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JAN/FEB 1996 ISSUE

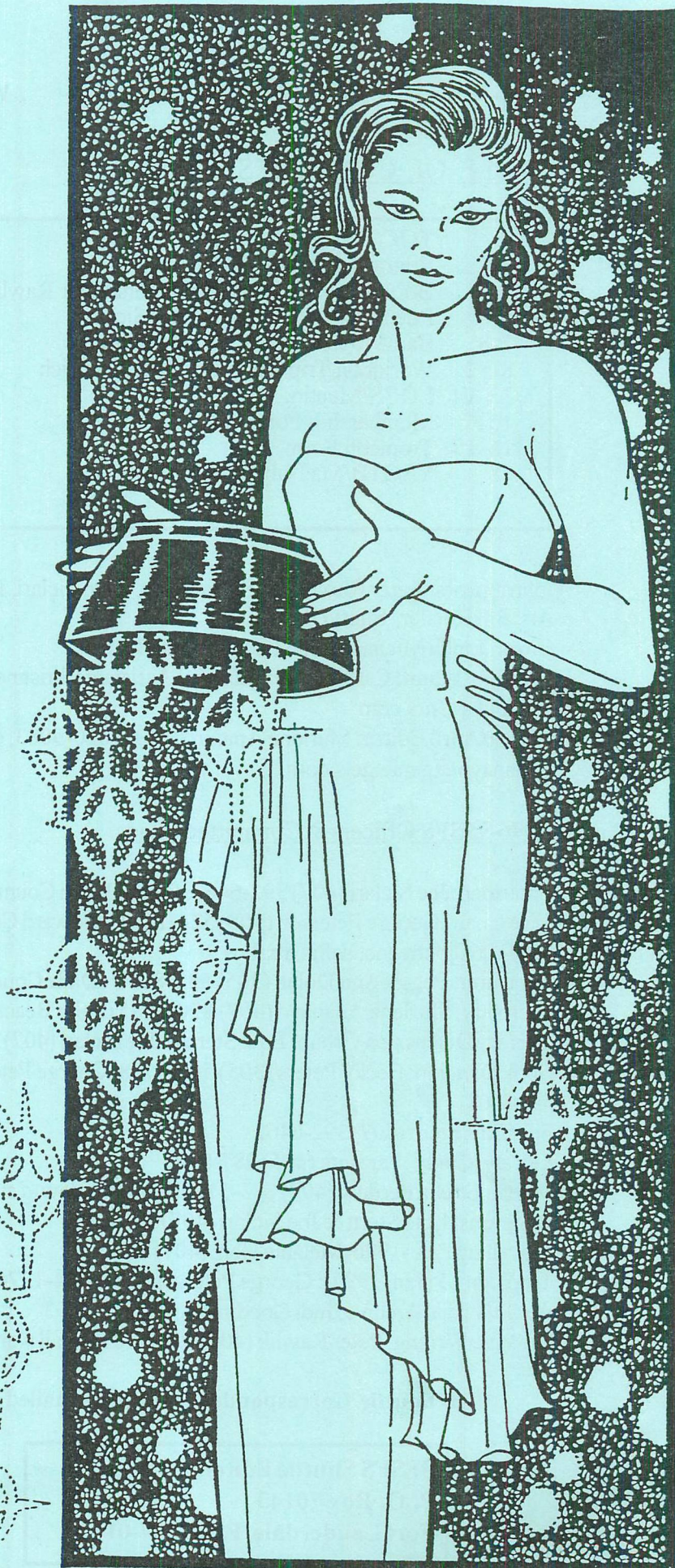
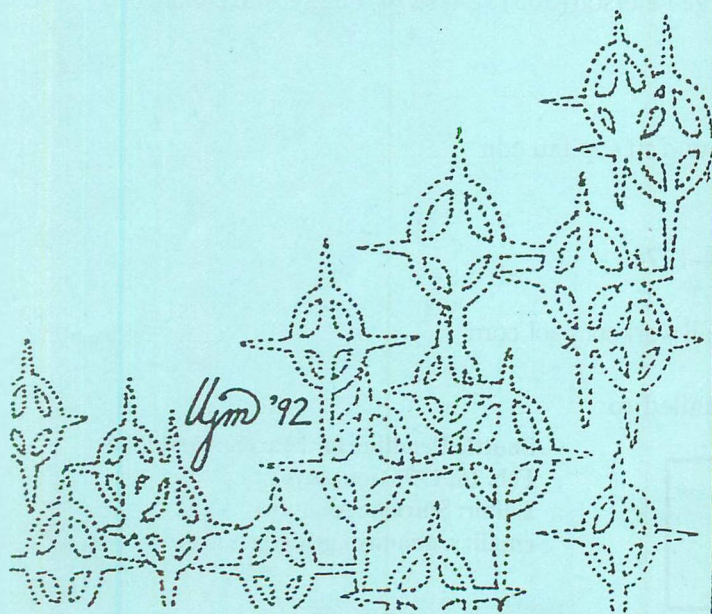
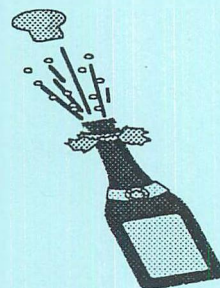


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EDITOR'S PAGE



Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah and Happy New Year! Happy Kwanza! Did I get everybody? I'm sure I've left someone out.

There was a little Christmas competition in our neighborhood, and I think we lost. We had one lonely string of lights strung up around the house, but the fellow next door went hog wild and strung up lights and put Christmas figures on his lawn. The lawn, if you listen carefully, sings. Maybe I should be considered a grinch, but I wouldn't want his electric bill. I don't know where people find the time and effort to put up lights and decorations. Some of our neighbors even put lights on their roofs. How they got up there, I'll never know. I guess they used a ladder. Or being this time of year, maybe they used a sleigh of reindeer or climbed up the chimney. (I'm afraid of heights; you won't catch me doing that.) And speaking of hanging up things, we only have a couple of pictures hanging up inside. I, for one, am afraid if we put a nail in the wall, the house might fall over.

Hopefully, everyone has recovered from the trip to the World Con. There were a lot of SFSFSans over there. I wanted to take a group photo, but I never could get everyone together. Now that everyone's home, maybe we can get out our Glasgow shirts and take a photo together. That is, if I can stop fans from running off to the bookstores or talking about science fiction for two minutes. Well, I can try.

My cat is hovering around the computer trying to get me to pay attention to him rather than working on the *Shuttle*. He has a bad habit of trying to walk across the keyboard when I'm trying to work. Much more of this, and you'll get a cat-atorial instead of a Christmas Carol. (Ouch! Sorry about that!)

Tropicon is fast approaching. (A little too quickly for some people, right?—like maybe the organizers?) It's number 14, and if you're reading this, I'd better see you there. We know where you live.

Speaking of which, I've been taking a crash course—reading some of James P. Hogan's work. I grabbed books off the shelves of bookstores. (Yes, I'm sorry I had to resort to this, but hopefully the SFSFS book co-op will be up and running again soon) a copy of *The Giants* trilogy, *Code of the Lifemaker*, *Voyage from Yesterday*

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and *Realtime Interrupt* (the last being one of his latest). I was, I admit, a little bit nervous because I'd be reading about formulas, geometric figures and analogs. But, Hogan is a very entertaining read despite or because of this "hard science" stuff. Depends on your point of view. But Hogan concentrates heavily on the people in his stories, too, making you wonder what they're up to and how they will resolve the situations they find themselves in. Scientists who find a humanoid being on the moon several centuries before there was life here. People on an exploratory mission who find humanoid robots on another planet. And a man trapped in a frightening altered reality created by his bosses. That last one is enough to give anyone nightmares.

Hogan, you've probably noticed, makes you wonder what it takes to be human. Are humanoid robots any less human than humans? How about characters created by a computer in one guy's virtual reality? And how about those humanoids that they found on the moon?

Interesting questions, huh? Please feel free to come to Tropicon and ask him yourself. I think I will.

I've also had the pleasure of recently reading two women's anthologies, *The Women of Wonder*, edited by Pamela Sergeant. The two anthologies have stories written by female writers of the 40s all the way up to the present. They're great! I can't say enough nice things about them. It's a fun and easy way to find out about an author you don't know a lot about, especially because Sergeant supplies biographies in the back of the books. The only unpleasant thing about the anthologies is they're heavy and they don't fit easily together in my backpack so I can carry them around.

A small group of us had an unsettling experience after the last meeting. We went to get copies of the Tropicon PR made at Kinko's, thanks to George Peterson and his handy-dandy little copy card. Behind him was a skinhead making copies of swastikas. I later went outside and figured out what kind of vehicle the nut was driving—the one that had all the racist bumper stickers on the back of it. It's frightening to think that there still are people out there who hate for no real reason. It really makes you think.

Hope you all have a wonderful New Year, and may you continue to enjoy reading, watching, drawing or participating in SF as you always have.

Take care,

Carol

Book Reviews from Becky Peters

Friesner, Esther, editor. *Chicks in Chainmail*. Baen Books.

© 1995. ISBN 0-671-87682-1. Cover Art by Larry Elmore. \$5.99

The editor wants to make it perfectly clear that she chose the title while the publisher wants to make it even clearer that he did not. I don't remember any other recent title with a disclaimer (in hot pink yet!) on the back cover. What you get are 20 stories ranging from readable to really terrific by a lot of good authors; stories with a touch of whimsy, humor, irony—fun! The in-jokes will definitely appeal, although probably more to female than male readers. The authors include Roger Zelazny, Elizabeth Moon, Susan Shwartz, Harry Turtledove, Nancy Springer, George Alec Effinger, Elizabeth Waters and, of course, Esther Friesner. If you enjoy fantasy, this is a yes—if you are into wish fulfillment, this is still worth reading. I expect the next one to be even better, since all involved obviously had a good time, and that will include the majority of readers.

Best of Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine, Volume 1. Warner Books, © 1994. ISBN 0-446-60140-3. \$4.99. Cover art by Don Puckey. Edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley.

Best of Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine, Volume 2. Warner Books, © 1995. ISBN 0-44-60192-6. Cover art by Don Puckey. Edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley & Elisabeth Waters.

If you read the magazine, you'll have read these obviously—but if you don't own copies, these are cheap at the price for 22 excellent stories. A few authors appear in both: Misty Lackey, Jo Clayton, Elizabeth Waters, Jennifer Roberson and Phyllis Ann Karr, but the other authors also craft a well-told tale. I plan to add both to my collection when the book division is up and running again. Fantasy readers—rejoice; if fantasy isn't your cup of tea, *perhaps* one of these tales might convince you to try a second nibble.



Tales From the Great Turtle: Fantasy in the Native American Tradition edited by Piers Anthony and Richard Gilliam. TOR, © 1994. ISBN 0-812-53490-5. \$5.99 Cover art not identified, fetish pictograph borders.

Couldn't afford the hardcover, so the appearance of the paperback is terrific news! The tales included flow like a river, as a glance at the table of contents makes obvious as well as the cover, "the past, future and alternate realities of Native America." The authors include Native Americans as well as familiar names like Jane Yolen, Mike Resnick, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Brad Linaweaver, Rick Wilber, Piers Anthony and Richard Gilliam who were inspired by the Native Americans' traditions. In fact, many have been guests at Tropicon or the Conference on the Fantastic. So you *could* justify picking up a copy to support a writer you know but the truth is no justification is necessary. This is a treasure—well-written tales that open the mind to other views of reality. It is to be noted that a future reading would provide even more insight. Knowing something about Native American cultures doesn't hurt your enjoyment, but even those merely in search of a "different" fantasy experience will find something vivid and worth sharing in these pages. Richard has followed tradition and ended the volume with brief biographical jottings—which for once could have been a little longer, since they are all interesting folk. This is a keeper!

Miskatonic University Literary Review by Pete Rawlik

There is blood on the shelves again. Horror has been invaded. In a revolution against the alien or demonic menace, vampires, werewolves and other "human" monsters have returned with a vengeance.

Vampires, of course, really never left the shelves. The last peak in vampire fiction was in the sixties and early seventies, the heyday of the Hammer Films and Christopher Lee. Since then, supernatural fiction has moved away from human monsters and toward what Lovecraft called the cosmic weird tale. Of course, people kept writing vampire tales—there just were not as many good ones. King and Rice were able to make names for themselves by supplying the best during a bleak literary harvest. Stephen King and Anne Rice have both made significant contributions to the revitalization of the vampire with novels like *Salem's Lot*

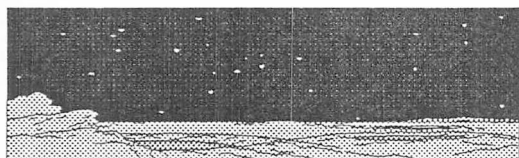
and *Interview With the Vampire*. Yet, despite their popularity, King and Rice are just a taste of what is going on. There are other authors—other mouths—who are taking deeper, more succulent bites. Unfortunately, they aren't always bestsellers.

Imagine, if you will, a world where Van Helsing fails and the sophisticated Count joins the Royal Family of England. This is the premise of Kim Newman's *Anno Dracula* and its sequel, *The Bloody Red Baron*. Brian Stableford's *The Empire of Fear* details an empire of vampires ruling medieval Europe and threatening the Arab world. Similar themes are explored in the shared world anthology *Under the Fang*.

British author Brian Lumley, has combined vampires with the spy genre to write the Necroscope series. British intelligence officer Harry Keogh is a necroscope, a man who can talk to the dead, and with this power he fights against invading communist vampires that are dark, alien parasites. As with all of Lumley's work, these stories are fun reads and have a certain appeal but they probably won't end up in your permanent collection.

Something that you might be proud to display are the works of two female writers. While Anne Rice has shown us the vampiric high society of the Big Easy, Poppy Z. Brite, who lives in New Orleans, delights in dragging her fans into the gothic, punk underworld of pirate radio and the Net in such novels as *Lost Souls* and *Drawing Blood*. Take note that you should proceed with some caution. Although her literary merits cannot be denied, Ms. Brite's graphic representations and thematic undercurrents of substance abuse, pedophilia, hetero- and homoeroticism may not be suitable for those easily offended.

Likewise, Nancy Collins has also delved into the world of punk vampires. Collins' punk vampiress, Sonja Blue, has added an interesting twist to the vampire tale. Collins proposes a world full of Pretenders, monsters that hide in plain sight as punks, vagrants, prostitutes and other street people. There are angels, Seraphim, as well. The question arises as to why one of the Seraphim would be interested in protecting a horrifying vampire-human hybrid. The answer can be found in the novels *Sunglasses After Dark* and *In The Blood*. The omnibus collection *Midnight Blue*, collects the first two novels and the third, *Paint It Black*.



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White Wolf seems to have taken Collins' ideas and run with them. *Vampire*, *The Masquerade* and its sequels, are best-selling role-playing games that allow you to play the part of a vampire, a werewolf, a mage, or a ghost. This has spawned a series of shared world novels and anthologies based on the games. The best of these is the hardcover anthology *Dark Destiny* which includes stories by Ellison, Bloch, Friesner, Weinberg, Ciencin and Byers. Bloch's story won a posthumous Stoker award, but the best stories are Collins' piece of forbidden love between a vampire and a werewolf, and Stewart von Allmen's disturbing "Escobar Falls" (which is not a vampire story).

Finally, award-winning SF author Dan Simmons, lauded for his masterpiece *Hyperion* Cantos, has written an equally masterful vampire meganovel. Titled *Carrion Comfort*, Simmons gives us a fast paced story of vampires, political intrigue, and the reporters who figure it all out. I have a particular fondness for this novel. *Carrion Comfort* closes in Philadelphia, an area I grew up in. Simmons description is so accurate, so finely detailed that you can literally use the book as your guide from fashionable Chestnut Hill through Fairmount Park and into the old city rail yards.

So vampires are back. And they are diverse enough that they can satisfy any hunger. Vampire rock stars, vampire politicians, vampire detectives, even vampire children haunt the novels in your local book shelves, ready to strike, to bite deep and infect any who dare to open the pages. The question I have is "why?" Why is horror taking this turn? Why our sudden, renewed fascination with vampires and werewolves and other human monsters? I think it has something to do with reality. Have you looked outside lately? Have you read the news? There are things happening: monstrous things. Look at the pictures. You can see the faces of those accused of committing these atrocities. They are human faces, like yours and mine. But no human could do these things. Only monsters could do these things. They must be monsters. There must be monsters; cannibal werewolves, pedophile ogres, rapist vampires, and mass-murdering demons. It couldn't be us. We couldn't do these things. Could we?

(And I wonder how these writers are dealing with the frightening advances of killer viruses such as Ebola and AIDS in the context of vampires, werewolves, etc.—Editor).

The Bookman

by *Pete Rawlik*

The Bookman walks,
wrapped in jackets,
bound in leather,
on Melville legs,
swinging Jack
London arms.



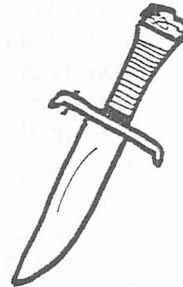
His back is Shaw
with a touch of Oscar Wilde.
Ribs by Wodehouse,
Encase a Harlan heart
and Heinlein legs.

His liver (what's left)
is pure Poe.
His innards,
are equal parts,
Bloch and Shelley and Kersh.

He talks
with a Hemingway tongue,
Stoker teeth
and Shakespeare lips.
He sees with MacDonald eyes
and hers with Agatha Christie ears.

But it's thoughts that count
on the Bookman's brain
is a sweet melange
of Joyce and Doyle,
Leary and Verne.

Dated, copyrighted,
waiting,
wanting,
for you
to open his flesh
and read him.



Serial Killers



by *Dan Siclari*

Serial killers
walk the dismal streets searching.
They look just like you.



Bad SF Movies We Love. by Peter Barker



What with moving and deadlines, desperation set in. For a while, I almost dug out *Trog*, but even in a moment of desperation I could not bring myself to watch what remained of that film. Joan Crawford's broad shoulders and scientists' *togs* were just too much!

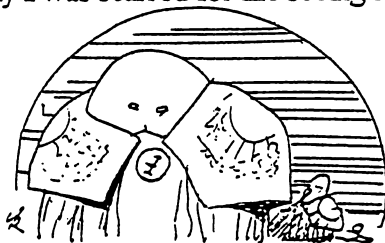
So I dug through our stockpile of videos (one of the few things we've gotten around to unpacking at our new digs) and came across *Missile to the Moon*. In my moment of desperation, it seemed like the thing to watch. Besides, as a child it had scared the tar out of me, coloring my nightmares for years to come.

Luckily now that I'm all grown up and have adult responsibilities like changing the air conditioner filters, it's not scary at all. Unless of course you count the entire fleet of 1959 or '58 pageant cuties dressed up in leotards and sci-fi accoutrements.

So what makes *Missile to the Moon* such a pleasure to sit through?

First off *Missile to the Moon* is like countless other movies of this period. If you like this sort of thing, you'll like this movie. It reminds one strongly of say *Cat Women on the Moon*, or the beloved *Fire Maidens of Outer Space*, or perhaps that all time great *Queen of Outer Space*, or even *King Dinosaur*. In case you've never seen one of those movies (though shame on you for not at least seeing *Queen of Outer Space* after our rave review of it) it involves basically some scientists getting in a phallic shaped rocket and going to some off-planet piece of real estate and meeting up with a society of women—usually scantily dressed. Of course this society of women are all man hungry, because the male of their species is conspicuously absent for some no doubt extremely plausible and scientific reason. Then action and adventure take place with people falling in love and that lot. Then they go home.

Of course this is just the basic formula. Each movie adds its own set of twists. *Missile to the Moon* has some really peculiar ones which is probably why I was scarred for life seeing it as a young child.



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The basic plot is about two teens who escape from prison, hiding aboard the brilliant and independent scientist Dirk Green's rocket. The government is going to take the rocket away from Dirk because civilians should not be messing with rockets. Dirk thinks otherwise, and when he discovers the two escaped teens decides to blackmail them into being his crew so he can take off with the rocket. At the last instant his scientist friend climbs aboard the rocket along with his friend's fiancé and they are all off for outer space adventures.

On the trip to the moon, a mystery develops while one of the teens is forcing himself on the only woman aboard. After this Dirk dies, uttering some cryptic words and leaving a mystery behind.

They land on the moon and after some exploration stumble across the civilization of women. The scientist is mistaken as Dirk at first, but eventually he is found out. After more hijinks the women's civilization is destroyed and they all return home. They all learn valuable moral lessons along the way and in the end the woman insists on asking her fiancé if she is prettier than those moon women. The two surviving males look at each other and say "Of course you are."

This woman of course has fouled things up throughout the movie.

Women always seem to get the short end of the stick in these movies. Either they are evil and want to keep our flabby scientists as their husbands, or they hopelessly fall in love with one of the assorted heroes and become complete slaves to their love and do silly things. In the case of *Missile to the Moon* we have both these cases along with another. The earth woman happens to be engaged to the only real scientist of the lot (well there were two but remember Dirk who built the rocket ship got bopped on the head by a battery during the obligatory meteor shower and is dead.) When one of the man hungry moon women gets him in a lip lock, the earth woman, in complete indignation, breaks their mad grappling and blurts out some important information that ends up getting our heroes in hot water. Of course she's in the same hot water. She explains later she got all steamed up and due to jealousy put the entire set of heroes in the dock.

Still, I suppose these women do have one thing going for them. They've got will power. They have this weird hypnotic power which they can hypnotize anyone with. Sad to say, there are just glaring eyes and no bizarre noises or beams of green light. Just a bunch of muttering about "My will is stronger than yours," which is said with the same conviction as "my laundry detergent works better than yours."

Still, let's not dwell on the women too much. When you watch the film you can ogle them all you want. Pay close attention to the credits at the beginning. Most of the moon women happen to be state beauty queens. Their number one talent seems to be being waitresses. Throughout the movie they seem to be trying to fatten up the earth people, constantly offering them food. They don't seem to be able to do much else. I suppose at least they do not dance, like in *Fire Maidens*, which is a plus. Well, one does, but only one and it is only for a few minutes instead of half the movie.

I think the thing that really scared me about this movie when I was a child was the moon itself. It's inhabited by giant rock creatures who walk like they are chafing badly and are constipated. They move at such a snail's pace that a one-legged gerbil could out distance them. Still, they are menacing. They have loud asthmatic breathing (just the way all evil space aliens should.) Our heroes are scared of them and have a lot of trouble keeping away from them. Maybe it's their bulky space suits, which on close examination cannot really be that heavy. You can see the duct tape that holds the air tanks together and their poor necks are exposed to the raw vacuum of space as well. When I was a kid I did not notice these things and was even more scared than the earthmen.

Besides the constipated rock people, you have the moon itself. It looks like death valley or any old place out west, but the sun! Oh, the sun. It's so hot it will kill you! The rock creatures thrive on it but our earthmen must keep to the shadows or they'll get fried. One of the teenage criminals manages to end up frying himself because of avarice. He is weighed down by too huge bags of loot like a greedy trick-or-treater, and the rock creatures catch up with him. To get out of the way he steps into the light and he goes up like a flammable set of child's pajamas—one flash and the only thing left is his bones. I think this really upset me as a kid as well. Still, it taught a valuable moral lesson. Don't be greedy or you'll fry.

Let's not forget the spooky cave scenes with the spider either. Not since *Queen of Outer Space* has there been a spookier space spider.

I can't tell you about everything or you'll not watch the movie. If I've confused, puzzled or piqued your curiosity, go out and find *Missile to the Moon*—it's a classic. Just make sure you do not show it to small children or you'll scar them for life.

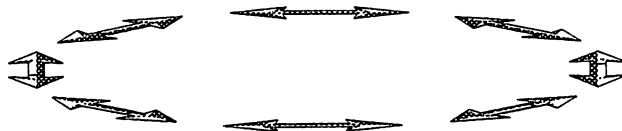
Trip Report by Rick Simicich

After the convention in Scotland, we had a few days left on our free one-week certificate to stay at the Marriott. We did day trips in Scotland. This involved the following steps:

- 1) Sleeping all day.
- 2) Getting up when driven from bed by housekeeping guilt.
- 3) Going to an attraction.
- 4) Finding that the attraction is just closing.
- 5) Going to a second attraction and finding that it has closed.

Then the big decision: Do we head north in Scotland or off to Ireland? Part of our dilemma was we had been told special insurance was required to visit Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland. Either way, we thought it would cost us 100 Pounds Sterling. There was some confusion, but we finally resolved it by calling Hertz, and we found out that there was no 100 Pound fee to visit the North which was, after all, part of Ireland proper. To visit the Republic required special insurance. Hertz told us they would give us the Royal Auto Club number for Northern Ireland free of charge.

It would be hard to imagine a later start. Glasgow is a maze of twisty little passages, all only slightly different, but marked the same. Also, our map seemed to show that the A11 connected to the M8, but in fact, the M8 connected to the M77 that connected to the A77, a bit down from where the map showed. This cost us about an hour in driving in circles in Glasgow, looking for the exit we thought we'd missed, following interminable signs all leading to the "City Centre," and so forth.



Finally, we were headed south. It was a route that went past a lot of roadside shops and even a supermarket or two. We stopped in a food store to load up on provisions (10 cans of Haggis, a lifetime supply, for us and all of our friends), to see what food costs the average person and what they usually eat. A brief stop at a bank for some currency, and we were en route.

The ferry had left an hour earlier. There was another ferry line, but they had left 45 minutes earlier. There was a final trip at 7:30 PM, and we could get on that one, maybe, if there were still spots. There were. We bought a return ticket, for a three or four day excursion, and pre-booked our return.

When we begun approaching the Irish coastline, Deb informed me that she had picked out our spot to stay the night—at the Ballygally Castle hotel. That was where we were going to spend the night because it was mentioned in the *Let's Go* book, and how expensive could it possibly be?....

So up the coast we went, off to Ballygally, just a few miles up the coast. It was a bit odd coming off of the ferry—we went where the police directed us—away from the main road through an inspection line. We followed the signs, and soon we were on the coast road headed north up the left side of the road.

We drove past some houses that were vaguely reminiscent of Palm Beach, facing the open water across a road, just a bit smaller, and then there we were—around a corner and there was a castle off into the distance. So I managed to pull into the front car park and Deb went inside. 60 Irish Pounds Sterling for a room and two full cooked breakfasts (this is formidable in Irish terms.) Full cooked breakfasts consist only of things that are bad for you, healthwise, but which taste good—fried bread (two types, soda and potato), fried eggs, fried bacon, fried sausage, fried tomato and fried mushrooms.

Deb waxed enthusiastic when we checked in—about being in a real castle, and they were impressed with her enthusiasm (you know, the castle thing and all—I think that there was some direct woman to woman communication going on at some level that we men just aren't allowed to comprehend, even when we observe it directly.) Deb just walked up and gave the proprietor the secret—known only to women—handshake that said, "I always wanted a horse but now I'm middle aged, so I *need* to spend at least one night in a castle," so they upgraded us from an ordinary room in the new (this century) addition to one of the rooms in the original castle tower.

We were right under the Ghost room. The Ghost room was the room in which the original castle owner (and member of the builder's family who inherited the castle) imprisoned his wife after she had an affair with the stableboy. She apparently threw herself headlong down the narrow and wooden spiral steps to her death. She died after spending months in a room no bigger than a

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medium bathroom without even a Prodigy terminal. It is said that she imagined she heard her baby crying.

In the morning, we had our wakeup call, and the (gasp) full cooked Irish Breakfast. This differs from a full cooked Scottish breakfast in that they fry different things. Same grease, though, just different things to eat. The waitress was quite friendly, told us all about the castle we had slept in and served us each a huge plate of fried food.

And then we were on our way. Now it seems that the first thing one notes about a Irish breakfast is that it has a tremendous soporific effect. Even though it would have seemed that we had plenty of sleep the night before (assisted by beer and/or cider) we were immediately forced to pull over and take a short nap, and eat more chocolate containing caffeine.

Finally, we headed into the countryside. The previous evening, a local bar denizen had advised us to take the side roads to Torr Head, and these were small roads indeed. And pleasant. The weather was predicted to turn bad later that evening, but was bright and sunny in the morning. There is something relaxing about driving country roads where 25 MPH might be a breakneck pace and where you see more sheep in the road than oncoming traffic, especially when the sheep can run along the road as fast as you might drive. Especially if it is a one lane road with passing places.

One of the first things we noted as we went up the non-main road was that there was a farm museum. An energetic lad, Patrick, by name, had prepared a display of old farm items such as tractors, plows, harrows, potato diggers, and root pulpers, all in relatively working condition (although how many roots would you want to pulp to prove this proposition). For two pounds sterling each, he took us around, and we took pictures of old tractors, motorcycles, a model T Ford and many other things which in some way or other tortured some plant or earthen thing in a farmlike manner. Perhaps the pride of his collection was the hay bailer that took two tractors to run, one to pull it and the other to provide belt power.

Our next stop was *Carrick-a-rede* (rock in the road), a famous rope bridge to an island. This was a bridge where the fishermen would cross over to catch migrating salmon which had their return to their rivers impeded by this island or "rock in the road." Their nets would be spread out from the island, so they would go there to get the fish out of them, and so forth. But the island wasn't quite connected to the mainland so they strung a rope bridge. A repaired version of this

bridge (with handrails on both sides for us wimps) can be traversed by brave, energetic souls who want to relive a bit of history. Now it is a 3/4 mile walk over quite a few stone steps and so forth to get to where you can risk your life dangling 80 feet over an open gorge. We carefully observed people traversing the bridge using our handy-dandy binoculars which we could do from the safety and comfort of the parking lot. There were a lot of striking views all around. It was just like being there.

One of the fine views from the parking lot was an island just offshore topped by grass. We were told that they had to put exactly eleven sheep on the island. Ten sheep would have fattened too much, and twelve would have starved. People are not allowed on the island at all because of nesting birds, puffins and so forth.

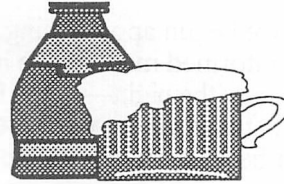
We then stopped briefly at the marina at Ballantoy. It was a tiny seaside town with a colorful area where boats were tied out. Since it was such a fine day, there were a fair number of folks futilely trying to sunbathe along the rocky shore.

The next and last real stop was the Giant's Causeway. The Giant's Causeway is a large basalt formation like you read about in your Golden Book encyclopedia. When igneous rock cools, it forms crystals. Cool it real fast, and the rock forms a sort of glass. Cool it more slowly, and it forms fine crystals like granite. Cool it extremely slowly, and it forms huge crystals, hexagonal in shape that have cross sections of two feet or more.

Like all sites on the Irish coast it is impossible for any normal human to get there under their own power. Once you pay to park in the lot, you can pay again to take a bus to where you can actually see the basalt formations. This turned out to be worth it. The columns of black rock rose from the sea to where the waves no longer washed them, and then weathered to a brown-grey. You can walk from one crystal to the other, and it is like stepping from stone to stone in a giant puzzle. You step up a bit and a bit over to try to figure out which way the exit is before the giant balls fall on you.

That evening, I wanted to hear some Irish music in a pub, and Deb wanted to stay in a Farm B&B by the water. In the end, neither of us quite got our wishes as we finally found an open pub (but the music didn't start until 10:00 PM or so, too late to stay,) and the B&B we found was a bit away from the water and not quite on a working

farm either. But it was quite a nice place, and the breakfast was once again full of things that one should not eat because the food was just too greasy. But it was good, although we missed the fried potato bread.



In the morning, we visited the Old Bushmill's distillery. Old Bushmills was quite a bit different from our previous distilleries, in that (1) they weren't working when we went through (2) this was clearly a major commercial operation, with huge quantities of whiskey being produced (3) they had steel vats for the fermentation of the wort rather than vats of Oregon pine (4) they had multiple stills to go in parallel (5) they distilled the whiskey three times instead of two plus redistillation of feints and low wines as is done in Scotland. This pretty much makes sure that they start with absolutely neutral grain spirits before they begin to age and cask condition them into whiskey. Because the barrels are reused several times, the sherry or bourbon has a remarkably different flavor, and this is an advantage in making different products.

I volunteered to be a taster. They put out several brands of 'whiskey ordinaire,' Johnny Walker Red (If I'm going to drink Johnny Walker, I usually drink the Black), two other Irishes (Jameson and one I hadn't heard of) and a bourbon. For my money, they easily beat the other Irishes, and I've always thought that Johnny Walker Red had an off taste. I felt the bourbon tasted similar to Jack Daniels which I've never liked much, preferring such brands as Wild Turkey. So it wasn't surprising, considering the combination, that the Bushmills won in my mind.

Now I should point out that this was not a blind taste testing, and that the whiskeys were all cut 50% with water to simulate drinking conditions.

Finally, I was asked to choose between the two premium Bushmills brands—their 10 year old single malt matured in bourbon barrels, and their blended, matured in sherry casks, drink. First the sherry cask stuff tasted a bit less harsh, but then they had me taste that against Glenfiddich (usually my brand of choice for single malts). I

decided that that whiskey couldn't be compared with the sherry cask stuff, although it stood up well against the single malt. I finally felt forced to choose the Bushmills, not because of its flavor, but for a lack of character on the part of the Glenfiddich which has changed in taste since I started drinking it some years ago.

Then we took off to the west again, towards the town of [London]Derry, while carefully avoiding the Town Centre of Derry itself. Ever since we had entered Ireland, we'd seen evidence of the troubles. Police stations all over the country were surrounded with chain link fences topped with razor wire. Public buildings could be found easily because of the strong steel fences they were topped with, with links too close together to climb. As we neared Derry, we began to see whole communities fenced in with razor wire and guardposts in front, and the police stations were now fortresses with steel mazes around them, not simple fences.

We also began to see other signs of the troubles—such things as political signs and slogans, Irish flags on top of telephone poles, and signs giving the directions to Londonderry with the London part painted out.

And then we made a wrong turn, and we were in the Republic of Ireland. It seemed that there was a checkpoint, but at this point the checkpoint was completely unmanned, and other than a couple of the largest speed bumps we'd ever seen, and an armoured checkpoint, we were in another country. No possibility of a passport stamp, no officials to get one from. So, we stopped a couple of miles down the road and bought lunch. The roads near the border were much better maintained on the UK side. The brogue changed dramatically—both we and the folks in the lunchroom couldn't understand each other. Oh, yes, and the signs were in both Gaelic and English, and the directions back were to Derry, not Londonderry with the London part graffitied out.

It was at the point that we were listening to the radio and the next place we were supposed to go had reports of arsons—car fires set in the middle of the night, and a number of families being evacuated. We decided to head back to the coastal tourist areas where we really felt more welcome and less like we were likely to end up in the middle of someone else's political squabble because we parked in the wrong place. Then we began to notice that along the main road, there were Irish flags flying from the tops of telephone

poles in some locations, and UKish flags—Union Jacks or similar in other places. And the political slogans varied with the flags.

Now there are two other things you need to know about the North of Ireland: (1) Everything closes at 4:00, or five minutes before you get there, whichever is earlier unless you get there first thing in the morning, in which case they are apologetic because they just aren't up to full speed, and (2) the country closes up tight on Sunday. So tight, in fact, that people are surprised if you say that you are thinking about taking an airplane or a toll bridge on Sunday because it never occurred to them that it might be open. I think that is why they call it God's Country—it is closed for the Sabbath. So on Saturday night, we began to plan our Sunday activities and were faced with the fact that most of the things we might want to do the next day (such as, for example, shop for overpriced expensive trinkets with Leprechauns on them that say "Glenmoremoney") wasn't going to happen because Ireland was closed.

Now one of the things we found about ten minutes after it had closed on Saturday was an open farm where one could do such things as ride horses, camp, or look at sheep and ride around in a genuine piece of working farm machinery, a passenger bus which they jokingly referred to as a paddiwagon. They had sheep shearing demonstrations (I say that if you've seen one freshly denuded sheep, you've seen them all), a petting zoo, and so forth. Deb got to pet a horse who, trapped against a fence, put up with it for a few minutes before politely running away. But Deb found carrots on sale at "Only 20p a pound" (which, at the current rate of exchange probably translates to something like \$9.85US/ounce) and was well equipped for bribery of the horses, um, draft ponies, maybe, tomorrow. These horses looked like they were putting on quite shaggy, long, and protective coats. Last horses I saw growing coats this shaggy were laughing at a blizzard in Wyoming, and this was summer in Ireland.

And since it was summer, still, there were lots of places that weren't heated. Like bathrooms for example. Sticking to the seat is no fun, and neither is trying to figure out how to turn on the shower. After significant consideration, we finally determined that, yes, the pull string outside of the shower turned it on.

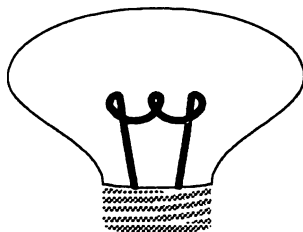


Electricity in general seems to be treated differently by the folk in the UK. It almost seems that in the USA, one puts an outlet where one is called for whether or not something might be plugged into it someday. (Oh, look, we've had five feet of wall without an outlet—let's put one in!) In the UK, however, we found that there were rarely, if ever, just outlets in the wall for no good reason. This may be because outlets are horribly complicated things, with special shutters that close and hide the hot leads unless something is first pushed into the ground lead hole and individual switches for each outlet. Lighting circuit outlets were sometimes different and sometimes the same. In one hotel which was probably considered first or second class there were no empty outlets in the room. In most cases, the lamps were wired directly into junction boxes, but there was no place to plug in, say, a laptop. We rang up housekeeping and they got us an extension cord (which was quite a production—as the outlet was a full steel outlet box with a shuttered outlet and a switch.)

Now, we carefully brought all of our voltage converters, one for low wattage and the other for high wattage appliances. We had brought a medical appliance, a computer, a camcorder battery charger and an electric toothbrush. Everything we brought was marked for 110-240 volts, 50-60 hz, except for the medical appliance which had a switch that had to be turned to change it from 110 to 220 volts. So the only important conversion item we brought was the plug converter. Into that we plugged an extension cord, and into that cord we plugged everything else.

It seems that, especially for travel items, the auto-sensing power supplies are becoming way more common, and so next time we will bring more plug adapters and fewer (or none, perhaps) voltage converters.

The other thing we brought was an inverter, a device that will feed up to a 140 watt appliance with 110 volts AC when plugged into a 12 volt car cigarette lighter. We used this to recharge camcorder batteries and also the laptop computer.



Hmmmm ... a few words about the two B&B's we stayed at. We picked our B&B's in a number of ways. They had to be outside of large cities, preferably in farm areas or by seashores. We also looked for claims of certification regarding them, not that we actually expected to know what the certification meant, but that if it was a certified B&B, it might be more than just someone who hung a shingle out in the hopes of making a couple of extra pounds.

The first one was off of the A2 outside of Bushmills at 55 degrees, 13 minutes, 16.0 seconds North, and 6 degrees 29 minutes, 1.3 seconds west. (Measured via a Garmin GPS 75.)

This B&B charged 13.50 Pounds Sterling per night (PPDO), supplied a full breakfast, and had comfortable beds. The downsides were that the bathroom was up the hall and that the common area was pleasant, but not really accessible except for the few minutes in the morning while you were waiting for your breakfast to digest.

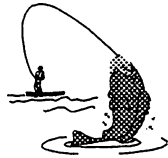
The second was at Torr Brae, at 55 degrees, 11 minutes, 27.7 seconds North, 6 degrees, 4 minutes, 22.1 seconds west.

This B&B had 'ensuite' accommodations (Translation: Private bathroom). It also purportedly had a calf in the barn that was just a couple of days old, but the calf was not part of the tour. The woman running the B&B (with the electrical pull string shower) commented that since she'd had her third child (one in the oven) that babysitting fees ate up too much of her salary and that running a B&B allowed her to stay at home with her children.

This B&B had a magnificent view of the ocean which we appreciated once we woke up, and poor beds. Both of us noted that waking up was difficult at best, and that we had to walk out the stiffness in the morning.

Deb decided to take the B&O ferry back the evening before we otherwise might have to reduce the Monday morning drive. The ferry over had been miserable in terms of putting up with massive amounts of cigarette and pipe smoke, so we paid the extra tariff for Club Class accommodations just to have an enforced non-smoking area. We considered staying in our cars, but found that wasn't allowed.

This may be worth the extra six pounds if you are into cappuccino and/or prefer fewer (but not no) screaming infants. Seats were comfortable, many folks found a spot on the bench seats and laid down, and there was a waiter with coffee, tea, cappuccino, or soft drinks or liquor (for a fee) and it was quite pleasant.



Nov. 27, 1995

Dear Joe & Edie:

Thanks for Shuttle #122. We enjoyed reading it. Interesting perspectives on the Glasgow Worldcon.

Unfortunately, we won't be able to come to Tropicon 14. Please keep us in mind for the future.

All best,

Kelly & Laura Freas

30 Nov. 1995

Dear Shuttle Crew—

There are pluses for Fran in Oklahoma. She has a great view of the night sky.

Great color cover! I can hardly wait for your Australia in 1999 trip report with a photograph of Joe on Ayre's Rock at sunset.

I haven't tried searching for my last name on the Internet. What do I do if I have a match?

Beast Wishes,

Teddy

423 Summit Avenue,
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

November 14, 1995

SFSFS Shuttle Editor,
P. O. Box 70143
Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 33307-0143

Dear Joe or whoever:

Your big 10th anniversary SFSFS Shuttle issue just turned up at the bottom of a large sack of unlocced fanzines. It dates from the start of summer, and I'm very sorry I didn't respond to it within a sensible length of time. The main problem was the brutally hot summer (*Ours hasn't been exactly cool, either-Editor*) in Hagerstown which left me without the energy to read most large fanzines or write locs exceeding one page in length. Just now I'm in a month-long remission from APA obligations so I'm trying to do something about the backlog no matter how ancient parts of it are.

WINTER SOLSTICE ISSUE

One consolation is that I'm still in time to wish you all success for Tropicon XIV. The hotel price seems unbelievable for Florida in the height of the tourist season.

I could sympathize with the frightening facts about the struggle against backyard nature. It passes all understanding to me that people are worrying about deforestation in this nation. At least three new trees jump out of the soil in my back yard every 24 hours and if left alone for a week, they become taller than I am. The grass on my property hasn't had an ounce of fertilizer of soil builder or anything else during the 35 years that I've lived here, and after a couple of rains, it's so green that I feel half-sick just looking at it.


All your material on the tenth anniversary of your club was interesting even to a person like me who know little or nothing about most of your neighbors. The compilation shows that many of these persons can write very well and entertainingly and should be appearing in fanzines much more frequently than once every ten years.

The clubhouse idea might be something that would help hold the club together for the next decade. I have no idea what the prices of property, property taxes, utilities and so forth cost in your area, but they can hardly be worse than those in Los Angeles and Boston, two of the most expensive cities to live in in the nation. You will, I assume, get lots of input from fans in those two cities about their problems and how they are coping with them. I get the impression from *De Profundis*, for instance, that the LASFSF gets some income by renting part of its building to mundane groups from time to time.

I've never had any trouble coping with the alleged paradox George Peterson writes about, the existence of evil in a universe created by a beneficent God. The explanation is symbolically given at the very start of the Bible: mankind creates evil by his own choice, whether by eating of a forbidden fruit or blowing up a building in Oklahoma City. God gave mankind the ability to comprehend the difference between good and evil, and man makes the wrong choice too often.

Michael Drawdy echoes a viewpoint that Trekkers have been making from time immemorial when he writes that the original series "was prophetic in its predictions of a technologically, multicultural society." How could there have been any prophecy when Star Trek just chose out of a half-century of prozines the hardware and props that pros had used hundreds and thousands of times in their stories for the pulps?

OMIGDOD!
A LOC WRITTEN
IN PERFECT
ENGLISH!
LOOK IT FROM
A DIFFERENT
ANGLE



The creation of a tapes archive is a splendid club activity which should be improved by making duplicates of all these tapes just in case something happens to the originals. German fans seem much more interested in this sort of thing than groups in the United States. Munich Round Up always includes in each issue an impressive list of recent additions to the hundreds of available tapes of pro and fan events, speeches, panels and so on.

The response to Gary Farber's letter in the past issue made feel good. "A lot of people are leaving fandom to work in technical areas, computers, communications and such. I know a lot are still fans, but it seems to me that people are getting involved in living the technical side and are leaving the imaginative side. I'm not sure I find this a good thing for either fandom or the real world...." I'm proud of my claim to be the most all-out exception to this general trend. I patronize an out-of-town public library instead of the one in Hagerstown because it has no computers in the reading and reference rooms. Also, when I needed to make a change in my medigap insurance from one carrier to another, I chose the new one because its firm keeps its computers out of sight of customers just as it does the commode and the urinals.

By the way, someone in an APA claimed that I am averse to computers because I have one in my head. This alarmed me so badly that I dug out my old bulk eraser for my audio tapes and used it as a pillow for several nights, then banged my head against a wall ten times a day for the next two weeks to make sure the alleged computer would no longer be functional.

Again, I'm sorry I didn't write in a sensible length of time.

Yrs & C.,
Harry Warner, Jr.

MEETINGS (Some of these are tentative)

January 20 Imperial Point Library

12:00 p.m. Board Meeting

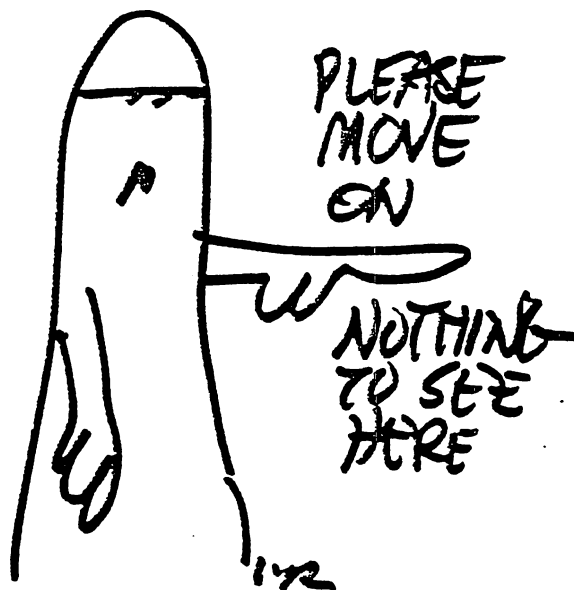
2 p.m. Regular Meeting

Subject: Alien creation—participatory program

For the rest of the year ...

February 24	Hallandale Library
March 23	Airport Hilton
April 20	Picnic (Location TBA)
May 11 or 18	Imperial Point Library
June 15	Coral Springs Borders
July 20	Imperial Point Library
August 17	Hallandale Library
Sept. 21	Imperial Point Library
October 19	Hallandale Library
November 16	Miami Book Fair
December	Annual Dinner TBA

THIS FANZINE
IS NOW CLOSED



South Florida Science Fiction Society Membership Form

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

Regular \$20.00 ____
General (nonvoting) \$15.00 ____
Child Membership (12 years or under) \$1 ____
Subscribing Membership (\$1 per issue of club newsletter) ____

Date: (Don't forget it's 1996) ____

Name: _____

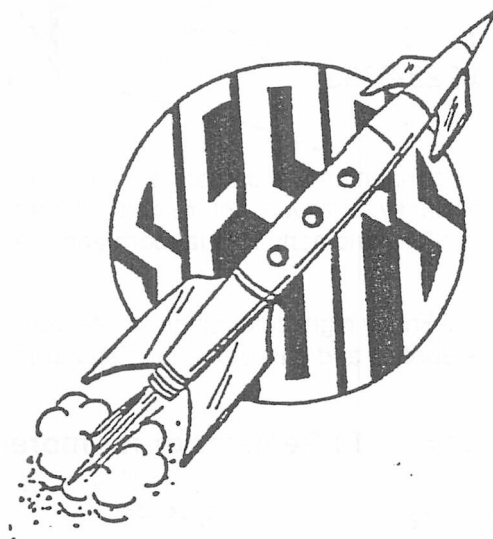
Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (hm/wk) _____

Birthdate: _____ Email address: _____

Interests _____



Just confirmed new guest!
Daniel Keyes
author of *Flowers for Algernon*

TROPICON XIV

The South Florida Science Fiction Convention

January 12 — 14, 1996

Guest of Honor

James P. Hogan

Toastmaster
Mike Resnick

Special Filk Guest
Joe Haldeman

Ben Bova, Hal Clement, Linda Evans,
Charles Fontenay, Joseph Green, Jack C.
Haldeman II, Mary Hanson-Roberts,
Rick Wilber, and a "cast of thousands"

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FanHistoricon 1996

Tropicon is proud to host this year's FanHistoricon, an annual gathering of fans interested in preserving fan history. With our guests, this is a special opportunity for anyone interested in fannish history. We will be having some related programming focusing on 60's and early 70's fandom and are also hosting a meeting of the TimeBinders.

Arrive early. You won't want to miss our special Friday night celebration in The Velvet Comet where Chance and Lady Luck might help you meet some celebrities and gain some fannish fame and fortune!

**Membership: \$21.00 through Dec. 15
\$25.00 at the door**

For Dealers Room & Art Show info write
to P. O. Box or sen email to
g.peterson5@genie.geis.com or call
407-392-6462 and leave a message.

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 recognized by the IRS under Section 501(c)(3).

<http://www.scifi.maid.com/tropicon.html>

TROPICON XIV

This promises to be one of the Best yet...

Join us at our unique **Galactic Casino for a Meet the VIPs Mixer**. You'll get to socialize with our illustrious guests in our Hotel's beautiful courtyard. Then we'll have an evening of friendly gambling. But don't expect the usual craps; we're going to have some unusual games from around the cosmos. Don't worry about the money, we'll supply the Galactic Script. Later we'll have a special auction so you'll be able to spend your winnings.

And there will be our usual, excellent **programming**. We'll have Alien Artifacts, explore politics in SF, voyage into the depths of the human mind, visit Africa, and meet the Ghosts of Fandom Past. Other programs in the works: The Well Traveled Fan, Green SF, On the Shoulders of Vulcans, and Art for Artists' Sake. There'll be readings, gaming, Art Show & auction, & our famous Trivia Contest.

Don't miss our **Guest of Honor Banquet**. Your choice of Key West Chicken or Dolphin Jardiniere and all the fixings will be served. Our special guests will speak and we will have a surprise or two in store for you. All this for just \$23.00 including tax and service. It's a Tropical happening! Banquet tickets should be reserved by Monday, Jan. 8. *Reserve your banquet now!* Seating is limited and sure to sell out!

Robert Heinlein Memorial Blood Drive: January is a critical time in South Florida for donating blood, so save up the red stuff! We will have books & buttons for those who give the gift of life.

Charity Auction: To benefit a local literacy organization. We will need donations, so bring your collectibles. All donations to the auction are tax-deductible. And your check book, for that item you've discovered you can't live without.

The DoubleTree Guest Quarters Suites: Located on Cypress Creek Road, just west of I-95 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The \$79.00 per night, Single/Double, in January, in South Florida, is a bargain. For that price you get a two-room suite, a bedroom plus a sitting room which includes a wet bar, microwave oven, coffee maker, refrigerator, t.v. with built-in VCR, and a sofa with pull-out sleeper. Not to mention the freshly made DoubleTree Chocolate Chip Cookies. Rooms are going fast, so make your reservations now!

Art Show: Panels: 4' x 8' = \$20.00

4' x 4' = \$12.00

Tables: 2.5' x 6' = \$20.00 // 1/2 table = \$12.00

Dealer's Tables: \$45.00 (includes 1 membership)

Banquet: \$23.00

Membership: \$21.00 to Dec. 15; \$25.00 at the door.

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Name(s): _____

Address: _____ Phone Number() _____

City: _____ St.: _____ Zip code: _____

Enclosed is a check/money order for \$ _____.

It is for: _____ Memberships _____ Banquet tickets _____ Dealers Tables
_____ Art Show Panels.

Make checks payable to SFSFS and mail to: P. O. Box 70143, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-0143

YAGTB:

- ___ The Grinch made me do it.
- ___ This was supposed to be your X-mas present. The Snow Beast ate the \$5 million dollars I was going to send originally.
- ___ You contributed something! Please do it again.
- ___ Trade for your zine or whatever.
- ___ My pet cat or gremlin typed your name into the address database.
- ___ Editor's Perogative.
- ___ We had a few extra Shuttles kicking around and wanted to litter your doorstep with one of them.

The South Florida Science Fiction Society is a 501(C)3, not-for-profit, educational organization. The views and opinions expressed in the *Shuttle* are those of its writers, editors and staff only. Anyone else who would like to express his or her very valued and highly worthwhile opinion is encouraged to do so. Next month's editor will be Shirlene Ananayo. Thanks to all present and past contributors; without you, this wonderful publicaton could not continue.

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