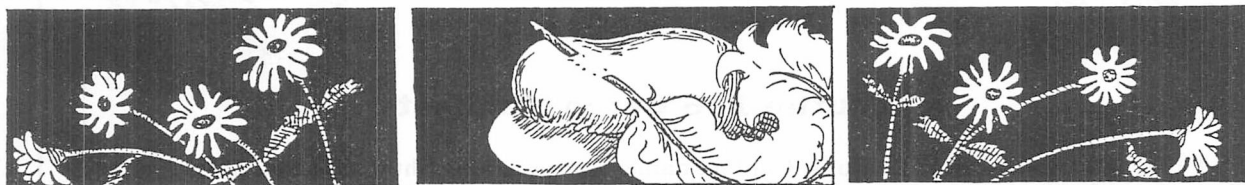


South Florida Science Fiction Society

SHUTTLE

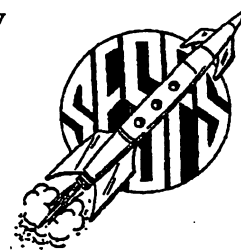
NOVEMBER 1994

Issue 116





South Florida Science Fiction Society
PO Box 70143
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The SFSFS Shuttle #116 — November, 1994

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THE December MEETING

There is no information available. All SFSFS members will be receiving a postcard as soon as plans are definite.

THE October MEETING REVISITED

by Shirlene "Magpi" Ananayo

Having missed the first 45 minutes or so of the meeting (it was the shortcut), I cannot say what went on during the business portion. Sorry folks! *(Never fear...virtually everything that was discussed is brought up elsewhere in this issue. That's right, we're going to make you read the whole thing! Cover to cover! - Ed.)*

I did walk in during Joe Siclari's presentation/talk on CompuServe. He was followed by Chuck Phillips, who spoke on the various types of modems available. I got up and talked for a bit on Genie. Steve Gold talked about both Delphi and America On-Line. And Peter "Mal" Barker wrapped up the meeting with a humor-filled talk on the Internet. *(Don't forget that he was interrupted by Becky signalling us that it was time to go - by turning the lights out. It was pretty funny...felt like we were a rambunctious grade school class. Adding to this feeling was the fact that there were construction paper bats, Jack o' Lanterns, and tombstones decorating our meeting space - Ed.)*

After we closed down the library, I had to get back to Miami, so I missed dinner and the book discussion. I hope that Peter or Ericka will fill us in on what happened there. What say you, editors? <g> *(We say that we didn't make it to the book discussion either, and too much time has passed for us to entice anyone else to write about it. As for the dinner, it was Chinese food at the Lotus Blossom -we think...but then aren't all Chinese restaurants called "The Lotus Blossom"? And there's really not much to say beyond that. -Ed.)*

NEW SFSFS OFFICERS

The SFSFS Officers for 1995 are as follows:

Chairman: Joe Siclari
Vice-Chairman: George Peterson
Secretary: Shirlene Ananayo
Treasurer: Peggy Dolan

There were no competing nominees for any of the offices, and the offices were voted upon at the November meeting, November 19. Needless to say, all of the officers were unanimously voted in. It was a secret ballot, as evidenced by the fact that everyone closed their eyes as they said, "Aye!"

EDITORIAL

by Mal Barker (with Ericka Perdew)

As I understand it, the purpose of the editorial is to grab the reader by the throat and drag them down into the editor's personal madness. Hopefully they'll come out the other side improved by the experience...or at least scratching their collective head and wondering what exactly that idiot was babbling about.

What I plan to babble about today could best be illustrated by a clip from an old Tarzan movie, so let's all try to envision one together. Cue scene of a large fish tank disguised to look like a jungle stream. Cut to a storm of silver fish swimming. There's a lot of them. Cue a blundering human who stumbles into said tank/stream/whatever of fish. Suddenly, the water roils and in a matter of seconds all that's left is a few scraps of bone. The fish consumed everything else, just that quickly.

"So what does this have to do with science-fiction?" you ask. No, it's not the fate each of us dishes out to the GoH's at a convention, but you're close. Instead of that blundering human, envision the latest SF book, with the blurb "1994 Fanboy Award Winner" proudly emblazoned on its cover...or the latest grand and amazing "Adjective-Adjective-Adjective-Noun" comic book, or multi-million dollar SF movie, or SF TV show. Instead of those hungry fish, envision...us, of course. The Fans.

Why do the same people who sneer at the TV announcer exhorting us to "be sure to watch America's most popular TV show 'America's Funniest Recycled Sitcom Scripts!'" go all ga-ga over anything even vaguely science-fictiony? Why do we run around like sharks in a feeding frenzy, attempting to consume every last one of these? Don't fans pride themselves on being a bit more discerning than the average earthling? Certainly we consider ourselves more intelligent than "mundanes"...yet, how then to explain the current push by fans to resurrect **Battlestar Galactica**?

Don't think for a moment, though, that vapidty in SF is limited to TV or movies. There are quite a few books out there which are also just plain bad...yet because they may have won some sort of "award", we all rush out and buy it. "It's an official award!" we tell ourselves. "Someone must know what they are talking about, right?" Maybe we should instead ask ourselves "How many votes were there for this particular award? Now, how many SF readers are there in the world? Don't these numbers differ by at least a couple of magnitudes? Are all the people voting on this award experts in the field? Do they spend their time writing novels for a living? Or do they just happen to have a set of favorite authors they read, then assume that gosh, since their favorite author wrote something they like, it's a science-fiction classic?"

Instead of acting like this is all one big roadrace, with

everyone going from latest book to latest movie to latest TV show, regardless of quality, as fast as we can, why not stop to smell the flowers along the way? Or, to put it in science-fiction terms, why not put a space credit in the telescopic viewer and watch the meteors fly past? It's not as if there isn't massive quantities of really good SF from the past six decades or so to enjoy. Why rush to get the latest Gor epic when you haven't read anything at all by Alfred Bester? Why complain about how awful seaQuest DSV is, and continue to tape and keep every episode, just because it's supposedly science-fiction?

How can anyone expect to read or watch only science-fiction from the last decade or so, and be a well-rounded SF fan? For that matter, how can anyone expect to be able to express a valid critical opinion unless they have a wide experience of SF works? You can't say that "this book is the best of the books about planet Claire" when you've never read any other books about planet Claire. For all you know someone wrote the definitive work on that planet over 45 years ago, and the one you read yesterday is just a derivation of that. But you've never read anyone from the so-called "old school", so you're not aware of that.

SF fans tend to have somewhat limited funds, as a rule. Perhaps we should spend some of our hard-won dollars on some of the nifty stuff that comprises the foundation of science-fiction, rather than blowing a month's rent on propellor beanies with all the main character's faces from some new TV show screen-printed on them. And don't read this or that just because gosh, everyone *else* at the con did. Slow down and explore. Kick off your shoes and stroll through the vast field of science-fiction.

I Dream of GENIE

by Shirlene "Magpi" Ananayo

For those of you who missed the meeting...and those of you who were still reeling from all the information that I chatted on about during my quick presentation, here is a re-cap of what was said.

"GENie" is a commercial online service offered through General Electric (*hence*, GENie - Ed.). It provides many services to its customers that I won't even attempt to explain at this time. Suffice it to say that there is a lot of information that is made available to GENie customers.

Within GENie there are a multitude of "RoundTables" (RTs) and each is equivalent to a specialized Bulletin Board System or BBS. Within each RT you have the actual BBS (where messages can be written and read), the Real-Time Conference or RTC area (where you can interact "live" with other customers in "rooms", equivalent to Chat/Conference Rooms on other services), and the library (where files can be either downloaded/retrieved or uploaded/stored). In the BBS area, it is broken down into Categories that are comprised of individual topics (equivalent to folders or files on other services).

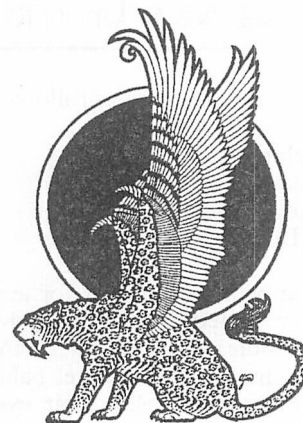
The area that I was asked to speak about are the Science Fiction RoundTables or "SFRTs". The original SFRT devoted to SF/F fandom grew so much that the decision was made to divide the sole RT into three different ones; each devoted to its own aspect of SF/F fandom.

SFRT1 is devoted to the written word. There are six categories devoted to authors, writers, and artists. Most of them are available online, so you can ask them specific questions that most of them are more than happy to answer or respond to. There are additional categories devoted to diverse subjects - from specific written works, to the business of publishing, to bookstores, to historical SF/F, to Mythopoeic Fantasy. There is also a category devoted to Horror.

SFRT2 is devoted primarily to Media fandom. If you want a place to discuss the nuances of certain *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episodes, then this is the place! There are also categories devoted to *Babylon 5* and *Doctor Who*...but that's not all! You also get a salad shooter - oops, wrong script...<blush> You can find a topic devoted to practically every SF/F t.v. show that's ever been seen in the United States or the United Kingdom. There are topics on various screenwriters, artists, directors and soundtrack composers as well.

SFRT3 is the general fandom RT. In other words, it's the catch-all place for anything that doesn't fit under the auspices of SFRT1 or SFRT2. In addition to the categories for the different yearly conventions held each year; you can find categories for *Intersection- the '95 Worldcon* and *NASFiC/Dragon*Con '95*. There is an entire category devoted to *Modems of the Queen- the GENie chapter of Queen's Own*, the *Mercedes Lackey Fan Club* - as well as categories for *Pern/Anne McCaffrey* fandom and *Matters Of The Force/Star Wars* fandom.

I will admit that I didn't cover every aspect of what can be found in the SFRTs on GENie, but believe me when I say that there is a lot out there. If you've got any questions, please ask me at the next general meeting, okay? Until then, hope to see you on the boards!



L O C S !

Dear Edie and Joe:

My new wife, new to fanzine fandom, asked me to explain the bare-breasted female cartoon character saying "Words" in your last issue. "Oh, that's just Bill Rotsler being himself" failed to enlighten her.

The corporate vehicle I was riding in down the information superhighway started missing on a few cylinders and the drivers tossed a few of us passengers out. I now have my thumb up to catch another ride.

Beast Wishes,

Teddy Harvia

Dear Joe and Edie:

Many thanks for 115th Shuttle, which continues to please for the legible typography and interesting material.

I hope Francine Mullen doesn't need to pay as much for sheet filk music as the prices that confront a person interested in longhair music. Vocal scores of operas under copyright can cost upwards of \$150 or even more. Short piano compositions and songs lasting two or three minutes and covering a couple of pages can have list prices of \$5 and up. My purchasing has been mainly limited to a local store that has a music-by-the-pound sale once a year.

What I did and what was done to me on October 1 this year are lost to posterity. Everything since August 12 is permanently blacked out and there is no hope of improvement in this crisis until the baseball strike is settled. However, you deserve congratulations on your new car. My current vehicle is now two and a half years in my possession and the salesman at the used car lot persuaded me to buy it without even mentioning its best feature. It's the first auto I've ever owned with a trunk compartment that doesn't stay hopelessly cluttered up with stuff.

Made Maid had me very worried until the final paragraph. Please, I implored nobody in particular, don't let this be yet another story in which the hero and his women are revealed at the climax to be Adam and Eve. Fortunately, Charles Fontenay didn't take the cliched way out and as a result I enjoyed the little story very much.

You chose well when you selected this John Berry item to reprint. I believe it's the source of the title of my fan history book and I also suspect it might contain the first appearance in print of the "nice old man" reference to

George Charters that became his theme song of sorts. Your younger members won't comprehend all the allusions and subtleties in John's prose, unfortunately, unless they've memorized the contents of the giant Willis issue of Warhoon.

I hope eventually to acquire copies of both the Asimov and Bloch autobiographical works. I share George Peterson's dismay over the comparatively low financial rewards Bob Bloch received (See "Remembering Robert Bloch" on page 6 for an example of just how low those financial rewards could sometimes be - Ed.). Jack Williamson's book tells much the same story; some of the finest science-fiction written during the middle part of the century brought him incredibly puny sums.

The reports on the worldcon are helpful because most con reports on the Winnipeg event have been rather brief up to now, resulting in a good chance that each new one will contain information not previously published.

I hope Leslie Fish and others promoting this fan-haven (*the unpaid ad on page 20 of #115 - Ed.*) have done their homework with government authorities before they start to raise lots of money to purchase the land. There is a wilderness of red tape and bureaucracy involving wilderness land.

Yrs. &c.,

Harry Warner, Jr.



REMEMBERING ROBERT BLOCH

by Gerry Adair

Shortly after meeting Robert Bloch at Tropicon IV, I understood what Stephen King meant when he described him as having the face of a sixth grade clown. There was...well, there was what you could only describe as an honest-to-God twinkle in his eyes. Do you know what I mean? I'm talking about that little spark that flashes in the eyes of cinematic Santas but is invariably absent in their street corner and department store counterparts. Bloch's eyes had, as my grandmother used to say, "the devil in 'em".

I didn't see it at first. If anything, he seemed annoyed at my requests for him to sign a few of his books for me. It was late, he was jet lagged and bone weary and he'd already held off other requests with a promise to make himself available for book signings the next morning. I apologized for my persistence but told him I had to leave in 15 minutes. My wife was pregnant and her due date wasn't all that far away. I'd left her in the care of my sister-in-law, drove 45 miles to Ft. Lauderdale, and "crashed" the con (Mea Culpa, SFSFS) just to have the opportunity to meet him. I had to be back home that night.

That's when I first saw the twinkle.

He crooked his finger and directed me to his room. "If you're telling the truth, I'm deeply honored," he said, closing the door behind us. "On the other hand, if you're lying, I'll simply have to kill you".

For the next 15 minutes he signed all my books and tolerated a barrage of questions. Before I left, I thanked him for his patience and apologized for my fannish behavior.

"You don't have to apologize for being fannish to me," he responded. "That's how I got into all of this in the first place".

In 1933, a 16 year-old Bloch wrote a fan letter to H.P. Lovecraft. A short time later, Lovecraft responded, "There's something about the way you write that tells me that perhaps you would like to try your own hand at it. I would be very glad to read whatever you turned out". True to his word, HPL's guidance and support were instrumental in Bloch's first professional sale, *The Secret in the Tomb*, to *Weird Tales* in 1935.

Over the next 60 years, Bloch established himself as an undisputed master of the horror genre for his tales of

supernatural and psychological terror. Harlan Ellison praised Bloch's work as "on a level with Poe". He has been the recipient of a Hugo Award (for *That Hellbound Train*), the Inkpot Award, the Gray LASF Service Award, the Twilight Zone Dimension Award, the Bram Stoker Award from the Horror Writers of America, and Lifetime Career Awards from the Atlanta Fantasy Faire, The World Science Fiction Convention, and The World Fantasy Convention.

His most famous novel, *Psycho* (1959), was made into a landmark horror film by Alfred Hitchcock that continues to generate millions in revenue for Universal studios through merchandise, sequels, and even as a theme park attraction. The novel was sold blind to MCA by Bloch's ex-agent for a mere \$95,000. Of that amount, Simon and Schuster received 15% and the agent 25%. Bloch received an obscene \$6,000 gross - *not* net - out of the whole deal.

"If you're telling the truth, I'm deeply honored," he said..."On the other hand, if you're lying, I'll simply have to kill you"

He seemed genuinely tickled when I told him that I became acquainted with his work, not through Hitchcock, but through the *Thriller* TV series and that I preferred *American Gothic* (1976), a fictionalized account of the life of H.H. Holmes, America's first serial murderer, to *Psycho*. Although grateful for the fame he received from *Psycho*, his personal favorite from among his novels was the relatively unknown *The Scarf* (1947).

The last time I saw him was in Nashville in 1991. We agreed to meet for breakfast to discuss the possibility of his attendance at Tropicon X as a returning GoH. I was cocky and prepared to meet any financial need or any other incentive he might request in order to ensure his attendance. He thanked me but gently declined, citing a list of medical and financial obstacles that would make any trips or commitments for the next year or so a virtual impossibility. This (the first World Horror Con) was going to be his last con for the foreseeable future. He did, however, promise to compose a tribute letter to his friend Andre Norton (Tropicon X's GoH) for our program book.

Then, out of left field, he asked me how my son Michael was doing. I started to laugh, but he reprimanded me in a stern mock-serious voice.

"Don't you dare laugh at Michael!" he said. "If he hadn't been born I *would* have killed you!"

Later that day as I was dashing through the lobby on my way to the airport, I saw him entering an elevator. I gave a quick wave. He bowed slightly from the waist and then, just before the elevator doors shut, raised both hands to his ears and made a "Wugga-Wugga" face.

Robert Bloch had planned his funeral arrangements quite some time ago. For years he had been sending his

manuscripts and memorabilia to the University of Wyoming. At his request, he was cremated and his ashes placed in a book-shaped urn. That urn, bearing the title **The Complete Works of Robert Bloch**, was sent to the University and now rests alongside the stories that frightened and delighted us for the past six decades.

As for me, a congratulatory note on the occasion of Michael's birth and an autographed program from World Horror Con I in 1991 inscribed "Best to Michael's Father" will always serve as a reminder of the gentle little man whose stories just happened to serve as the wellspring of contemporary horror literature.

STUPID ALIENS

-A MALADY OF SF IN GENERAL AND THE TV MOVIE
"WITHOUT WARNING" IN PARTICULAR

By George Peterson

Back in the old days, when science fiction was starting to grow up, John W. Campbell of *Astounding* laid down the challenge. The goal when creating non-human intelligent life-forms was to make a creature who thought as well as a human, but differently. In other words, their behavior would be alien yet still make perfect sense within the context of their nature and origins. That's easier said than done. It's hard to think differently.

It's so difficult to get really *alien* aliens, that we seldom see them - even in good literary SF. All too often, they're just humans in different bodies. And this is especially true with TV and the movies. *Star Trek* creatures are just humans with bumps and ridges. None are outside the range of normal human behavior. Much the same could be said for *Babylon 5*, *Alien Nation*, or a host of other television shows.

In truth, this is not really a problem. The point of SF, like any other literature, is to illuminate the human condition. The aliens in *Star Trek* and *Babylon 5* metaphorically represent the many different peoples and cultures of today's world. The Klingons started out as stand-ins for the Soviets; the Bajorans are really Palestinians. And that's okay; it's in keeping with SF's function as metaphor and analogy. It's why Campbell changed the name of his magazine from the pulpish *Astounding* to *Analog*.

Unfortunately (you knew that was coming, didn't you), the notion that "They're aliens, so they do alien things" is used to cover a lot of stupid, ill-thought-out behavior. In short, alien characters are used as excuses for bad concepts and bad writing.

Case in point: CBS's movie *Without Warning*, which aired Sunday, October 30, 1994. Done as a sort of updated version of Orson Welles' 1939 *War of the Worlds* radio

play, the 2-hour TV movie depicted a fictional news broadcast.

It opens with a report on three meteorite impacts that have taken place - one in Wyoming, one in the mountains of southwestern Spain and one in Mongolia. Fortunately, all of these fell in remote rural areas, thus minimizing loss of life and property damage. A little girl is found near the Wyoming site, a missing skier is discovered in Spain. Both are seriously injured, and babbling incoherently.

Astronomers are brought in to explain. The fragments came from an earth-grazer known in part as A-Venturie. It was apparently headed toward the north pole when it broke up, causing fragments to hit in different places.

The plot thickens when another scientist points out that the fragments all landed on the 45th parallel, at equidistant points, forming the edges of a perfect 3-sided pyramid. The odds of this happening are infinitesimal. Could this be evidence of extra-terrestrial intelligence?

Soon other bizarre events take place. A scientist associated with SETI is flown to Houston with a strangely closed-mouth NASA. And the impact craters begin emitting a strange radio signal that grounds all air traffic along the 45th parallel.

An astronomer boldly proclaims this to be an ETI visitation. Another guest on the news show babbles about ancient astronauts. On the other hand, a Pentagon spokesman and Arthur C. Clarke (whoever *he* is...) poo-poo the idea.

Then NASA reveals that another asteroid is headed for the North Pole. As the object is large enough to cause serious ecological damage, the government dispatches two F-16 fighters armed with nuclear missiles to intercept it. We are assured the warheads are powerful enough to shatter the incoming asteroid, but not large enough to spread too much dangerous radiation into the atmosphere. Russia, China and the security council have given consent. The fighters are successful in destroying the incoming asteroid, but are mysteriously destroyed.

The radio signals from the craters stop, and air traffic is restored. The danger appears at an end. Or is it? The citizens of a small town in Wyoming have all suddenly vanished without a trace, a la *Marie Celeste*.

Then the SETI scientist, storming in from his meeting with NASA, reveals that the second object was an incoming spaceship. "They came in the manner they chose..." and we, "...the most violent planet in the Universe," shot it down. He then reveals, after a quick, overly melodramatic argument with a NASA administrator, that three more incoming meteoroids have been detected: targeted at Beijing, Moscow, and Washington, respectively. "We were given a great gift..." and we are being punished for destroying it.

But all is not lost! Once again, the Pentagon comes to the rescue. Nuclear missiles are targeted. With only seconds to

spare, all three cities are saved. (Yes!)

But, once again the celebration dies, for the radar soon shows dozens more coming down, all targeted at major cities world-wide. And the mysterious words the little girl and the skier muttered before they died are deciphered: "Grow up you 1-4-7" (referring to the 147 member states of the United Nations).

The movie ends with the news correspondent promising to stay on the air "as long as we can."

Now, I'm not going to give **Without Warning** a bad review. It was really pretty good. Overall, it was well done. The production values were good, and I found the events to be well researched and plausible.

The writers did a good job of catching the flavor of similar newscasts - The way, for instance, such shows pair up a crackpot with a legitimate expert in the name of balance, accidentally creating the illusion of controversy where there is none. They also recreate the strange mixture of skeptical reporting and gullibility so often exhibited on these newscasts, and the typical man-in-the-street interviews and responses. It all came off as quite realistic.

I found the scenes where the correspondents broadcasting from the three target cities try to say goodbye to their families in the last few seconds - just in case the missiles fail - to be particularly affecting.

Without Warning was exciting and suspenseful all the way through. I must say I generally enjoyed it.

Except (you knew that was coming, didn't you?) the underlying concept is another case of aliens who don't make much sense.

I don't have a problem with aliens who want to bomb us with asteroids - for whatever reason - or even with keeping these motives unclear. Mystery works, too. But this wasn't the writer's intention.

First of all, dropping asteroids on a planet as a way to send a friendly "hello" would be a mind-bogglingly *dumb* idea. It's like introducing yourself to a neighbor by crashing your car into his den. Excusing it by pointing out that no one got killed is beside the point (the initial impacts did result in casualties despite being in unpopulated areas). The aliens

didn't have any business expecting a pleasant response.

Second, the decision to intercept the second asteroid targeted at the pole is not an unreasonable response. There was no clear evidence this was a benign landing. What were we supposed to do? Just stand there and let a big lump of rock cause massive ecological damage? If aliens were coming in for a landing, they should have given us decent warning (**Without Warning** is a pretty good title in this case). If a terrestrial nation did something like this it would rightly be considered an act of war.

And where does the scientist get off calling this "the most violent planet in the Universe"? How does he know this? And how can you describe a civilization which slings asteroids at unsuspecting planets as peaceful? If that's a peaceful planet, I'd hate to see a belligerent one.

If the writers were dealing with this as simply an attack from outer space, it would work fine. But the give-away as to their true motives is the message: "Grow up you 1-4-7." This is also pretty dumb. The ambassadors bringing this message to the world are two seriously injured people, who soon die. The message is garbled, and we are given no time to interpret and evaluate it before being bombarded.

It's also a message coming a bit late in the game. The truth is we've already been growing up a bit. There are still wars going on, but they're nothing compared to the great conflagrations that marked the first half of this century. We've had nuclear weapons for nearly fifty years, yet, except for the initial attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, no one has used them. Also in the last few decades, we've begun to really recognize and deal with problems of population growth, pollution, and ecological destruction (contrary to popular belief, use of fluorocarbons in aerosols was ended nearly 20 years ago, and the ozone layer is no longer in serious, long-term danger). So it's ironic that just as we're getting it together, a bunch of cosmic busybodies come to pound us into rubble - because we couldn't tell the difference between their ship and an incoming asteroid. That's a bit like finding a feral child and clubbing it to death because it doesn't know proper table manners.

Even if the message were, "Straighten up, or else," it's still a clumsy way to say it. Klaatu and Gort were much more eloquent.

I would have been quite satisfied if any of these points had been brought up by a character in the show. Even if a question mark were left regarding the aliens' true motives, it would have been a valid question.

All things considered, the most likely message being conveyed is a sort of self-hatred. It's the updated version of original sin - that humans are inherently evil, corrupting, and violent. It's both sanctimonious and untrue - not to mention insulting.

Without Warning is a pretty good piece of work. It's a shame to see it tarnished because someone didn't think it through well enough.



Bad SF Movies We Love

By Peter Barker and Ericka Perdew

The Queen of Outer Space takes place in the dizzyingly high-tech, super-futuristic year of 1983. Of course, the film itself was made in the fifties, and catered to a generation of men which, by and large, had *just* discovered that space travel could be fun. We mean more fun than anything else...even working on the car or being the center of attention at the barbecue. The lesson to be gleaned was that men's place was in space...and women's place was at the side of (and just *slightly* behind) the bold space man. Sure, women could be brainy and stuff, in their own way. But heaven forbid that they actually dabble in something as nifty as rocket science.

Why, look at the whole beginning of the movie. The first few minutes of this film are just full to the rafters with men. The heady scent of testosterone must have filled the air on the days they filmed these scenes. First of all there's the Leader of the Underground Space Toadies, who looks disconcertingly like Walt Disney. Then of course, there are his minions and then there are the dashing astronauts.

Is this what society will have streamlined itself into in the future...ugly toadies and dashing astronauts? you may be asking yourself after awhile. But then you see that there *will* be women in the future, as exemplified by the girlfriend of the leering, supposedly studly member of the crew. She comes to bid him goodbye clad in a green satin full length gown and floppy, blood red gloves.

Then you also see that there is a guy on board who is not quite so dashing. In fact, he's a bit corpulent and saggy, but with twinkling eyes and apple cheeks...not to mention a super neat Bob's Big Boy hairdo. Is this some demented elf of Santa's who's had his hand in the hormone jar? Why, no! Seems this is the learned "professor" whose space station the astronauts will be paying a visit to. Just what college this "professor" graduated from remains a mystery, which is probably just as well...because he's continually doing such boneheaded things as trying to light a cigarette on the rocketpad, or waxing philosophical about Venus' "several moons" (huh?)

Soon our heroes have been shot down and captured by the Venusians - who, of course, are all women...wearing spandex...and spike heels...even while running through the woods after earthmen. Come to think of it, maybe that's the Venusian super power. They can't eat radium or anything, but they all have perfect balance.

They all troop in to meet the Queen, who wears a mask that looks like bad papier mache. After she gets a load of the White Male Reality of the fifties ("Why don't you girls knock off all this gestapo stuff...and be a little *friendly*?"), she is understandably ticked and throws them into prison to

await execution.

Enter Zsa Zsa. That's right, there's a Gabor sister in this turkey. She's a "scientist" whose main activity seems to be arranging flowers in her laboratory all day. She also seems to think that a woman is only attractive when her face is perfectly immobile, so consequently she has to hiss her lines through clenched teeth. Natch, she falls in love with the boss space guy and decides to help them escape, along with a couple of her pals who are wearing Anne Francis' *Forbidden Planet* castoffs (come to think of it, the astronauts are also wearing space gear from *FP*, so they should all get along swell).

Will Zsa Zsa and the earthmen escape? Why does the Queen wear that mysterious mask? How did the producers of this dreck think they would get away with it? These and many other questions can only be answered if you go and rent the essential, hallucinatory stinkburger that is *The Queen of Outer Space*. Do so. NOW.



What's Up With **WXEL**?

by Ericka Perdew

Since I became SFSFS/WXEL Liaison some weeks ago, I've been asked "What's up with WXEL?" (in one form or another, and for varying reasons) by quite a few people. I'd like to take this opportunity to get everyone up to speed on what WXEL is, and what its connection to SFSFS means...both to us, and to them.

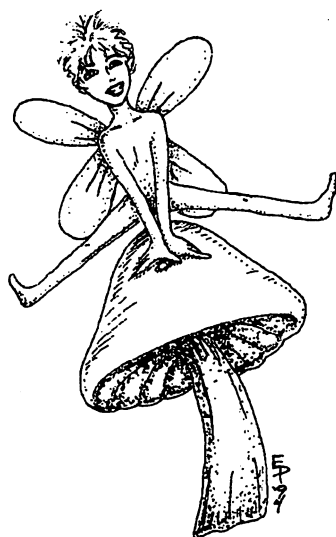
WXEL TV-42 is a public television station in Boynton Beach. The programming director is T.J. Lubinsky, and he is my main contact with the station. T.J. also happens to be an SF fan, and is very serious about bringing SF programming to south Florida. Currently WXEL is showing episodes of *The New Twilight Zone* and *Dr. Who* every week starting at 9:00 on their "Sci-Fi Saturday Night" lineup. Some of the *Dr. Who* episodes are rare and/or making their United States premiere, as with the December 17 broadcast of *Invasion*. Two recent additions to the roster are *Dimension*, a 15 minute SF/Fantasy newsmagazine which is sandwiched between the other two programs, and *FutureQuest*, a half hour show mainly

consisting of question and answer with SF writers, scientists, and miscellaneous personalities.

Also coming soon to WXEL is **The Tomorrow People**, the cult British SF show about a group of teenagers with extraordinary powers. What's particularly exciting about this is that **The Tomorrow People** has not been shown *anywhere* in the United States in over a decade. Due to the expenses incurred in procuring the original masters in London (the tapes last shown here weren't in playable condition), only 38 episodes have been purchased out of the full run of 68. With sufficient interest, however, WXEL may consider acquiring the full run.

To continue with shows like those named above, WXEL needs our help. WXEL puts out a newsletter and holds pledge drives, amongst other things, and is asking SFSFS for help with some of their events. In return, they will give us on-air mentions of SFSFS and Tropicon, and of course - if you're in the viewing area - the kind of programming mentioned above. Whenever anything is coming up which SFSFS can help with, I'll bring it up at club meetings and/or in the Shuttle.

Currently there are still SFSFS members needed to answer phones during the pledge drive this December. We already have six people committed to doing this and need at least two more. With eight people we are told one person will be interviewed on-air about Tropicon. If we can get 12 people, SFSFS will fill the entire phoning "block", which will also be mentioned on-air. The probable date for us to do this is December 3, from 8-11 pm. If you would like to participate, contact me at (407) 272-0156 or perdew@sit.sop.fau.edu. If December 3 is bad for you, contact me anyway and let me know if December 10 is better.



The South Florida Science Fiction Convention

Tropicon 13

"Tropicon Comes of Age"

Guests of Honor
Kristine Kathryn Rusch
Jael
Toastmaster
Ben Bova
Special Filk Guest
To Be Announced

Membership: \$24 (higher at door)



Also attending:

Hal Clement, Harry Stubbs, George Richard, Dean Wesley Smith, Sandy Schofield, Charles Fontenay, Ginger Curry, Gary Roen, T. J. McGregor, Rob McGregor, Rick Wilber, Jack C. Haldeman II.

Location:
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Rooms: \$59 per night (single-quad)
Phone (407) 684-9400
(please mention South Florida Science Fiction Society)

To Register, or for more information, write:
Tropicon 13
c/o SFSFS
P.O. Box 70143
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307
Please make checks payable to:
South Florida Science Fiction Society

Jan. 6 - 8, 1995

Tropicon is sponsored by the South Florida Science Fiction Society, a 501(c)(3) non profit educational and literary organization.

OBITUARIES

Dark fantasy writer and editor Karl Edward Wagner died October 14 of congestive heart and liver failure. He was 48 years old.

Actor Raul Julia - who played Gomez in the film version of **The Addams Family** - died on October 24, several days after suffering a stroke. He was 54.

San Francisco area fan Clint Bigglestone died of a heart attack on October 13.



**Send this completed application form, along with your check for Membership dues to:
SFSFS Treasurer, 4427 Royal Palm Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33140-3039
Make check payable to SFSFS**

- These rates are good for membership from January - December 1995**

Interests: _____

\$437.22



ou are getting this because:

- _____ You are a member of SFSFS!
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- _____ You've submitted a LOC, review, or art (not that we can't use more...hint, hint!)
- _____ Trade for your 'zine
- _____ It contains a review / article of possible interest to you.
- _____ You have been mentioned...or, at the very least, subtly alluded to.
- _____ You've seen "Plan 9 from Outer Space" at least 17 times.
- _____ You still think "Pong" is a pretty neat game.

**South Florida Science Fiction Society
P.O. Box 70143
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-0143**

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