times. Maybe the 'island paradise' serves to protect you from invasion by mass fans who must be either envious or wanting to check whether you are alive after such a mammoth issue. Number 31 must have eased the last of those two worries.

The artwork that comes on the covers of N never ceases to interest me -- half the reason is simply that NZ appears to be producing quite a number of people who draw extremely well. (Strips is also excellent.) Not having any Aussie equivalent makes



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me, the reader, all the more envious because I really would like to see an Australian version of some of the stories which appeared in Strips... their sequencing was almost as good as that of N with the articles.

OK, I know you claim it to be haphazard, but seeing the sources it's drawn from, I wonder about that. In fact, I have begun to wonder what it is that seems to have begun in NZ in the last couple of years. I mean, when Aussie Con was held the only NZ fan that I chanced to meet was an older guy, who was a farmer I thought as well as a fanatic collector of old pulps, named Tom Cockcroft. I admit that contact with Tom has been a little irregular of late but I know that he still carries on fannying in Lower Hutt, and occasionally writes what appears to be a column on old pulps for Ashwing (which I rarely see these days). And recently Greg Hills started sending me copies of his Tanjent which mentions more NZ-produced fanzines.

Just looking through the latest issue of N I see mention of yet another group of zines that previously I had not hear of... and more interesting is the fact that I don't think the majority of these zines are ever seen inside the desert continent over here. I have only the haziest impression of a fandom that four years ago was small and isolated into small pockets, which since then has grown both in size and level of activity. (Yeah, I know that fanzines are a poor indicator of the activity level of a group since they can be deceptive, and really only indicate the number of affluent fans in the area... wherever it is. Until something better comes along, they will suffice.)

Which reminds me to ask: How did WellCon go? Perhaps that's another point toward my curiosity as to the growth of NZ fandom. I mean, you don't seem to have had a major convention the way we had AussieCon to spark all that interest and activity, and the current level is a bit of a puzzle. No doubt it will undergo a further spurt across the local sf landscape after WellCon (presuming that there are sufficient new faces that become interested enough to respond in print or kind.) Large cons somehow seem to provide an impetus to this sort of activity. Wonder if that means that we can look forward to seeing a sudden new surge in zines and topics of discussion from NZ? Any educated guesses?

When in Auckland, how does one go about getting to your place out in the Hauraki Gulf? I think that, given that I will have six weeks to travel around in (guesstimate!) I can come and say hello while I'm up that way since I also want to see the top of the North Island before it all gets turned into tourist development (such as I saw in an old issue of the Listener). I can't recall the name of the bay exactly, but it seemed that the objections of the local Maori landowners were being silenced by the council threatening to blackmail them over several thousand dollars in back rates.

Sounds similar to some of the tactics employed

in getting aborigines to sign the agreement permitting mining of Uranium in the Northern Territory, near the flood plain of the Alligator River. (The Liberal government thought it was a good thing because it would mean employment for 7,000 people. Of course, they neglected to mention that those of them that became miners stood a 50/50 chance of dying of radiation-induced cancers before the age of fifty. They would - they're going to make the profit along with the overseas investors.) Enough of this meaningful politics.

To get back to fanish matters, I guess I should apologise for the long silence on my part, but it has been brought about by a number of factors, the major ones being study, a fulltime job, and a change in lifestyle that has meant that I slow down in most areas and have gotten active in things like photography and drawing... though not very, I admit. The seemingly inevitable happened in all this, and I



found that I simply did not feel outgoing enough to write when I had the free time during that period.

This letter is not a guarantee that I still feel like writing anything tomorrow. I have, on reflection and rereading over the burst of activity of the last few days, been so disappointed and disheartened by the crap that I produce, that I really wonder whether anyone reads it, or simply sends me zines out of politeness. I cannot tell, for publication is, somehow, not a very good form of feedback. Too often I see what I write as possessing no structure and tending to ramble, saying clumsily those things that could be said very simply.

**** The rise of fandom in NZ in recent years reflects a number of non-fandom, non-NZ influences, I think. The themes and some of the concerns of sf have spread into media other than the written word.**

Films with sf content, musicians and singer/songwriters using sf elements, the stunning images in

much sf-related artwork, tv sf, the hard-science reality of NASA's achievements - all have made sf less of a mystery and more accessible to non-fans.

SF books have sold better, therefore publishers have printed and distributed more; enough sf films have been a success at the box-office to encourage more. Therefore, some people exposed to sf have liked it and followed up the interest, buying more books, seeing more films.

So just as CB radio enthusiasts, hot rod enthusiasts, surfers, etc, etc, have all met people of like persuasion, read magazines catering for their interest, and formed clubs, so have sf fans in various cities and countries developed their brand of fandom. SF is different to most other fandoms to the degree that the written word is pre-eminent (STAR TREK fandom to the contrary, I suppose).

When in Auckland you can come by ferry (1 hour trip), by amphibian plane from downtown (9 minute trip) or by Cessna direct from Auckland international airport. Phone me when you arrive for details. **

Perry Middlemiss, PO Box 98, Rundle Street, Adelaide 5000, Australia.

My thanks for N 29/30 and 31 which arrived in rather rapid succession.

I must say that I'm enjoying the work of this Colin Wilson character more and more of late. His cover for 29/30 is truly superb and the blue paper sets it off very nicely. Without a doubt one of the best fanzine covers I've seen in quite some time. I hope you can keep pushing him for more.

I realise I'm pushing an event which is still almost two years away, but the sooner people join Adventure 81 the cheaper it will be for them and the better the con will be; as we'll have more money to play around with in the early planning stages. All indications are that it will be a large but enjoyable convention. (Two years gives us enough time to do a large amount of organising without the prospect of organising the con into oblivion.) To that end we would like to see as many New Zealanders as possible over for the con - especially as the chances of the WorldCon in Australia in 1983 increase. So, I would be grateful if you could spread the word.

I don't know whether you will get to see MAD MAX (a recent Australian made movie) in your fair country, as I believe your government has banned it... The film techniques are competent, if a little crude, which detracts from the overall effect for the first 15 or 20 minutes. During that time I had a lot of trouble making sense of the dialog because of all the background noise. It wasn't too bad after that but I'm not sure whether I got used to it or whether the sound techniques actually improved. The film is set in the not-too-distant future, when it is difficult to tell the cops from the motorcycle gangs, and tells the story of the conflict between a cop and one of the gangs. It's interesting although nothing spectacular.

Marc Ortlieb, 70 Hamblynn Rd, Elizabeth Downs, SA, 5013, Australia. (7/11/79).

Noumenon: First, the physical appearance is, as always, excellent. Doesn't perfection get boring? I really think you should muck up an issue. It'd reap all sorts of interesting letters. (Maybe not though).

Hope WellCon went well. One of these days, I'll arrange to go to New Zealand. Perhaps on my way to the States in '81. I don't know.

From your letter column it appears that NZfandom has developed its own schisms and feuds. Well come to the real world. (Sigh!)

I enjoyed your comments on **THE WHITE DRAGON**, largely because I agree with them. Having recently finished reading **DRAGONDRUMS**, I feel it is a pity that McCaffrey didn't release it before **WHITE DRAGON**, as there are several things in **DRAGONDRUMS** which throw events and characters in **WHITE DRAGON** into clearer perspective. Well, whilst I'm at it, why not?

** Marc's review appears in this issue's review column.

No, perfection isn't boring. After the first 10 or 12 years it just comes naturally. **

Duncan Lucas, 12 Beattys Rd, Pukekohe, South Auckland, NZ. (6/10/79)

It's about time I, as one of those NASF 'officers' (that's us 'self seekers' over there by the blood stained firing squad type target wall...), responded to your comments in the latest Noumenon.

NASF is the national organisation for sf fans in this country (small pause while my ribbon jams), but (sigh) it got off to an inglorious start, tending towards the 'skiffy' and thus possibly scaring away the 'sercon' fen - where did they go? Noumenon, of course! So, in 1979, we actually have what would appear to be TWO fandoms in NZ - the fandom of After Image and such (ie those who enjoy being fans for fans sakes) and the habitual contributors to Noumenon. But there are degrees between and much crossing over, hopefully.

Personally, I like the idea of an NZ sf association - but I'm speaking as a self seeking NASF officer (President of the Auckland branch). Thru bad press like that you've given 'us', the association gets a bad reputation which will be very hard to change - and it does need changing. The only way to change that sort of image would be to enlist some dreaded sercon fen in the NASF, but they won't join because Noumenon says NASF is naughty. The only way to change the NASF would be from within - support, not alienation, is the answer. Show your support by printing my little commercial, which follows...

The Auckland branch of the NASF is still living (just), but is requiring of NEW MEMBERS. I've (me, the self seeker...) been able to find the club a nice reasonably clean sort of venue, it being the Workers Educational Association building (21 Princes Street, Auckland, just up from Albert Park and along from the Hotel Intercontinental). The group meets on the first Sunday of every month

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at 2.00pm when we sit around and become more and more depressed about the ever diminishing membership. Further information can be extracted from myself at the above address or by phoning 86-420 (Pukekohe), or from the Secretary by phoning 875-436 (Auckland). Commercial over.

Oh, another gripe -- has your policy changed or something? Did not old Noumenon have the words 'NZ's only sf magazine' or similar printed over or under the title on the cover? Does this mean that Noumenon is no longer an NZ sf magazine? Or what? I used to like seeing it there, so don't think I'm being deliberately antagonistic. (Okay, so maybe I am.)

**** The saga goes on! Look, I haven't set Noumenon apart from NASF. As far as I know, NASF has set itself apart, either by design, default or disinterest.**

I offered to publish Wellington NASF news when the group was starting, irrespective of whether it had its own newsletter or not. This offer has been ignored or not relayed to members. I certainly haven't received any NASF news.

I agreed with Frank Marcasy to run reciprocal ads/news with Warp. This offer has not been taken up, nor my letter replied to.

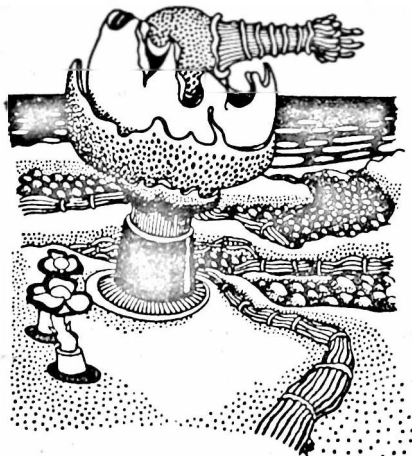
I offered to run Auckland branch news, and/or to help with its own newsletter. I haven't heard another word about the idea.

So much for my offers of support.

As to my reviews of the NASF magazines, they are compared to all the other zines. Comments on their scope, competence of editorship, and reproduction quality are listed to give prospective readers/members an indication of such details.

Noumenon doesn't say NASF is "naughty". All I've done is comment on what I've seen in print, in NASF magazines, some of which I've found wanting.

No, I've not "changed policy" but the new masthead didn't lend itself to the sub-head. The sub-head now appears on page 2. **



Margaret Lambert, 2/79 Rimu Street, New Lynn, Auckland, NZ. (29/10/79)

Auckland NASF had our first real meeting in the WEA Rooms on October 7th. John Northcott showed SILENT RUNNING and DARK STAR (both good!) David Harvey and Duncan Lucas spent a bit of time not agreeing to disagree and I forgot the coffee, but we had more members there than we've had recently, so on the whole it was more of a success than not.

I enjoyed the gaming articles that you ran. It sounds like fun. Millennium, I understand, do a bit of gaming, as well as a bit of scient fiction in general. David has only two more games to get to complete the set, he says, and he's offered to show NASF some of them, sometime. Nice of him. I don't know whether we'd be able to fit it all into one meeting though. Still!

G R Hills, PO Box 770, Wanganui, NZ (29/10/79)

A couple of quick skims-thru show me that the pot is boiling nicely. My name crops up like the prices in Wellington restaurants. Well, just to fool you, I will spend hardly a moment on them! (I only do it for two reasons, the egoboo of seeing my stuff in print and the information gleaned from the kneejerks. If it helps the conversation, so much better!)

You persist re NASF. A pity I can't just shrug and say "It's your own funeral" because unfortunately your remarks can hurt NASF badly (and unjustly) while you only alienate those Noumenon readers already in NASF who know better. A minority. Rather like the situation in WAR OF THE RING when I was playing Dave Harvey: After one of my puzgal had suffered a couple of wounds from Frodo (protected by mithril and bearing a magic sword), each tradeoff of blows simply wounded the nazgul more without harm to Frodo. Short of persuading you to recant, I suspect the best way to deal with the situation is to let it die a natural death.

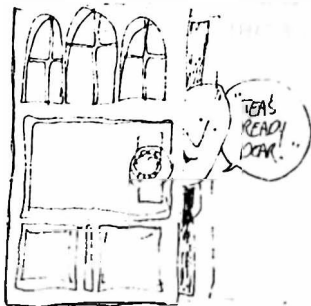
THE MODERN BEM Part II ... allow me to crawl away into a cave and hide my face ...

I liked your review of GLORIANA better than the one I saw in Vector. You said more, at less length, and I agreed with what you said. Mind you, the academics will point out that the plot is unimportant in GLORIANA, the interrelationships are the ... oh, you covered that aspect too. Well, the ideas are ... again. (Further I will not comment, not having read the book -- nor having desire to after I saw it hailed as a "major" work by the critics).

I liked the cartoon on the back -- and, true to the promise therein (see the little trolley with the pot-plant), WellCon has flowered. Fruitfully. Soon there will be the sound of little WellCons pattering across the fannish ken. Enuff of this way of speaking. Nigel Rowe mentions you're working on a post-WellCon booklet, by the way.

**** What is there to recant re NASF? What I've said (except for my reply to Duncan Lucas in this**

issue) is that their magazines are not masterpieces (nor surely intended to be) and that some people say/write things I don't agree with. The over-reaction by such as yourself (I'm usually suspicious of over-reaction) and the garbage you put in *Tanjet 10* makes me wonder what sort of jealousies or games are going on. Why are you, for instance, fighting someone else's battle? (If, in fact, there be a battle, which is not at all certain to me or many NASF members.) **



Peter Graham, PO Box 264, Papakura, NZ (7/11/79)

Since the Con Booklet just arrived I'll just add a congratulations to you and Nigel. And it's great -- a wedding night zine? I'll never match that. (By the way, I stuck my horoscope on the cover of this BTH 'coz the Astrology folk be having an International Convention in Auckland in January 1980. Wouldja credit \$90 is the dues? What a world it is! Don't think an Astronomers' Con would do as well).

Did you know your name anagrams as "robot/ dragon hui"? (As fits a Con organiser). Have an idea you came out as "a right dour boon", too, as other faneds may be muttering over sundry xerox machines now.

Chris Morrin, 8 Helvetia Rd, Pukekohe, NZ.
(29/10/79)

Hope to see a review on how WellCon fared next issue -- I couldn't get there myself because of exam pressure, but I would love to hear how it went. The illustration by Mike Willoughby in *Noumenon* 33 (page 26) I thought superb, very surrealist. Hope you can use the enclosed pictures.

** Certainly can use the illos, thanks Chris. Hope the WellCon report is to your liking. **

Michael Newbery, 111 Houghton Bay Road, Wellington 3, NZ. (31/10/79)

The PO finally got around to delivering *Noumenon* 33 yesterday, presumably by way of Pitcairn Island, bearing all those wonderful promises of things to come at WellCon. So how long did it actually spend journeying through the mails? Mind you, the delay has just about given me time to recover from WellCon.

Congratulations to you and Mervyn for the

organisation (and for artfully avoiding ~~me~~ to do the next one). I'm not sure though if I'll ever recover from the sound of Pink Floyd overamplified at 1/2 watt, neither will a certain car advert ever be quite the same. By the way, did you ever notice that the theme music for one of its predecessors was an instrumental 'Panic in Detroit'?

Jim Storey is a very witty illustrator, he has a nice, if somewhat strange, touch. Don't let him get away.

'Twas enlightening to meet everybody, see you at the next one.

** Yes, about 10 to 14 days in the mail. I think that's the record so far for *Noumenon* within NZ. And yes, Storey is 'on leash' so to speak. Hi, Jim. **

Bruce Ferguson, 13 Burnside St, Lower Hutt, NZ.

Firstly the bad news. The date has changed for WellCon B since I last spoke to you. We discussed the matter and the committee has decided on Queen's Birthday weekend (30 May - 2nd June) 1980. I realise the weather may be against us but all activities will be indoors. Besides -

- (1) It is a better time for Varsity students (the whole committee are ex-varsity students).
- (2) At that time of the year, people's time should be free.
- (3) Overseas guests can then travel further on and go skiing -- surely a novelty for the Australians.

We will be issuing regular newsheets to the 'zines later.

** I'm sorry to hear of the change to Queen's Birthday -- too soon, perhaps, and the weather will probably keep me away. Good luck, though, and I hope your plans come together properly. **

Ralph Silverton, 47 Turramurra Avenue, Turramurra 2074, Australia.

Bruce Ferguson's review of Kurt Vonnegut's *SLAPSTICK* was, I found, slightly erroneous. Ferguson's main point seemed to be that since Vonnegut gave up writing science-fiction, his powers have declined.

Ferguson mentioned *PLAYER PIANO*, *THE SIRENS OF TITAN*, *SLAUGHTERHOUSE 5* and *CRADLE*. All wonderful books, all more or less science fiction. He failed to mention Vonnegut's notable mainstream efforts, *A BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS* and *MOTHER NIGHT*, the latter being regarded as his best book.

As for childish phrases (Hi-ho, So it goes, etc.), Ferguson is right in describing them as irritating in Vonnegut's later books, but in his earlier works they were something new and original.

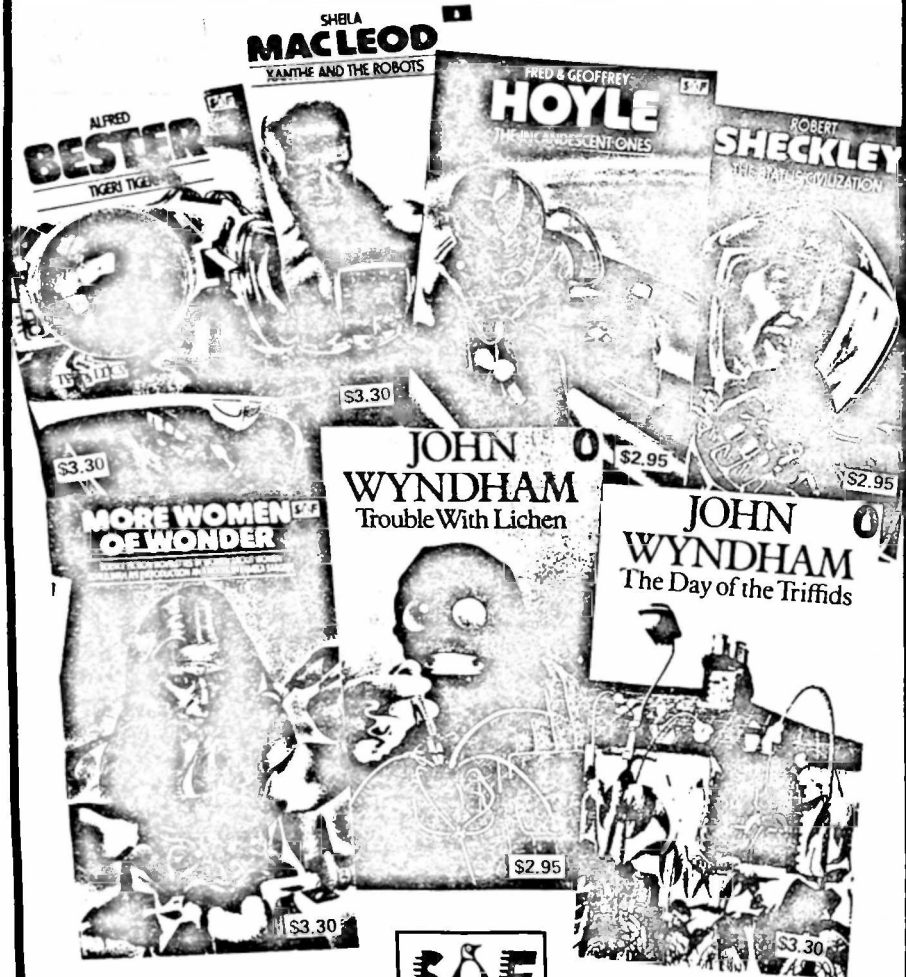
Another thing. If the mainstream audience is the "lowest common denominator", then what are readers of science fiction? The elite? I think not.

Perhaps Ferguson regarded the mock-Vonnegut style in which he wrote his review both clever and degrading, but I found it positively maddening.

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11 LETTERS...

The point is this. Vonnegut has not declined because he gave up writing science fiction. A hundred great artists have declined on a highway parallel to his. Listen:

Of youth and obscurity.

The autoclave of heady ambition trapped.

The fermenting of the yeasty heart stopped

Burst with such pyrotechnics the dull world gaped

And "Repeat that!" still they cry.

But all his efforts to concoct

The old heroic bang from their money and praise

From the parent's pointing finger and the child's amaze.

Even from the burning of his wreathed bays,

have left him wrecked: wrecked,

And monstrous, so.

As a stegosaurus, a lumbering obsolete

Arsenal of gigantic horn and plate

From a time when half the world still burned,

set

To blink behind bars at the zoo.

Vonnegut seems to have got caught up in one of his own novels, sad to say.



A once-in-a-lifetime photo taken at WellCon. Reports and other photos begin on page 14.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM

Peter Fuller (NZ), who we thank for the kind words.

David Harvey (NZ), a lively form letter.

Peter Ivamy (NZ): Next issue, Peter.

Harvey Kong Tin (NZ): "I could take you to task over your comments on my previous letter in Nnumenon, but I won't. If you have a closed mind only you can open it."

"My views on 'ordinary' psychology is that it is 'nuttier' than anything in para-psychology."

Thanks also for the illos Harvey.

Peter Knox (Aust), who advises that Boggle has ceased for the time being.

Vanya Lowry (NZ).

Evan Ritchie (NZ).

Ralph Silverton (Aust): "The Pownall cartoon wasn't as good as his previous efforts. Perhaps he's setting himself too laborious a task. Also I wish Mr Mike Willoughby would realise that excessive detail does not necessarily make the most effective imagery." Thanks also for the illos, Ralph.

Brian Strong (NZ), who sent a 'pleasant' New Year card.

Unknown Press, 25 Parkway, Montclair, NJ 07042, USA, telling of a booklet on fanzine publishing available for \$150.

And quite a few others whose letters and fanzines will appear next issue. Thanks, folks, and keep 'em coming. *



Zak Reddan (left), coyly and colourfully appreciating Peter Hassall's new sf film/tv zine, Fantasy, with Peter listening intently.

Too Close To The Truth

There are at least three very good reasons for trying to see **THE CHINA SYNDROME**.

Firstly, it is an excellent example of 'gripping' film making. The initial storyline and plot elements gradually build up in a skillfully disarming way. It is only at about the three-quarter mark that you realise you are literally pinned to your seat, as shocked and outraged as the main characters.

Jack Lemmon plays the part of a nuclear power station's chief technician, who knows and therefore trusts and believes in his work and the station.

You see his gradual changes from initial disbelief, through tension and anger, to his final outrage and attempt to 'correct' matters.

You see the strain on Lemmon time and again as he has to change his beliefs, non-verbally, before the camera. It is a masterful performance.

Jane Fonda and Michael Douglas play a TV magazine show hostess and cameraman, respectively. Their changes are less dramatic than Lemmon's, but they play their roles extremely well also.

Fonda moves from being a trendy, somewhat superficial announcer (tiger birthdays at the zoo, cute jokes about ballooning) to a concerned reporter, slightly over her depth. Douglas is more politically aware at the start, but he is still changed by the magnitude of the events they attempt to reveal.

Secondly, the film (quite coincidentally) was released not long after the Three Mile Island nuclear station accident.

In theory, not much can go wrong with a properly built and functioning nuclear plant, with the numerous safety systems and their back-ups.

But The China Syndrome story and the Three Mile Island events both show what can happen if too many things go wrong at once – especially if human error is added to equipment malfunction or overload.

One can be forgiven for thinking that the strain, on both personnel and equipment, must be too much in such an installation as a nuclear power station.

And that strain is not only technical, as the film and other real-life events testify.

For the third main reason I recommend **THE CHINA SYNDROME** is that it fictionalises a recent landmark investigation and court case.

The story of Karen Silkwood's concern about a large corporation's plutonium plant, her mysterious death, and a \$10.5 million damages judgement against the corporation, have been well covered in the media.

But apparently the makers of *The China Syndrome* were turned down in their efforts to base the film on the Karen Silkwood events. So they made up new characters and a slightly different storyline, but along a similar theme.

This, it seems, had some unexpected advantages. Rather than being a film of espionage and court cases, it centres more on the technical aspects of a nuclear plant – the power (political), influence and economics surrounding it.

It becomes a chilling film, all the more believable and shocking because the two real-life situations echo throughout many scenes.

The technical details have been presented carefully, while the actors portray all the weaknesses (and occasional strengths) of both sides of the media – the reporters and those reported on.

Highly recommended. -- BAT

When *THE CHINA SYNDROME* was filmed, the Three Mile Island accident had not occurred and the problems of reactor accidents had not been that widely publicised. Therefore, the film could be described now as science "fiction".

To describe it as simply a thriller is to underestimate it, and ignores the vital part that nuclear science plays in the film. To call it an anti-nuclear power film is to miss the point, for a careful viewing of the film condemns not nuclear power per se, but the way that the generation, marketing and distribution of nuclear power is handled in the United States. To say that it is unbelievable is to fly in the face of what has happened since.

I don't hold any brief either for or against nuclear power. After all, it is another energy resource, and when one is handling any sort of energy resource, one is dealing with potential danger. One of the problems with the nuclear energy resource is that of long term radioactive contamination, should there be any problems. So one has to be super-careful in handling nuclear material and wastes. And perhaps it is the very fact that the contamination problem is so long-term and dangerous that the dramatic impact of a nuclear power plant accident is heightened.

But then consider the danger of a hydro-storage lake – billions and billions of tons of water contained behind a wall of concrete. What would happen if the dam burst. Death by drowning is just as permanent as death from radiation. And drowning is only one of the fates that one could suffer from a burst dam. Admittedly, there is not the danger of radioactive mutation, but the devastation wreaked by a broken hydro-storage dam would be colossal.

Consider also the problems of rogue oil wells, wrecked tankers, storage tank accidents, LPG gas transporter disasters. When all is said and done, the harnessing of any energy source has inherent dangers.

Many people who saw *THE CHINA SYNDROME* may have come to the conclusion that the problem lay in nuclear power. But it does not. The story is fairly straight-forward. Kimberly Wells (Jane Fonda), a reporter with a Los Angeles TV station, is doing a series of reports on energy. She and her cameraman Richard Adams (Michael Douglas) are present at a reactor power plant when an abnormal situation occurs.

The reactions of plant staff and in particular that of the chief technician Jack Godell (Jack Lemmon) are surreptitiously filmed. It later turns out that a faulty instrument caused Godell to misinterpret the situation and take the wrong action. The curious thing is that another instrument gave him the correct information. Godell, however, made his decision on which instrument he would

follow, and acted from that. A little bit of enquiry and the TV team realise that they could have seen a potentially disastrous situation. They try and persuade the TV station to look into the matter further but the station is not interested. Finally Kimberly persuades a reluctant Godell to look into the situation and he does.

Enter the real villain. The reactor plant is owned and operated by an electricity distribution company - a private corporation - which sells power into the grid for the Los Angeles area. The company is building another reactor and safety hearings are taking place to determine whether the new reactor should be built. Of course, the power company would not like to be seen with egg on its face at safety hearings. To have the new reactor turned down could mean a substantial loss of profits.



Further, to shut down a reactor already operating could mean huge losses to both company and stockholders. Consequently, the company is doing all it can to hush the problem up. Godell finds that certain welded joints are not what they should be and impetuously confronts the contractor, who in turn warns the power company of a potentially embarrassing situation. Godell makes the information available to anti-nuclear lobbyists, but the courier taking the evidence disappears.

Godell becomes extremely paranoid and takes over the control room of the plant at gunpoint and will only talk to Kimberly and the TV cameras. His attempt to explain to the media the precise nature of the problem is confounded by his own mental distress, an induced nuclear accident at the plant, and the arrival of a SWAT team which shoots first, despite the fact that every alarm bell in the plant is ringing.

Godell is shot, and it is only after one of the other employees is shocked into telling the real truth that all the facts come out.

Now what happens when one sees all this on the screen, and is subjected to the tension and

drama of the proceedings, and it certainly succeeds as a thriller, is that one wonders just how safe this nuclear stuff is. This is the overlaying theme nuclear power is not safe.

If the cooling system fails in the reactor and the reactor reaches a temperature of 300°F, it could melt through the pressure vessel that contains it; once it melts through this and the concrete it could melt through to the center of the earth - in theory. If it hit underground water, the water would turn into radioactive steam and would be released into the atmosphere. And faults in the cooling system were involved in the film.

If nuclear power were so uncontrollable it is doubtful that we would have it. But nuclear power is very controllable (and by power I mean the generation thereof) - that is the important thing. What is so uncontrollable is the human being.

The underlying point in **THE CHINA SYNDROME** is that no matter how safe you try to make nuclear power generation you are, in the final analysis, relying on the human factor. The problems with the reactor started at its construction. Every weld was subject to radiographic analysis. The radiographs were inspected by the supervising engineer. If there was a fault, it could be corrected at that time. However, in the movie the consulting engineer didn't check each individual radiograph. He just signed a docket which said he had, so the supervising engineer was trying to save money. He said as much when confronted with the evidence by Godell.

And what of the power company. They wanted to hush the scandal up because it would jeopardise their chances of setting up a new plant. Furthermore, to shut down the problem plant would cost money in terms of lost kilowatts supplied to the L.A. grid.

So the human failings which led to the problem were money and profit related. If the film says anything it says this: if you are going to have a potentially hazardous method of energy generation which involves the making of profits by the generating body, and the possibility of dangerous shortcuts being taken by the profitmaker, *don't*.

At least here in New Zealand energy generation is not in the hands of private enterprise, and although the present administration may place undue emphasis on making electricity supply (among other things) a paying proposition for the Electricity Department, at least there isn't a private profit-making corporation lurking behind the scenes, taking dangerous shortcuts and being downright negligent, just to save money.

Now many readers may feel that free enterprise is the only way to generate and market energy. But the past performance of free enterprise, particularly in the areas of mining last century, makes me suspicious. Nuclear power generation is too dangerous to leave in the hands of private profit-makers. If we are going to have it, let's have it for all the people, in the hands of all the people. That is what **THE CHINA SYNDROME** said to me.

— David Harvey



REPORTS

After reading and enjoying *Nooumenon* 32 & 33 I decided it was about time I put pen to paper to write to you on WellCon. This being partly influenced from observing a rather large, bearded (but nice) person I had the luck of meeting there.

To put it simply, I enjoyed WellCon a lot — from the first hour till the last. The main personal event on my agenda was meeting people I'd had the opportunity to write to for over a year. Sure, some did look taller than I expected; some just a little younger looking; but otherwise they appeared as much as they described themselves on paper. For me this interaction was terrific — arriving at rather riotous parties in the hotel rooms!

The programme I found was generally well timed. Except it could have been a little more informal (you, I might add, had the remedy in the form of us getting into little groups). The actual talks themselves were entertaining and informative (I got on my knees, including SF Music!) and the films, particularly *DARK STAR* which had my eyes glued to the screen and my laughter almost choking me! The art show was a little too small, tho' the standard was reasonably good; better luck next time.

I have to congratulate Nigel Rowe and yourself on the fine work you did for the Convention Booklet. It is easily a collectors item, to my surprise fandom went as far back as 1932 (ye Ghods!) in *Godzone*.

Overall the programme, the parties and especially the people made WellCon a success, and being the first con this is very promising. All I know is that everyone went away with some fond memory (besides a hangover); this I think will blossom into an even better con next year. Hopefully I'll see you, Mervyn and everyone else having a helluva good time when the place and the date is concrete.

Tom Cardy, 137 Richardson St, Dunedin, N.Z.
(31/10/79).

I went to WellCon out of curiosity. I have been reading science fiction and fantasy for over twenty years, but up until early in 1978, I had never had anything to do with any organisation or group of fellow readers or enthusiasts. Mine was very much a

solitary interest.

In March of 1978 I became involved in the Millenium club in West Auckland, and found enthusiasts who had the same sort of feeling about science fiction that I had. We met once a month, had a talk maybe a film and a rap session. At these meetings vague rumours of a "KiwiCon" circulated. Members met and talked for the first time with active fans like Duncan Lucas and Greg Hills, and I think were somewhat dazed by the enthusiasm of fans and fandom.

Millenium was, and still is, somewhat of an arm-chair group, more orientated to quiet discussion, and has generally an older membership. So consequently, there was some concern at what a Con, a gathering of a large number of active members of fandom, would be like. I went out of curiosity. For me, the whole thing was going to be a real hummer or a roaring success. If it was to be the former I would at least come back home with a fistful of books from the Huyser Bookshop. If it was to be the latter, the books would be a bonus.

It was with some internal reluctance that I went to the registration on Friday evening. I was pleasantly surprised to see a large number of people obviously older than myself. Then I began to recognise names that I had seen in *Nooumenon* and *Tanjent*, names at last with faces attached. And so a non-fan got gradually involved.

It is hard to describe the sensation — as WellCon got going I began to realise that it was going to



Bruce Ferguson, long-time *Nooumenon* contributor, current editor of the NASF newsletter *Warp*.

be a winner. On the Friday night there was an atmosphere of anticipation. This was New Zealand's first science fiction Con. Science fiction enthusiasts were at last coming out of the closet, out of the pages of the fanzines, out from behind their books. It was beginning to happen.

Many others no doubt will discuss the programme. Suffice it to say that a number of areas of science fiction were covered. I was impressed at the obvious amount of work that the speakers had put into their topics. But then if preparation had been second rate, a rubbishing would have been the order of the day.

I was particularly impressed at the depth of comment. I wasn't expecting University level discussion on Farmer or H.G. Wells -- but I got it, and appreciated it. There is nothing worse than being talked at. But the speakers had an uncanny knack of finding the intellectual median of their audience -- not an easy thing to do when you may have never met them before -- and I congratulate them for an interesting job well done.

Of all the talks, the most stimulating was by Con organiser Mervyn Barrett, who discussed "A Time of Wonders" or life in the 1920's and 30's, with a particular emphasis on entertainment and the fact that in those days, at least entertainmentwise, science fiction was a way of life. But science fiction was not the only wonder in the time period. There were many new, amazing, bizarre, wonderful things in that time. Wonderful things were a way of life.

We can look back on it as the time when the pulps got going, the beginning of the Golden Age (so called), the advent of writers like Asimov, Van Vogt and others. And all through the talk I was wondering when Barrett would get around to the literature. But instead we were treated to more wonders in the Barrett audio-visual presentation. Fact by interesting fact, Barrett used up his time, and it was a time of wonder for me that he had really only touched in a peripheral manner on the development of science fiction in the 20's and 30's. And then, in the last sentence, he drew all the strands together, wound and wove them into one amazing and magnificent throwaway line, saying that it was against all these wonders that Asimov and Heinlein and Van Vogt were writing, and he left it like that and left us, sitting there in dumb amazement, wondering if he had in fact finished, and we didn't know whether to clap or shut up or what and MIGOD it was the most amazing and wonderful thing, that sensation, for it all fell on you like a thunderclap, that perhaps it if had not been for the time of wonder, no one would be reading science fiction!! AT ALL.

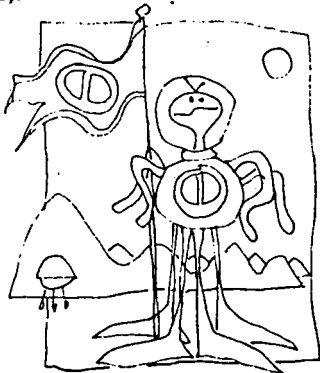
But the thing I appreciated most was that, after over twenty years of reading science fiction, I could go into a room of people and know that I could talk science fiction and not be thought a nut, and at last I had that boost to my own confidence that what I had been doing in reading science fiction was, despite the snide remarks from parents, friends and others, the right thing to do. If Well-Con did nothing else for me it did at least that.



Greg Hills, long-time Noumenon contributor, current editor of about 68 dozen zines, oneshots and apas (at last count).

There really was more to it, however. It established a number of important things. Firstly that science fiction really is people, and it is surely a wonderful thing for people to gather together to discuss a common interest. Secondly, that there will be and must be more Cons. Mervyn Barrett and Brian Thurgood have set high standards to follow. But if future Cons are as good as Well-Con 1979, I'll be there. Thirdly it established for me that science fiction is what it always has been -- good stimulating fun, with the world as your pearl, and the entire galaxy, with all its parallels as your oyster.

Mervyn Barrett and Brian Thurgood, and everyone who was at Well-Con -- thank you. -- David Harvey.





One of the displays put on by NASF at their clubrooms.

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WellCon, the first science fiction convention to be held in New Zealand (Oct 19 22, 1979), was attended by about 150 people of various ages and interests. The programming was quite full but spaces were left here and there for fans to get to know each other. It was a fairly serious programme as we did not know what level of attendance or interest to cater for.

Registration got under way at 7.00pm on Friday night, followed by a few introductory words from Mervyn Barrett, the chief organiser and master of ceremonies. THINGS TO COME was followed by brief discussion and lots of people milling round, meeting the faces behind the names they'd read about in NZ's blossoming fanzine crop, and arranging room parties.

The convention was held in the St George Hotel, Wellington, and the rooms were very suitable. The main room was divided in two by screens, the first half having the registration desk, a small-scale art display, a Noumenon table and a NASF table, seats and a coffee bar. This became the main discussion/hanging-out area. The second area contained the speech/film/seating facilities, rearranged to suit the various programme items.

Saturday's items included a subjective but very informative talk on "Farmer's Riverworkd -- Reincarnation & Riverboats" by Jeff Rowe; an excellent and comprehensive piece on "H G Wells -- Utopia, Science Fiction and the World State" which was skillfully presented by Roy Shuker; Mervyn Barrett's "A Time of Wonders" about the 1920s and 30s (plus the briefest hint of the origins of sf!); a discussion group session on Humanistic SF introduced by myself (how D H Lawrence led me to sf); and a talk by Bruce Ferguson on "The Time Travellers."

These items were surrounded by coffee breaks and lunch, and led into the dinner break, allowing quite a bit of time for informal milling and talking. A couple of items could have benefitted from a longer discussion period afterwards, but the wide range of ages and interests of the attendees was

somewhat unexpected. Saturday night featured Woody Allen's clever and humorous SLEEPER but it was many hours of room parties later before many followed Woody's example, if only for a short period.

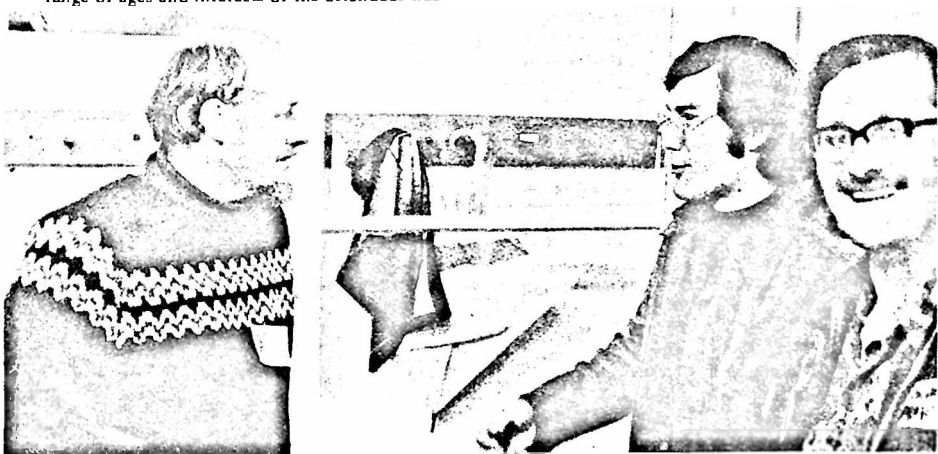
Sunday morning was left free, the programme beginning with METROPOLIS at 1.30pm and, after coffee, Mervyn spoke on "The Celluloid Transfer" and I spoke on the interface between sf and (mostly progressive) music, both talks using slides and taped music. That evening's feature film was SILENT RUNNING, a film I have a lot of time and respect for despite its construction around a message. Parties and a late night jazz jam in the bar wittled the dark hours down to size once again.

Monday morning's discussion on "Conventions -- This one, Next One" highlighted the substantial success of WellCon and the enthusiasm to hold a national convention annually. After lots of constructive discussion it was decided to build on the experience and enthusiasm of Wellington fans and hold next year's Con in Wellington also. A group is already planning details for a 'bid' for Auckland for 1981.

Two Wellington fan film productions were then screened, "Coleslaughter" ("Day of the Trifids" had nothing on this) and the world premiere of "Gross Encounters of the Worst Kind" which I think had something to do with beer -- the production was excellent and the special effects showed a few imaginative and skilled minds at work.

The final coffee break was followed by the hilarious DARK STAR (which has never had commercial release in NZ as far as I know) and the winding up chat from Mervyn.

So WellCon was a tremendous success in many ways and while improvements are always possible, the attendees were pretty happy with the whole idea of such a con. — BAT



Brian Strong (left), telling Frank MacKasy Jr that they don't want any, thanks, while Humblebert Emperdink (extreme right) tries a new publicity pose.

18 WELLCON...

As a matter of interest, Noumenon 33 (which I think you said you mailed Tuesday 16 October) has just arrived after a lengthy journey of ten days.

Now a few thoughts on WellCon.

Mervyn is to be congratulated on his organisation as things indeed ran smoothly -- at least on the surface.

I suppose I would have to admit the preponderance of films was a little disconcerting to me, not being a film-oriented person, and consequently I was not able to appreciate this aspect fully. Undoubtedly others found it to be a highlight.

I now see that to fully realise the benefits of a con one should be booked into the con hotel. Being obliged to stay with friends, I felt somewhat responsible to put in an appearance once in a while and of course this did not leave me as free as I would have liked. One learns, however.

The discussion group caught me out too. Being naturally a fairly reticent sort of person, I had a little difficulty calling to mind on the spot books and authors of particular interest. Of course I can now name numbers of both, but at the time? No chance.

Anyway, suffice it to say that I enjoyed the experience, collected an even dozen new books, and am now able to put faces to at least some of the names that have become familiar through the pages of Noumenon. — Ian McLachlan (37 Hillcrest St, Masterton, NZ).

Out in the street, people are wearing CHEAP TRICK badges and hats, jackets and bags, cruising on Friday night. Inside the St George a man says to me, "i betcha never knew there were so many other crazy people, just like us, huh?" Does he set the tone for the weekend? Thank god no.

That same night Mervyn B screens his fave credit and the rest of THINGS TO COME, the 2036 portion of which seems to be manifesting itself in places like L A airport, to a certain extent (i venture) because of such films, rather than being simply predicted by them.

Regardless, i applaud the selection of films, can only wonder why DARK STAR never attained commercial release in this country, and offer thanks for the opportunity to be socially inept with so many people. — Zak Reddan.

It is now a week since WellCon and I am still trying to organise my thoughts for this report you requested.

WellCon was enlightening, enjoyable, and exhausting. It was the first chance for NZ fen from all around the country to get together. People finally met all those names they had read about in Noumenon, Warp, Tanjent, Worlds Beyond, etc, and I for one will say it was a pleasant experience to meet them all.

The items on the programme were interesting and I think catered to most tastes. Bruce Clement and I are planning a similar mixture, although with

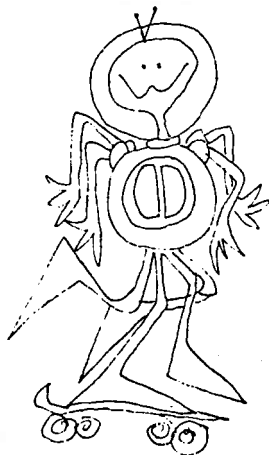


Roy Shuker delivering an excellent talk on H G Wells (to be reprinted in Noumenon, probably next issue).

more emphasis on social activities (discussions, audience participation) and less on films (besides, Mervyn admits that he has almost exhausted the supply of films available).

The first two speakers (Roy Shuker on H G Wells and Jeff Rowe on Riverworld) showed the range of the Con, in style, presentation and content. I think I preferred Jeff's talk -- he was very relaxed and friendly and I knew the subject better than I know H G Wells.

I enjoyed the films -- everyone from METOPOLIS and THINGS TO COME to SLEEPER and DARK STAR. Mervyn's knowledge of films



really benefited the Con here.

As president of NASF I am delighted with the way the Con brought together, not only members from around our different branches, but also brought us into contact with other sf clubs and groups. Auckland's Millenium and Marrian Way Club, and Invercargill's H G Wells Club.

The Con had a unifying effect on attendees. This was the first NZ Con and I think everyone there delighted in the fact. Vera Loneragan's success in enrolling people to support A in '83 resulted from this.

After the last Con people are now looking towards future Cons. Next year's will be in Wellington again. At that one I hope some people will put forward proposals for a Con in another centre. Bruce Clement and I are organising WellCon B and look forward to meeting everyone again. The venue will be selected shortly and I hope all NZ fanzines will provide publicity. For any information, contact me at 13 Burnside St, Lower Hutt. — Bruce Ferguson.

I'm in no state to be writing these comments on WellCon. I would rather be asleep, in a tub of enough hot water to float my bony frame, eating, or more than one of the above. However, given a night to rest, my chaotic memories of it all will settle down into some orderly arrangement bearing



Tom Cardy, New Zealand's southernmost zine editor as far as we know.

no resemblance to what actually took place. Hence this, now, I shudder to think of all the demented con reports with which it must strive for space.

Fun and their money's worth seemed to be had by all.

I am wondering, though, whether New Zealand is large enough to need nation-wide conventions. What were the facets you enjoyed at this one? The talks of the programme, talking till 4 ack emma getting drunk with fans you've only heard of before, watching rare films? Certainly WellCon offered a number of aspects to different people. But this little nation is well-linked by mail, and so uncongested you could probably achieve these in more effective civilised fashion through personal meetings or Spontaneous Gatherings of a local nature — more practical here than overseas — and the Post Office.

Consider the talks. Many of the examples included in Bruce Ferguson's "The Time Travellers" seem to have been covered also in Noumenon by someone using the same pseudonym. And the presentation "SF Rock" was but a summary of articles from that magazine, written by an editor who shall remain nameless.

I suspect people are giving too much respect to the traditions of oppressed American fandom. I would not don a propeller beanie... it would entangle with my hair in the first high wind, leaving me unbearded and partially bald. Mental image: 50 propeller-wearing fan step out into the invigorating Wellington wind! 49 leave the ground in a swarm, a sort of nuptial flight about the hotel; only Duncan Lucas remains grounded, frustrated and at last appreciating the advantages of lightness!

Similarly, need we assume that the natural aim of any sf reader with a trace of soul and Aryan blood is to attend and organise conventions, preferably wresting the chance to host them in bitter parochial battles? Must we consign those with only luke-warm desires to the Vestibule of Hell? And if you persist in these squalid little affairs, there really is no intrinsic need for Guests of Honour (imported), fancy-dress parties and the other ornaments. There is no clause in the Laws of Nature which doom to flop any convocation lacking the tinsel. People, please, take the plastic wrapping off your imaginations and decide what is appropriate for a New Zealand gathering, which might not be the things mandatory overseas.

— David Bimler, Flat 8, Old Fire Station Cuba Street, Palmerston North, NZ.

Noumenon
NEW ADDRESS
40 Korora Rd, Oneroa
Waiheke Island, N.Z.

WHAT
REVIEWS...
WHERE?

Reviewers:
Marc Ortlieb
Garry Tee
Brian Thurogood



THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION

Edited by Peter Nicholls
(Granada, 1979, 672pp, 10½"x7" h/c)
Jack illustration by Chris Foss.

This is the one! It outstrips all the other "encyclopedias" combined! You only have to touch it and browse here and there and it feels like the real thing -- a complete, reliable, indispensable treasure.

The glowing praise of Isaac Asimov, Michael Moorcock, Harlan Ellison, Philip Jose Farmer, Frank Herbert, Norman Spinrad and Roger Zelazny should convince you too -- their words certainly attest to the years of research and knowledge, careful preparation and sifting, and pure stamina of Peter Nicholls, especially when one considers the other 'encyclopedias' published during the preparation time of this one.

For comparison, Robert Holdstock's *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION* (Pan) is more of a well-illustrated source book, providing the reader with many avenues to follow up. Donald Tuck's *THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY* (Advent, 2 volumes so far) is an exhaustive bibliographic tool, only going up to 1968 so far and rather specialist.

David Kyle's *A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION* (Hamlyn) deals mostly with the early years, 19th century to the early 50's. James Gunn's *ALTERNATE WORLDS: The Illustrated History of Science Fiction* also concentrates mainly on the early years, rather academic initially and often a warm but patchy reminiscence during his own years.

So Peter Nicholls, associate editor John Clute, and main contributing editors Malcolm Edwards and Brian Stableford, have created *THE encyclopedia* -- a book to enjoy and cherish. **BAT**

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION

Edited by Peter Nicholls



DRAGONDRUMS -- Anne McCaffrey
(Sidgwich & Jackson, 1979, 240pp, \$16.95)
Jacket illustration by Colin Saxton.

The latest in the Masterharpers of Pern series, *DRAGONDRUMS* deals with some of the "other songs" that the Harpers play. It is centred around Piemur, the young apprentice first encountered in *DRAGON-SINGER*, and the tasks he is set once his voice breaks. Chronologically it fits between *DRAGON-SINGER* and *THE WHITE DRAGON*.

The book's theme seems to be the struggle for acceptance and maturity by an exceptional young person. Unfortunately I feel that McCaffrey has wrung this theme dry in previous novels, and one cannot help but get a feeling of *deja vu* when reading of Piemur's difficulties with the Drummer apprentices. There are solid echoes of Jaxom's problems with his milk brother in *THE WHITE DRAGON*; Menolly's difficulties with the apprentices in *DRAGONSINGER*; and even of Keevan's struggles in *THE LITTLEST DRAGON RIDER*.

None the less, the book is highly enjoyable, not least from the point of view of the fresh information we are given about Pern. We discover more about life in the Holds, and the Southern Continent. McCaffrey also allows us closer glimpses of events glossed over in other books, such as Mirrim's impression of Path, and Menolly's relationship with Sebell.

I have a feeling that the book wouldn't make much sense to anyone who hadn't read the other Masterharper novels. However it is a must for Pern addicts. (One of these days I must work out why Pern is so fascinating.) — **MO**

THE RIDDLE-MASTER OF HED HEIR OF SEA AND FIRE HARPIST IN THE WIND

— Patricia McKillip

Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of *The Chronicles of Morgon*, Prince of Hed.

(Sidgwick & Jackson, 1979, c230pp, c\$17.50 each)
Jacket design by Bartholomew Wilkins & Partners.

This series grows from the adequate first volume to a whole of considerable strength. *RIDDLE-MASTER* moves from an awkward first few chapters into the basis of a stimulating fantasy epic, dealing with Morgon's oft-times reluctant development towards a troublesome, chilling birthright.

Morgon's destiny brings him in touch with many powerful people — the enigmatic Deth, the mysterious Morgol El, the wolf-king Har, to name an awesome trio — all at a time of enormous changes for his world.

The opening chapters of *HEIR*, in sharp contrast to the straight-forward storytelling in *RIDDLE-MASTER*, are alive with the flow of life and even some fine humour, and I welcomed the change. I was too conscious of the writing in the first book, but with *HEIR* lost myself totally to the puzzles and adventures of the rapidly growing cast of characters, many by now excellently drawn.

HARPIST brings together the lively storytelling and the complex plots and counter-plots, a few light moments offering respite from the ominous, mysterious and, at times, breath-taking majesty of McKillip's vision.

This review cannot cover all the noteworthy facts of the epic, but it certainly ranks with the fantasy standards set by, say, Tolkien and CS Lewis.

I will certainly look out for other titles by McKillip — a writer whose promise is surely great.

— **BAT**

SIGHT OF PROTEUS

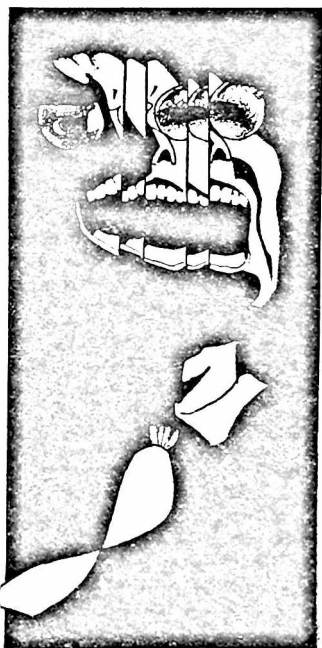
Charles Sheffield.

(Ace, 1978, 282pp; US \$1.75).

Cover art by Clyde Caldwell.

This impressive novel is the first written by Charles Sheffield, an English physicist who is President of the American Astronautical Society. In the past few years he has published many connected stories (including this novel), set a few centuries ahead, in which people travel throughout the Solar System in ships propelled by "kernels" — Kerr-Newman black holes (named after the real Professor Roy Kerr at the University of Canterbury). The few million spacers in the United Space Federation are the dynamic part of humanity, contrasted with the densely-crowded and unstable population of Earth.

In this novel, form-change machines are used extensively for modifying human bodies, primarily to keep them fit for a century but also for repair and cosmetic purposes, with more extreme changes possible. The central character is Behrooz Wolf, head of the Office of Form Control which regulates changes of body forms. He discovers that the greatest living scientist, Robert Capman, is conducting illegal experiments in which extreme modifications are being made to human bodies, to equip them for various extra-terrestrial environments. (I was surprised to read on p.199 of a space-dwelling form equipped with *suckers* — in a vacuum?) When Capman's illegal experiments are discovered, he stages an elaborate disappearance.



22 REVIEWS...

Years later, Wolf and Capman arrange to collaborate in studying the bodies of three spacers, who had used form-change equipment to refresh themselves after a mammoth binge, but who died in the process of changing into aliens adapted to a planet similar to Saturn. Many diverse plot elements are combined skillfully into an impressive climax.

This book could be criticized on the grounds of being overly rich in incident, so that some interesting episodes are passed over briefly. Indeed, other writers handling such material might have spread it over a trilogy of novels. Sheffield writes as a humane optimist, who believes that humankind can use reason to overcome its problems. His characters are depicted with much more detailed personalities than has been conventional in sf, and his writing is rich with historical and literary allusions (some of them extremely subtle) which add to the pleasure of the reader.

In contrast to many paperback publishers, Ace have produced this book with neat and clear typography, with very few misprints and with a serviceable paper binding. A nice touch is provided by the well-designed cover illustration which symbolizes the plot, and which actually incorporates a portrait of the author. — GJT

THE WEB BETWEEN THE WORLDS

Charles Sheffield.

(Ace, 1979, 288pp; US \$4.95).

Cover art by Boris.

In the prologue to this outstanding novel, a passenger plane from Christchurch crashes in Antarctica. This review is being written in the aftermath of the tragedy of the Air New Zealand crash on Mount Erebus. Sheffield's choice of Christchurch is not arbitrary: a climactic episode near the end of the book requires him to start there, for sound geographical and geometrical reasons. The fictional plane (unlike reality) is well-equipped with versatile emergency equipment so that some passengers survive, including the central character Rob Merlin who gets born in the wreckage. When the baby is rescued his hands are frozen, so that as Merlin grows he gets fitted with a sequence of semi-biological prosthetic hands.

By Chapter 1 Merlin has become a bridge engineer, who has invented a device for making very strong cables which he uses for bridging Cook Strait, Bass Strait etc. He meets Darius Regulo, an old engineer who lives in his private watery world, Atlantis, made by melting an icy asteroid. Regulo has become vastly wealthy from asteroid mining and from his share in rocketship traffic throughout the Solar System, but his slogan is **ROCKETS ARE WRONG**. Indeed, a rocket literally throws away many times the energy which is necessary for launching its payload.

Regulo engages Merlin to construct an orbital tower, by tying a guided asteroid to a cable

attached to the Earth at the Equator. The asteroid is further out than geostationary satellites, so that Earth's gravity is insufficient to hold the asteroid and the cable remains under tension. Trains can then be run up and down the cable (powered through superconducting cables) without wasting energy. Indeed, trams moving in from geostationary orbit or out beyond it generate power for driving the other trains, and loads taken beyond geostationary orbit get launched by the Earth's angular momentum.

This is sf with a very hard core, with highly technical discussions between Merlin and Regulo. For instance, Sheffield does not consider it necessary to amplify for the reader an allusion to two different forms of rotating fluid ellipsoids. MacLaurin's axially symmetric type and Jacobi's triaxial type. When Merlin explains his audacious plan for attaching the cable to Earth, Regulo remarks approvingly, "I'll always take a solution with dynamic stability over one with static stability".

Regulo is accompanied by his assistant Cornelia Plessey (who may be his daughter) and by a sinister biologist Joseph Morel, whose experimental giant squid Caliban is linked to Regulo's computer Sycorax. Cornelia's mother Senta has had some memories erased by Morel, and she is befriended by Howard Anson, who runs an information service. Merlin's work on the vast engineering project is involved intricately with the complex relations between those characters, and several plot lines run in parallel until they converge near the end of the book.

A related story by Sheffield, with an accompanying article on "How to build a Beanstalk", is due to appear in issue No. 4 of **DESTINIES**.

The reader may by now be puzzled by the resemblances to a novel published a few months previously — Arthur C. Clarke's **FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE**. In fact, the Science Fiction Writers' Guild of America recently published a joint letter from Arthur C. Clarke (past President of the British Interplanetary Society) and Charles Sheffield (current President of the American Astronautical Society), explaining that neither of them had known of the other's book until after both had been accepted in 1978 by their publishers. They explained that each of them had based his novel on a series of technical publications, beginning with Yuri N. Artsutanov's article in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 31 July 1960. Clarke and Sheffield both knew of the striking painting by Cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov and A. Sokolov of a Space Elevator arising from near Sri Lanka to geostationary orbit (published in their collection of space paintings **THE STARS ARE AWAITING US**, "Melodaya Gvardiya", Moscow, 1967, p.25).

There are differences in detail between the orbital towers in the two novels (e.g. Clarke's tower is constructed under static equilibrium); but there are many striking resemblances. Both Clarke and Sheffield use billion-ton towers with super-

conducting cables to drive their trains, and both have a bridge engineer as hero, each of whom passes on his equipment for the much easier task of building an orbital tower on Mars (although only Clarke tackles the awkward problem of dodging Phobos). Moreover, in both novels the tower is viewed by an appalled spectator who vows that he'll never risk his neck on such a gadget but will stick to good old-fashioned rocketships!

Both novels, Clarke's last (or so he intends) and Sheffield's second, are extremely well written, with human relations combined skillfully with engineering problems. My advice is to get both novels, and to keep them for your permanent collection. — GJT

The Adventures of Captain Sunshine
Art by Colin Wilson.

Story by Peter Farrell, Roy Middleton, Reuben Sandler and Colin Wilson.

Lettering by Helen Cross.

Colour by Joe Wylie and Jean-Luc Bozzoli.
(1979, 30pp comic, 50 cents)

Science fiction, ecology, violent oil tanker adventure, contact with cetaceans, and a hippy mythos style of superhero are the blend of New Zealand's first colour 32-page comic.

Colin Wilson's artwork is mostly up to his usual outstanding, the colour work is mostly dreadful (whether the colourists' or printer's fault I don't know), and the story and script are pretty dumb.

I'd say most collectors would like a copy, more for the art and the significance of such a venture, but hopefully Colin Wilson will have more control over the colour work, at least, on the next issue, due late February. — BAT

BLIND VOICES — Tom Reamy
(Sidgwick & Jackson, 1979, 260pp, \$17.35)
Jacket design by Bartholomew Wilkins & Partners.

Tom Reamy crafted a number of short-fiction pearls in his short career and this, his only novel, was published after his sudden death in 1977.

It is a work of considerable power, taking the small town concerns of a writer like Bradbury and infusing them with a modern, chilling feel of impending doom — the poetry of the writing a skillful but discomforting fit with the macabre story.

I was reminded at times of the Walter Tevis book **THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH** (a far superior work to the flawed film based on the book), although I am not sure if Reamy intended the philosophical interest to outweigh the Weird Tales elements, or vice versa. For the story is definitely not pleasant in parts, especially when it outlines the motives as well as the actions of some characters.

BLIND VOICES is probably not in the 'masterpiece' class but it suggests that a budding master-craftsman was cut short from a stunning development. — BAT

THE GODMAKERS — Frank Herbert
(Nal, 1975, 175pp)

Cover Art uncredited.

I enjoy Frank Herbert stories. He knows what he's talking about, he writes a captivating adventure yarn, he teases the reader to guess what's coming next with well-placed clues, and he accepts no limits to what he may speculate about.

THE GODMAKERS is a stimulating blend of convincing hard science and rigorously thought out speculation about supernatural and spiritual possibilities.



An example of Colin's work for Captain Sunshine, with a number of visual jokes and parodies for comic art fans.

24 REVIEWS...

What could happen if high technology and highly developed psychic/spiritual powers co-exist? What if the Hindu/Buddhist mythos were true -- people achieving omnipotent god-like powers, walking a knife edge between responsible power or calamity.

THE GODMAKERS tells the intriguing story of Lewis Orme and his rise from an R & R Agent (Rediscovery and Re-education Service, who hope to reknit the galactic empire shattered by the Rim Wars) to the top of his craft, and then on to his 'training' to be a god.

Few even try what Herbert usually achieves. Long may he live and write. -- BAT

THE ART OF SCIENCE FICTION

Frank Kelly Freas.

(Donning, Norfolk, Virginia, 1977, 120pp; US \$7.95).

In Noumenon 25, Rollo Treadway wrote of this collection: "An excellent buy, and one no sf-art fan can pass up if the title is eventually released in New Zealand". Now that it has been released here I endorse Rollo's comment. Here is a large collection of work by one of the leading sf artists (winner of 10 Hugos!), finely reproduced on large pages (277 x 212 mm), with an informative and witty commentary by the artist. Unlike many illustrators, Freas actually reads and understands the stories which he is working on, and his artwork frequently adds significant ideas to those contributed by the writer.

Who could ever forget his first cover for Astounding, illustrating Tom Goodwin's *The Gulf Between* (October 1953)? Likewise, his Astounding covers for Simak's *Immigrant* (May 1954) and Leinster's *Pirates of Ersatz* (February 1959) linger in readers' memories long after the stories have been forgotten. And of course, his little green Martian leaning through a keyhole (his 1955 Astounding cover for Fredric Brown's *Martians Go Home*) has become a popular classic of sf art.

Although sf fans think of him primarily for his



work in Astounding and Analog, he has published in many other magazines. Indeed, his best-known creation is probably the celebrated Alfred E. Neumann of Mad magazine (who can no longer be described as "inimitable", since the current candidates for the American Presidency are presenting passable imitations of Alfred). This collection includes the very first work which he sold, whilst still a student in 1950 -- a subtle depiction of a piping satyr which was bought by Weird Tales (which apparently commissioned a story to go with the cover). Also, it includes several of the splendid posters which he has done in recent years for NASA, to make people interested in the exploration of space.

Freas' technical virtuosity enables him to use a wide range of techniques, including pen drawing, pointillist black dots, impressionistic water-colours, dry-brush acrylic and detailed oil paintings. His styles range from symbolic images through photographic realism to surrealist abstraction, sometimes combining these effects in a single picture. This is a book for sf readers to keep and enjoy. -- GJT

CAPTIVE UNIVERSE

Harry Harrison.

(Sphere, 1978, 185pp; \$2.95).

Cover art uncredited.

This is a welcome reprint of one of Harrison's finest novels, first published in 1969. Chimal is a member of an Aztec tribe living in a mountain valley blocked by landfalls. After many generations of isolation the tribe is facing extinction. The priests have become ever more brutal, enforcing their rule by sacrificing anyone who is not totally submissive to the will of the gods. And the tribal tabus are reinforced by the gods themselves indeed, Chimal's existence is the consequence of the violation of a tabu, for which his father's heart

LOCUS

The Newspaper of the Science Fiction Field

Edited & Published by Charles N. Brown.

Locus is the essential zine for all serious sf readers, collectors, writers, artists, editors, libraries/librarians, and quidnuncs. Major news; People, Market & Media Notes; Columns; Reviews; Interviews; Surveys & Summaries; even important adverts -- all are in Locus. --BAT

20-24 pages; 11"x8 1/2"; offset.

\$13.50/12 seamail; \$21 airmail -- individuals.

\$15/12 seamail; \$22.50 airmail -- institutions.

PO Box 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119, U.S.A.

had been ripped from his chest by the claws of Coatlucue, she with the twin snakes as head and the necklace of human hearts and hands.

When Chimal is a boy his strange ideas cause the priests to beat him and the villagers to scorn him. As he grows to manhood he becomes dissatisfied with the peasant existence and tries to find a way out of the valley. Soon his inquiring mind gets him chosen by the priests for sacrifice, and his only chance of survival is to escape from the valley. When he does, he finds that the valley exists inside an interstellar ship. Chimal does not just happen to be a superman.

The interstellar voyage had been decreed centuries earlier by a mad dictator, whose sociologists had arranged for the human cargo to survive by breeding them for social stability. Passiveness and mental dullness were to be enforced by tabus, which were intended to be broken at the end of the voyage to allow the following generations to reach full human potential. Chimal's irregular conception had freed him from the mental fetters imposed genetically on the tribe. The sociologists had designed the ship's crew, a bizarre caste of monks and nuns, to be stabilized by their dedication to the duty of controlling the tribe.

Harrison portrays convincingly the degeneration of the crew, who have come to regard the perpetuation of their own role as being much more

important than completing the voyage. Thus, the crew need liberating from their imposed constraints as much as do the captive tribe. Of course, when Chimal succeeds the change is no more welcome to the crew than to the tribe.

This novel is much more than an entertaining adventure story with a sympathetic hero. Harrison presents concepts about human societies, psychology, morality and ethics which invite his readers to think about such matters. Any reader who had complacently accepted conventional wisdom on such matters is likely to feel rather uncertain after reading this book. Is there any form of literature other than sf in which entertainment can be combined with such ideas? — GJT

SPACE WAR BLUES — Richard Lupoff
(Sphere, 1979, 315pp, \$3.95)
Cover Art by George Barr.

Somebody once remarked that Wagner's music is not as bad as it sounds, a clever phrase I heartily concur with, and this book may not be as bad as it reads.

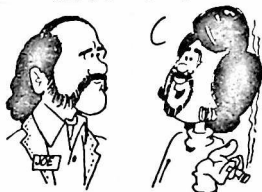
But I doubt it.

Harlan Ellison's rambling introduction makes for interesting reading and certainly provokes you to read the book. But somehow the telling doesn't match the vision. Portions have appeared elsewhere and, at times, don't fit with each other. The exaggerated style in other portions leave the reader irritated

HALF-LIFE

*The life & times
of Elmer T. Hack*

MY WORK IS READ ALL
OVER THE WORLD



IT MADE AS MUCH SENSE TO ME AS
IF I'D READ IT UPSIDE DOWN!

YESTERDAY I RECEIVED A JAPANESE
TRANSLATION OF ONE OF MY GOODMAN
BOOKS



I KNOW THE FEELING

UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T READ
JAPANESE.



I HAVE THE SAME TROUBLE WITH YOUR
ENGLISH EDITIONS!!



CHARLIE EVANS & JIM BAROOR

26 REVIEWS...

rather than stimulated. The plots (and many of the names) jar and jolt, lacking flow and reader-interest.

I'd say it depends on taste. — BAT

STARS OF ALBION

Edited by Robert Holdstock & Christopher Priest
(Pan, 1970, 240pp, \$3.25)

Cover Art by Bob Norrington.

The basic point of this book, according to the editors, is to show that British sf is distinctive, and as good as that of other countries.

As a showcase anthology, then, I'd say it possibly fails. Of the upper echelon, only the Aldiss story is interesting; Ballard's is drab, Shaw's is throwaway, and Watson's is mimetic nastiness.

Keith Roberts provides simplistic stereotypes and denouement; Barrington Bayley's is mock-Vernian hack; Holdstock's doesn't quite come alive; and I don't know what Priest's is saying.

So that leaves David Garrett's fair to middling; Josephine Saxton's rather bleak semi-occult; and David Masson's good story on a weak base.

Which leaves John Brunner's *The Vitanuls*, for me far and away the best story in the book. Only it and the Aldiss seem to contain significant elements of what I look to British writers for in my sf reading.

Sorry chaps. — BAT

DEFINITELY MAYBE — A Manuscript Discovered Under Unusual Circumstances.

Arkady & Boris Strugatsky (translated from the Russian by Antonina W Bouis).

(Collier MacMillan, 1978, 144pp; US \$1.95).

A group of scientists living in a tall apartment block in Leningrad, working on many different subjects, are getting close to making major advances by combining ideas from their diverse subjects. During a few sweltering days they find themselves subjected to a strict application of Murphy's Law. Not only does every possible thing go wrong (such as telephones constantly ringing with wrong numbers), but some very strange people appear to distract the scientists from continuing their work. Sinister officials harangue them, alcoholic drinks are delivered and forgotten lovers arrive, one



bringing an unknown child. A large tree appears inexplicably in an asphalt yard, and strangers melodramatically declare themselves to be extraterrestrial envoys.

Some of the scientists suspect that humanity has attracted the attention of some super-civilization, which is interfering to prevent humanity from advancing. Others think that no intelligence is involved; rather, some fundamentally homeostatic aspect of the universe is becoming unbalanced by the application of human reason, and that the universe is automatically restoring the balance. Most of the scientists are defeated by the distractions, but some decide that they will accept the distractions as an inevitable accompaniment to their work. Indeed, the distractions could even serve as useful indicators that the scientist is approaching some significant discovery in his work.

The original Russian title translates literally as *Still a billion years till the end of the world*. The book consists of disjointed fragments (a manuscript discovered under unusual circumstances), ending in an unfinished sentence. This sombre and bleak work confirms the reputation of the Brothers Strugatsky as being amongst the most thoughtful writers of sf. — GJT

AUSTRALIAN

SF

NEWS

The Australian equivalent to *Locus* — 8 pages, 11"x8" offset, photo-reduced type.

\$7.00/10 issues airmail; \$4.00/10 seamount

Edited and published by Merv Binns, 305 Swanston Street, Melbourne 3000, Australia.

NEW ZEALAND AGENT: Noumenon, 127 Wilma Road, Ostend, Waiheke Island, N.Z.

SF (& RELATED) BOOKS PUBLISHED IN NEW ZEALAND — OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 1979
 - Listed in order under their NZ publishers and distributors

Associated Book Publishers (NZ) Ltd:

WALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD—Suzy McKee Charnas (Gollancz \$14.50): First British edition (?).
 THE JESUS INCIDENT—Frank Herbert & Bill Ransom (Goll \$16.50): First Br edition; Jacket by Terry Oakes.
 ROCANNON'S WORLD—Ursula Le Guin (Goll \$9.75): New edition.
 THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION—Edited by Peter Nicholls (Granada hardcover): First edition.
 DAGGER OF THE MIND—Bob Shaw (Goll \$13.95): First edition.
 VISIONS & VENTURERS—Theodore Sturgeon (Goll \$15.25): Collection; first British edition.

Beckett Sterling Ltd:

THE MAN WHO COUNTS + THE NIGHT FACE + THE PEREGRINE—All Poul Anderson (all Ace \$2.90):
 New editions; all cover art by Michael Whelan.
 MASTER OF HAWKS—Linda Bushyager (Dell \$2.90): First edition; cover art uncredited.
 CONAN THE SWORDSMAN—De Camp, Carter, Nyberg (Bantam \$2.95): New edition; cover by Darrel Greene.
 WEB OF THE WITCH WORLD—Andre Norton (Ace \$2.60): Reprint; cover art uncredited.
 ZARSTHOR'S BANE—Andre Norton (Ace \$2.90): First edition; cover art by Sanjulian; interior art by Evan
 TenBroeck Steadman; an Ace illustrated novel.
 GALLAGHER'S GLACIER—Walt & Leigh Richmond (Ace \$2.90): "The original uncut version"; reprint.

Book Reps (NZ) Ltd:

Canopus in Argos Archives; RE: COLONISED PLANET 5: SHIKASTA—Doris Lessing (Cape \$16.50): First
 edition; first of the Canopus series; jacket design by David Prout.

Wm Collins (NZ) Ltd:

COLLISION WITH CHRONOS—Barrington Bayley (Fontana \$2.95): New edition; cover by Colin Hay.
 THE LIGHT FANTASTIC + STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT—both Alfred Bester (Fon \$3.50ea): "The great
 short fiction of Alfred Bester" vols 1 and 2; first British paper edition; cover art by Tim White.
 DREAMSNAKE—Vonda McIntyre (Pan \$3.50): First British paper edition; cover art by G. Underwood.
 A CURE FOR CANCER + THE ENGLISH ASSASSIN—both Michael Moorcock (Fon \$3.75ea): First
 editions of revised text; 2 and 3 of the Jerry Cornelius quartet; covers by Bill Sanderson.
 THE WALKING SHADOW—Brian Stableford (Fon \$3.50): First edition; cover art by Terry Oakes.
 STARS OF ALBION—Edited by Holdstock & Priest (Pan \$3.25): First edition; anthology; cover Norrington.

Gordon & Gotch (NZ) Ltd:

KIRLIAN QUEST—Piers Anthony (Panther/Granada \$4.95): First British paper edition; volume 3 of the
 Cluster series; cover art by "FJG".
 FANTASTIC VOYAGE—Isaac Asimov (Corgi \$3.35): Reprint; cover art uncredited.
 SWORDS AGAINST DEATH + SWORDS IN THE MIST + SWORDS AGAINST WIZARDRY—all Fritz
 Leiber (Mayflower/G \$3.35ea): New editions; vols 2, 3 and 4 of the Swords series; covers by "PE".
 WONDERWORLDS—William F Nolan (Corgi \$3.75): First British paper edition; cover art uncredited.
 THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME—H. G. Wells (Corgi \$4.95): Film tie-in reprint; cover art uncredited.

Hodder & Stoughton Ltd:

HAN SOLO AT STARS' END—Brian Daley (Sphere \$3.70): First British edition; cover art uncredited.
 FLAMERS!—Nicholas Fisk (Knight \$2.35): New edition; juvenile; cover art uncredited.
 THE EARTH AGAIN REDEEMED—Martin Green (Sphere \$5.75): First British edition; cover uncredited.
 FOOL'S HILL + SPACE WAR BLUES—both Richard Lupoff (Sphere \$3.70, \$3.95): First British editions;
 American title of Fool's Hill was The Crack in the Sky; cover art uncredited.
 NIGHTWINDS—Karl Edward Wagner (Coronet \$3.30): First British edition; cover art by Chris Achilleos.

Hutchinson Group (NZ) Ltd:

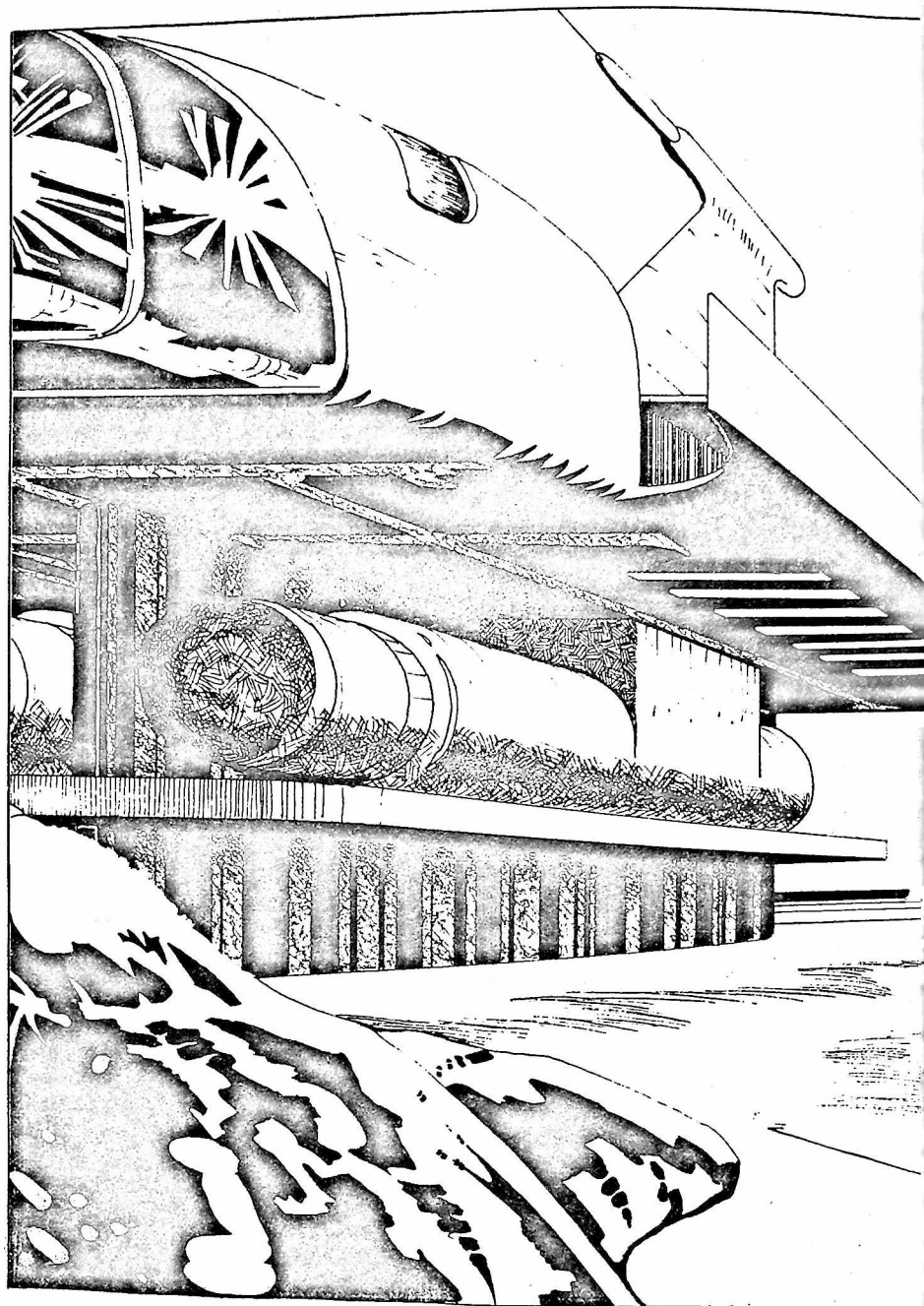
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