

Y E S O N O F T H E W S F A J O U R N A L

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In Brief --

Received the Sept-Oct '71 column the same time as this one, so will probably publish it in SOTWJ #54 or 55. Am expecting the Nov-Dec '71 column and 1971 wrap-up in time for the DISCLAVE issue. Don't know what Richard's plans are for future (1972) columns--hope they can start coming monthly, and more frequently, so they can be kept more up to date.

Material (lots of it) still needed for DISCLAVE issue--stories, poems, art (especially full-page), articles, reviews, LoC's, you name it....

Does anyone know the current address of Harley Billings?

TWJ #79 still at publisher's; no word yet on when it'll be ready....

More on MINICON 6 (covered briefly in SOTWJ #51). On tap at the con, according to their 12-page (digest-size, ditto--with offset covers) Progress Report #2 (cover by Boxell), will be a bookdealers' & hucksters' room, an art show, an auction, a Program Book containing a special Minnesota Fan-artists' collaboration, a Star Trek costume contest, a baronial feast of the Soc. for Creative Anachronism, a Pro Writers' Contest, Round Table Discussion, films ("New Horizons in Science Fiction"--seminar discussion led by Harlan Ellison; "The Day The Earth Stood Still"), parties, etc. (See SOTWJ #51 for additional info.)

According to THE SUNDAY STAR's TV Magazine for 26 Mar '72, "Star Trek" may be reborn. In an article by Jerry Buck, it is noted that NBC has asked Gene Roddenberry to do a "Star Trek Returns" movie, which would also serve as a pilot for a new series. Wonder how much of the original cast and setting will be retained?

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-- DLM

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TO:

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL

(dissecting)
 ^ THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Operational Procedures

Supervised by

Richard Delap

Ah, the summer doldrums are here again. Not quite so down as some years, perhaps, but nonetheless it seems that summer carries with it a sense of mild unconcern. (The editors, oddly enough, must get this summer depression during the winter, since that's when they edit the summer issues, I assume.)

Actually, it's not really as bad as I make it sound. There are a few nice stories these months, but overall there just seems to be a sense of idle time-killing that generates little excitement. Or, then, maybe it's just me...?

Perhaps I'm expecting too much but I keep hoping for something revolutionary. I realize that revolutionary things don't seem to be in the social climate this year, except conversationally, but the magazines need some new blood pumped into those old veins. And that I think sums it up. The field is becoming much too stagnant. The new novels have been doing little to inject new blood--if anything, the novels on the whole are getting progressively worse and publishers seem intent on publishing nothing but the oldest of old ideas reworked for the umpteenth time. Most of the better short fiction is ending up in "original" anthologies, and non-fiction related to the sf field seems to find more enthusiasm with the book readers than with the magazine audience.

With all the talk of media revolution, it does seem odd that sf magazines which should be the first with new ideas and presentations are falling further and further behind.

Will Marshall McLuhan please stand up and make a comment?

Magazines for JULY-AUGUST, 1971

AMAZING STORIES and FANTASTIC:

These two magazines have now put their covers on heavier stock and one may be happy to note that this helps prevent that worn and crushed look the magazines had on the news-stand even when they were newly arrived. This is all fine and good for outer image and may or may not tack up a few extra sales. Content-wise, there is little change. White still seems to have small ability to keep the level of his short fiction at more than mediocre. Editorials and articles continue to be reasonably good at times, though White amusingly puts his foot in his mouth in the August FANTASTIC by lauding his new printer for less typos, while his praise for the current "superior" issue is packed into a compound sentence that never concludes...because of a printer's error. Better luck next time, Ted....

AMAZING STORIES -- JULY:

Serial:

The Second Trip (part one) -- Robert Silverberg.

Short Stories:

The Peacefulness of Vivyan -- James Tiptree, Jr.

Tiptree has produced some fine psychological gambits in many of his previous sf stories, but this one about a quiet and loving young man who is an unknowing pawn in games of extraterrestrial intrigue has little of the subtlety and sly insight he's displayed previously. Instead he opts for a weak and cliché-ridden background to prop up attempts at foreground emotionalism. Needless to say, it fizzles.

Bohassian Learns -- William Rotsler.

Rotsler briefly draws the reader into the world of a new baby, through the painful ordeal of birth and the first sensations from the outside world, including the horrified reactions of the hospital staff who immediately find

themselves at the mercy of the child's mutant mental power. Short and essentially plotless, the story is a none-too-interesting treatment of a familiar sf theme.

Border Town -- Pg Wyal.

A beautiful-ugly farce about dishonor among thieves. Wyal once again proves his mastery of the elements of top-notch satire with a polished exaggeration of some unsavory aspects of reality--in this case a "border town" of the future which beneath all the technological gimmickry differs not a whit from today's and yesterday's examples. The word games are funny (he does some delightful things with proper names!) and the characters equally so without once slipping on this treacherously slippery material. Read this one.

The Worlds of Monty Willson -- William F. Nolan.

I can't think what either Nolan or White thought was clever about this parallel worlds thing in which a man shunts from one world to another, with the twist ending suggesting that he can replace himself infinitely. The plot holds no surprise and is given no startling or unusual handling; it is, in fact, depressingly routine.

Reprint:

The Lost Language (1933) -- David H. Keller, M.D.

Science:

How to Build a Solar System -- Greg Benford.

FANTASTIC -- AUGUST:

Serial:

The Byworlder (conclusion) -- Poul Anderson.

Short Stories:

The Joke -- David R. Bunch.

The quality of Bunch's Moderan series continues to fluctuate--a few stories have come close to really excellent, few have been really poor, and the majority fall somewhere between the poles. The metal/flesh humans of Bunch's satiric future are here used to explore the dimensions of greed and, as the tie-in with the title, the dimensions of death. I found it a bit too obvious for my tastes, but some may prefer it to Bunch's more hair-splitting philosophies.

Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus -- Eugene Stover.

There has been so much recent discussion on the possibility of "different" levels of intelligence between the races (with almost uncountable reasons for this alleged difference) that one finds it very difficult to seriously regard this story which uses the theme as backdrop to what turns out to be something of another class. It's as slick and polished as a school apple, but like with the apple, the intentions easily fall suspect to intimations of questionable sincerity.

Sentence in Binary Code -- Christopher Priest.

As far as I can tell there seems no point to this exercise other than the use of an idea which Priest found interesting--namely, imprisoning those who buck the system (his hero is "politically undesirable", which is as far as the explanation goes) by implanting their intellects in a computer. It's so damned vague that the reader has no place to stand, which decisively invalidates the drama of the concluding escape.

Pulse -- James Benford.

...And yet another story in which the mood is invoked with precision but at the expense of plot clarity. Still, the mood may well be enough for those who find themselves drawn into a woman's "dream" moon of desert and weird plant-trees and, along with the woman's therapist, find it a cunningly-laid trap. Mildly interesting.

Reprint:

The Electrical Butterflies (1942) -- Ross Rocklynne.

Articles:

Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers: Eldritch Yankee Gentleman (part one) -- L. Sprague de Camp.
Science Fiction in Dimension: A New Paradigm (part one) -- Alexei Panshin.

* * * *

ANALOG:

With the exception of a couple of stories, the fiction this time is uniformly awful. Then, strangely enough, to make up for the lack Campbell offers two editorials which are generally superior to almost all of his recent work. The July issue has his overstated and possibly inaccurate statements on the current Eco-surge, but they are quite a nice change-of-viewpoint from much of what we're reading lately. The August issue features the editor's fine factual speculation re neutron stars, collapsars, black galaxies, etc., in a very thoughtful and entertaining piece of work. P. Schuyler Miller's book reviews continue to be uniformly good, and there's a very different sort of "science fact" article about the most expensive gameboard in existence (disregarding, of course, real-life military gamesmanship which uses entire countries as playing fields).

JULY:

Serial:

The Outposter (conclusion) -- Gordon R. Dickson.

Short Novel:

Zero Sum -- Joseph P. Martino.

I am not in the least sympathetic with the hawkish war propaganda which has become a staple for Martino--to my mind one of the worst writers ANALOG has ever featured--but this slant of writing could at least be tolerable as a contemplation of differing (or like) attitudes if one felt impelled to continue reading on the strength of the story. But Martino plots an idiot course through a spacewar featuring humans vs. the alien Khorilani in a preposterous misunderstanding of tactics. The gross social analogies are as annoying as the easy statements used as cover-up of the author's laziness. For example, a minor character capsulizes the relations between the foes in a short discussion that jumps from "essentially no contact between the races" to "the current war" without once being interrupted for an explanation of the reasons behind the changing relationship (later, of course, written as a "brilliant" revelation offered by the story's otherwise very boring hero). Worse of all, it is a short story padded out to read like 40-page version of Chicken Little...and at one page that story was plenty long enough. Bloody awful.

Novelette:

A Little Edge -- S. Kye Boulton.

An old-fashioned air battle may stir the hearts of surviving WWI air aces, but changing the setting to a planet of a double sun, making the enemy ferocious birdmen-cannibals, and riddling the threadbare plot with nauseating clichés which aren't in the least disguised by the "different" setting is not my idea of an even minimally interesting approach. The author--whose byline is surely a pseudonym for someone who is or should be embarrassed by such drivel--seems to be battling to steal the worst author title from Martino; and I'll have to admit that this issue produces a neck-and-neck race. Incredible, absolute crap.

Short Stories:

The Man with the Anteater -- F. Paul Wilson.

An sf fairy tale with a slant on labor, economics, and utopia, which tries very hard to breeze its way through an unwieldy blend of hardheaded business realism and "the little man who made good" fantasy. (Well, yes, it's a very Amerikan story.) I'll give the author credit for trying, and if Campbell's standards for humor didn't dip so low he might have demanded a rewrite that would have spelled success. As it stands the story simply has the best of neither approach. Fair.

Poltergeist -- James H. Schmitz.

A new Telzey story here, in which the psi-powered heroine takes a restful weekend away from college and finds herself at the mercy of a frightened stranger and his "poltergeist". The story becomes less and less plausible when Schmitz drags in a "Bridey Murphy" angle, and the whole thing finally gets just plain silly. I'm not really tired of Telzey but I'm awfully tired of these thin puffs that pass for plots.

Science:

Spacewar -- Albert W. Kuhfeld.

AUGUST:

Serial:

The Lion Game (part one) -- James H. Schmitz.

Novelettes:

Analog -- Grant D. Callin.

What might have been snapped off quickly as a short, light story becomes under Callin's guidance an endless and unendurable mess of detail on the inception, development and final outcome of building a computer analog of the human nervous system. There are no characters--unless you would call the men who spend pages and pages spouting theory-in-dialogue "characters"--and the story has no effect beyond the contrived shock of the moment when the computer is turned on, a trick any sf reader of even minor involvement can smell a mile away. Dreadful.

A Little Knowledge -- Poul Anderson.

Three men, out to make their fortune by villainous methods (unapproved, to be sure, by the Polesotechnic League) begin their dastardly deeds by kidnapping Witweat, a flowery-spoken, effeminate (by human standards) pilot of a race only beginning their emergence into the space age. Anderson spices things up with some well-injected science about a giant-sized planet named Paradox, and his wheeler-dealer antics to place his characters on this world are fun to follow. But in the end the humor, sadly sounding like an audacious patronization of Gay Lib, turns sour and tasteless. Anderson has been writing long enough to recognize such dangers; he should know better.

Dummyblind -- Douglas Fulthorpe.

For the most part this is concerned with the efforts of one man, a war hero, to put an enemy command post out of commission. With the aid of several dummyblinds to draw enemy fire, he creeps and crawls and fights his way closer to his target, only to find an unexpected confusion as he reaches his goal. Fulthorpe only hints at the background of this odd future war, but the hints are provocative and add interest for those who may find the extended battle a bit wearying. Ok of type.

Short Stories:

Letter from an Unknown Genius -- Colin Kapp.

When a mysterious letter containing the equations to produce a power far beyond nuclear fusion leads to a blowup which turns a desert to glass, the search for the obviously brilliant letter-writer engenders a meeting between a female scientist, an innocent go-between, and an abbe in a secluded monastery. As the three discuss the possibilities both of the power and its discoverer, Kapp dangles them carefully before an effectively moody background. The conclusion is not as convincing as Agatha Christie made it years ago in her precedent-setting novel, but any quibbles about cribbing do not completely dispel the nice buildup.

Ratman -- F. Paul Wilson.

"Ratman" is Sam Orzechowski, a part-time Federation snooper whose cover is his trade--namely, clearing out pesky space rats from the spaceports of various worlds by using specially-trained rats to hunt out their wild brethren. The rats also come in handy when flushing out a spy, and while Wilson's plot action is quite brisk the clichés are so painfully predictable that all the rats in Hamelin couldn't putt it from the danger zone.

Science:The Imbrium Impact -- Nils Aall Barricelli.Toological Electronics -- G. Harry Stine.

* * * *

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION:

F&SF has a new look on the interior with new and cleaner typeface--all set by computer according to the editor's notes--and it adds 3,000 words to each issue. (A price jump is coming later but let's not spoil the pretty picture now.) There's a wide range of subjects in these issues, with the general level of entertainment value and good writing averaging out well. I'm still very high on Asimov's monthly science columns, ranging this time from Shakespeare to mathematics (the latter a bit too much for my denseness regarding math, but as close to understandable here as anyone could make it), while the remaining features still hold top position over any like columns in the other sf magazines.

JULY:Serial:Jack of Shadows (part one) -- Roger Zelazny.Novelette:New Boy -- Maureen Bryan Exter.

Little here plotwise in the way of originality or true inventiveness, but as the editor states, it "comes refreshingly alive under Mrs. Exter's sure direction". The "new boy" is a quiet and obviously brilliant child who has a profound psychological effect on his schoolteacher and others who come into close contact with him. Exter writes simply and well, and though all her sympathetic characters have a tendency to sound very much alike, their bright, caustic and funny dialogue is still entertaining. No, not an original story, perhaps, but quite readable in spite of that.

Short Stories:Sweet Forest Maid -- Gene Wolfe.

When all the brouhaha about the currently exploited themes of alienation and loneliness in an overcrowded world has faded away, and presently popular but all too often empty authors have justly died in the light of time, there will remain a few intimate and very human glimpses which compound bitter humor and understated compassion into a true picture of these oft-misused ideas. Wolfe's story compactly says it all in a few paragraphs, and says it very, very well indeed.

For a Foggy Night -- Larry Niven.

Multiple world lines--uncountable alternate worlds resulting from every decision ever made--has proven an sf staple which many writers (including Niven himself) have used previously. The saturation point seems to be near for this theme, however, for while Niven's tale of a man bouncing between worlds in a foggy San Francisco night is smoothly light, it offers exactly the same thing we've seen so often. Quite negligible.

Un-inventor Wanted -- Michael Gillgannon.

A down-and-almost-out man applies for the job of the title, finding he is asked to work for an organization dedicated to preserving the status quo by eliminating all progressive inventions. The story almost works, thanks to the author's wry way with satiric dialogue, but the humor comes on a little too heavy to carry the sting it should have. Like Niven's story, it just isn't original enough.

The Palatski Man -- Stuart Dybek.

Here's an unusual, highly symbolic story of childhood with the evocative descriptive power of the best of Bradbury but with a haunting sadness that oddly enough bears little relation to Bradbury's more common nostalgia. On the surface it portrays the world of children matter-of-factly, their innermost emotions in dealing with events which seem unusual but not really fantasy. And as

the line between childhood and maturity cuts through of a sudden, so then does the line between fantasy and reality blur out into an indistinct haze. A strange story, but a good one.

Science:

Bill and I -- Isaac Asimov.

AUGUST:

Serial:

Jack of Shadows (conclusion) -- Roger Zelazny.

Novelette:

Born to Exile -- Phyllis Eisenstein.

Alaric, a young minstrel, journeys to the castle to which his late teacher had some day hoped to return before his sudden murder. Alaric quickly becomes a welcome member of the court retinue, but must always take care never to reveal his secret power of teleportation since the King's witchfinder is sharp-eyed and eager to burn anyone who might threaten his position. But all this is background trimming for a romantic and pleasant story of young love as Alaric and the Princess Solinde find no use for the class barriers intended to keep them apart. Mrs. Eisenstein writes with an obvious delight that comes across strongly to the reader and makes a delightful story of simple materials. Quite good.

Short Stories:

A Slight Miscalculation -- Ben Bova.

The title tells the catch in this funny little tale of a stubborn mathematician who predicts a quake along the San Andreas fault "next Thursday". As the population scurries to the East, the man remains behind trying to find why his lab's computer disagrees with his calculations; and Bova aims for a concluding bellylaugh and hits the mark squarely.

A Ring of Black Coral -- D. R. Sherman.

Oh Dear, another of those nicely-written, nicely-detailed (here on underwater equipment used in shark hunting) and basically boring things that try to cover emptiness with murky symbolism. I got all the way to where the "mermaid" begins to pull the hunter deep into the ocean before I decided that Sherman really wasn't after fresh game. And he wasn't.

The Pied Potter -- A. Bertram Chandler.

A writer, a scientist, a secret and possibly dangerous lab experiment, hashish, and that familiar old Chandler standby, rats, thousands of them, living in a "Hell painted by Hieronymus Bosch". It's nearly impossible to take it seriously and term it "frightening", as does the author, but taken as a fast, fun diversion of the moment it fills the bill moderately well.

A Rag, a Bone -- Patrick Meadows.

We've had stories before in which mankind turns primitive in a ravaged world and practices such shuddery deeds as cannibalism. But Meadows has given this some thought and brought in a reasonable and even more shuddery extrapolation--a major source of food may be the bodies of those frozen for possible future revival. Even more interesting and upsetting are the psychological ruses these people practice to avoid the burden of guilt. Unpleasant but well-done.

An Occurrence on the Mars-to-Earth Run #128, at Approximately 2400 Hours, 21 January 2038 -- William Dean.

When several men are spewed out from their spaceship just above Earth's atmosphere, their fate seems sealed as they drift toward a cinderous death with no hope of rescue. Again I must quote the editor who found the sudden twist ending "something quite different"--though don't ask me why, as this ending has been around forever and a day and Dean's ambiguity about "what happens after" doesn't add much as far as I'm concerned.

Verse:

Loups-Garous -- Avram Davidson.

Science:

Prime Quality -- Isaac Asimov.

GALAXY and IF:

I still have trouble coming up with anything to say about these two magazines, which stand or fall by their fiction alone and seldom feature any "extras" other than the regular book columns of Lester del Rey for IF and Algis Budrys for GALAXY, the latter with a fine discussion here of the strengths and weaknesses of one of sf's more dazzling new authors, D.G. Compton. Jack Gaughan continues to handle all the artwork with amazing speed and dexterity, but for some reason the efforts of everyone fall short of making an "image" which can bypass the fictional content. One must therefore watch for favorite authors on the cover and title page and buy in the hopes of snagging their better efforts...and your chances of getting soothed or burned remain steadily at about 50/50.

GALAXY -- JULY-AUGUST:Serial:

The Moon Children (part one) -- Jack Williamson.

Novella:

A Congregation of Vapors -- William T. Powers.

Fifteen or so years ago we were getting our fill of fallout shelter stories with people imprisoned inside or out, dying or living at the enemy's (and author's) whim. Now with pollution the "scare" subject of the times, authors have been polishing up those old stories with a minor rewrite to fit the new mold. Powers' story is strictly another shelter epic--no bombs this time but instead a country smothered in its noxious industrial fumes. There are some extremely silly sequences--the President's "emergency fact-finding session", for instance, which comes off as very tepid black humor--balanced against some moderately good characterizations and a few effective moments as the crew of a survey control center in Chicago meets the demands of being the only communications link in a desperate country. But the pace is too lethargic and what little suspense is generated is far more quickly dissipated than are the deadly vapors. With no help from frequent dangling loose ends, the rather upbeat ending (only 7 to 9 tenths of the people die, do that's upbeat, isn't it?) might easily be likened to the parting of the Red Sea--it simply isn't nice to kill off all God's chosen people (Amerikans, Amerikans!), no matter how stupid they've been beforehand. Have your respirator handy if you read this--you'll need an occasional breath of fresh air.

Novelette:

All the Way Up, All the Way Down -- Robert Silverberg.

The final published story (but not chronologically final) in the urban monad series, about a depressing but fascinating future of supertall and superpopulated cities, has the usual plethora of fine detail but suffers a bit in the overuse of them--specifically the too-involved descriptions of a futuristic audiovisual rock concert which recklessly indulges in silly Ellisonisms ("pulling down suns and chewing them up"). This in addition to a plot which is mainly filler detail makes it rather a rough go for those not already familiar with the previous stories, while those who like the series may find it of interest for its very well done sexual episodes and texturizing details of urban life.

Short Stories:

All But the Words -- R. A. Lafferty.

Once more Lafferty tells of Gregory Smirnov and his band of mad experimenters--including a wacky new member, Energine Eimer--who this time are out to establish communications with an alien race. But established "rapport" takes a twisted turn when the alien comes to Earth and makes a speech...without end. Normalcy is not relative to these stories, but for those who enjoy Lafferty's humor (as I do) this one is bound to be fun. Good.

The Phylogenetic Factor -- Ernest Hill.

Will machines hurry man into the future or will the point be reached where they instead help man to recapture something lost in the long-ago? Hill opts for the latter but comes up with only shadows of characters who never sound

quite real for being suppressed in stereotype roles that fight them all the way. I wish Hill had tried a bit harder on this one; it just might have worked.

The S.B. Notations -- J. K. Swearingen.

A new world settlement story with a clever handling, Swearingen tells it as the diary notations of a young girl whose remarkable intelligence has surpassed her primitive, violent environment. She cannot yet obtain a "civilized" view because of cultural surroundings that include cannibalism (lots of people-eating these months, have you noticed?), and her potential is threatened when an investigation squad arrives and is aghast at the conditions of her world. The ending makes a nice ironic point about prejudice and, with the lead-in help of binary numbers clues, meshes its contrasts nicely.

Duckworth and the Sound Probe -- Larry Eisenberg.

An uninspired Duckworth story in which the brilliant but dizzy scientist finds a way to pick up sounds from the past, leading to the expected complications from those who want to try some retrospective political spying. There's also some details about Duckworth's new wife's ability (actually, inability) to cook, thrown in mostly for humor but much too weak to buoy the rest. Fair.

IF -- JULY-AUGUST:

Serial:

The Fabulous Riverboat (conclusion) -- Philip José Farmer.

Novella:

Arnten of Ultima Thule -- Avram Davidson.

Science fiction or fantasy? With Davidson it's hard to say for sure and in the end really quite unnecessary to make any distinctions if one is willing to simply tag along for an energetic ride. The world of Thule is a sort of never-never land (with vague hints throughout that it might be another planet) in which one follows the adventures of young Arnten, from his childhood agonies of being different (dark and hairy among a blonde people), through his search for his long-missing "bear" father. The plot holds few surprises but the adventures, for all their basic familiarity, are still fun because Davidson knows exactly how to make them fun. The writing style is peculiarly mannered (even grating until one gets used to it), but in the end it produces the desired effect of creating a special aura that accepts such things as nains, mandrakes, a plague of rust, a mad king, and "witchery" (primitive science?) with gusto and wonder. Good fun.

Novelettes:

Occam's Scalpel -- Theodore Sturgeon.

It's difficult to condense this plot down to a few words, but the base of the whole construct is concerned with an old man whose wealth and power is the controlling element of much of what happens in our world. (No, his name isn't Howard Hughes!) The complications develop as the old man nears death and others take an interest in what will happen when his control vanishes. As might be expected, Sturgeon writes briskly and convincingly, carrying the reader through by building curiosity to an intense pitch. Yet all the author's skill cannot dampen the utter preposterousness of the concluding revelations--a hidden alien, terraforming, a hoax, and the Great Lie as possible truth all play a part--leaving the reader who takes the opening premise seriously feeling pretty much of a fool. Really, Sturgeon, was all that necessary?

To Seek Another -- James A. Gotaas.

"Corny" is the first word that comes to mind in reaction to this sf quasi-mystery that begins as a tame but mildly interesting search for a murderer on one of man's future far-flung worlds. But it takes a bad turn when the author starts hauling in all sorts of junk--a "morphlizard", the memories of the investigator (enough to drive him mad if loosed), clones...and I'm sure there's a kitchen sink in there somewhere if you look for it, at least a symbolical one. Skip it.

Short Story:Boomer Flats -- R. A. Lafferty.

Three eminent scientists (or Magis) arrive in the mud-caked town (or what passes as a town) of Boomer Flats to seek out the ABSM's (Abominable Snowmen, giants, missing links, whatever). And they don't find them, not because they don't know what they're looking for but because their search becomes something quite different. The cockeyed setting and characters only emphasize the delightful rationale behind Lafferty's intense efforts to show his readers the beauty of being bowled over by common sense, whatever crazy form it takes. Bright, sassy, and very good.

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THE CLUB CIRCUIT: News, etc.

THE SOCIETY FOR CREATIVE ANACHRONISM, INC.

(SCA)

POBox 1162, Berkeley, CA 94701. Membership: General (\$1 or more donation per year; receive Membership Card); Subscribers (\$3/yr; receive four issues of Society's 'zine, TOURNAMENTS ILLUMINATED, plus notice of all Society-sponsored events in the Kingdom in which they dwell); Subscribing Members (\$4 or more per year; sub, notices, and Membership Card); Contributing Members (\$15 or more per year; sub, notices, Membership Card, listed on Annual List of Contributors); Patrons (\$50 or more/yr.; sub, notices, Membership Cars, incl. on Annual List of Patrons, entitled to Special Privileges); all donations (\$1 for General Members, anything in excess of \$3 for others) are tax deductible. ##### Founded in Berkeley in 1966, it is "a non-profit, educational corporation with, at last count, thirty-five branches in the United States . . . Each of these branches sponsors Tournaments, Revels, and other activities which are educational in concept and diverse in accomplishment. Tournies and Revels, the primary and secondary social gatherings of the Society, are free and open to anyone who is willing to take the time and trouble to don pre-seventeenth century garb. . . The Society's prime concern is with the Western European Middle Ages and Renaissance . . . At present, the Society has chartered four Kingdoms: The West, The East, The Middle, and Atenveldt; which pretty well divides up the North American continent, plus a number of islands. Within these Kingdoms there are many subdivisions: Principalities, Baronies, provinces, cantons. . . Each Kingdom is ruled by a King, and his Lady, the Queen. The King is chosen periodically, by armed combat with Medieval Weapons, in a Tournament. . . The Corporation itself has a Board of Directors, who make the necessary policy decisions for the Society as a whole, and a staff of officers who implement these decisions. . . Society events can feature music, dancing, plays, poetry, puppet shows, magicians, mummers, medieval arts and crafts, games, broadsword and shield combat, hawking, tilting at the ring. . . Between events, the local branches may sponsor classes in the above arts and sciences . . ."

TOURNAMENTS ILLUMINATED #19 (Vol. 5, No. 2) (Summer, 1971) -- 56 pp., incl. cover; 50¢ ea.; quarterly; mimeo. Society notes; on Bransles (with verse & music); "The Lay of Sir Julian" (1st prize, Epic category); "Of Tourneying"; on Society ideals; on "Fourteenth & Fifteenth Century Men's Hats"; "A Viking Helm"; more prize-winning poems; "The Tourney Chest"; news from the Kingdoms & regions; Honors List; lettercol; listing of "Present & Possible Branches".

#20 (Vol. 5, No. 3) (Autumn, 1971) -- 65 pp., incl. cover. Society notes & business; on "The College of Bards"; on "Sovereign Marshalling"; "Come to Grips With Your Weapons"; "An Bibliography on Clothing"; "The Golden Age of Chess"; "An Article on Mead"; poetry; "Medieval Camp"; Pavanne (w/music); an annotated listing of recordings of medieval & renaissance dance music; on the "Barbarian"; lettercol; news from the Kingdoms, etc.; listing of SCA branches.

Opinion -- Mostly about and how-to, with ample illustrations/diagrams. Highly recommended to all those with even a latent interest in things Medieval.