

PROSPECTUS 11

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PROSPECTUS is the newsletter of the Fantasy and Science Fiction Society of Columbia University, and is published irregularly. Edited by Eli Cohen. For information about the Society and its activities, contact the officers:

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AKOS 3 IS READY!!! After all our trials and tribulations, crises and postponements, the magazine has finally been finished. If you have not yet received it, and if you won't be able to pick it up in person, please drop me a note and I'll mail you your copy. It took something like four solid days (and nights) of mimeographing before we finished collating the first 150 copies at 6:30 A.M. the morning of Lunacon. I'd like to thank Steve Gelb for help in getting supplies; Maggie Flinn and April Kihlstrom for invaluable aid in slip-sheeting and collating; and most of all Jon Singer, for the heroic job of cranking out 32 pages, 300 copies of AKOS on our ancient, decrepit, hand-run, Gestetner mimeo.

This Thursday, as every Thursday, FSFSCU will meet in the Postcrypt (basement of St. Paul's Chapel), at 8:30. Or if the Crypt is closed, in 601 Furnald.

This Friday (April 24th), FISTFA will also meet in 601 Furnald. FISTFA is one of New York's oldest continuing science fiction clubs -- the membership consists of whoever shows up at that particular meeting, plus the host. The activities consist of rapping about SF, or whatever else comes to mind. Sandy Meschkow, our ace book reviewer, was the previous FISTFA host, but since he moved to Philadelphia, I've inherited it. (It's not only inheritable, it's catching!) So if any of you want to stop in Friday, after 8:30, you're welcome. You can also pick up your AKOS then.

"An armed society is a polite society."

— Robert A. Heinlein, *Beyond This Horizon*

"An armed society is out on a limb."

— Varik P. Thrip

Book Review: SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS, Conducted by the University of Colorado under contract to the United States Air Force, Daniel S. Gilbert, Editor. Bantam, Jan. 1969, 943 pp., \$1.95.

This is the UFO report published last year that led to the recent demise of Project Blue Book. The contributors to this report sharpened up their Occam's Razors and came in swinging like Conan. There was a flurry of controversy about this report before it was released, including strong protests in certain UFO circles that it would prove to be a white-wash. To the extent that it considers the thesis that UFOs are of extra-

terrestrial origin "not proven" you might consider it so. But whether you are pro- or anti-saucer, you should read this report for the multitude of goodies it contains.

If you are pro-saucer, this book will give you a coronary, no mistake. Those investigators are so pigheaded about times and angles and such! But when the investigators were puzzled by a case, they admitted it, as in cases 5 and 46. And for those of you who believe that our government is hiding UFO evidence, Case 52 will interest you, if you can bring yourself to believe the claims of the witness that two guys from NORAD walked off with the crucial negatives. In many cases, there must be hidden evidence of a sort; that satellite that McDivitt saw that NORAD claims was Pegasus B was probably just one of those things in orbit that NORAD doesn't want to talk about.

If you are anti-saucer, or merely openminded and interested in science, research, or the craft of intelligence, this book will delight you. UFOs are not treated as problems in mob psychology but as problems in observation. Quite a few of the contributors give the impression that they would love to catch a live UFO. But, hell, they are up to their ears just trying to get to the bottom of radar propagation, inversion layers and ball lightning. Atmospheric phenomena and their interactions seem to get more complicated the more we study it, and many UFO sightings can be accounted for by these phenomena. And honest-to-God, pilots DO chase weather balloons and SAC bombers DO drop flares and witnesses DO take something as straightforward as a satellite re-entry and make all sorts of wild tales out of it. If there really are any UFOs running around in all those air inversions, they certainly have not proved to be a menace to the security of U.S. thus far. Therefore, this report recommends, it would be far more efficient to concentrate time, money, and research effort on those less controversial aspects of the atmospheric phenomena we still do not understand.

So much for dogma. The real fun of this book lies in the tools the contributors have marshalled to investigate sightings and UFOs as a whole.

32 x 300 = 9600

I guarantee you will learn more about the analysis of photographs, mirages, radar propagation, ball lightning, the effects of high magnetic fields on auto bodies and ignition systems, the psychology of perception, the visibility of small bodies in orbit and so forth than you probably want to know. Don't try to pull a flying saucer hoax without reading this book. After reading it, you will come to understand how an intelligence apparatus can get so much information out of a few Brownie shots.

But, on a more positive note, not chasing UFO reports does not make unexplained atmospheric phenomena go away. There is an English joke about how you catch lions in the desert. You take a big screen and sift all the sand. What doesn't go through the screen is a lion. If we just keep on studying plasmoids, air inversions and radar propagation, who knows? Maybe some day an ESSA radar technician will find a way to comb all that mess off the radar screens -- and those hovering mother ships (if any) are going to get mighty conspicuous!

-- Sand Meschkow

THE ADVENTURES OF GRAYSON GREENSWARD

The natives of Pan-el are fond of gambling, especially with dice. In order to insure honesty the dice were usually cut from large crystals of quartz. The sides of the dice were decorated with pictures of fruit,

and the scoring of the play was adapted from a more elaborate gaming device in Last Vega, the dice being thrown three at a time.

The transparent polyhedra with their colored surfaces would sparkle quite prettily during the game, and much effort and pride of craftsmanship went into their making.

Grayson was in a game for moderate stakes when one of the players made a roll which caused two of the dice to strike together, fracturing one and ruining it. Heartbroken, the player immediately retired to a corner to compose an appropriate memorial to the broken crystal. He was too upset, though, to produce a satisfactory elegy.

Grayson Greensward eventually perceived the poor creature's problem, and suggested that he use the house computer to clear up some of the alliterative puzzles.

Their host was naturally sympathetic, but reluctant to interrupt the house's activities for Grayson's new-found friend to use the computer.

"But," coaxed Grayson, "All we need to use is the silicon die ode rectifier."

--Yarik P. Thrip (with thanks to Tom Bulmer)

Enclosed with this PROSPECTUS you will (hopefully) find an application for membership in the National Fantasy Fan Federation. This organization, which has been around since I think the late '40's, can serve as an introduction to that freaky subculture known as science fiction fandom. It is essentially a correspondence club, a way of getting people who like SF together in the absence of other means. If you join, you will have a chance to find out about other fanzines (AKOS is a fanzine), about the peculiar language and customs of fans, and about the various activities it is possible to engage in through (and in spite of) the U.S. mails. You can join round robins, in which 4 or 5 people send a circular letter around, or round robin stories, where people collaborate on a story. If you're ambitious, you can publish your own magazine and join the NFFF amateur press association. And you have an opportunity to meet people by mail that you can later run into at conventions -- something that makes conventions much more enjoyable.

Speaking of conventions, DISCLAVE will be held in Washington, D.C., on May 15-18. If you're interested, I can give you more information.

LUNACON was held last weekend, and had an attendance of close to 750. Friday night there were the usual parties, with Isaac Asimov, Anne McCaffrey, Robert Silverberg, and various and sundry other notables appearing. One of the more unusual events was the coming-out party of Miss Pookie T. Underfoot, of Clinton, New York. Miss Underfoot was an instant success, though when the party got a little crowded, she lost some of her poise and crawled under Fred Lerner's bed. She eventually had to be removed, when she seemed on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Miss Underfoot was then carried out of the room, and seemed to recover somewhat; rather than take her back to the party, it was decided to leave her temporarily in Sandy Meschkow's room, where she reportedly crawled into the bathroom and went to sleep. But then, what can you expect from a 9 month old pussy cat?

A rather dull program Saturday (except for the Apollo lift-off) was enlivened by a heated exchange between Isaac Asimov and Harlan Ellison. They traded insults for about 10 minutes, until 5, when there was a recess for supper. Saturday evening there were more parties. Our Acting Seneschal, April Kihlstrom, reports that about 25 fans went to Lin Carter's house out in the wilds of Queens. Though she mentioned something about 18 fans walking into a subway at 3 A.M., singing various fannish songs and disturbing the sober citizens of Queens, she was rather reticent about the party's details. Anyone who would like to add more information about the convention is welcome to write me. But please try to keep it printable.