

SPEED OF DARK 20

1. Instant Hugos

As a combined effort to blab the latest news, and provide a hook for the following essay, these are the winners of the Hugos given by SeaCon:

NOVEL: DREAMSNAKE

NOVELLA: Persistence of Vision

NOVELLETTE: Hunter's Moon

SHORT STORY: Cassandra

DRAMATIC: Superman

Editor: Bova

Pro Artist: Vincent Di Fate

Fanzine (hah): SFR

Fanwriter: Bob Shaw

Fanartist: Bill Rotsler

Non-Hugos:

Campbell Award: Stephen Donaldson

Gandalf/Novel: WHITE DRAGON

Gandalf/Grandmaster: Le Guin

Graham England, editor of the SeaCon daily newzine, conried me into researching the origin of the Hugos for a brief essay. Evidently Graham didn't realize that he could page through WEALTH OF FABLE for a quick plagiarism job; in fact I'd have done it myself but for the easy convenience of the original research material in Bruce Pelz' collection. I had a lot of fun digging through old PRs and newzines. I even unearthed facts contradicting an assumption abroad in fandom, which I've frequently repeated myself.

It is untrue that Americans have never defeated an overseas bid. San Francisco won the right to host the 1954 worldcon by beating London and Cleveland. London did come back to host the 1957 edition.

Meanwhile, here's what I came up with for Graham, combining original sources with histories by Warner, Franson and DeVore.

H IS FOR ROCKET

By Mike Glyer - 14974 Osceola
St., Sylmar CA 91342,
August, 1979

The September 9, 1953 issue of
FANTASY TIMES, a mimeographed

newzine, deemed PHILCON 2 "a dull success". Yet Philcon 2 originated the awards which have since become the highlight of annual worldcon programming.

The Hugos have their genesis in controversy, and have seldom been without it during their existence. None of the early efforts to create awards for the field, such as the "Committee of Awards and Commendation for Meritorious Work in the Production of Science, Fantasy and Weird Fiction", date 1948, was able to overcome its critics and unify fans with pros behind a given awards concept.

Four British fans, Leslie Flood, John Benyon Harris, G. Ken Chapman and Frank Cooper did create the "Annual Award for Artistic Merit in Creative Fantasy," popularly called the International Fantasy Award in 1951. There was no direct connection between the IFA and the Hugos. The Hugos are markedly different in diversity of categories and method of selection. Yet it remains of interest that the IFA trophy, modeled on Bonestell's cover for the 2/51 GALAXY, consisted of a spaceship 20 inches high. There was one for fiction, chromium plated on an oak base, and one for nonfiction, bronzed on a mahogany base. The IFA rocket had stubby wings in addition to wide tailfins, and in a photo its resemblance to the Hugo is no greater than the fact that any chrome rocket on a plinth looks like any other. No writer on the period I have examined (see bibliography) states that the Hugo was directly inspired by the IFA, or that the Hugo rocket resulted from seeing an IFA trophy. It's something that ought to be easy enough to answer, given that most of the fans involved are still around.

Whatever the case, the design of the trophy is the only point of similarity between the two awards. Unlike the IFA, which was selected by an international panel of pros (and last given in 1957), the "Achievement Awards" created for Philcon 2 were selected by popular vote of its membership. The idea of a nominating ballot was not introduced until 1959, nor did a large number of voters participate in the early Hugo selections. Judging by Warner's statements in WEALTH OF FABLE, the votes were cast for such a diverse group of contenders that the winners had only a fistful of votes and no award at all could be given in a couple planned categories (for example, no short story award). The original winners were: Willy Ley (Excellence in Fact Articles), Philip Jose Farmer (Best New SF Author or Artist), Forrest J. Ackerman (#1 Fan Personality), THE DEMOLISHED MAN (Best Novel), ASTOUNDING/GALAXY (tied: Best Professional Magazine), Virgil Finlay (Best Pro Artist).

Philcon 2 neither adopted a nickname for its awards, nor described the physical trophy in any of its publications. Warner credits Bob Madle for naming the awards after Gernsback, and Hal Lynch for doing the spadework for the Hugos. It wasn't until two years later that Clevention's PR 2, in stating that they'd keep the statuette design used by Philcon 2, implied that the first Hugos were rocket-shaped. Philcon 2 assumed that succeeding committees would keep the awards going. But SFCon the following year completely ignored them. It fell to the 1955 Clevention to revive the Hugos.

"Space precludes telling you the entire story of how these Hugos came into being," PR4 tantalizes historians, "but suffice it to say

that during the process, two of the committee were nearly jailed, many heartbreaking setbacks were surmounted (these include both financial and technical ones) and that there were two or three times when the committee almost threw in the towel." A photo shows Noreen Falasca, co-chairman, virtually dwarfed by the bulky award. The 1955 Hugos consisted of a solid bronze, double-plated chrome rocket 13½ inches tall on a mahogany base 6½ inches high, weighing a total of 9 pounds. The committee underwrote the expense of a pattern mold, allowing Ben Jason, creator and caster of the first Hugos, to continue manufacturing them for years afterwards.

(Source publications courtesy of Bruce Pelz' collection:)

Fantasy Times #185

Philcon 2 Program Book

Clevention Progress Reports #2, #4

A HISTORY OF THE HUGO, NEBULA AND INTERNATIONAL FANTASY AWARDS, by

Don Franson and Howard De Vore

A WEALTH OF FABLE, Harry Warner Jr.

2. Recreational Carnage

"'Right now I'm going to teach you how to use a sword,' Lancelot was saying. The interest of the recruits revived..."

As did mine. Randomly opening David Drake's DRAGON LORD to page 21 I found that line so piqued my interest that I read the book cover to cover on a Saturday afternoon. If you pick up this Berkeley-Putnam hardback for \$10.95, you'll quickly discover that Drake has done a masterful job melding military history, archeology, Arthurian legend and supernatural fantasy. Drake superbly accomplishes the contrast of ancient legend with the everyday cynicism of two mercenary soldiers.

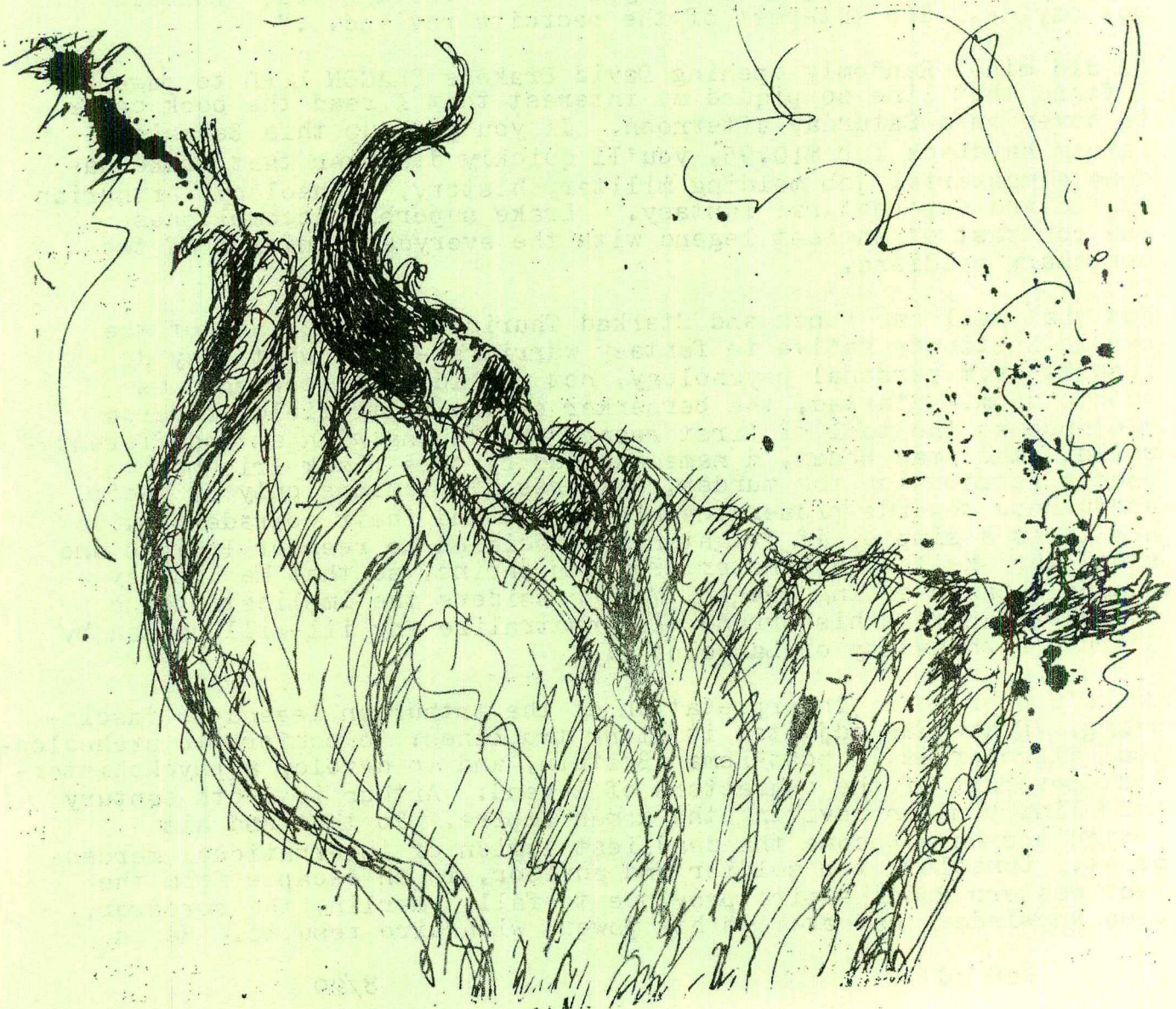
Not that Mael mac Ronan and Starkad Thurid's son lack any of the heroic instincts native to fantasy warriors -- but what they do results from personal psychology, not morbidity whitewashed as mythic doom. Starkad, the berserker of the battlefield, regards violence as the tool of first resort in dealing with an indifferent world. Mael mac Ronan, a name assumed by this black Irishman to escape retribution for murder, measures his actions only by their usefulness towards preserving his friend and their comradeship. To him it is a simple, if frightening, decision to reenter Ireland and steal the skull of a monster from its shrine, so that Merlin may summon a Saxon-eating dragon. Mael considers the implications no farther than that his errand will neutralize any ill-will caused by Starkad's thrashing of Lancelot (!)

Drake's unorthodox interpretation of the Arthurian legend is fascinating. Drake has adjusted it along two lines: to conform to archeological discoveries in post-Roman Britain, and to develop a psychohistorical portrait of the characters of legend. Arthur is a 6th century Mussolini bent on reviving the Roman Empire. To that end his Companions have become the deadliest legion of international mercenaries. Lancelot, top soldier and advisor, is an escapee from the last Western Roman empire province to fall. Merlin, the sorcerer, uses knowledge that exceeds his power with dire results. He is

one of the few remaining who can summon the old powers largely suppressed by Christianity.

Readers of John Keegan's history of warfare, *THE FACE OF BATTLE*, should find *THE DRAGON LORD* equally fascinating. Drake's expertise includes military history, and the book is full of unobtrusive commentaries on equipment and tactics. Drake is about as far as you can get from Hollywood knights in iron plate ramming each other in the lists with telephone poles. As a result, the equally well-written fantasy elements have added impact.

I would warn that *DRAGON LORD* faithfully relates the effect of using the weapons so carefully described -- consequently there is immense gore, and perhaps some of the inevitable morbidity required to sell fantasy ever since Moorcock hit the market. There is witchcraft, and some heterosexuality to insure that no one mistakes the heroes for gay blades. Provided you are not the kind of reader put off by such frankness, *DRAGON LORD* should give you one of the best reads of this or any other year in fantasy.



3. Corflu Barrel Philosophy

Running FILE 770 on a day-to-day basis results in such a preoccupation with detail, the credibility of individual news items, the disposition of individual subscriptions, that I have to make a conscious effort a couple of times each year to take my bearings.

One result of the most recent stocktaking was the sudden discovery that the zine is solvent. This was quite a surprise, since my latest examination of affairs was sparked by the belief that the zine's financial base (ie, renewed subs) was rapidly declining. How to explain? Ostensibly I keep two lists: the master mailing labels, and the chronological expiration and overseas trade list. It is my inflexible rule that no payments for F770 are separated from their cover letters and envelopes until I have entered the appropriate data on a mailing label. For cash received at Lasfs and cons it is admittedly less airtight, but after two years of handling things this way I've had only two or three reported errors. In theory, I simultaneously enter the subscriber's name and address on the appropriate sheet for the last issue they will receive. This list is my base for accounting -- how much theoretical budget I have per issue, what the renewal rate is, and what individuals (special to me for one reason or another) think of the zine in terms of whether they renew and for how long.

After a recent session entering sub renewals, I toted up the paid subs (excluding those that had expired with the last issue). My chronological list said I had 152 (plus half a dozen overseas). This seemed a disaster, for past accountings had been as high as 190. Running over my list, the statistics indicated a 43% renewal rate -- slow but sure death. The first thing I did was set up a graph sheet to lay out the geographical distribution of paid and free copies. I used the mailing labels for that. In the course of this survey I found that I actually had 194 open subscriptions of all types. There had been a bookkeeping error on one batch of subs. The new information indicated that I am at breakeven financially, but it still proved that F770 has underpenetrated fandom. 58 subscribers were in California. Given worldcon membership, this is not a complete distortion -- California does have a lot more fans than most places -- but far more than 150 fans exist in the rest of fannish fandom. Even though F770 is a fannishly-oriented publication, and therefore not subject to impulse-purchase by the majority of fandom, I tend to assume (in advance of testing) that 10% of Iggy's membership ($6000 \times .10 = 600$) is a fair estimate of F770's potential audience. For one thing, VOICE OF THE LOBSTER has already hit 250, and that is a specialized publication.

After reconciling the lists anew, the renewal rate slightly improved to 51% -- I don't know what commercial publishing considers a good percentage, but I won't be satisfied with less than 70%. I also learned that no one in Idaho, Maine, Missouri, Nevada, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Wyoming, Hawaii and Alaska is receiving F770 for any reason. Fandom flourishes in at least four of those states -- and this is without going into any states where I have merely one or two contacts. For the moment

let's get away from what I don't have and scan the distribution of what exists. In preface, I have a policy of extending unlimited subscriptions to artists and news contributors who are in touch with me on a regular basis. This is far simpler than assigning arbitrary issue credit to each note or phone call or illo. So the column marked "free" stands for them.

	PAID		FREE
California	58	California	13
Illinois	14	New York	7
New York	11	Washington	5
Georgia	8	Pennsylvania	4
Massachusetts	7	Massachusetts	3
Michigan	7	Michigan	3
Florida	6	(Canada-BC, Alta, Ont: 6)	
Maryland	6		
Ohio	6		
Indiana	5		
Washington	5		
(Canada -BC, Alta, Ont: 10)			

From this I have tried to draw up a publicity plan that will expose F770 to fans in the badly underrepresented areas, but that's not especially interesting reading. The remainder of this discussion, therefore, shifts over to posing briefly a couple ethical considerations. In other words -- you help me edit F770. I'll tell you what I have been doing; let me know what you think.

First, I've received the complaint on several occasions that I didn't send a copy to somebody who was mentioned in F770. Up front, I have to point out that when the LA Times publishes a letter to the editor by me, they don't mail me a copy of the paper for my trouble. So the only time I ever send F770 to somebody who is mentioned and wouldn't otherwise get it is if I think they'll have a newsworthy reply.

Second, F770 has now been around long enough so that it runs itself in a lot of ways -- club, apa, personal and pro news comes in in a greater volume than I can use. So I actively solicit information in, mainly, the areas of controversy that have to be the most closely watched. This leaves time to set up more connections with overseas fandoms of Poland, France, Netherlands, UK, Australia, Hungary, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and Sweden. The question is: do you consider news from these fandoms of sufficient priority in your interests to bump some of the less vital (but nonetheless informative) data sent to me by domestic fans? If enough favorable reaction is received, I'll actively establish correspondence towards this end. If not, I'll continue a passive news-collecting stance in the realm of international fandom.

REVISED SOLUTION
FOR INSTALLMENT SALES EXAMINATION PROBLEM

Due to the class' mind-boggling score on Friday's examination problem, your instructors have made available the following explanation of the solution provided to them by the National Office:

(4) Can you deduct a Moovian urn?

No! Sec. 101 (B)(67½) X-9 plainly states only Moovian vans expense for Moovian people from Indianapolis to Dallas is deductible. However: under Sec. 007 (2x4) this would change the unrecaptured cost of the unstated interest of the urn, therefore who would be on first basis, what would be on second basis, and I don't know would be on adjusted basis, thereby qualifying this as a van johnson. Van johnsons fall under Sec. 54-40 (or fight), where they are crushed, qualifying for casualty gains treatment. The same section covers the involuntary conversion of backwards-flying goochy birds. It is the intent of Congress that Sec. 54-40 (or fight) deal with accelerated depreciation on excess income for giant snakebirds less the inventory depletion allowance on wookies (unless you dr p back five yards and punt).

All accelerated depreciation in excess of the Sec. 55 (m)(p)(h) limitation is recaptured by the highway patrol, and the holding period is computed with time off for good behavior. Any excess payments are deducted on Schedule Under-the-Table, but you must multiply the tax by 150% if you are a left-handed Albanian dwarf and the payment was made on an alternate Thursday or the 31st of February (whichever comes first) unless your lucky color is Comeandgetme Copper. In the latter case the 150% is abated by the mineral depletion allowance for lead. If the abatement is less than the Great Juju's shoe size, then you must reduce the amount by $E=mc^2$ times the number of dependents claimed. This results in a greater tax, the underpayment of which is assessed at a ratio of sixteen to one. This ruling rescinds Sec. 65 (m)(p)(h) for everyone except truckers.

IRC Sec. 2001 (a)(d) clearly states that any penalized portion of the adjusted underpayment of the excess overpayment (less the realized recognition of the amount in excess of the overpaid underpayment) must be recomputed by the amount of cars in Los Angeles and the number of floors in the Ticor Building. Code section 2001 (a)(d) superceded the old San Andreas Fault Rule under which the declining balance of the Ticor Building was held to be the fault of the state (which shakes me up!).

In some cases this rule is set aside by Article 82 of the Geneva Convention. International treaties are the law of the land, but since you must NEVER DEPRECIATE THE LAND!! the Geneva Convention falls out as Sec. 1231 treatment and breaks its neck. The resulting nonreimbursed medical expense is subject to the appropriate percentage limitation which is the length of your lunch hour divided by Billy Barty's hat size.

That amount may never exceed the excess of the long term

capital gains, although the taxpayer may elect to carry it over for ten years, or take it in the long term capital shorts. This was upheld in Tax Court Memo 78 RPM (Dick and Jane Meets Godzilla, Vol. VI Page $\frac{1}{4}$ -- Braille edition only -- Justice is blind.)

If the long term capital shorts are adaptable to general wear, then it must be subjected to a computation for understated disinterest. See Table LXVIII, unless you slip the maitre-d' ten bucks and qualify to use Table I (below):

WAISTBAND		LONG TERM CAPITAL SHORTS	
More than	Less Than	Dropped before July 4, 1776	Dropped after December 7, 1941
10	20	1492	1607
19	30	1732	1812
29	40	1848	1861
39	*	1914	1929

* shorts in excess of waistband size 40 qualify for wide-term capital gains treatment

If the above table does not apply, use the All-Encompassing Black Hole Rule, conceived for all taxpayers who could not see the light. This rule states that if you are a T/P and/or cannot see the light, go to the nearest theater and see a Stanley Kubrick movie. If you qualified under not seeing the light, just sit there and listen to the soundtrack until the statute runs out. The taxpayer may elect to eat popcorn and jujubees bought from the Great Juju mentioned above. If you see DR. STRANGELOVE, you are entitled to a medical deduction. Your medical deduction consists of your adjusted basis in the theater ticket. Unrecovered basis disqualified by the 3% AGI limitation is shot into the nearest black hole. Popcorn and jujubees are only deductible if (a) served by a pharmacist, or (b) if they give you a ptomaine attack. All popcorn thrown at the screen is nondeductible as a personal opinion, unless reimbursed by the vendor or recovered after the lights come on.

It is hoped that this explanation will help stamp out unnecessary, needless and useless redundancy.