



EMMA
TERRELL

1995 SFSFS Officers & Committee Heads

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Editor's Desk

Welcome to another to-be-fun-filled year with SFSFS. It's five more years to the next millennium, or it's probably more accurate to say, next century. Whatever. We just got through with another Tropicon, so needless to say there probably are some weary souls out there still recovering. Mention the con to me, and my eyes might glaze over, and I'll start looking for a receipt book, calendar, or calculator, mumbling "Tropicon, Tropicon" like the witches over their caldron in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Maybe Melanie Herz and I spent one too many hours at registration. (Can I sign you in, and how many days are you staying? Oops! See, there I go again!)

There must be more to life than Cons, but not much more. Except maybe meetings. And I mustn't forget books. I feel like I can't keep up with what's coming out every month, and for the proof, I can look at the floor of our house. I'm so glad we finally found a bigger place to live; now there's more room for the books that didn't fit in the apartment. Isn't that the only reason for buying a house other than somewhere to sleep and somewhere to have friends visit?

Work, ahh, work fits in here somewhere, too, like it must. A surefire cure for science fiction is mundania, but must Monday morning always roll around so quickly? Oh, well. At least I finally discovered I could get on-line at work and communicate with everyone else. For a while, I felt like I was in the Stone Age. I didn't even have a computer at home, but now I do. Just in time to find out that the darned things now have CD-ROMS and goodness knows what else. I'm not competing with the Joneses anymore, but with the Nets. It's like that old saying--when something new comes out, it's already out of the date. I sure hope I can't be replaced with a new and improved model, although at my age I wonder.

The *Trek* movie of *Trek* movies came out at the end of last year to much fanfare, but, I would say, I was disappointed with Kirk's swift departure. I liked Data's struggle with his recently added human emotions and the dastardly Malcolm McDowell's portrayal of the mad scientist.

Must scientists always be silently off-kilter; how about government officials or bureaucrats?

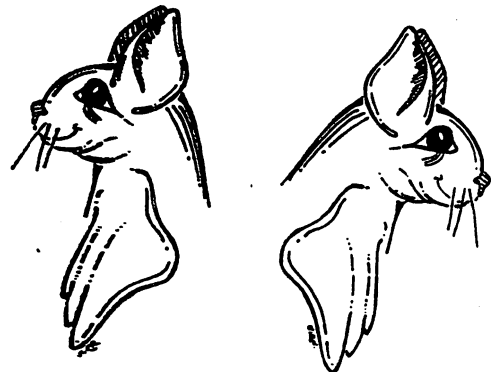
The best book I've read so far this year has been Kristine Kathryn Rusch's *Heart Readers*. I haven't read *Sins of the Blood* yet, but look for the review by George Peterson in this issue. At some point this year in our literary discussion group, we'll be talking about Isaac Asimov's last (and best) autobiography. (I didn't know he liked malteds, although I should have suspected since his father owned a candy store.) If you would like to read any of the books I have mentioned, please get with Fran Mullen, head of the book division, to order them. And please check over the list of books by our Tropicon guests in this issue. Don't forget because you are a member of SFSFS, you can get a discount. And there are lots of wonderful books out there just waiting to be read and further clutter up your living room floor.

This month, we also have other book reviews and a couple of reviews of the latest *Trek* series which (finally) has a female captain. Didn't you ever wonder why in the past *Trek* series, the only female captains were aliens? (Kind of makes you think that many of the directors or scriptwriters were men, and never thought to put a female captain in the story line, but we don't have prejudices like that anymore, do we? This is *Star Trek* after all!) This also includes the *Trek* movies, even the latest one. I hope someone will write in and prove me wrong. I'll be looking for your letters.

And I mustn't forget, many thanks and kudos to my assistant, Christina Santiago, who did a lot of legwork and phone calls to badger people for articles. My e-mail address is carolp@main.sirs.com. (Please use this as sparingly as possible. We have been warned at work not to overuse our e-mail privileges.) Hope to hear from you there or via the Shuttle's PO Box. Or give me something at the next meeting. I'll be the one with the notebook and/or the camera.

Take care,

Carol



FILM REVIEW

"The Turkey"

REVIEW BY GEORGE PETERSON

They ranted. They raved. They enthused. It's good; it's great. Brandon Lee puts on such a fine performance; his death was such a loss. You must see it. They (Mike Drawdy, Dan Siclari, and Christina Santiago) seemed to think *The Crow* was a good movie. So I borrowed the tape from Dan. (Editor's note—if the parties being named would like to write a rebuttal review, they are encouraged to do so.)

I was ... underwhelmed.

The Crow is a rather pretentious revenge fantasy set in an unrelentingly dreary urban cityscape. A woman named Shelly raises a stink about serious code violations in her building. In response a bunch of goons show up to beat and rape her on the night before her wedding (*Devil's Night*—the night before Halloween). Her fiancé, rock musician Eric Draven, shows up while this is in progress, gets shot and is shoved out the window. Shelly hangs on in intensive care for 30 hours before dying herself. One year later, Eric crawls up out of his grave to avenge their deaths.

The title of the film comes from Eric's link to this world being reincarnated as a crow.

On the whole, the characters aren't very interesting. Nor is the plot. In fact, one of *The Crow*'s main flaws is that Eric is invulnerable. As a result, there is virtually no suspense through most of the movie. The bad guys are just a bunch of straw men to be knocked over. It's only at the end when Eric suddenly becomes mortal (for reasons I won't go into), that things get somewhat exciting. The good guys are also just there to fulfill their stereotypical roles.

Nor is there anything interesting about the acting. Brandon Lee does okay as Eric, but nothing that any other competent actor couldn't do. The others do their jobs as well as they can with what little they were given.

And that's about it. Most of the rest is style and atmosphere which is dark, rainy, and jumbled. The film is shot in near black & white, and the sets and scenery

could be described as the bastard child of Caligari and Batman. It's interesting at first, but is so unrelievably dreary that it soon becomes boring. Contrast, people, contrast!

The Crow isn't a total loss. There are a few scenes that are interesting, a few good lines. The female villain with the eye fetish is kind of neat. Some of the shots of Eric's familiar flying over the landscape look very good. Overall, however, *The Crow* is a lot of arty nonsense. It's neither a good movie, nor a good film.



Bad SF Movies We LOVE by Ericka Perdew and Peter Barker

Bert I. Gordon is the man behind many of the sci-fi "classics" of the 1950's and '60's. Together with wife Flora, Bert wrote, directed, and created the special effects for such epics as:

The Beginning of the End (giant locusts pester Peter Graves), *Earth Vs. the Spider*, a giant spider terrorizes local teenagers), *Village of the Giants* (adolescent hoods become giants after drinking a potion invented by boy genius Ronny Howard and strike fear in the heart of Tommy Kirk, who wears shorts tighter than the skin of an olive), and of course *The Amazing Colossal Man*, about a man who is exposed to a nuclear blast, simultaneously losing all of his hair and becoming...a giant (are you beginning to see a pattern?).

Eventually, however, the '60's psychedelized to an end, and Bert was faced with the problem of entertaining the swinging, jaded audiences of the '70's. Racking his brain, he ultimately came up with his most stunningly original idea yet, one that was sure to pack those 1977 butts in the seats and keep them enthralled for

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two hours of nonstop thrills and chills. The name of his opus: *Empire of the Ants*. The plot: Ants are exposed to radiation and become (say it with us, boys and girls) GIANTS! OK, so this seems to be a recurring theme with Bert. However, the difference between this film and his movies of the '50's is that in this one, humans who in the past would panic and then rally 'round Mom, Dad, and apple pie to save the day, instead have nervous breakdowns and start a travelling group therapy session.

Of course, Burt gave a cursory credit to the writer of a story called *Empire of the Ants*—a little-known hack by the name of H.G. Welles—but since the movie of the same name bore virtually *no* resemblance to the story, why give Welles all the glory? Why, indeed. (Bert goes on to do the same thing with *Food of the Gods*, an equally thrillingly film of his from this era. There's a great lesson to be learned here—you can glamorize any old tired idea with a famous story title. "Why, give us a canoe and a few fishing poles and we'll be all set for the remake of *Moby Dick*!" the movie execs burble. "This time we'll have a giant trout attack water skiers at Florida's scenic Cypress Gardens. Captain Ahab can run the local swamp boat concession!")

Empire of the Ants opens, as it must, with mysterious men in red jumpsuits dumping barrels of toxic waste into the ocean, via a strange gizmo which methodically disposes the contents of each barrel into the water, all the while making ka-chunk, ka-chunk noises. The contraption and the ka-chunk, ka-chunk noises (which somehow put us in mind of an intestine backing up after a bad meal) are integral to this establishing shot, because as each barrel ka-chunks, the camera lingers on each one as it turns over, revealing such cryptic words as DANGER and RADIO-ACTIVE. Is Burt, we wonder, trying to tell us something?

Hmm. Could be.

Soon we see little ants crawling all over leaking "toxic waste" (which is really gold paint just like all of us got to jazz up our models of the Millennium Falcon) and even v-e-r-r-y slow thinkers will begin to make some connections (Keep gold paint away from ants or they'll grow real big!).

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Joan Collins is lining up some suckers, er, that is, prospective clients, to purchase lots to build on at "Dreamland Shores." To the typical South Floridian, the concept of "Dreamland Shores" is only too familiar...a time-share swindle which requires that the suckers (what else can we call them but suckers, after all they *are* clad from head to foot in polyester) get into a rickety boat with Joan and putt-putt out to a remote island for a whole fun-filled day of Hard Selling.

Unfortunately for Joan, nobody here seems much interested in buying. The old couple is just there for the free food. The middle-aged couple is there to make like The Bickersons. The lonely spinster secretary is there to bring the June Allyson quality that the film so desperately needs. The young but unhappily married couple is there so the slimy, leisure suit wearing hubby can make a pass at the pretty blonde woman, who is there so that she can pretend to be a modern, liberated '70's gal by kneeing him in the groin. The young, cocky upstart guy is there to be the pseudo-liberated woman's love interest.

Needless to say, with the lack of interest displayed at the outset, Joan's chances of making a deal *really* take a nose-dive when huge, irradiated ants start attacking and devouring her prospective buyers. Of course, we can't rule out the possibility that her sales technique—which seems to consist of blaring at people sitting about a foot away through a bullhorn about the "future golf course," "future country club," "future electrolysis pavilion" and so on—had already obliterated any chance of a sale long before the massacre begins.

Soon Joan's oh-so-fashionable culottes are torn and soiled and she is staggering breathlessly through the woods with the rest of the gradually dwindling motley crew, as now-you-see-it, now-you-don't rain pours down (perhaps the hose couldn't always reach? Or heaven forbid, the ants took control of the weather). People alternately fight off the ants and ramble through long, unprompted monologues about the "Story Of Their Lives." It becomes clear that our "Me Generation" protagonists are so twisted up with inner turmoil they can barely scream in terror at the sight of the **really** bad special effects meant to be the giant ants, much less spray them with DDT or hit them with a bazooka like the good old fashioned heroes of old.

Now that we've mentioned the ant attacks, let's discuss them a wee bit.

First of all, when the camera zooms in to pick up the action of the giant mutant ants, it suddenly seems like they're filming everything on the tilt-a-whirl. The camera goes 'round and 'round, never stopping for a moment.

Sometimes one needs to watch the scene several times to figure out whether that was an arm or a leg in the jaws of the ants. Maybe they weren't filming on a tilt-a-whirl but the ant actors got overly enthusiastic and started attacking the cameramen as well. Or perhaps Bert's pint size stars got out of their little farm and into someone's britches.

By the time they stumble upon civilization (after spending a good part of the film in a boat with everyone getting in touch with his inner child), all three sets of married couples are ant fodder...Was Bert perhaps making an artistic statement about the shaky state of marital union in the '70's?

The bedraggled group are picked up by a squad car and reassured that although their story is fantastic, squad cars will be sent out to check up on those darned giant ants. Everyone relaxes a bit at this news, although warning bells should have perhaps been going off when they are told the town they are going to has a rather large SUGAR REFINERY!

We wouldn't want to spoil anybody's pleasure by revealing the truly Hitchcockian plot twist near the end, but suffice to say that Joan winds up being spritzed with the Queen Ant's pheromones, which instantaneously brainwashes Joan, and instills in her the knowledge that "we've got to serve them." (No doubt this scene was inspired by speculation that similar treachery riddled the recent presidential administration). As she is apparently extremely susceptible to suggestion at this point, we suspect Joan was still under the influence of ant pheromones when she agreed to star in the film versions of sister Jackie's novels *The Stud* and *The Bitch*, which came out just a year or two later.

As for Bert, he probably should have used some of those pheromones to induce people to go see *Empire of the Ants* when it came out in theatres. Apparently he didn't, because *Ants* laid a giant egg while people turned out in droves to see *Star Wars* instead.



BOOK REVIEWS

Sins of the Blood

by Kristine Kathryn Rusch

Dell Books

\$5.50 paperback

ISBN #0-440-21540-4

Review by George Peterson

Here is my review of *Sins of the Blood*:
"Oy."

... Well, I suppose I should elaborate.

Let me begin by outlining my preferences so you know where I'm coming from.

First of all, I don't like horror. I seldom find stuff designed to be scary, to be scary. And then, if I want horror, all I have to do is turn on the news. There's enough real-life horror out there to bother feeling scared by slimy things-that-go-bump in the dark.

Secondly I don't care for vampire stories. I've never shared the fascination many people seem to have regarding blood-drinking corpses. Mostly they seem silly or contrived. Stoker's classic pretty much sums it up. There are few such novels that have made much impression on me. Dan Simmons' *Children of the Night* presented some science fictional vampires that were very plausible and interesting which helped rise the book past its contrived Hollywoodisms. And Tim Powers' *The Stress of Her Regard* is a work of genius which transcends the genre. Beyond that most stuff in this genre has left me cold and unimpressed.

"Cold" and "unimpressed" are two words that I definitely will *not* use to describe my reaction to *Sins of the Blood*, a new novel by Tropicon XIII's Guest of Honor, Kristine Kathryn Rusch.

In *Sins of the Blood*, Rusch examines the consequences of vampirism on the society in which it already exists. Cammie Timms is

an ACV—an Adult Child of a Vampire. In fact, she stalked her own father in order to protect her three-year-old brother from his murderous rampages. Rescued and raised by the Westrina Center, a slightly mysterious private organization which has carte blanche in the state of Wisconsin to deal with vampires, she is dealing with her personal demons by working as an eradicator.

Her brother has another history. Adopted and raised by an out-of-state couple, Ben, now an adult, has become a vampire himself. He quickly comes under the protection of a very old vampire, who wants to use Ben as a powerful tool for his own purposes. Not that Ben doesn't have plans for himself.

Cammie's memory of her early life returns, and she becomes obsessed with finding her brother to be sure he has turned out all right. Denial is the name of the game as she heads into an encounter that holds dreadful consequences for her and her brother.

The first impression that arose for me was the parallel between the vampire parents in *Sins* and real-life abusive parents. According to Rusch, she didn't plan to use vampirism as a child-abuse metaphor. Instead the parallel arose as a natural consequence. This is one of Rusch's main achievements. She does an excellent job of highlighting, through fantasy, the reality of a dark world where predators breed their own victims...victims who must forever battle their pasts or succumb to and perpetuate that evil. Her characters are intelligently drawn and well-developed; their actions and reactions are right on the money.

Equally impressive is the background. The depth of a story or novel of this type is directly related to the depth of background development. Even if it isn't explicitly described in the story, the stronger the history and setting, the stronger the author's feel for it will be. Rusch has done her homework and it shows. It helped make me think of how much more sense much of history would make if certain people had been vampires.

There is no question that Rusch has written a fine novel. But can I recommend it?

There, I'm in a bit of a bind. *Sins of the Blood* is definitely *not* for the faint of heart. It contains many scenes of explicit violence and sex as well as psychological issues that are even more disturbing. This novel took me much longer to read than a book of this sort usually does. I kept having to stop reading it because it got too intense. There were moments where I literally moaned and threw the book aside. But I did finish it.

Then again, I will not soon forget having read *Sins of the Blood*. And when most books go through me like water down a drain, there is something to be said for that.

So if you have a taste for horror, or a strong constitution then I think you will find *Sins of the Blood* to be well worth reading.

The End of an Era

Robert J. Sawyer

Ace Books, 224 pages, \$4.99, November 1994

by Paul Edwards

Good new science fiction writers are rare! So much of the schlock that appears today constitutes reworking of ideas which, as often as not, have already been effectively handled by others in the field. The emergence of Robert J. Sawyer has been like a breath of fresh air. I now have read four of his novels and half of a four-part serial currently in *Analog*. The subject of this review, *The End of An Era*, does not disappoint. Sawyer is fascinated by dinosaurs as three of his previous four novel demonstrate. They are grouped as the *Quintaglio Trilogy* and are among the best extended snapshots of a very alien civilization that I have read. Only C.J. Cherryh in her *Chanur* series and in her *Faded Sun* trilogy can compare. In a different way, John Brunner in *Crucible* is compared to what Sawyer manages to do in this set of novels.

Had I not already begun the Sawyer serial in *Analog*, I would have been concerned that he was somewhat one-dimensional. The subject matter of that serial is so different from the trilogy and is so well-realized that any fears on that score are groundless. *Era*, too, demonstrates a capacity for extrapolation and an attention to detail and research that, at times, is staggering. I would not dream of spoiling the plot of this truly amazing novel. It offers a plausible and entirely new theory to account for the demise of the dinosaurs from Earth and manages to do so in the context of a plot that is as carefully crafted as any I have come across recently. Unlike many science fiction books, the protagonists are characters that I could relate to and are drawn with enough depth to make me care about them.

I am one of those people who doesn't much care why the dinosaurs disappeared. I am much concerned about where I can find good Folk CDs. This novel kept me enthralled through all of its 224 pages, and I think deserves to be regarded as one of the best books of this year. Because it is a time travel story, one must suspend belief to a degree. Within the conventions of that genre, however, this manages to be consistent and does not resort to any of the more obnoxious *deus ex machina* tricks that mar this kind of story all too often.

Sawyer, like Spider Robinson and Charles de Lint, is Canadian. While I do not suggest there is a quantum difference in the quality of the writing from Canada, I do suggest that there is a different style and ethos about the writing of all three of these writers. I suggest also that it has a freshness that is just one more element that makes Sawyer a pleasure to read. This is one of those books that I would urge all of you to run out and buy. It's \$5 well-spent! (Where can you find good Folk CDs, anyway?)

(Editor's note—Paul Edwards, a newly recruited member and obviously an avid reader, joined SFSFS as of the January meeting. A warm welcome!! I'm sure we can look forward to more reviews from him. Hint, hint, hint...)

Foreigner

A Novel of First Contact

by C.J. Cherryh

published by DAW Books, Inc. 1994

reviewed by Frederick C. Bragdon

Ms. Cherryh is known for her Alliance-Union Universe with such award-winning novels as *Downbelow Station* and *Cyteen*. *Foreigner* is not set within the same universe and begins with a human colony ship inexplicably becoming lost in unfamiliar space. The only means available for the survival of the passengers is to establish a settlement on the surface of a nearby earthlike planet with a thinner atmosphere. This world already has been populated and developed to about the Age of Steam Power by the indigenous people who call themselves the Atevi. A systemic misunderstanding between the humans and the Atevi results in a war between the vastly outnumbered but technologically advanced humans and the Atevi.

The war ends with a treaty being signed that exiles the humans to an island on the planet called Mospheira that is offshore of the Western Alliance. The human settlements' continued survival is insured by the calculated and propitious release of their technical and scientific knowledge to the Atevi. Finally, one sole human being is allowed to live with the Atevi at Shejidan, the capital of the Ragi Association, the center of authority for the Western Alliance. Cherryh's story centers on the Paidhi Bren Cameron, and he becomes the human ambassador to the Atevi.

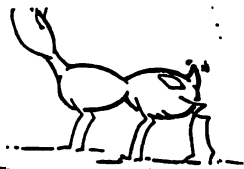
Now, one would think that this was a straight forward political intrigue story and to a large extent it is. The interesting part of the story is that the Atevi, if they cannot settle their dispute through the use

of words, resort to socially and politically legitimized assassination of the people who have done them wrong. This has developed over many generations and results in the Atevi having many words for betrayal but no words for "friend" or "love." Atevi relationships are built upon the lack of betrayal as defined by one's "man'chi," which is loosely translated to mean the designation of one's primary responsibility to a particular association or individual with the knowledge that the ultimate resolution may be the assassination of an aggrieved party or parties. Thus, when Bren becomes embroiled in a power struggle between pro- and con-human technology, his first instinct is to attempt to understand the various positions from a human standpoint. But if you indulge in such anthropomorphisation, you're likely to end up dead and that has not been unheard of for previous praidhis.

Bren is stationed with the "Aiji" (lord of the Western/Raji Association), Tabini. He is guarded/monitored by two highly trained security agents by the names of Banichi and Jago, male and female, respectively. Although their man'chi is to Banichi, they may not be faithful to Bren as the internal power struggle mounts. Banichi sends Bren for his own safety to an ancient mountain fortress, Maiguri, to meet Banichi's exiled grandmother, Ilisidi. As it turns out, this also isolates Bren from regular contact and consultation with his human superiors back on Mospheira. We quickly learn that although Ilisidi is at the end of her life and has been passed over by her grandson for "aiji," she clearly possesses the clarity of mind, spirit and strength to be the deciding influence in the ongoing power struggle.

I enjoyed Cherryh's novel for the alienness of the Atevi society and her refusal to resolve the resulting conflicts in presumptuous human terms. What inconsistencies there were, I did not feel were due to the incompleteness of her world

building, but were due to normal loose-ends in the plot; especially when this reader is hoping for another book in this new universe by Cherryh.



**BADLY GOING WHERE (NO) WOMAN
HAS GONE BEFORE
A REVIEW OF STAR TREK:
VOYAGER
BY PETE RAWLIK**

Well the premiere episode of *Star Trek: Voyager* has come and gone. Frankly, I wasn't impressed. First Mission finds out that Tuvok, Voyager's chief of security, has disappeared along with the Maquis ship he was spying on. Think about this for a moment. If the Maquis ship has been destroyed then Tuvok is dead. If the Maquis are safe, then going after Tuvok threatens his cover.

Voyager traces the Maquis to the Bad Lands, an area of intense plasma storms and is flung 70,000 light years across the galaxy. There they find themselves and the Maquis have been kidnapped by the Caretaker of the Ocampo. Decades ago, the Caretaker species accidentally decimated the Ocampo homeworld. For thousands of generations, the Caretaker has taken care of the Ocampo. Now the Caretaker is dying, and he's looking for someone to breed with so he can create a replacement.

The most fascinating thing about this new area of space is the lack of technological expertise--particularly in chemistry. Both the friendly Neelix and the belligerent Kazon seem capable of interstellar travel but incapable of understanding the synthesis of water from oxygen and hydrogen. If you can build, fly and repair an interstellar starship you should be able to make water. (By the way the Kazon ships look an awful lot like the beak portions of Romulan starships.) The

Voyager's sensors seem to be lacking in intelligence as well. Voyager initially finds no evidence of an underground civilization despite the fact that the array is routinely firing energy bolts at conduits on the planet's surface.

After rescuing their missing staff, the Voyager violates the Prime Directive and destroys the Caretaker's array. This prevents the Kazon from gaining control of the array and destroying the Ocampo. This also pisses the Kazon off to no end.

The Voyager and the Maquis, as well as Neelix and his Ocampo companion Kes, decide to integrate. The new crew is comprised of former enemies and new species under the Star Fleet banner. Let's take a look at the crew.

Captain Kathryn Janeway.

I have no problems with Captain Janeway, well okay, one problem. Data had a cat. Picard had fish. Janeway has a dog which she leaves with her significant other. Janeway doesn't know she's about to be blasted to the other side of the galaxy so the Voyager assignment must be a long-term mission. Bring the dog. Pets are for human comfort. If your job doesn't allow you to have a particular pet, don't own it. Besides the Captain should have plenty of room for a pet dog but that would be unfair to the rest of the crew.

The solution to the pet problem can be found in sickbay. Please note that transportation across the galaxy is violent enough to kill the first officer, pilot, chief engineer, medical officer and nurse and cause a hull breach but the hologram projectors in sickbay still are intact. The Voyager, it seems, is equipped with an emergency holographic doctor, Doc. Zimmerman. Hey guys! Let's build the whole ship out of that holodeck stuff. Hell! Put a projector in every room. Virtual furniture, virtual pets, virtual doctors, why not an entire virtual crew at least as backups. If you have technology, use it.

Chakota, former Maquis captain and now Voyager's first officer.

Doesn't making your former enemy your first officer kind of alienate your second

Conn Officer Tom Paris.

Tom apparently did some bad stuff before being kicked out of Starfleet and joining the Maquis. Hey, wait a minute, this is the same guy who played Cadet Nicholas Locarno who also did some bad things before getting kicked out of Starfleet. Wouldn't it have been better to use the Locarno character instead?

Harry Kim, Ops/Communications Officer, fresh out of the academy.

Didn't any officer with experience want the job? By the way, his mom called to tell the Captain that Harry forgot his clarinet. Thanks for breaking the ice for Harry, Mom.

Chief Engineer B'Elanna Torres, a human-klingson crossbreed. I loved ST:TNG's K'Ehlyar and had real hopes for this character. Great, I thought, now we have a chance to get deeper into Klingon culture and this time from a female perspective. Unfortunately, B'Elanna seems to be destined to express her Klingon side in fits of uncontrollable rage that lend strong support to the genetics side of the nature-nurture argument.

Tuvok, Neelix and Kes, resident aliens. On these guys, I reserve judgement for now.

Did I like *Voyager*? Well, it was satisfactory. I had hoped that after all the talk, the wiz kids at Paramount would do a better job. Is there hope? Yes, I think so. With proper writing and direction, I think the *Voyager* crew can hold the interest of the fans for as long as needed. However, *Voyager* needs to avoid the pitfalls of its predecessors, particularly, *Lost in Space*, *Battle Star Galactica* and *Space 1999*. These shows were all weakest when they spiralled into the abyss of "we're almost there," and I fear *Voyager* could easily follow suit.

Remember, guys, it's "boldly go," not "are we there yet?"

And So It Began ... Again by George Peterson

Just in case you were on the far side of the Limitless Lightfields of Flanux, the new *Star Trek* series premiered recently. Starring Kate Mulgrew as Captain Kathryn Janeway, *Star Trek, Voyager* is the title of this latest variation on Gene Roddenbury's famous creation.

In the opener, the *Voyager* is searching a region called the Bad Lands for a Maquis ship that has disappeared. They are swept 70,000 light years across space by a mysterious entity called the Caretaker. There they join forces with the Maquis, discover a race of short-lived humanoids living in an underground cavern, get into a fight with some unpleasant aliens and wind up destroying their way home. As a result, the *Voyager* finds itself stranded on the other side of the galaxy where the journey home will take a lifetime.

I won't go into detail as to the various characters. There's been enough written up in other places. I'll make just a few points.

Firstly episodes like this always seem a bit contrived. There is always the gathering of the characters, and it's usually easy to see where all the initial conflict are set up.

Secondly, Mulgrew's Janeway is a much more overtly emotional commander than we've had for a while. Picard was very stiff and formal, and Sisko rather laid back (unless he's p.o.'d). On the other hand, as a friend pointed out to me, Janeway's mannerisms are much more reminiscent of Kirk. It makes a nice change.

Thirdly, there was nothing really special about this episode. It's filled with a lot of the usual *Star Trek*isms that we've been seeing for many years. And in this sense, *Voyager* failed to do what I was hoping it would: relieve the ennui.

I think the premise is a good one. By sending Voyager to the other side of the Galaxy, Star Trek is, in a sense, returning to its roots. We're back to the beginning when Gene Roddenbury had the whole universe in front of him. Now they can't depend on any of the old standbys (except Q).

But, the truth is, I've gotten bored with *Star Trek*. It seems to have reached a certain level of writing, acting imagery, and plateaued out. I doubt we will get anything really new. For example, the Kazon Oglas seem like a scruffier version of the Klingons. The Ocampa, too, are familiar, and the Caretaker is the typical sort of super-alien *Star Trek* writers have over-used.

I will watch *Star Trek: Voyager* for a while to see how it develops. But my expectations are not high.

(One final note: near the end of the episode, Janeway gives the Caretaker a little speech regarding the need for children to grow up. There was a time when this scenario of the "Wise-Humans Show Up to Set The Aliens Straight" used to annoy me. However, after the last several years of hearing anti-human, anti-technology attitudes bandied about, to see a show operate on the idea that humans are not just an evil disease, but that we might actually know what we're doing and have something valuable to contribute, now seems refreshing.)



Collecting Collectibles (or my mother thinks I do it for the money) by Judi B. Goodman

My home is divided into two very distinct areas, one for the average person to see, and the other for those who know me (not necessarily those who understand me). The average portion consists of a kitchen, living room, dining room and one bathroom. The other is where my soul lurks. You see I am a collector. (Cue the incidental hokey horror theme, please)

A very long time ago, in my relatively short life, my parents made their first tactical error in relation to my upbringing. They wished to keep a sick child occupied, and so they got her a stamp album and some cancelled postage stamps. Oops! Little did they realize just what they had unleashed. The little album grew to four big albums within a year, and soon the cost began to grow with them. That's when mistake number two was spawned (No, my sister is older than me).

To encourage me towards a less expensive hobby, my father bought me a guitar. Boy, was he mistaken. Music gave vent to collecting in a whole new way. Not only could I collect sheet music, but I found that she who can play (and own) the most instruments, will almost always win. Soon, my room was overrun with musical apparatus, and the maid refused to enter. My parents, realizing that it was they who had encouraged this, gave me a bit of advice, "get rid of 'em, or else!" It's amazing what an "or else" can do; so I found myself pared down to four guitars, a piano, a trumpet, two harmonicas, a cello, a flute, and a clarinet (is that it, hmmm....I think that should be close enough) Then, Mom went to Europe! (Cue the organ music)

When my mother went to tour Europe with my grandmother, they felt compelled to purchase a "little something" from each city for my sister and me. It had to be small but distinctive enough. And, most importantly, it had to fit into their luggage! At breakfast the first morning, my mother looked at the silverware and an idea "knifed" through her brain. Collector spoons! Having realized this, her gift buying and toting problems were solved. On her

Soon my friends discovered that I was collecting spoons and began helping me expand my little collection. Seventeen years and one hundred and seventy-two spoons later, I've asked—no, begged people, “No more!” Then, came college! (Cue kettle drum thunder effect)

In college, I discovered gaming. Now, for most people, gaming entails paper, pencil, dice, and playing time. For me, it meant more things to buy! Dice of every color and shape, lest we forget the die bags (preferably leather), modules, screens, and, inevitably, figurines. Soon, this too had taken control of my limited space...and something had to go. It was college that went. I trudged back home (Okay, so I took my three-cylinder Chevette down the turnpike) and presented my parents with my newest pas-time. Needless to say, they didn't understand (Cue the funeral dirge).

About ten years ago, I achieved gainful employment with a government entity (which means, I get paid lots for doing very little <not really, but I try>). Since the spoons, the musical instruments, and the gaming supplies didn't quite fill my home; it was time for me to find the next step (Cue trumpet fanfare).

First came the turtles...not just any turtles...but the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. I built them a small shrine in my computer room [snort of disbelief from the silent typist]. Next, I began collecting non-sports trading cards. They grew into a bookcase—a big bookcase. Comic books struck me next...and boy, did they hit hard! My collection is somewhere in the vicinity of five thousand titles and it's still growing (They grew so much, they no longer fit in the computer room...just check my living room!).

Finally, I rediscovered the one collectible area that has confounded everyone...including my oldest friends. *Star Trek* toys. Somehow, I only remember purchasing one doll, but now, they've taken over a room.

Y'know. I blame my parents. If they hadn't tried to keep me occupied all those years ago, I wouldn't be in the mess I'm in now. But, at least there is one bright light in all of this...well, maybe more than one...I've convinced my mother that I only do it for the potential income. Only I know that I'm never going to let any of it go! It's mine! It's mine! It's mine!

**FROM THE FAR REACHES OF NC
CAME THIS LETTER FROM JUDY
BEMIS:**

Dear Carol,

I received your letter. Thanks. I sent Joe a report from Tony about how the con suite at Tropicon was, and that was most of what I saw of Tropicon, except for the filk concerts and the trivia contests. I will have more to write on conventions after Boskone and ConCave.

North Carolina has been very cold, and it has snowed twice already. They have no snow removal equipment in this area, so any snow is a big deal, and causes school closings and delays. It was so icy all day yesterday that I stayed indoors except for two short walks to the mailbox, and I slipped down the hill both times.

I loved the first quarter *Shuttle*, and am sorry we have to go to quarterly on it to afford it.

Take care of yourselves, Judy Bemis

The Tropicon XIII Robert Heinlein Memorial Blood Drive was a qualified success. The Palm Beach Blood Bank requested 15 donors and we had exactly 15 donors. Thanks very much to every one who gave blood.-- Dave Lyman

Dean Wesley Smith (or That Handsome Guy Who Came to the Con with Kris Rusch)
by Nina Kiriki Hoffman

Dean Wesley Smith went through a number of odd jobs on his way to writing, including being a Palm Springs golf pro, designing an indoor miniature golf course, running a used book store, and driving a school bus. If you find that his bartending and juke box stories have the ring of truth, that's because he's been there, too.

An Idaho boy, Dean attended Clarion in 1982, was a finalist in the first volume of *Writers of the Future*, sold many short stories and a novel (*Laying the Music to Rest*) and went on to found, with his partner Kristine Kathryn Rusch, *Pulphouse Publishing*, an innovative specialty press that in its heyday published about 80 books a year and affected the direction of U.S. science fiction and fantasy publishing.

Many of the novellas Kris bought as the editor of *Pulphouse* subsidiary publish-

ing house went on to win or be nominated for Nebulas, Hugos, and World Fantasy Awards. Dean and Kris won World Fantasy Awards for their work at *Pulphouse*. Dean continues to edit *Pulphouse: a Fiction Magazine* and plans to start two new magazine titles in the near future. He also continues to publish *the Report*, a writer's magazine.

Dean and Kris also write books together. One of them was the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* novel *The Big Game*, written pseudonymously by Sandy Schofield. Dean just completed a *Spiderman* novel and plans future forays into the final frontier.

(Note from George Peterson: We asked author Nina Kiriki Hoffman for a bio on her friend Dean Wesley Smith for the *Tropicon XIII* program book. Unfortunately, space and time limitations prevented us from using it. However, Nina kindly gave us permission to publish it in the *Shuttle*. So if you were wondering who that handsome guy hanging around Kris Rusch was, this should let you know.)

OUR THOUGHTS ARE WITH:

Bill Wilson, whose mom was in the hospital. Hope she's on the mend soon!

Jack Weaver who recently had surgery. Hope we get to see you soon, Jack. Let us know if we can help you in any way.



Tropicon XIV

The South Florida Science Fiction Convention

January 12 — 14, 1996

Guest of Honor

James P. Hogan

Toastmaster

Mike Resnick

Hal Clement, Charles Fortenberry

and a "cast of thousands"

Fort Lauderdale, Florida



Membership: \$18.00 through May 31, 1995
\$21.00 through Nov. 30
\$25.00 at the door

Write for Character Room & Art Show
information.

To Register or for more information, write:
Tropicon XIV
c/o SFSFS
P. O. Box 70143
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-0143
Please make checks payable to SFSFS.

Tropicon is sponsored by the South Florida Science Fiction Society,
a non-profit literary society incorporated in the 415 under Section 501(c)(2).

SFSFS SHUTTLE, # 118, MARCH/APRIL ISSUE

TREASURER'S REPORT FYI 12/31/94

TROPICON XIII

Revenues	
Registration	\$1,347.25
Brunch	\$240.00
Art Panels	\$130.00
Dealers	\$430.00
Program Book Ads	\$60.00
Contributions	\$468.18
Interest	\$64.40
Total	\$2,739.83

Expenditures	
Art Show	\$140.99
Dealers Room	\$12.60
Guest of Honor	\$510.00
Logistics	\$50.80
Postage	\$23.30
Programming	\$29.00
Progress Report 1	\$320.54
Promotion	\$50.00
Storage	\$526.45
Supplies	\$68.65
Total	\$1,732.33

Excess Revenue Over Expenditures **\$1,007.50**

TRAVELLING FETE

Interest Revenue **\$7.93**

BOOK DIVISION

Revenues	
Discounts, Allow.	\$763.06
Interests	\$7.19
Total	\$770.25

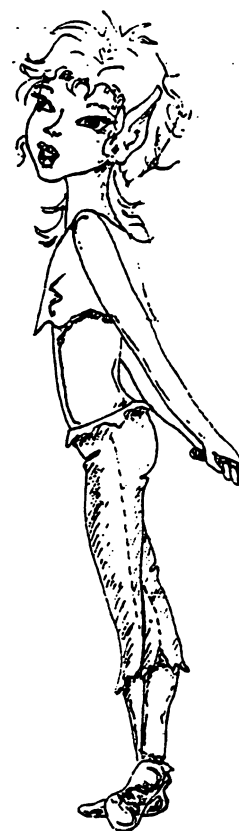
Expenditures	
Postage	\$15.02
Supplies	\$73.99
Shipping & Handling	\$151.20
Phone	\$10.00
Total	\$250.21

Excess Revenue Over Expenditures **\$520.04**

TROPICON XII

Registration	\$2,669.50
Art Commissions	\$258.73
Art Panel Fees	\$452.00
Banquets	\$1,012.00
Contributions	\$132.25
Dealer Fees	\$665.00
Interest	\$73.97
Miscellaneous	\$20.00
Program Book Ads	\$375.00
Shirts & Caps	\$330.00
Total	\$5,988.45

Expenditures	
Art Show	\$268.41
Banquet	\$1,009.91
Cash Short (Over)	(\$2.48)
Committee Expense	\$19.06
Con Suite	\$468.43
Dealer Room	\$32.70
Guest Expense	\$303.37
Guest of Honor	\$837.93
Fan Guest of Honor	\$156.66
Filk Guest of Honor	\$154.30
Logistics	\$18.00
Postage	\$92.50
Program Book	\$257.69



SFSFS SHUTTLE, # 118, MARCH/APRIL ISSUE

TREASURER'S REPORT FYI 12/31/94 (cont.)

TROPICON XII

Programming	\$43.72	
Progress Report-Printing		\$127.80
Progress Report-Postage		\$325.90
Promotion	\$30.17	
Storage	\$516.60	
Supplies	\$195.47	
Shirts & Caps	\$474.99	
Video Room	\$185.50	
Total		\$5,516.63
Excess Revenue Over Expenditures		\$471.82

SFSFS

Revenues	
Membership	\$1,260.00
Contributions	\$146.15
Interest	\$96.11
Misc.	\$12.00
Shirts	\$305.00
Total	\$1,819.26

Expenditures	
Meetings	\$20.60
Misc.	\$5.29
Postage	\$20.40
Reports	\$61.25
Shuttle Postage	\$555.13
Storage	\$516.66
Supplies	\$17.50
Shirts	\$415.35
Total	\$1,612.18

Excess Revenue over Expenditures

\$1,612.18

\$207.08



South Florida Science Fiction Society Membership Form

To be mailed to: Peggy Ann Dolan, SFSFS Treasurer, 4427 Royal Palm Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33140-3039. Checks should be made payable to SFSFS.)

Upgrade to Regular \$5.00 (after 3 meetings and contingent to a vote) _____

I ask the club to waive the bylaws and permit me to rejoin as a regular member at \$20.00 _____

General (nonvoting) \$15.00 _____

Child Membership (12 years or under) \$1 _____

Subscribing membership (\$1 per issue of the club newsletter) _____

Date: (Don't forget it's 1995!) _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (home/work) _____

Birthdate: _____ Email address: _____

Interests _____

Meetings

PUBLICATIONS WORKSHOP

Learn all you ever wanted to know (or didn't even begin to realize) about putting a newsletter or any other publication together. This informative meeting will be held at Joe and Edie's house on **March 11, at 11 a.m.** Yours truly is practically guaranteed to show up. Joe will be showing us how to import and export text, how to use Pagemaker 5.0 and other wonderful things I'm sure.

LITERARY DISCUSSION GROUP

Deja Vu. March 11, That night at the same place, (Joe and Edie's, that is!!) at 8 p.m., is the literary discussion group. This month's choice is *I, Asimov*, Isaac's latest (and last) autobiography which came out in paperback, and *The Positronic Man*, coauthored by Asimov and Robert Silverberg.

SMOFCON FOR EVERYONE!

Calling all smofs and wannabees!! A mini-Smof Con is targeted for **March 12 at 1:00 p.m.** at the Siclari/Stern residence. We will be going over all those important things that fans need to know--how the different heads handle their duties, what an sf club does, etc... All committee heads and the board are encouraged strongly to attend. (We know where you live!) Other scheduled activities that day include a Chilli Cookoff.

TROPICON MEETING

There will be a Tropicon meeting at Fran Mullen's place on **March 19 at 1 p.m.** Call (305) 929-5815 for directions. Be a part of next year's convention; we need you!

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

The March general meeting is scheduled to be held **March 25 at 2 p.m.** at the Fort Lauderdale Airport Hilton which is also the site of the Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts. Our guests will be Joe and Gay Haldeman. The hotel is located at the junction of I-95 and Griffin Rd. The *Conference* is being held from March 22-March 26, 1995. SFSFS has in the

past been drafted to put up the conference's art show and help out in other ways. For more info, call Becky Peters at (305) 563-5788.

APRIL GENERAL MEETING

April 22, 1995 is Earth Day and also the April program. The location will be determined, but we will be meeting in Dade County. The speaker will be Club Member Gerry Adair who is studying Arthurian literature. That night, there will be a 8:00 filk meeting at Dina Pearlman's house. Call (305) 989-0290 for directions.

TROPICON MEETING

The April Tropicon meeting will be held April 23, tentatively at Fran Mullen's apartment. Be sure to call Fran at (305) 929-5815 to confirm.

MAY GENERAL MEETING

The May meeting will be held May 13 at 2 p.m. at the Imperial Point Library. The library is located at 5985 N. Federal Highway, which is either north of Commercial Blvd. or just south of Cypress Creek Rd., depending on which direction you're traveling from. The Bookstop, I have been informed, is no longer there. (Boo!) The number of the library is 492-1801 in case you're lost. Before the general meeting, the board will meet at 12:30 p.m.

MAY LITERARY DISCUSSION MEETING

Spend your weekend with SFSFS. The May literary discussion group will be held the same day, May 13, at 8 p.m. at Joe and Edie's house. The topic will be *Rogues in Space*. Suggested reading is Ben Bova's *Sam Gunn Unlimited*. And any others you might come up with. (Why limit rogues just to the men? I'm sure there are plenty of roquettes or the equivalent out there.)

JUNE GENERAL MEETING

The June meeting will be held **June 17 at 2 p.m.** The Location will be determined. The program will be the Well-Traveled Fan and we will learn the best ways to travel, what to avoid when traveling and how much should or shouldn't be packed for the trip. June filk meeting will be held **June 17 at 8 p.m.** Location will be determined.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 Phyllis Eisenstein's Birthday:	27	28 ●	1	2	3 Bruce Konigsburg's birthday:	4
5	6 1928 William F. Nolan: Dea O'Connor's birthday:	7 Fran Mullen's birthday:	8 1859 Kenneth Grahame:	9 ● Carol Porter's birthday:	10 1918 Theodore R. Cogswell:	11 1921 F. M. Busby: 11:00a Pubs Workshop: Siclari/Stern's 8:00p Book Discussion: Siclari/Stern's; I. Asimov & Positronic Man
12 1925 Harry Harrison: 11:00a SFSFS BoD: Siclari/Stern's 1:00p Mini-SMOFcon 1: SFSFS committee training: Siclari/Stern's	13 1911 L. Ron Hubbard:	14	15	16 ○	17 St. Patrick's Day: Charles Fontenay:	18 George Peterson's birthday:
19 1:00p Tropicon meeting: Fran Mullen's apt.	20	21	22 ○ 1931 William Shatner:	23	24	25 2:00p SFSFS Meeting: Interview w. Joe & Gay Haldeman Ft. Laud. Airport Hilton
26 1931 Leonard Nimoy:	27	28 1912 A. Bertram Chandler:	29	30 ● 1928 Chad Oliver:	31	1 1926 Anne McCaffrey: 1942 Samuel R. Delaney:
Conference on the Fantastic: Fort Lauderdale Airport Hilton						

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 1931 Leonard Nimoy:	27	28 1912 A. Bertram Chandler:	29	30 ● 1928 Chad Oliver:	31	1 1926 Anne McCaffrey: 1942 Samuel R. Delaney:
2 1805 Hans Christian Anderson: 1948 Joan D. Vinge:	3 Tony Parker's birthday:	4	5 1917 Robert Bloch: 1926 Roger Corman:	6 ●	7 1915 Henry Kuttner:	8
9 1911 George O. Smith:	10	11	12	13	14 ○	15
16 Easter: 1922 John Christopher:	17	18	19	20	21 ○	22 12:00a SFSFS BoD: 2:00p SFSFS Meeting: King Arthur-Fact & Fiction; Dade 8:00p Filk: Dina Pearlman's home
23 1:00p Tropicon 14 meeting: Fran Mullen's apt. - tentatively	24	25 1897 Fletcher Pratt:	26 1949 Marta Randall: 1912 A. E. van Vogt:	27 1903 Frank Belknap Long:	28 ●	29 1908 Jack Williamson:
30 1938 Larry Niven:	1 1890 E. E. "Doc" Smith: Margaret Gemignani's birthday:	2	3	4	5	6 1915 Prson Welles:

From: Fran Mullen, a list of books by Tropicon 13 authors

ISBN	TITLE	AUTHOR	PRICE
0451451759	Afterimage	Rusch	4.99
0312083173	Best of Pulphouse Hdbck	Rusch	13.95
0451452828	Heartreaders	Rusch	4.99
0440215404	Sins of the Blood	Rusch	5.50
0451454154	Traitors	Rusch	4.99
0451451201	White Mists of Power	Rusch	3.99
0812515463	As on a Darkling Plain	Bova	3.99
0812532171	Astral Mirror	Bova	2.95
0812513002	Battle Station	Bova	3.95
0812503198	Ben Bova's Cybebooks	Bova	4.50
0812514084	Challenges	Bova	4.99
0898796008	Craft of Writing Sci Fic	Bova	16.95
0553082345	Death Dream	Bova	22.95
0812511654	Empire Builders	Bova	5.99
0812532120	Escape plus	Bova	2.95
0671876317	Exiles Trilogy (R)	Bova	5.99
0380718863	Future Quartet	Bova	5.50
055356241x	Mars	Bova	5.99
0812532252	Multiple Man	Bova	2.95
0812532473	Orion	Bova	4.99
0812514297	Orion in the Dying Time	Bova	4.99
0812502388	Peacekeepers	Bova	4.95
0812532198	Prometheans	Bova	2.95
0553562894	Sam Gunn Unlimited	Bova	5.99
0312854498	To Fear the Light	Bova	21.95
0812514483	To Save the Sun	Bova	4.99
0812507355	Trikon Deception	Bova	5.99
0812520637	Triumph	Bova	4.99
0812531612	Vengeance of Orion	Bova	3.95
0812500768	Voyagers I	Bova	4.95
0812513371	Voyagers II	Bova	4.95
	The Alien Within		
0812532368	Voyagers III	Bova	4.95
0671875981	Watchmen	Bova	5.99
0812532279	Winds of Altair	Bova	3.95
0886115136	Isaac's Universe	Clement	4.99
	#04 Fossil		
0786860618	Blue Pearl	MacGregor	21.95
1562827898	Storm Surge	MacGregor	19.95
0345373464	Spree	MacGregor	4.99
0446361542	When Dreams Collide	Simmons	4.99
0671880306	Star Trek Ds9 Big Game	Schofield	5.50

YOU ARE GETTING THIS BECAUSE:

- _____ Editor's prerogative
- _____ You submitted a LOC, review or art (Send us some more, please)
- _____ Pickard and Kirk ordered us to!
- _____ The post office goofed, but you can keep it.
- _____ It's leap year.
- _____ Trade for your 'zine.
- _____ You ordered a Burdines' catalogue and got this instead. (Sorry)
- _____ You renewed! (And not a moment too soon!)
Thank you! Thank you!

CONS OF NOTE:

March 22-26, 1995. Conference of the Fantastic in the Arts. At the Ft. Lauderdale Airport Hilton. Guests: Joe and Gay Haldemann, Douglas E. Winter, Pat Cadigan, Brian Aldiss. Membership will be \$80 for members of the Conference and \$145 for others. For info: write to Mary Pharr, IAFA Treasurer, English Dept., Florida Southern College, Lakeland, FL. 33801.

May 19-21, 1995. OASIS 8. At the Orlando North Hilton & Towers, Altamonte Springs, FL. Guests: Alan Dean Foster, Barclay Shaw. Membership is \$20 to 4/18, and \$25 at the door. For more info: write to OASIS, Box 940992, Maitland, FL 32794-0992.

July 13-17, 1995. NASFIC/DRAGONCON 95. At the Hilton Hotel & Towers, Atlanta, GA. Guests are George Alec Effinger, Harlan Ellison, Bjo Trimble, Michael Whelan, Timothy Zahn. Membership is \$50 to 3/15, \$55 to 6/15, and \$60 at the door. For more info: write to NASFIC/DRAGONCON 95, Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362. (404) 925-2813.

Aug 24-28, 1995. INTERSECTION, 53rd WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION (Glasgow)
Box 15340, Washington, D.C. 20003

(301) 345-5186 or intersection@smof.demon.co.uk.

\$125 (membership at present)

Guests of Honor include: Samuel R. Delaney and Gerry Anderson