

the Texas SF Inquirer

The best little newszine in Texas!

Published by F.A.C.T., the Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc.



NEWS

The Final NEBULA BALLOT *****

----- NOVEL -----
Count Zero, by William Gibson
Free Live Free, by Gene Wolfe
The Handmaid's Tale, by Margaret
Atwood
The Journal of Nicholas the American,
by Leigh Kennedy
Speaker For The Dead, by Orson
Scott Card
This Is The Way The World Ends, by
James Morrow.

----- NOVELLA -----
"Dydestown Girl" by F. Paul Wilson
(Far Frontiers #4)
"Escape from Kathmandu" by Kim Stan-
ley Robinson (Asimov's, Sept.)
"Newton Sleep" by Greg Benford (F&SF
Jan./Heroes In Hell)
"Gilgamesh in the Outback" by Robert
Silverberg (Asimov's July/Rebels
in Hell)
"R&R" by Lucius Shepard (Asimov's,
April).

----- NOVELETTE -----
"Aymara" by Lucius Shepard (Asimov's,
August)
"Hatrack River" by Orson Scott Card
(Asimov's, August)
"Listening to Brahms" by Suzy McKee
Charnas (Omni, September)
"Permafrost" by Roger Zelazny (Omni,
April)
"Surviving" by Judith Moffett (F&SF,
June)
"The Winter Market" by William Gibson
(Burning Chrome).

----- SHORT STORY -----
"The Boy Who Plaited Manes" by Nancy
Springer (F&SF, Oct.)
"The Lions Are Asleep This Night" by
Howard Waldrop (Omni, August)
"Pretty Boy Crossover" by Pat Cadigan
(Asimov's, Jan.)

"Rat" by James Patrick Kelly (F&SF,
June)
"Robot Dreams" by Isaac Asimov (Asi-
mov's, mid-Dec.)
"Tangents" by Greg Bear (Omni,
January).

(Posted by "Sue Denia"
on the SMOF-BBS, 2/12/87)

SHORT NOTES...

Houston writer Rory Harper has a
story, "Snorkling in the River Lethe"
in the current issue of Amazing
Stories. Another story, "Regenera-
tion" is scheduled for the upcoming
issue of Aboriginal SF.

San Antonio writer Lynn Ward has
sold her first novel to a new pub-
lishing company started by award
winning editor George Scithers.

Fans of Robert Adams' Horaeclans
series, rejoice ... Steve Jackson
Games has the game license, and a
GURPS Horaeclans will appear by NAS-
FiC. Maybe sooner. They're also look-
ing at a boardgame adaptation.

Edd Vick, who has several comica-
script sales under his belt already,
is getting ready to sign a contract
to write several more, for Blackbird
Comics in Austin.

"CyberTex", a twice-yearly series
which Vick is co-authoring with
Dallas artist Guy Brownlee, involves
a light-hearted treatment of a post-
holocaust Republic of Texas (which, >

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Edd says, is about the only "relatively" sane place left in the world). The story revolves around a patrol of the Texas Rangers, which patrol the borders.

Edd's second series, called "Miracle Mouse", is an updating of an old animated character. It is aimed at the same audience that enjoys reading the new updated Superman, Batman, etc. It revolves around a three-way battle between cats, mice, and dogs (with the cats and mice trying to take over the universe, while the dogs are on Mankind's side). Edd says he's signing on the first ten issues, which involve an extended storyline where Miracle Mouse attempts to combat the Cats' Master Plan (bringing back Beast incarnate).

Meanwhile, Brad Foster has recently entered into a contract with Renegade Comics of California for six issues of a bimonthly comic called "Mechthings". The series is relatively light-hearted ("not heavy-duty death & destruction," according to one source), and involves a future in which robots have gained some autonomy. The first issue will be out this summer.

Brad has also sold several illustrations to Amazing Stories and Dragon magazine, as well as to SF Chronicle. As to his own private small press, Jabberwocky Graphix, he's been picked up by the major comic distributor, Capital City, with an order large enough to clean out most of his

back stock; Friendly Frank's, another, smaller distributor, now also carries his line. Such a growth in business has induced him to step up production of his "Goodies" comic book to monthly, and his "Stuff" (humorous comic) book to bimonthly. With all this to keep him occupied, it's no wonder that his prolific fan-art and letterhacking is being cramped a bit (but he's still slugging away at it, if you haven't noticed -- perhaps with the international exposure from "Shards of Babel", as well as other zines seen widely outside the US, this year Brad will finally have a shot at clinching the fan-artist Hugo he's been just missing for the last few years!



Brad Foster's CORFLU outfit

SF/FANTASY MUSEUM MAY MOVE TO CLEVELAND... Hap Henriksen writes that the museum project has been in serious trouble lately. The project transferred from Beaumont to Houston just in time to see the collapse of the oil industry... and as growth halted, the real estate market collapsed... and if that was not bad enough, the shuttle disaster shut down the aerospace industry. Henriksen has met with almost every foundation and corporate entity in Houston during the last year; everyone has advised him to put his project on hold and wait for better times. Even those who have promised money have reneged, Henriksen says.

However, there is still hope for the museum. Several years ago, Henriksen aided Dr. Lynn Bondurant, Chief of Educational Services at the NASA Lewis Space Research Center, in putting on an art exhibit to commemorate the 25th anniversary of NASA. The exhibit was held at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in Cleveland, Ohio.

NASA Lewis is planning an expansion of their Visitor Information Center, which will include an Air and Space Museum, Space Camp and Research Center. They are also looking into a Science and Technology Museum and talked to June Scobee about a Challenger Children's Center. Dr. Bondurant felt that a science fiction and fantasy museum would round the complex off nicely, and asked Henriksen if he would consider moving the project to Cleveland.

Henriksen has also contacted James Burnett at the Greater Cleveland Growth Association, who is charged with putting together a nonprofit corporation and board to fund and build the NASA complex. Burnett, Bondurant's former boss at Lewis, is an sf fan from way back; starting at age 10-12, he was doing such things as reading pulps to spending a day in Sri Lanka with Arthur Clarke. He is a long time Star Trek supporter and has attended the Asimov seminar. Commented Henriksen, "It is nice for a change to have a man that is familiar with the genre in a decision-making position."

By having a nonprofit corporation run this complex, it allows this entity to solicit funds from NASA contractors and sub-contractors as well as from other corporations and foundations without a conflict of interest. The board will be made up of NASA officials, local business people, educators and famous personalities.

Burnett is very interested in the concept of a museum and research center for science fiction and fantasy, and has asked Henriksen to start a letter-writing campaign to the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce to show support for such a concept. Because a museum devoted to sf/f has never been

the Texas SF Inquirer

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The Texas SF Inquirer is available for "the usual" (artwork, articles, columns, reviews, etc.; arranged trades with other fanzines; letters of comment; news; useful and newsworthy phone calls before 10:00 at night; and mimeography/collating help) or by subscription.

A six-issue subscription is still \$6.00; but sample copies are now \$2 each. (Some back issues are still available, as well.) If you join FACT (\$15/year), a year's subscription to the Inquirer (at least six issues -- maybe more!) is included with your membership.

The EDITORIAL ADDRESS for the Texas SF Inquirer is 618 Westridge, Duncanville, TX 75116, (phone 214/780-7662). Please mail all trade zines, letters of comment, and contributions there.

The main FACT address is P.O. Box 9612, Austin, TX 78766. That's where you should send all FACT-related mail, as well as ISFI subscriptions.

established, there is no track record for Mr. Burnett to go by -- and he has to show broad-based support to his board of directors.

If you're interested, write to James Burnett, Greater Cleveland Growth Association, 690 Huntington Building, Cleveland, Ohio 44115.

SALARIUS is a new monthly science-fiction magazine from J&R Publishing of Houston, Texas, which showcases work by new artists and authors.

Issue 4 will be out in time for the Houston Fantasy Fair at the end of March; it features a title story by Ardath Maybar called "The Left Eye of God" and a cover by Nick Smith. Work by several brand-new Texas writers also appears in that issue, along with illustrations by talented artists like Jean Elizabeth Martin and Darla Tagrin.

Issue 4 will also see the inception of a new series of articles on "The Arts in Space" written by Larry Tagrin.

Issue 5 is tentatively slated for May or June release. The contents are pending, but at least one "name" professional will be published in the issue. Of note on that issue is *Salaris*' first full-color cover, which will probably be a painting by Darla Tagrin.

Salaris is desperately looking for artists and writers. Write for their guidelines at P.O. Box 500043, Houston, TX 77250-0043 (include a SASE). Subscriptions are \$13/year; cover price is \$1.50.

Fan News

AGGIECON 18 UPDATE: Unless you're going to Corflu, don't miss this year's Aggiecon, April 2 - 5 in College Station, Texas.

Guests this year include Ben Bova as GoH, Rowena Morrill as Artist GoH, Steven Gould as Toastmaster, and Kerry O'Quinn as Media Guest. Howard Waldrop, Lewis Shiner and Ed Bryant are a few of the 20-30 other guests expected.

Events will include a live Lovecraftian quest, dancing, a SFWA Regional Meeting, a create-a-movie panel series, a guest roast, game shows, a masquerade ball and much more silliness in addition to the traditional panels, readings, art show, auction, movies, videos and banquet.

Full-con passes are \$13; supporting memberships are \$3, and SFWA members get in free.

AggieCon is the largest annual science fiction convention in the Southwest; expected attendance is 2,500. For more information, write to Box J-1, Memorial Student Center, College Station, TX 77844.

DUFF WINNER! On December 31, 1986, the DUFF ballots were counted, and Lucy Huntzinger won!

160 fans cast ballots with the North American administrators, 32 fans cast ballots with the Australian administrators. Lucy won on the 4th ballot run-through, with a total of 105 votes.

Lucy's address is 2215-R Market St., San Francisco, CA 94114, phone (415) 652-8734. She is now your North American source for the just-published 1985 DUFF Report by Marty and Robbie Cantor; send her \$6.00 for it!

LIBRARY PROJECT GOES OVER THE TOP!

With the combined efforts of the U.S.S. Antares and Star Trek: San Antonio, their library project has exceeded expectations. They reached their goal of a VCR -- and were also able to purchase eight tapes (five episodes and three movies) plus a locking cabinet to store them in. The items were presented to the San Antonio Library at their board meeting in January.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS...

Cathy Doyle and Kip Williams have moved, due to a flood in their old apartment (well, they were going to move anyway, but the water sort of hastened their progress along). Their new address is 26 Copeland Lane, Apt. D, Newport News, VA 23601; their phone number remains the same.

Jeanne Mealy hasn't moved again, but I got her zip code wrong in the last issue. (I hate numbers...) Her zip is really 55409. Oops...

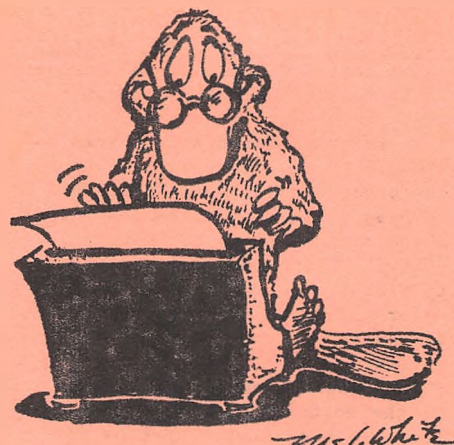
TEXARKON CANCELLED! The first convention in the Southwest to emphasize science fiction and fantasy art and artists has been cancelled this year, according to Theresa Petterson. Reasons cited were a lack of interest (e.g., burn-out) on the part of the chairman, Steve Smith.

The first Texarkon was held in 1982; it was a mellow convention that became a family affair for at least 500 people every year for five years. Robert Asprin became the Resident Toastmaster/Guest of Honor over the years; other guests included Gordy Dickson, Andrew Offutt, Ted Sturgeon, Kelly and Polly Freas, and L. Sprague and Catherine de Camp.

Texarkon was the first con in the region to turn its art auctions into a major entertainment event (with even greater attendance than the masquerade!), with Asprin as auctioneer.

"THE AUSTIN SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY MEDIA SEWING CIRCLE" TO FORM...

Lesh McGrew asks, "Would you appreciate a weekly (when you feel like coming) gathering in living-room informality to talk about science fiction and fantasy, both media and non-media? Not really a club, no



officers, no rules, no dues -- bring your own beverage (no booze) or munchies, no-video-AT-the-gathering-type meeting? Well, so am I! Why not give me a buzz in the evenings and we'll see what we can arrange. The "sewing circle" atmosphere is simply my way of emphasizing the informality I'm looking for, although you could certainly bring your knitting if you like! All ages welcome if well-behaved. I have cats, so unless you are highly allergic, I could just keep them out of the way if you will tell me you're coming.

"Nothing is carved in stone, but Sunday afternoons are good for me. If you'd like more info, you can SASE me at 9902 Plover Dr., Austin, TX 78743, or call 836-9190 after 5PM weekdays, and from 11 AM 'til 10 PM weekends."

SEPTEMBER PARTY 5 (REVAMPED)...

Robert Teague, editor of "Transmissions", the disgustingly frequent Nova Odyseus newsletter, begs us to list SP5(R), so I guess we'll oblige. It's September 18-20 at the Econo-Lodge in Panama City, Florida; guests are Kenny and Beth Mitchrone. Write to Nova Odyseus at PO Box 1534, Panama City, FL 32402-0123 for more info.

Media News

RODDENBERRY TO SPEAK IN COLLEGE STATION... MSC Cepheid Variable presents Gene Roddenberry, the creator of Star Trek, November 7, 1987 at the Memorial Student Center of Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. As of now the event is still in the planning stages, but there is the possibility that one or more of the stars of the new Star Trek TV series will appear with Mr. Roddenberry. Cepheid Variable is also considering presenting the Star Trek films in conjunction with the event. For ticket information and an update on the program, contact MSC Cepheid Variable, Box J-1, MSC-TANU, College Station, TX 77844 or call (409) 845-1515.

ABOUT THAT NEW STAR TREK SERIES...

Various posts on the SMOF-BBS purport to know the inside details about the new series.

According to "anonymous", some of the exciting new characters we can look forward to in "Star Trek, The New Voyages" include Commander Data, the android who wants to be human; The Living Tricorder, a blind man with bionic eyes; Leslie Crusher, a 15-year-old computer genius Starfleet Lieutenant; and lots of kids and families.

"Anonymous" concluded his post with the editorial comment, "Does anyone besides me want to twow up?"

Allen Varney reports that the new series takes place a century or more after the previous one, and the new thrust is not exploration but colonization. Entire families will be included in the cast; Dorothy Fontana and David Gerrold are the story editors.

Allen also reports that Paramount has directed that of the initial 26 episodes, the first 13 must be written by established television writers with six or more produced credits; the next 13 can include some lesser-known or less-experienced writers. Allen comments that Paramount doesn't seem to have learned from its mistakes, given that the third (i.e., worst) season of ST was bad precisely because the producers went with scripts by "established" teevee creative typists instead of science fiction writers...

In another SMOF-post, "Harbinger" wonders about the new title sequence, and asks, "Will they boldly split another infinitive?"

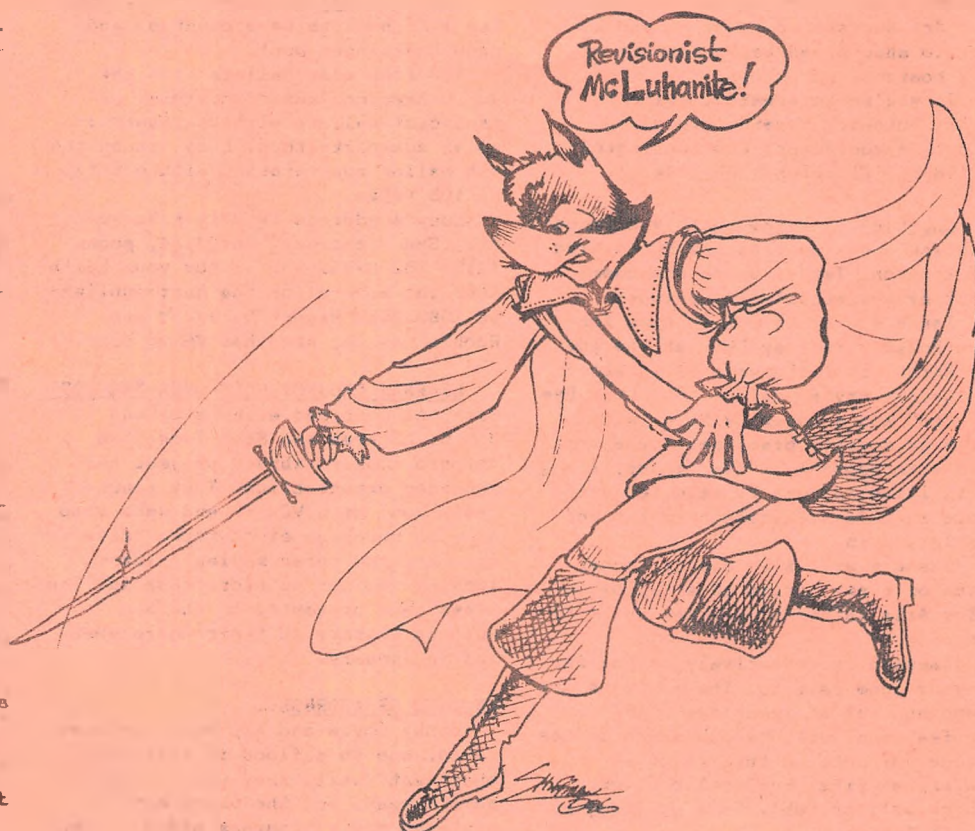
The Alpha Centura Communicator adds that the series is set to go into production this April with a budget of slightly more than \$1 million for each one-hour episode, and will be offered to the 145 stations that currently broadcast the old series.

WHO'S WHO IN AUSTIN DEMATERIALIZES

... "Who's Who in Austin", an Austin-based Doctor Who club, has dematerialized as a TARDIS of the Companions of Doctor Who. They are reorganizing as a new club called The VorTex. There is a new Newsletter (The VorTexen); the official fanzine is The TARDIS Voice (issue 3 is out; cost is \$4 plus \$1.25 postage, if mailed).

The club is also trying to recruit new members. Meetings are in the Party House of the Lawnmont Apts., 2211 Lawnmont (off Burnet at the Arby's) on the second Tuesday of every month. In addition, if you have suggestions on what to do/see at meetings, send e-mail to L MANNING on the SMOF-BBS.

For more information about VORTEX, call 512/451-4976 or write to them at 2211 Lawnmont #221, Austin, TX 78756.



DOCTOR WHO TIME CAPSULE IN THE

WORKS ... A BBC-approved Doctor Who Time Capsule is now being collected for storage for 100 years on the University of Texas Campus.

The BBC has donated several items for the capsule, including actual props from the shows. The project is being sponsored and coordinated by The Press Gang of Austin, Texas, which is soliciting donations for the capsule.

The Press Gang is looking for objects that somehow represent Doctor Who fandom, the show itself, or the actors (in short, whatever will make a person who sees it 100 years from now understand what Doctor Who and fandom is all about). They would also appreciate small donations of cash or stamps, as this is a not-for-profit venture. If your donation is accepted for inclusion, you will be given a receipt for tax purposes -- however, please don't send any items until they are approved... unsolicited items (unless acceptable and not redundant) will be sold to raise money for Austin's PBS station, KLRU.

For more information on how this works, and how you can donate an item to the time capsule, send a SASE to The Press Gang -- T.L.C., 9902 Plover Drive, Austin, TX 78753 or call (512) 836-9190 in the evenings. They promise to answer all queries -- eventually.

MISCELLANIA

• A.P. McQuiddy reports that for those of you interested in such ephemera, the episode of "St. Elsewhere" which aired on February 25th included a scene in the children's ward, where a kid was reading the second issue of Dark Knight. (Andy adds that the "kid" turned out to be a guy who was really seventeen years old...)

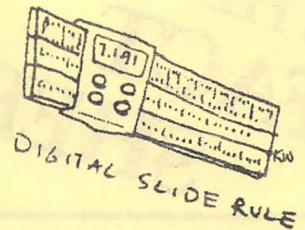
• The unofficial president of the Green M&M's Club called the offices of the Texas SF Inquirer recently to leave a hot tip. It seems that she doesn't have a subscription to the Frederick's of Hollywood catalog, but knows a certain redhead who does...

GLYPToCon
May 15-17
Cleburne State Park

Be there!! Aloha!

As a Matter of F.A.C.T.

News and Notes About the Fandom Association of Central Texas



Meeting Schedule:

April -- Annual Meeting, at Aggie-con (date and time TBA)

May 10th, 1:00, Austin History Center

June 14th, 1:00, Austin History Center.

Of General Import:

• OK, everybody, don't forget about GlyptoCon 2, the annual FACT relaxacon! It's at Cleburne State Park again this year; dates are May 15-17; memberships are \$20 and include two nights bunking and Sunday breakfast. Send in your memberships to Dennis Virzi, 618 Westridge, Duncanville TX 75116. Remember, you don't have to be a member of FACT to attend...

• No, FACT won't have its Gibson chapbook at AggieCon, rumors to the contrary. That project has been pushed back yet farther into the future, until William Gibson has met all his current writing contracts...

• Congratulations to the Computer Applications Committee, which found and purchased a computer for use on S.E. Woodard-Vladyka's "For Your Information" convention listing and database (currently being maintained on 3x5 cards). FACT is now the proud owner of a vanilla XT clone... with a kapooey hard disk. Oh, well. In addition, S.E. has temporarily relocated to California until further notice (her mother is ill)... however, we may have a buyer for the system, so all is not lost.

About FACT Members:

• Bob McGann has moved to Virginia "in pursuit of a better life, although it pained me to leave that cradle of civilization, Texas." His new address is 112-C Prosperity Ave. SE, Leesburg, VA 22075. Best of luck in your new location, Bob!

• Not one, not two, but three FACT members have bought new cars within

the last few months. Ed Scarbrough has a new maroon Taurus, of which he is inordinately proud. Monica Stephens has a 1987 Mitsubishi Galant (when she was showing it off in February, Ed Graham was impressed by the conglomeration of controls in the front, and was even more aghast when he found out that was only the stereo...). And David Herrington has a new Charger, I believe. Not to be outdone, Fred Duarte has bought a house. (Reportedly, you would be well advised to bring a chair along if you go to a meeting there, since Fred is still a little short on furniture...)

• Shelley Corzine may also have a new car, though this isn't certain... the day before she came to the February FACT meeting, the Corzines totalled their old car...

• Also, Edd Vick has moved; his new address is P.O. Box 3008, Richardson, TX 75083-3008.

• Neil Kaden reports that he just got back from a much-needed four-day vacation in Jamaica. "It was wonderful!" he exclaimed. "It cost about the same as going to a convention, and I didn't have to work!"

• FACT member Steve Jackson now has a total of five interactive novels on the shelves. The latest two are both from TSR -- they are based on Car Wars, the initial report is that they are doing well though not spectacularly. The first one is Battle Road; the second (a collaboration with Creede and Sharleen Lashard) is Fuel's Gold.

The older three are from Puffin in the U.K., through they are being republished by Dell here in the States. They have all been out for some time -- the latest, Robot Commando, appeared about six months ago. The big news on those is the translations. The Puffin books really burned up the track -- the first, Scorpion Swap, was on the children's best-seller list for some months -- and

they are selling translation rights worldwide. Scorpion Swap has gone into German, French, and Spanish editions; Demons of the Deep is now in French, with the other translations to follow. And the last letter from the publisher said the series has also been sold for Japanese, Finnish and Icelandic!

Steve happily reports that both series are earning some money -- and some recognition -- for other Texans. The third in the Car Wars series, Dueltrack, hit the stores some time in February. It was written by fellow FACToid Scott Haring. And Robot Commando has a David Martin cover. (Now let's hope Dell has the good taste to use that same art when they reprint it over here...)

ArmadilloCon 9

Planning Meeting Report:

The meeting was held January 17, 1987 at Casa Del Fred (Duarte) in Austin, TX. It was very well attended, according to Willie Siros.

Fred Duarte, this year's chair, reported that the convention will have a unique second track of programming.

Both Steve Jackson (of SJ Games) and Secret Master of Gaming Rembert Parker have agreed to head a Gaming Division of Programming. By integrating gaming into the overall scheme of ArmadilloCon, they hope to attract over one hundred game-oriented attendees.

In addition to developing this "half track" of game programming, Fred intends to make use of this year's Fan Guest of Honor, Mark Olson, by using him (and other MCFI/NESFans) as a focal point for a "How To Run A Con" mini-track.

Fred mentioned fine-tuning the hotel contract (nailing down specific function room costs), but stated that he expects no problems working with the Wyndham hotel.

One sore spot with last year's convention, the Masque Ball, is still a concern. Fred needs someone to manage this year's Ball. If you're interested in taking charge of it, planning its theme and seeing it through, please give him a call at 512/445-2496.

(report by Dennis Virzi)

THE FACT SHEET

FACT MEETING
14 September 1986

Present: Shirley Crossland, Joe DiMaggio, Douglas W. Dlin (?), Fred Duarte Jr., Steven Fay, Lynda Gibson, David Herrington, Karen Moran, Steve Jackson, A.P. McQuiddy, K Meschke, Pat Mueller, Angela Philley, Robert Reedy, Willie Siros, Ken Smith, Monica Stephens, Robert Taylor, Iris Wright, Michael Wright, and Skip Zahorik.

1. Willie Siros opened the meeting at 1:18 with some general comments about Confederation. Everyone had commented about the weather in Atlanta (and everyone who went seems to have come back with a cold). The FACT t-shirts were well-received also.

For those who are interested in news and statistics, Willie gave the snaf-report on the Worldcon site selection voting. New Orleans will host the 1988 Worldcon, and Donald A. Wohlheim will be their GoH. In the history of Worldcon site selection voting, this was the 10th consecutive first-ballot victory, with New Orleans just barely squeaking into the lead with 7 votes.

Boston will host the 1989 Worldcon, to no one's surprise (their bid was uncontested). They will announce their GoH choices at Boskone; however, their fan GoHs will be the surviving members of the first Boston SF club from the '40s. Over 1300 people voted in the 1989 site selection; however, more than 400 people voted for none of the above, no preference, etc. instead of for Boston (a statistic which some find disturbing).

2. Robert Taylor then gave an ArmadilloCon 8 report.

Programming is all taken care of, Robert says. Among the pros attending will be Lucius Shepard, Bruce Sterling, Howard Waldrop, Neil Barrett, Bud Simonds, Carole Nelson Douglas, George Alec Effinger, Steve Gould, Karen Joy Fowler, Ed Bryant, Robert and Jay Sheckley, Tom Mattox, Don Webb (an Austin pro), and Michael Point (who, someone commented, is "offensive to politically correct cyberpunks"). Gardner Dozois, Chad Oliver, and John Shirley may also attend.

Compared to previous ArmadilloCons, the schedule this year will be crowded -- everyone wants to give readings. This will be the first year a convention member won't be able to attend everything on the program -- at times, two or three events run concurrently, but it all works out to about one and a half tracks of programming.

The dealers' room and art show will open for set-up at noon on Friday, October 10; lots of workers are needed, so drop by the Sheraton then to help. Please. The con itself will open at 3:00, and that's when the movies

will start too. Robert noted that there is some problem with the movie schedule; evidently Eric Truax has gone to California to work on a film, and if we can't work something out our movies may be videotapes this year...

Saturday's schedule is "very full"; highlights include Debbie Notkin's GoH speech at 1:00, the Family Feud at 2:00, and Gibson's GoH speech at 4:00. Sunday's highlights include a Howard Waldrop reading at 1:00, Ellen Datlow's GoH interview/speech at 2:00, and the art and book auction at 4:00. The convention officially closes about 6:00 Sunday, but there will be a dead dog party in the con suite.

Robert has sold 253 memberships so far (about 50 of these came since the last big mailing). He says he's still budgeting for 500 attendees, though. About 20 dealers' tables have been sold, too.

On Thursday night, everyone is invited to dinner at La Fonda San Miguel's with the guests of honor; you'll have to pay for your own meal, and kick in \$2.00 towards paying for the GoH meals too. Remember, this means YOU -- the more the merrier! There'll also be a similar expedition Sunday evening for BEQ at the County Line.

Pat Mueller offered to mimeo the name badges; she asked Fred Duarte to call her with the badge size, and the quantity needed. It might be possible to print members' names on labels on the laser printer as was done for Lone Star Con, but nobody promised anything specific.

The Fan Lounge is in the petty suite next to the con suite, on the second floor of the Sheraton (room 217). It will also serve as a sort of quasi-Green Room, and anything else anybody decides to do with it when Pat (who's running the Fan Lounge) isn't looking.

The entire second floor of the Sheraton is the "Party floor" -- if you plan on holding a party, get a room there; if you plan to party all night, that would be the most convenient place to stay. (And, naturally, if you want to sleep somewhere QUIET, ask for a room on a different floor!) People were also reminded not to take their beer bottles, etc. off the second floor! (Also, the drinking age in Texas is now 21; stickers for legal drinkers' name-badges were strongly suggested.)

The con suite will be open from 6:00 p.m. onwards each evening -- except during the cash bars at the Feet The Pros Party on Friday night, and the Masque Ball on Saturday. We need to make a minimum of \$200 in sales at the cash bar each night, so...

It was pointed out that the Sheraton doesn't have a sound system in their ballroom, and one will probably be needed for the Masque Ball. Tentative arrangements were made.

The Sheraton will be running a snack bar during the convention for our members' convenience. (Someone snidely pointed out that the water fountains will probably be coin-operated, too...)

Andy McQuiddy asked for help in his area -- he's doing the speaker introductions for panels and readings, and since a lot of programming overlaps he can't be everywhere at once. If you'd like to help, contact him about this.

Sherlock did the art for the ArmadilloCon t-shirt -- it should look pretty good. Don't

forget to buy your shirt!

For some reason, the discussion took a sharp curve to the left at this point, and the validity of the term "cyberpunk" was argued. The phrase "novels of Gibsonian sensibilities" (or noGs, for short) was bandied about (it originated at Worldcon this year, I believe). This was only marginally related to the ArmadilloCon report, and was relegated to its proper position in the agenda.

Willie asked, "Who's running Security at ArmadilloCon?" and then suddenly Skip Zahorik was in charge of it. Everyone applauded, and Skip looked about besuitedly.

Robert also announced that in a week or so he'd start holding daily ArmadilloCon meetings. This seemed a bit excessive, but everyone agreed to give it a shot.

Robert noted that he foresees about \$1000 in profit from ArmadilloCon 8 (\$500 of which will return to FACT itself, since that was the "seed" money FACT supplied).

3. Steve Jackson reported on the findings of the Computer Applications Committee (which consists of William Watson, Matt Lawrence, Monica Stephens, Steve Jackson, Earl Cooley Jr., Joe DiMaggio, Jim Gould, and Edw. A. Graham, Jr.). He passed out a proposal that FACT purchase an IBM system which S.E. Woodard-Vladysko could use for her efforts in indexing and cataloging US conventions, and in publishing the zine "F.V.I.," a compilation of convention information. She would also use this system to computerize her book/author catalog project. The cost of the system would be approximately \$1,000, and SE would have the option to buy the system from FACT at cost if she so desired.

Pat Mueller moved that FACT accept this proposal, with the additional provisos that the system be insured, that S.E. attempt to publish "F.V.I." at regular intervals and that the zine be made available to FACT members (either free or at a discount, depending on how it is printed, i.e. on FACT's mimeo or photocopy), and that S.E.'s convention list be uploaded somehow onto the SMOF-BBS regularly (probably by mailing a disk to the sysop). Karen Moran seconded the motion, and it passed with no one opposing.

As a side note relating to the SMOF-BBS, someone reported that a new version of the T-Net system is now available for \$35, and should solve the "validation problems" experienced by the SMOF-BBS. If the SMOF-BBS sysop would like, FACT could probably purchase this update for him.

4. Fred Duarte, chairman of next year's ArmadilloCon, read his proposal for ArmadilloCon 9.

-- He plans to have not one, not two, but THREE Guests of Honor: Keith Roberts, Ian Watson, and Brian Aldiss; he wants to fly them over from Britain on the Concord. His editor GoH will be Susan Allison, who will be flown from LA to Washington to meet the GoHs when they arrive, and then will accompany them to Austin. Fred also noted that he had chosen someone who had worked hard and deserved the honor of being Fan GoH: namely, Fred Duarte. He'll be flying to Britain two weeks before the convention, to meet the GoHs and accompany them to Washington on the Concord.

-- ArmadilloCon 9's hotel will be the new

FACT MEETING

19 October 1986

Wyndham in north Austin, on 360. He plans to rent a stretch limousine from Thursday through Sunday to transport the guests about, as well as a microbus which will serve as a junk-food shuttle every thirty minutes (there isn't a Jack-In-The-Box or Wendy's for MILES around the Wyndham). Each of the guests will stay in a Presidential Suite at the Wyndham (at \$350 a night); Fred also plans to have a two-bedroom suite available for "Starving Writers' Crash Space."

-- The first 200 ArmadilloCon 9 memberships will be free to whoever asks Fred for one. They will be \$40 or \$50 thereafter.

-- As a final note, Fred stressed that at ArmadilloCon 9, the Dress Code will be enforced -- everyone MUST wear their official ArmadilloCon 9 Sweat Pants.

Well, everyone got a good chuckle out of this -- and to those of you who weren't at the meeting, I hope that by now you've figured out that Fred was pulling our legs. He was speaking from the side of his mouth. He was having us on. (If you need to have these things spelled out, it's "H, O, A, X." A joke. Not for real. Like the review of "Thru-put" in issue 18 of the Inquirer. Got it?)

Now, for something completely different... the REAL thing.

ArmadilloCon 9 will be held October 9 - 11, 1987, at the Wyndham South (at Ben White and IH-35) in Austin, Texas. GoH is Bruce Sterling; Editor Guest is Beth Meacham; Mark Olson of NESFA and MCFI is Fan GoH; and Pat Cadigan is Toastmaster.

The Wyndham South's ballroom is slightly bigger than the one in the Sheraton, and divides up conveniently into space for the dealers' room, art show, movies and panels. There are four "comfort suites" overlooking the pool, which we will also use; one or two of these will become the con suite, and the others are possibly tagged for NESFA/MCFI or Nolacon (1988 Worldcon) parties. The lobby area is enormous, with sunken "conversation pits" and couches; the pool is both indoor and outdoor, and that area also includes a sauna, health club, and jacuzzi.

The Wyndham South has 319 sleeping rooms; the room rates for ArmadilloCon will be \$55 for singles/doubles, and \$66 for triples/quads. We have 85 rooms blocked; if we DON'T make our room block the function space will cost us \$300 (it's free if we DO make the block). The Wyndham has an airport shuttle, too, which is important. Dealers' tables will probably cost \$40 or \$50 apiece. Fred also plans to rent a station wagon or van for the weekend, to transport people and things about.

Fred intends on offering a special rate of \$10 on memberships through the end of this year's ArmadilloCon; after that, memberships will cost \$15 through AggieCon, and will go up to \$25. There was a raging discussion of economics at this point... Fred's total budget is for \$5500. Not bad!

Steve Jackson suggested offering a "Neofan" discount -- if ArmadilloCon 9 is your first convention, it would cost you less to join, and you'd get a different-colored badge so everyone would know to be nice to you. The pros and cons of this were discussed; the main difficulty seems to be in whether or now we want to take a person's word for whether

they're a neofan or not...

Nobody had any problems with Fred's guests, the choice of hotel, or anything. We're all very tractable and agreeable, I guess. Fred plans to have a flyer at this year's ArmadilloCon.

5. Steve Jackson asked if anything further had been accomplished with the Hyatt room-comp and projector problems. Willie said nothing had been done, and that he still needed the "material from the projector people in Houston". Displeasure was expressed. Willie did note that CactusCon (the 1987 Phoenix NASFiC) had officially declined the \$1000 donation we had offered them. This had nothing to do with the Hyatt problem, however...

6. Shirley Crossland announced that the Austin Writers League will be holding a writers' workshop for sf and fantasy writers on October 4.

7. The next meeting will be held on October 19; it will serve as an ArmadilloCon 8 debriefing session. Fred will run the meeting, and will then be able to figure out specific things to do (and not to do) for ArmadilloCon 9. No one knows where that meeting will be held, yet.

Willie noted that Ed Scarbrough had asked that a FACT meeting be held in Dallas. Pat was delegated to check with Larry Lankford to see if the meeting could be held at the Dallas Fantasy Festival (November 14-16).

The December meeting and Christmas party will be held in Austin.

8. William Watson reported on the findings of one subset of the Computer Applications Committee -- finding an alternative place to the UT VAX to store our databases.

It seems that Mark Brown will be obtaining a multi-user UNIX machine soon, and has offered us about 20 or 30 megabytes on this machine to store our data. If we want a phone dial-up to this equipment, we'll have to supply the phone line, modems, etc. (We'll also have to supply a printer.) This should be up and running by the end of the year, and simplifies our problems immensely (we won't have to buy the computer, just the peripherals).

9. Various picky legal problems were then tossed around with wild abandon.

Robert had planned to do a bulk mailing next weekend, part of which would consist of a flyer from a bookstore in Houston; however, Pat threw a monkey-wrench into the works by pointing out that according to the postal regulations, you can't use a non-profit bulk permit to mail anything for anyone who doesn't DESERVE to have a non-profit permit. Robert promised to check into this. Someone made a clever comment about post office regulations which I forgot to write down (and therefore, forgot).

It was also noted that FACT has to pay state sales tax on t-shirt sales, and on sales of ads in program books. Feb.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Minutes taken & transcribed by Pat Mueller

Present: Fran Booth, Shirley Crossland, Joe DiMaggio, Fred Duarte Jr., Steven Fay, Ed Graham, Karen Moran, Andy McQuiddy, K Meschke, Pat Mueller, Willie Siros, Monica Stephens, Robert Taylor, Eric Truax, Allen Varney, Dennis Virzi, and Mike Wright.

1. Robert Taylor opened the meeting at 1:18 pm, and began with an ArmadilloCon 8 post-mortem.

*** Attendance: Robert reported that there were about 485 warm bodies at ArmadilloCon 8; if you included the no-shows (about 55 of them, and 2 pro no-shows), that raised the convention membership to around 515. There were about 350 to 370 full memberships sold; 285 memberships were sold before the convention, including dealers and about 30 pros; the rest of the memberships were at-the-door, with about 70 3-day memberships sold.

(Willie Siros, who likes statistics, later gave me these numbers: 588 memberships sold: 250 from outside Austin, and 52 from out of Texas. 200 ArmadilloCon 8 members also came to Lone Star Con, and 40 or so members came "out of the blue" and from outside Travis County.)

Fred Duarte noted that he has already sold over 70 memberships to next year's ArmadilloCon.

*** The Hotel: Robert noted that holding the con on the second floor of the Sheraton made for a nice concentration of people -- "critical mass" was the exact phrase used. The density was only a problem when some panels let out, he said.

*** The Fan Lounge: Everyone agreed that the fan lounge was an overall success. The "Instant Art Show" there was especially popular, and some people were using the typewriter in the corner to do a convention one-shot story.

It would be nice if soft drinks were available there during the day next year, in addition to coffee and hot chocolate (and Shirley Crossland asked if we could find a better hotpot -- i.e., one with a thermostat -- for heating up water for cocoa and tea...) Karen Moran said she'd look into getting bakeries to donate pastries to have in the morning; Robert suggested taking coffee and donuts to the dealers and to the art show in the morning; Willie recommended having a separate headquarters and green room next year, instead of using the fan lounge for that purpose also.

*** The Con Suite worked well, although its budget was only about half of what it should have been (we ran out of everything too fast). Joe DiMaggio said people grumbled about running out of supplies, and about the con suite's limited hours; he said he spent about \$350 on supplies, and David Herrington donated 20 cases of cokes -- and that wasn't enough!

Monica Stephens recommended that the person doing next year's con suite start working on it several months in advance, and that we consider renting a Coke dispenser (which would be cheaper than cans), get someone to donate one to us, or borrow/rent a supermarket coke dispenser. Eric Truax suggested we look into making Coke or Pepsi our "official convention soft drink" and try to get our supplies free from Coke or Pepsi. Dennis

Virzi stressed that we have to stop buying our supplies retail!

*** The Pig-Outs were discussed at length. The Chicken Pig-Out went fine, but there were problems with the Pizza Pig-Out. (The Pizza ran out before everyone who bought tickets had eaten, for one thing; it got real crowded in the con suite, for another.) Suggestions included raising prices, finding cheaper pizza, or doing Pizza twice. Fred Duarte suggested putting stars on badges or something. Other suggestions included a Taco Pig-Out, a fajita Pig-Out, or a Whatever-the-hotel-has Pig-Out... Dennis strongly recommended not paying retail for the pizza for the pig-outs, either... Willie mentioned that the Wyndham has pizza on their menu, and that might work for next year's pig-out; he recommended that we try the pizza there some time, to see if it was any good.

(My memory gets a bit foggy here -- I think this is what one cryptic note in my minutes means... -pw) The Pig-Outs qualify as "Sales to Members", and someone should be put in charge of the sign-up sheet so we don't over-sell the Pig-Outs!

*** The Video Room went OK. Mike Wright reported. Friday was OK, as the Video Room had its own room, but Saturday's original plan to put the videos and films in the same room didn't work, which was why it was put in the alcove by the elevators. That was a mixed blessing -- it was a high-traffic area, and the volume disturbed some of the panelists, but Fran noted that a number of people who wouldn't have otherwise stopped by, did. Mike also noted that he ended up showing a lot of Japanimation and public domain videos, due to lack of success in getting permission to show things (Universal, Paramount, and Disney wouldn't grant permission). He recommended putting the video room in a hotel room so it's considered a "private party," to get around those legal aspects. Robert didn't think there would be enough room in a hotel room for that. Mike added that the experiment with showing the UI films worked well, and that the big-screen TV loaned to us by Reaco was very impressive. Overall, it was a success, Mike reported.

*** The Film Program was discussed next. Robert noted that the ballroom was much too big, and that perhaps the Colorado Room by itself would have sufficed. Eric said that at the most, about 35 to 40 people were watching films at any one time, and suggested scaling the movie program more like AggieCon's (noting that we really can't fill up the whole program with bad movies any more). It was noted that there are three factors limiting the film program: 1) quality, 2) budget, and 3) the times they're shown (multiple screenings of the same films was discussed). Eric noted that he couldn't do a whole lot with this year's budget of \$400 (he needed at least \$100 more for rentals, he said, and that we should add at least \$100 more for insurance and projectors). Willie noted once again that there are various public-domain films in private hands around Austin, and that using those films would be a good way to enhance a limited budget. Robert recommended that next year, we have a dedicated Movie Room. Eric also added that he went through four different projectors this year!

Fred Duarte asked that Eric submit two lists of films for the program next year -- a

minimalist list which would adhere to the budget, and a maximum "wish list."

*** Videotaping: Karen Moran and Eric Truax taped "all the ArmadilloCon stuff" with a camcorder. Eric said he'd watched the tapes and it was "of limited interest." The lighting was flat, the people were green, and sometimes the image went all over the place due to inexperience with the camcorder. (Karen added that near the beginning of the tape, viewers might become a bit queasy, as she was playing with the zoom.) It is a good start though, towards a cheap convention archive.

Suggestions for making the tapes better next year included: taping in 3/4" (budgetary constraints might prohibit this, though); improving the lighting (leaving the set-up in one room and planning the program around that); having a dedicated crew for taping; having more than one camera; and, as far as general programming goes, having smaller panels (fewer than six panelists), and having those panelists knowing what they're talking about beforehand -- which brought the discussion briefly back to the subject of a Green Room.

Eric recommended a budget of \$200 plus for videotaping next year, plus \$10 or so for lights.

Eric also suggested budgeting time on the Friday of the con for advance GoH interviews, to be taped at the Austin Cablevision studios (where they have better equipment, switchers, and good lighting); each interview should last about 20 minutes, and could be shown during the convention.

Mike Wright suggested we plan to show "reruns" of panels later in the convention in the video room. Showing fan-produced videotapes such as "Uncle Albert's Video Fanzine" was also suggested.

*** Abusing Interlude: Jay Sheckley flings a towel at Gardner Dozois at the County Line restaurant, prompting Gardner to reply: "Oh, I absolutely always buy stories from people who throw hot towels at me!"

*** Dealers' Room: Willie Siros reported that there were 33 tables in the dealers' room, and that he violated Ben Yalow's First Rule of Convention Planning before trying to set the room up -- he didn't measure the room first, and it was much smaller than shown on the hotel floor plans... All told, dealers sold more than \$10,000 at ArmadilloCon; the comics dealer alone (who, according to Willie said he really liked being the only comics dealer) sold more than \$2,000 worth of merchandise; each of the jewelers in the room did over \$1,000 in business; Willie's and Scott's book table sold about \$1,600, and Jane and Scott Dennis "probably sold in the \$500 - \$600 range" -- and got sick on top of it all. Ed Graham reported that SASFA's table made over \$60. Complaints heard from the dealers included "the room was too small," "there wasn't enough space," and "the room hours were too limited."

Willie noted that since no one was specifically in charge of the dealer's room, and he wasn't sure how many dealers were coming, he did the table layout at the last minute; however, he did know that the room really should have only held 24 tables...

Willie advised Fred that next year's ArmadilloCon should do a dealer's mailing way in advance of the convention, and noted that he

should have the dealers' room sold out six months out. He also recommended that we send confirmations back to dealers who have bought tables, including a map and table locations (against the wall, aisle locations, etc.)

*** Sales to Members: Willie asked that FACT buy copies of "Howard Who" from Doubleday to sell at ArmadilloCon 9, and perhaps Aggiecon as well. He suggested that if no one is selling new books at the next ArmadilloCon, FACT invest in some and sell them as well. This was tabled for further discussion.

It was recommended that at next year's ArmadilloCon, someone be put in charge of "Sales to Members," which would be separate from Registration. We should look into selling things other than t-shirts, and push the copies of the Vance book left over from Lone Star Con as well. Willie noted that Nina Siros recommended that Sales to Members have its own receipt book, and that all sales generate receipts next year.

*** Autograph Sessions were brought up as something good to do next year as well; putting them at the Sales to Members table was suggested. Wherever Autographing is located, the consensus was that it needs to be near Registration.

*** Registration: Fred Duarte reported that we still need to work out a better routine for getting information from people. He recommended printing out an advance list of members' names and street addresses, which they could verify when they picked up their namebadges. He also recommended having separate registration lines on Friday and Saturday for Advance and At-The-Door memberships. He asked about printing up business-like forms for receipts for both memberships and for sales to members, as well.

*** The Art Show: Everyone agreed that Fran Booth did a great job on the art show in the small amount of time between agreeing to do the show, and the convention itself. Fran reported that she had a bit of trouble counteracting a "weird amount of ill-will built up from ArmadilloCon 7", but she did art-snooping at Worldcon, joined ASFA, etc., all of which helped. Fran said the sales at the ArmadilloCon 8 art show went well -- there were a lot of direct sales on art Fran thought would go to auction: the Print Shop broke even and was worth the time and money invested in it -- those who responded to the idea, liked it. Fran said we made about \$150 - \$200 on the art show, with \$542 already paid out to artists, and \$896 still to pay.

She did note a few things which should be done differently next year. She recommended printing up MCR bid sheets which would serve as an artist receipt as well, as the MCR artist control sheets she got from Candace Pulleine worked real well this year. There was a lot of flak from the way the auction was run this year, and Fran recommended that it be held as a separate auction at 8:00 on Saturday evening, instead of being merged with the general auction on Sunday afternoon. That way, the art show could be open Sunday as well, for direct sales only.

Another problem with the auction this year occurred when people bought paintings, thinking that the money was going to Effinger instead of to the artist...

Fran also noted that a number of artists who attended the con were interested in doing panels, workshops, or demonstrations, includ-

ing signings/painting demos in the art show. Fran said that if such a thing were done next year, she'd want it in a room close to the art show itself, preferably next door.

=== Guest Liaison / Relations: Karen Horan reported that "everyone had a good time." She said she needed to put a little more organization into making the plane reservations, though. Ellen Datlow was astonished when we gave her a per diem. The pros were hanging out thick and heavy at the bar, and didn't mingle with the fans as much as they might have. She made each guest a customized guest basket, which was well received.

=== Programming: Andy McQuiddy did a great job of introducing the panels; reportedly, he'll do it again next year if he gets more help (he wants at least three more people!).

There was a problem hearing panelists in room B/C -- especially the Cyberpunk panel. Eric harked back to the problem of no focus on some panelists, and strongly recommended having less than 6 people on a panel. Willie recommended having a moderator for each panel, with questions supplied. It was noted again that a Green Room ought to solve some of these problems... Shirley Crossland suggested measuring each panel room, noting that short ceilings make for both bad acoustics and poor air circulation.

Both Robert and Willie suggested that FACT think about acquiring a 4-mike, 2-speaker amplifier to tote around, for panels and such.

=== The Program Book: Monica Stephens did a super job on the book and it looked real good! She noted that we won't have any left after we send out contributor and advertiser copies (and could she please have some envelopes and postage...). She also noted that we haven't gotten the invoice for the cover (about \$50), and that the printer needs to be paid \$336.50 in two days for the book itself.

Things to think about for next year include whether or not we should give the ad salesperson a 10% commission, and that we should definitely sell ads earlier than at the last minute. Monica recommended that we have someone start working on next year's book NOW -- or, at the minimum, six months ahead of time. We should start hitting up the New York publishers for ads NOW. She said her biggest problem was not getting articles and material in time -- she needed the stuff before WorldCon... and, she said, in capital letters, "NO LAST-MINUTE AD SALES AFTER THE BOOK HAS BEEN PASTED UP!"

=== The Gaming Area: Rembert Parker did a great job; the area was well-run, and it was nice that the gamers weren't segregated from the rest of the convention!

=== The Masque was perhaps politely described as a disaster. The dominoes didn't show up (so why bill it as a "Masque?"), the dance floor wasn't big enough, the sound system was ... well, "terrible" and "unbearable" were two words used during this meeting... There were lots of complaints about the music; what some people liked, others objected to... (Dennis suggested doing the music in 20- or 30-minute blocks, to keep everybody happy...) It would have been nice to give the guests and concon drink tickets to use at the cash bar... The overall consensus was: lack of advance planning, lack of manpower, lack of budget...

=== Other areas and problems: We needed

goers, or S.F.'s trouble-shooting group, or something to ease the load on the Austin fan complex. Security should have been taken more seriously -- badges being checked, etc. The Sheraton wasn't too happy when the Contex group cut their cake (which they were selling at their dealer's table) right in front of them... and evidently the Aggies sinned on this account, too.

=== Money: Robert Taylor reported that the Effinger auction raised \$557, plus another \$400 from the sale of a manuscript still due from the University of Texas. FACT raised \$175 at the con; we sold about \$30 in Vance books, plus some t-shirts (we ought to come out about \$8 ahead, all told, on the t-shirts)... ArmadilloCon 8 will definitely be able to repay FACT its \$500 seed money; if the rest of the program book ad money comes in, we can cover Shepard's plane ticket, and there ought to be about \$500 left over for next year's ArmadilloCon.

=== More suggestions for next year from Willie included babysitting (professional and bonded), and children's programming. This would require both extra manpower, and space (perhaps a hotel room).

Willie also wants fancier-looking flyers for next year's convention, on expensive slick paper.

Another comment: "Get more folks, get them interested earlier."

Monica noted that she heard a number of people say, "See, I miss the costumes" this year, in reference to the small number of costumers seen at ArmadilloCon. She also suggested that we provide space in the evening for filkers.

2. Onward to other business: Fred Duarte reported that "We're going to plunge headlong into bringing authors to Austin to do autographings!" Letters have been drafted, and two authors (Effinger and Card) have already agreed to participate. This would depend heavily upon publishers giving bookstores sufficient money for cooperative advertising, and entails a small expenditure of money on FACT's part.

3. Willie reported on the FACT database situation: Mark Brown, who is both Joe DiMaggio's and Andy McQuiddy's roommate, has acquired a prototype of a VAX clone, a 150-megabyte device which can be used to heat the house on cold days. The system has already been dubbed "DADOES" for "Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep." FACT can use 1/2 of the total capacity of this computer for FACT projects, IF:

- a) we bring in a new phone line to the house, so we don't have to use it on-site, and have two lines running to the VAX clone;
- b) we buy a modem for it;
- c) we verify that we can actually transfer the data from the current location at UT;
- d) we obtain a serial printer;
- e) we pay half the cost of the electricity used by the computer;
- f) we buy back-up tapes;
- g) and we buy a copy of the program we're currently using (which is, I believe, called TROLL).

The main purpose behind doing all this would be to:

- a) have a long-term, cheap place to keep our databases, easily accessible by modem for all who need to use or update it;

- b) be able to store more data, for complex tracking and statistical trend-finding;
- c) be able to target audiences for specific conventions
- d) set up more databases;
- e) and gain access to other VAX networks around the country by making DADOES a "network node."

Mark Brown has promised that this system will be up for a specified number of hours each evening, probably from 6 pm to 8 am, and 24 hours a day Saturday and Sunday; and that he'll announce down time a week ahead of time.

William Watson is borrowing a 20-year-old teletype printer that will last for several years, at least, to use with this system. Willie estimates that this could cost as much as \$1500 for the first year, with the cost breakdowns being: \$60.00 (minimum) for the phone line installation, \$14.00/month phone service (\$168/year), and \$20-\$25/month electricity (\$240-\$300/year) = about \$600; \$500 for the Troll package (including the source code), \$1400 for modems (some of which could be checked out for FACT special projects); and \$100 for 4 cartridge tapes for backups. Pat Mueller, who was faithfully writing all these numbers down, noted that they added up to more than \$1500. We all broke down the numbers a bit more, decreased the number of modems and did other mathematical magic and came up with a new total of \$1710 (which was still a minimum expense -- the phone installation and lines could end up costing a lot more...).

Pat recommended BORROWING a copy of the program, the phone line, etc. to CHECK if it would all work BEFORE investing this much money. The matter was tabled pending further study and discussion.

After that, the meeting ended.

Minutes taken and transcribed
by Pat Mueller

FACT Meeting
16 November 1986

This meeting was held at the Dallas Fantasy Fair in north Dallas; FACT would like to thank Larry Lankford of Bulldog Productions for the meeting space (as well as for having more writers and science-fiction oriented programming at this convention). Thanks!

Present: Bruce Diamond, Alan Laska, Lisa Morgan, Pat Mueller, Dennis Virzi, and Judith Ward. It should perhaps be noted that Willie Siros and Fred Duarte drove up from Austin to hold a party on Saturday night at OFF, but left Dallas before the meeting was held.

1. Dennis Virzi reported briefly on FACT convention activities. FACT is negotiating to host SerCon (a World Fantasy Convention-like con targeted towards science fiction) in 1988, and is bidding on holding a World Fantasy Convention in 1990 in either Dallas or San Antonio, as well as the regular yearly ArmadilloCons and GlyptoCons. Pat Mueller hastened to remind people of the Corflu in '88 bid as well.

Treading over Recaps — Problems to be Rectified

2. Judith Ward reported that SASFA (the San Antonio Science Fiction Association) will be holding a Writers Workshop in San Antonio on February 20-22; the sf side of the workshop is filled up, but there are still spots left on the "media side." Those of you who spoke to Judith about this, please be kind enough to send her your names and addresses — she cleaned out her purse, and may have mislaid one or two! Judith's address is 9214 Bridlewood, Apt. 3, San Antonio, TX 78240. If you need sleeping space during the workshop, give her a call at (512) 691-1554.

3. Judith also reported that Star Trek San Antonio and Star Fleet are quite busy with community-related work. They joined fund-raising forces to purchase a VHS VCR for the Memorial Branch of the San Antonio Library, along with several tapes.

They are also sponsoring a Book Fair at the library; if I understand it correctly, a child reads a certain number of books for the fair, and then the club donates a book to the library in that child's name — and the kid gets a book, too. Sounds like everybody wins!

Also, in March the library will feature a science fiction art show (including art by Sherlock), plus an exhibit of Star Trek memorabilia.

In addition to that, last year STSA made 75 lap robes for nursing homes around San Antonio, and this year they're doing a "Trek Tree" — making ornaments for the tree at their December meeting. Great going, folks!

4. Other miscellanea: Bruce Diamond rejoined FACT, and Judith volunteered to help Pat with the fan lounge at next year's ArmadilloCon.

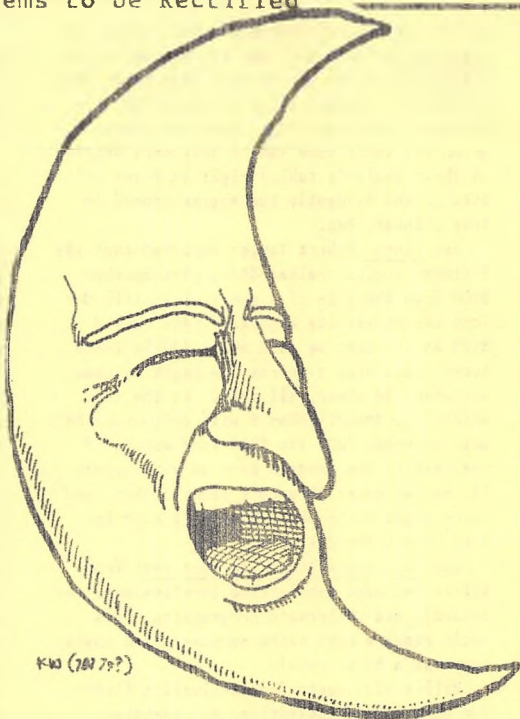
"Minutes" taken and transcribed by Pat Mueller

FACT Meeting
December, 1986

Well, there was a problem or two with this. Issue 18 of the Inquirer reported that the meeting would be held on December 14. At the October meeting, we said it would be held on the 8th of December. When Joe DiMaggio realized that this was actually a Monday, we changed it to the 7th. There wasn't an issue of the Inquirer out to stabilize matters any. And then I didn't feel like going to Austin on Pearl Harbor Day. There was a meeting of sorts, but nobody took minutes (and, according to reports, nothing really happened anyway). Other people tried to show up for the meeting on the 14th, and couldn't find a meeting. And the dog ate my homework.

At any rate, something did come out of all this — "The F.A.C.T. Sheet" a.k.a. the Official Monthly Club Newsletter. "Editor-for-the-moment" is Monica Stephens. The newsletter is targeted at FACToids, with "News and information on what FACT is doing and planning ... meeting notices, news on how FACT cons are going (and probably some pleas for help), invitations to FACT parties, and whatever else fits."

report by Pat Mueller



K-40 (78179?)

FACT Meeting
11 January 1987

Present: Fran Booth, Joe DiMaggio, Fred Duarte, Steven Fay, Lynda Gibson, Ed Graham, Mary Helm, Karen Horan, Steve Jackson, K Meschke, Pat Mueller, Robert Reedy, Ed Scarbrough, Willie Siros, Monica Stephens, Robert Taylor, Dennis Virzi, Judith Ward, William Watson, and S.E. Woodard-Vladyka.

1. Willie began the meeting at 1:30 with some opening remarks and a summation of various FACT activities.

• FACT has just purchased a computer to be loaned to S.E. Woodard-Vladyka to aid her in publishing her convention listings and in her cataloging efforts. Congratulations to Steve Jackson and the Computer Committee!

• Willie and Monica went to Swofcon and learned a lot (and had a good time anyway), where they discovered that NESFA had devised an adventure-type game to be used as learning tool for convention committees. The game was called "If I Ran the ~~FA~~ ... Con", and was edited by Leslie Turek. Matt Lawrence and Steve Jackson got hold of it, and now it's computerized... and NESFA thinks it's wonderful. The game has an ISBN number, and was designed to be sold at conventions; now NESFA is waiting to see what we've done to it before they take that any further.

In its original version, the game was targeted at the Worldcon level; Matt, Steve and everyone else involved are adding elements to bring it down to a mid-size convention level. Steve noted that there is a good possibility the game will be saleable to a community of real-time convention organizers, with the right promotion and marketing (and this means we're talking real money, folks). Monica added that suggestions for more scenarios are welcome (and that if people wrote up the scenarios themselves, that would be even more welcome).

• Willie reported that nothing has been done with DADOES yet, the FACT database is still at UT, we don't know how to get DADOES

to talk to iw4u (the computer the database is on right now) yet, and we don't know if we can find a modem that's compatible with both DADOES and iw4u. In addition, the iw4u database has not been updated in a while.

Right now, our databases are rather spread out: Robert has the FACT and Inquirer lists on his Apple, the NASFiC list is on iw4u, and we have photocopies of two other mailing lists which have not been input at all. Also, Pat Mueller has her own Inquirer database on her Kaypro 10, as well as rich brown's fan mailing list.

The goal is to get all the databases in one place, easily accessible by a lot of people.

Fred Duarte expressed concern about getting a good list for the big ArmadilloCon mailing he plans to do in February, as well as the big Sercon mailing. (Pat Mueller arranged to bring Fred's ArmadilloCon flyers down to the February FACT meeting; these will be mimeo'd. Fred plans to do his "Glow In The Dark" mailing in July.)

• Other incredibly old business: The Hyatt's has the paperwork we submitted to them in the latter half of 1986, to try to recoup overcharges on room comps from the NASFiC, as well as the bills for replacing the 35w rectifier that blew out due to their electrician's error. They were given a deadline of Christmas, 1986 to respond to this paperwork; the deadline has passed, and we have heard nothing from the Hyatt.

(To briefly recap this fiasco, for those of you who haven't been keeping up with it:

(The NASFiC was held over Labor Day weekend in 1985. The day before the convention, the Hyatt's electrician was hooking up the power to the projectionist's booth and goofed, sending 440 volts — instead of 220 — through the line to the 35w projector, which fried the rectifier. We had to fly someone to Houston to buy a new rectifier, pay for a rental car back from Houston, and foot the bill for a number of long-distance calls to get the mess resolved. After the convention, and after some prompting, Bill Parker (who was in charge of Technical Services for the NASFiC), gave copies of the bills to Willie, who lost them. The Hyatt dragged their feet, saying that the rectifier's fuse was at fault and should have cut in before we had Blackened Rectifier. After even more prompting, phone calls, etc., Bill Parker mailed a new copy of the rectifier bill to Willie. Meanwhile, we cannot find receipts for the plane ticket or the rental car, or documentation on the phone calls (it's been over a year, after all)...

(Complicating this is the Hyatt's shoddy record-keeping on the room comps for Lone Star Con; we have no documentation on what we verbally agreed the final hotel bill should total, in a post-convention meeting with our hotel sales rep, Greg Thibodeau. At that meeting, Thibodeau told us that the projector matter was being considered by the Hyatt's insurance company, and that the Hyatt would prefer to settle both the room comp discrepancy and the projector bill at the same time. Thibodeau is no longer with the Hyatt, and many of his files — including ours — have disappeared.)

The amounts in question are roughly \$1800 for the rectifier, and \$1000 for the room comps. At this point, we'll be lucky to re-

coup the cost of the rectifier...

There is a two-year statute of limitations in Texas for things like this. Lynda Gibson has talked to an attorney who is more than eager to take on the Hyatt; however, he wants \$200 up front, and will not contact the Hyatt before he reviews all the documentation we have on the matter. Willie was asked if he could turn over his file on this to the attorney; his words were along the lines of, "Um, what file."

After much wrangling about cash outlay and lawyer's fees, it was decided that Karen and Willie will have lunch at the Hyatt the week after this meeting, and will talk with them about the matter. If nothing is resolved then, the matter will be turned over to the attorney the next day.

2. Old business having been rehashed to death, it was now time to discuss new business.

Dennis Virzi reported briefly on the progress of Glyptocon II. He said that he had written to the Texas State Park Commission already, asking to reserve Cleburne State Park in May, and that the State Park Drawing was scheduled to be held on January 11. We will find out what date we've been given within two weeks; his first choice was May 8-10 (prompting grumbles about Mother's Day); his second choice for dates was May 15-17. Fran volunteered to cook Sunday breakfast for everyone again.

3. Fred Duarte talked briefly about ArmadilloCon 9. The first monthly meeting will be held at Fred's new house on January 17th, at 4:00. He asked that everyone bring chairs if they could... He noted that he'll be assembling his concon then, and urged everyone to buy their memberships now! (He's already sold about 70 memberships, which is an ArmadilloCon record.)

4. The FACT meeting schedule was confirmed; Joe DiMaggio has booked the Austin History Center at 810 Guadalupe for the second Sunday of upcoming months through June (excluding April, when the annual FACT meeting will be held at AggieCon in College Station). Monica Stephens noted that she'd have the next FACT Sheet ready after the end of January but before the next mailing; Pat Mueller said she'd take care of printing and mailing it if she got it by the first of February.

5. Pat Mueller was asked about the publication schedule of the Inquirer. She reported that the Inquirer would be published in even-numbered months, and that the deadlines for issues would be the 15th of the previous odd-numbered month. (Ergo, the deadline for issue #20, to be published in February, has already passed.)

Pat also asked if the FACT meeting minutes belonged in the FACT Sheet rather than the Inquirer (hoping beyond hope that someone would relieve her of the onerous task of taking minutes, transcribing them, and publishing them, thus freeing her page-count in the Inquirer for other things). Unfortunately they were deemed a bit too long for inclusion in the FACT Sheet. In addition, the FACT Sheet was described as being "timely" whereas the Inquirer was the "corporate organ." Oh, well.

6. A "Your FACT membership has expired" postcard was suggested once again as being a good idea.

7. Holding Sercon II in Austin was discussed. Willie reported that we may end up with a pretty good Texas contingent at Sercon I at the end of January; in fact, the FACT people have been coerced into holding the "fan" party on Saturday night. By the next meeting, we should have the details worked out, and should be able to start selling memberships, et cetera.

Willie proposed that FACT supply Sercon II with \$500 in "seed money," using the \$500 that ArmadilloCon 8 was returning to FACT.

Pat Mueller backed things up for a moment, and moved that FACT hold a Sercon in 1988; the motion passed with no opposing but with several abstentions. After that, Willie's "seed money" motion was passed.

8. Bank accounts became the next hot topic of discussion. Right now, FACT has several active checking accounts: the Lone Star Con account, which has over a dozen membership refund checks still outstanding; the FACT general account, which services both Glyptocon and the SMOF-BBS, as well as FACT; and the ArmadilloCon account. There was some discussion as to whether we should start up a new checking account in Duncanville for Publications / Inquirer / Publications/Inquirer / Publications -- er, well, FACT Publications. (There was a great deal of discussion on the semantics of the matter.) Anyway, it was moved, and the motion passed.

The amount of money assignable to such an account was another matter entirely. Pat gave a six-month report on mimeo supplies used (about \$150 worth for FACT repro, \$180 for ArmadilloCon repro, \$325 for Inquirer repro, \$130 for reimbursed repro to FACT members etc.) to each of the FACT directors; based on that report, she estimated she'd need to purchase at least \$1,000 (and probably closer to \$2000) worth of mimeo supplies in 1987 for the Inquirer, FACT, ArmadilloCon, GlyptoCon, and repro for FACT members. She noted that she'd like to purchase as many of the supplies at one time as possible, to obtain quantity discounts, and asked if FACT had enough money to cover this expenditure.

Well, there was hewing and hawing, about the quality of simco reproduction versus slick flyers and such... about the amount of repro that Sercon would use (a number of people pushing for more expensive, high quality slick printing versus dirt-cheap mimeo) but anyway Pat was authorized to purchase a month's worth of supplies for now.

Stemming from this discussion, it was decided that the FACT Board of Directors will meet on Saturday February 7th at 4:00 p.m. to discuss this. At that meeting, Nina Sirois will have the balance sheets for FACT et al. for the board to review.

A side note to this discussion was the membership's notification to Inquirer editor Mueller that the Inquirer was meant to be a break-even proposition, and should continue to operate that way. This could have devolved into more wrangling about money and accounting (especially the part where FACT is supposed to be "buying" the overs from each

print run from itself to sell at conventions, and the fact that Publications was the only division so far to submit a written budget for 1987 to the directors) but the editor bit her tongue and saved it for the board meeting, so this meeting could move on to more important and immediate issues.

9. Willie proposed that FACT obtain an Institutional membership in SFWA, which would cost \$50. The motion was seconded and approved. Fran was assigned to look into Institutional ASFA memberships as well.

Willie also suggested that FACT attempt to join the American Booksellers Association, which holds its annual convention over Memorial Day Weekend each year. ABA is the best place for convention organizers to talk with pros and editors, and ABA members receive discounts on ABA convention memberships, as well as advance information on ABA luncheons and banquets, etc. Dennis Virzi was assigned to write to them, presenting FACT as a bookseller (which we are, after all -- we're still selling Vance books, after all) to check into membership rates, etc. This brought up a tangential point -- we need more FACT stationery...

10. Monica Stephens asked about the 1987 FACT Directory. Pat reported that she had the matter well in hand; directory forms went out with the last Inquirer, were passed around at this meeting, and will go out with the Bylaws mailing later this month. The Directory will appear at Aggiecon.

11. Monica pointed out that Willie needs a computer or a terminal with a modem. Herewith be notified, one and all, that FACT is more than willing to accept a tax-deductible donation of such equipment... or is willing to buy something small and cheap.

12. Monica brought up another cogent point -- now that FACT is doing both ArmadilloCon and Sercon II, do we need office space again? It was suggested that we place an ad in the paper, asking that someone donate office space as a tax write-off. (There is a LOT of vacant office space in Austin right now...) It was pointed out that it probably isn't worthwhile to advertise for space at this point; Karen Horan volunteered to do some checking around. If nothing turns up in a month, we should probably budget \$30 or so for a newspaper ad... If we can get free office space, we could vacate the storage locker, which is costing us about \$30 a month...

Speaking of donations, it also might be possible to get someone to donate a copier to FACT... it was suggested that the FACT Sheet include a "wish list" for such donations...

13. Various side notes, which are probably news to everyone: The FACT storage locker was broken into earlier this year... the only thing missing were the cases of Fritos left over from Lone Star Con... The FACT copier sat unused for a year, and is now DEAD...

Well, anyway, the meeting devolved into chaos at 3:30.

Minutes taken and transcribed by Pat Mueller

FACT MEETING

8 February 1987

Austin History Center, Austin TX

Present: Shelley Corzine, Shirley Crossland, Joe DiMaggio, Fred Duarte Jr., Steven Fay, David Herrington, Steve Jackson, Matt Lawrence, K. Meschke, Pat Mueller, Willie Siro, Monica Stephens, Robert Taylor, Dennis Virzi, William Watson, and someone whose name I didn't catch but was at the History Center for a different function and who happened to hear the word "Boskone" as he wandered by...

Pre-meeting discussions:

• Shirley Crossland mentioned that Austin local Rick Shannon is trying to get his magazine "Trajectories" off the ground again, and that she is his "fan editor".

• Sercon I was discussed and summed up. There were maybe as many as 210 paid members, and perhaps upwards of 50 or 60 pros/program participants. Fred Pohl has asked Willie if the 1988 World SF Annual Meeting could be held at the Austin Sercon; this would be at no cost to us, entailing only coordinating the function and programming space. (This would net us 30 to 40 more international sf writers; no one could see a problem with this...) Only two editors were present: David Hartwell and Beth Meacham. Sercon I reminded Willie of the first two ArmadilloCons and early World Fantasy conventions -- no one had any firmly entrenched "traditions" to uphold (like hanging out in the bar to conduct business); panels were very well attended by pros as well as fans. Willie noted that the panels at Sercon I were not as "specific" as they could have been, but worked well. 80-85% of the pros in attendance were from the West Coast, but more were from LA, Seattle and Vancouver than were expected. The "bigger-name-pros" all seemed very enthusiastic about coming to Austin, especially Delany. Charlie Brown threw the dead-dog party. At least one Sercon report was promised for the Inquirer... Willie noted that he has one of the Featured Speaker presentations on tape, if anyone wants to listen to it.

• Sercon 2 news: Disch has been talked to, as well as Crowley; Rob Holdstock is waiting to hear reports on Sercon I from Ian Watson and Malcolm Edwards before he makes up his mind. LeGuin may not attend as a featured speaker, but may ask to be on a specific panel. We're going to try asking other BNPs to be on specific panels, too. (Steve Jackson noted that asking program participants to attend for a single specific panel was unusual for sf conventions, but typical for scholarly conferences.)

The meeting proper began at 1:30.

1. Willie Siro opened the meeting with some remarks about the FACT Board of Directors meeting the previous day.

• First off, Mina doesn't have our financial balance sheets ready yet, but has promised them by Aggiecon.

• FACT's current assets include:

- \$4,691 in the NASFiC checking account;
- \$3,000 or so in the FACT checking account;
- \$1,300 or so in the Armadillocon checking account;
- \$12,000 in a CD, plus:

Various material possessions: the XT clone acquired for S.E. Woodard-Vladyka's FYI proj-

ect; a 1200-baud modem; a broken Savin copier; a window-unit air-conditioner; an AB Dick electrotensciller; a Gestetner 460s mimeograph; a Gestetner 4170 mimeograph; a crockpot; an electric foot-massager; ten art-show hangings; 400 high-intensity light bulbs; 3 boxes of paper products; a desk; some tables; boxes of NASFiC paperwork; copies of the NASFiC Vance book, and some Tom Reamy books; plus miscellaneous mimeo, computer, and office supplies.

Steve Jackson added that our massive mailing lists and our claim against the Hyatt should both also be counted as assets. There was some discussion about the light bulbs -- should we sell them, or acquire some fixtures for them? (They were originally used in the NASFiC art show...) Some amazement was expressed at the amount of STUFF we have managed to acquire...

Willie concluded this inventory by noting that what we HAVE defines what we are -- a club, AND a corporation (which entails a lot of responsibilities).

• Another matter discussed at the BoD meeting was Pat Mueller's proposal to buy mimeo supplies in bulk instead of piecemeal, to save money. The Board determined to allocate \$1,200 from the FACT checking account to set up a FACT Publications checking account in Duncanville; of this money, \$600 is from FACT for the Inquirer, and the other \$600 is "front money" for other FACT-sponsored conventions and projects which will require Publications work (like ArmadilloCon), and will be "back-invoiced" to the proper area.

(Some discussion at this meeting about depreciation/wear-and-tear costs built into mimeo-use cost accounting; and the copy/life-expectancy of the FACT mimeos.)

• The Austin bulk mailing permit will be renewed soon.

• Computer Equipment -- FACT needs to acquire another computer or terminals useable by FACT members to get our database into shape for the ArmadilloCon and Sercon mailings, due out within the next several months. The board has authorized an expenditure of up to \$1,000 for terminals and modems, if such equipment could not be acquired free, to achieve this.

Since the Computer Committee has achieved their goal of acquiring a computer for the FYI project, but has not yet been dissolved, they were appointed a new goal -- to research information on terminals for the short-term goal of getting our database into shape; and to draw some conclusions as to our long-term computer needs. The point was made that FACT ultimately needs a computer system that is under its direct control, rather than using a UT computer.

The Computer Committee, composed of Steve Jackson, John Quarterman, Matt Lawrence, William Watson, Monica Stephens, and Joe DiMaggio, was directed to write up a proposal entailing the expenditure of \$2,500 or less for a computer system that would meet FACT's needs. Such a system would be used for the FACT database, and perhaps spreadsheets; the system must also fulfill the requirement of accessibility from outside upon demand.

• A FACT membership in the American Booksellers Association was deemed a reasonable idea by the board. The ability to attend the annual ABA conference will be provided as a service to FACT members, as well as access to other things the ABA offers, such as mailing lists, and regional and local booksellers conventions.

• Dennis Virzi summed up the matter of FACT's monthly income and its disposal. In short, and averaged over a year's time, FACT brings in about \$235 a month in memberships, CD interest, and Inquirer subscriptions. Of this, \$60 goes directly to the Inquirer, \$30 pays for the storage locker, \$20 goes to the SMOF-BBS for telephone charges, and \$25 is allocated to the FACT Sheet. Those of you who are quick with figures have realized that this leaves \$100 per month as discretionary income.

• Fred Duarte immediately jumped to the fore to request an application of this discretionary income. See #3 below.

• There will be another Board meeting the Saturday before the March meeting, to decide upon the agenda for the Annual FACT Meeting at Aggiecon. This agenda will be posted at the March meeting, according to the bylaws. Steve Jackson asked briefly about the "officer" positions enumerated in the bylaws; Willie explained that these positions "float" amongst the board members. (Pat noted to herself that she hadn't really noticed the position of "Secretary" doing much floating lately...) A number of people muttered that we really ought to pay more attention to our bylaws...

2. (Finally.) Dennis Virzi reported on progress on GlyptoCon 2. The date & location are finalized (May 15-17, Cleburne State Park); memberships are \$20, which include 2 nights accommodations in the park bunkhouses, plus Sunday morning breakfast.

3. Fred Duarte requested money from FACT for FACT's party at Aggiecon (in April), as well as funds for a FACT/ArmadilloCon/Sercon party at Boskone in February. He was allocated \$100 for party supplies for Aggiecon (but my notes are unclear as to the exact amount from FACT, ArmadilloCon, and Sercon). Robert Taylor noted that last year, FACT and ArmadilloCon split the tab.

It was noted that if we want to use Aggiecon's main party room, Fred will have to ask for it soon. Robert Taylor volunteered to coordinate munchie-tray preparations for the party; Fred asked for volunteers to help at the FACT/Armadillocon table.

As for Boskone -- There was discussion as to whether FACT should foot the entire bill, since Fred would be promoting ArmadilloCon and Sercon, as well as FACT in general. It was decided that the money would be split three ways, with FACT, ArmadilloCon, and Sercon each supplying \$30.

4. Speaking of Boskone... Willie proposed that FACT subsidize a trip to Boskone for Matt Lawrence, programmer for the computerized "If I Ran the ~~Zoo~~ ... Con" game, so he could go over what he's done so far with Ben Yalow and Mark Olson, and get the rest of the data needed to finish the game.. This way, we might have an almost-final version ready by Aggiecon... Although the computer game is a FACT project, the underlying program does not belong to FACT (although Steve Jackson and Matt Lawrence will most likely donate the game to FACT, once it's ready). The program itself is not finished, or protectable yet, and Matt is concerned about letting it out of his hands, which is why HE has to go.

Matt expressed a willingness to go to Bos-ton, but asked that someone else make the necessary plane reservations etc. for him. The

motion was made to allocate up to \$200 for this trip, and was seconded and approved.

5. On a different note, Willie expressed concern that Larry Lankford has farmed out most of the technical services for his "Fantasy Fairs" to FACT members... S.E. and Monica are doing troubleshooting for all of them, Judith Ward is doing the "con suite", and Willie reported that he's agreed to do the Green Room for all 8. We all should be picking up loads of experience from this...

6. Parties... Willie slyly hinted that some time this summer, when there's a Rangers game in Dallas, he'd sure like to see an expedition to a baseball game and Six Flags combined with a meeting and party up there... Brooks Griffith has volunteered his place for a summer party (it's on a lake, and he has a boat); Fran Booth wants to do a summer swim party in San Antonio; and Scott Bobo wants to hold a party at his apartment complex before the end of May, when he's moving... Stay tuned for further developments.

7. Old business: Willie reported that our claim against the Hyatt for a new rectifier is now at the insurance company (hurrah!); in addition, the Hyatt will make a compensatory offer on the room-comp business for Sercon, which we will probably refuse (the amount in question there is about \$2200). Steve Jackson suggested taking the room-comp money out in credit at other Hyatts, if it is freely transferrable; however, it isn't.

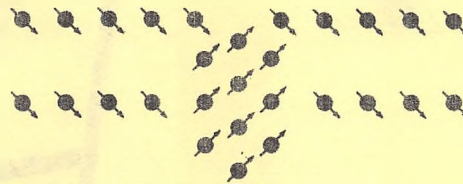
8. Last-minute stuff... Pat promised Fred his 5,000 ArmadilloCon flyers for the big mass mailing by the end of February; also at the end of February, we should have our Sercon featured speakers finalized...

In re ArmadilloCon pigouts: Willie reported that the Wyndham's pizzas are to die for. They have several varieties, "Goat Cheese, Duck, Eggplant and Grilled Tomato", "Salmon, Sour Cream and Dill", "Crab, Shrimp and Canadian Bacon" and "Fajita". However, they can make "normal" pizzas, too... The possibility of expanding the pig-outs was raised, and left for future discussion.

9. On March 7, the Board of Directors will meet at Willie's house, followed by a Sercon meeting; there will be an ArmadilloCon 9 meeting at Fred's house. The location of the party that evening is negotiable. The FACT meeting proper will be held Sunday, March 8, at the Austin History Center.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes taken and transcribed
by Pat Mueller



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and editor of *Mirrorshades*
the *Cyberpunk Anthology*

Fan Guest of Honor
MARK OLSON
chair of 1986 Boskone
and 1989 WorldCon

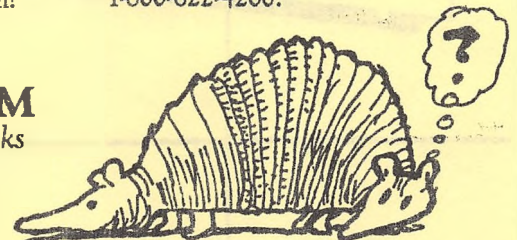
Toastmaster
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and author of *Mindplayers*

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KUDOS for ARMADILLOCON 8

Robert R. Taylor, Director
F.A.C.T.
Box 9612
Austin, TX 78766

12/2/86

Dear Robert:

Now that things are just beginning to resemble normality around here, I'd like to thank you, F.A.C.T., and the kind and generous people associated with ArmadilloCon for all the help you've given me following my fire. It was, of course, a traumatic experience; but it was made a great deal easier to get through by the concern of my friends. I'd be grateful if you'd convey my thanks to everyone who made it possible for me to attend the convention, and everyone involved with the suction.

Losing my belongings and being lightly toasted by the fire was an awful thing to go through, but on the other hand I've never been so profoundly touched as I was by the outpouring of solicitude that followed. I love you all.

Sincerely,

GEORGE ALEC EFFINGER
George Alec Effinger

October 21, 1986

Armadillocon 8
c/o F.A.C.T.
P.O. Box 9612
Austin, TX 78766

Dear People,

I just wanted to let you know (as if you didn't know already) what marvelous hosts you are and what a wonderful time I had in Austin. (Ten days ago? Wasn't it longer ago than that?)

Anyway, I thought the convention was absolutely terrific (I've been recommending it to Bay Area types since I've been back), and I thought all of you were gracious, friendly and welcoming to a remarkable degree. My special thanks go to Karen Horan, who was always not one, but three steps ahead of me, anticipating anything I might be about to ask her; to Fred Duarte; to Willy Siros; to Robert Taylor; and to anyone else I might be forgetting who went out of their way to make me feel like an honored guest.

The Bay Area's reputation for friendship isn't as world-famous as Texas', but if any of you want to come visit, I'll roll out our red carpet and see if I can return the favor.

Once again, thanks a lot!

Warmly,

Debbie

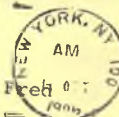
BROOKLYN BRIDGE 10 IS PART OF A LIMITED EDITION PORTFOLIO AVAILABLE FROM THE PHOTOGRAPHER PHOTOGRAPH BY JOEL GREENBERG

10/14

Dear Willie, Robert, Fred and Karen,
Thank you all so much for a wonderful time in Austin. I think it's the best con I've been to. You were all so hospitable. I hope to see you next year.

AND THANK ANYONE ELSE INVOLVED. Best,

Ellen Datlow



INCLUDE
APT # F
BETTER SE



Mr. William Siros
The Pandemonium Association of
Central Texas
PO Box 9612
Austin, Tx. 78766

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265 WATER STREET, N.Y., N.Y. 10038

Our 21st Century Writers

by Allen Vamey

This year, 2026, science fiction is 100 years old. A century ago Hugo Gernsback founded Amazing Stories magazine, and that humble start in 1926 began the procession of great authors who have enriched the 20th and 21st centuries.

As the most popular form of literature in this new millennium, sf has produced its share of tourist landmarks:

- New York's Futurian Commune, preserved as a historic site;
- Ellison Wonderland theme park in Sherman Oaks, California;
- Turkey City Drug Treatment Center in Austin, Texas;
- Lorrain & Lichtenberg's Shrine of Free Amazons, at Marion Zimmer Bradley's grave in Oakland.

But these well-known sightseeing stops could not capture the essence of modern sf writing, an essence deeply rooted in the evolution of the form over the past five decades. Searching for that essence, to satisfy my own curiosity and that of the Texas SF Inquirer's millions of readers, I visited some less accessible havens of modern science fiction production, the homes of 2026's most successful authors.

Part I
California Recovery Zone
6/12/26

Southern California, post-firequake, post-Medfly, post-famine, post-Disney, is a desolate land. Travel is difficult. Only the Inquirer's bottomless expense account paid my extensive urbway tolls, bribes, and desalination taxes. Only the balloon tires on my hired

urbobile negotiated the broken ferrocrete of North Los Angeles, while a Chicano urchin guided the stealthy approach to my goal.

Stealth proved necessary, as gangs of wild dogs and wilder teenagers rove the devastated landscape. Concealed in the bombed-out shell of a relief station, I observed the gangs' careful respect for the red sidewalks surrounding a large, open lot. Signs posted every few yards beyond the sidewalks gave clear warnings in six languages: IF YOU CROSS THIS BOUNDARY, YOU WILL DIE. In the center of that empty area, protected by electrified barbed-wire fences and a

traditional moat, lay the green lushness of Heinlein Colony.

Near the sidewalks it was safer, and I soon pulled up to the stone-and-steel gate. There, beneath the machine-gun towers, the guards checked me in and led the way along the carefully-circumscribed path across the minefields. Passing beneath the arch of the second checkpoint, with the colony's motto (FREEDOM FIRST, EVERYTHING ELSE FOLLOWS) carved in stone letters, we entered the happy enclave.

Beneath the statue of Robert Heinlein I was greeted by a colony rep, checked for weapons, and instructed in etiquette toward citizens. All the while, I goggled at the lavish greenery and evident prosperity of this suburban neighborhood. Along its wide sidewalks walked hundreds of people. A great stream of happy white faces -- and a few black faces, too, here and there, and at least one Hispanic that I saw. About one in ten wore the handsome badge denoting citizenship, and carried the mandatory sidearm required of all (and only) citizens.

In a small park beyond the entrance I passed a statue of one of the colony's founding fathers, Larry Niven. The famous author does not actually reside here, but frequently visits from nearby Tarzana, which he owns.

Meeting the First Citizen

The ever-influential Inquirer press card brought me to the plush office of the Colony's "first citizen." Now totally deaf, Jerry Pournelle is otherwise incredibly hale for his 93 years. Clad in his trademark khaki uniform, he strutted from behind his mahogany desk with the vigor of a 40-year-old.

"Megavitamins," he responded to my written question. "And prosthetics didn't hurt either. I could practically give you a road map of the magnesium alloy implants in my skeleton. That's just one example of how technology is making life better for the good folks in this

colony," he continued, leading me out for a briskly-paced tour.

Brimming with vitality and still quite prolific, Pournelle donates all income from his fabulously successful books to the colony. "See that?" he shouts, indicating a new hydroponics greenhouse. "The newest John Christian Falkenberg novel -- my 20th, thank you -- paid for that."

Walking the colony's broad, clean, tree-lined streets, the multiple-Hugo-winning author frequently pointed out new urbmobiles, houses, private fusion generators made possible by his work. As we walked, he absently slapped at the holster on his hip, which held the biggest, shiniest gun in the entire colony.

Though his enthusiasm is infectious, it's hard keeping up with Pournelle. One moment he is showing the Armory, the largest and most heavily guarded building in the complex -- "Every citizen has a key, and every citizen knows how to use every weapon in there, when and if the time comes."

The next instant, he is off to show the new train depot. "We're not only getting the trains to run on time, we're building them," he laughs. I soon found that deafness doesn't impede the great man in any practical way. "My friends say they can't even tell the difference," he says proudly.

Treats Citizenship Seriously

Not an official administrator of Heinlein Colony ("I'd be a disaster actually supervising people"), Jerry Pournelle is more a spiritual advisor, "like the Medicis in Renaissance Italy." His younger son is officially the leader. But Jerry is intimately involved in every major decision, and the official administrators (fellow sf writers David Drake, Dean Ing, Janet Morris, others) look to him as an elder statesman.

"I treat citizenship seriously," he says without preamble. "A lot of college professors and liberals in the old days didn't, and that's one reason we got where we are now. You look at those volunteer workers out there," pointing to half a dozen laborers in a vegetable field outside the walls.

"They're working for their citizenship. Here, it's not automatic; you don't get it unless you want it bad. It may take them years hoeing those weeds, and at damned low wages too. Most of them give up and leave, but a few hang in there. And when they get that badge and that weapon, they'll appreciate them. Our citizens never miss an election, and seldom even a town meeting. How many other communities can say that?"

"We've the administrative committee talked and talked about the best way to allow citizenship," he continues. "Military service. Neighborhood service. Examination. Labor. Every decade or so we even throw out all the citizenship rosters and start from scratch. We high mucky-mucks have to earn it all over again,

like everyone else.

"And you know what? No matter how we decide to judge it, no matter which way we think is best to earn citizenship, all of the administrators earn it every time, without fail. It's remarkable. I've earned my citizenship five times. I'm prouder of that than of anything else, I think, except my family."

The spry nonagenarian's own clear thought and immense likability made me want to talk with the other community leaders. "They're away," he said with a slight smile. "Hunting."

"Hunting?" I said -- or rather, wrote.

"Let's just say this area has the lowest crime rate in the entire nation, when it once had one of the highest. Criminals have learned that our citizens are willing to protect their security and property." As though punctuating his statement, a fusillade of rifle shots sounded beyond the complex walls. Pournelle didn't hear the shots, but he smiled just the same.

Benefits of Progress

We headed back to the central office at the same brisk pace, stopping off at Pournelle's own magnificent home, "Chaos Manor." Here he showed me his cluttered, book-lined office, including four entire shelves of his own bestselling work. A state-of-the-art personal computer sat on his desk.

"This does my columns," Pournelle boasted, referring to the computer columns he contributes regularly to BYTE, the oldest surviving computer magazine. Almost since the magazine's inception in the late 1970s, Pournelle has filled several pages of every issue with reports, reviews, gossip, and speculation about the industry. "Good money, good contacts, people like it."

Text scrolled across the computer's screen. "The great thing now is that I don't have to do the work any more," the ageless writer explained. "My assistants phone news and reports onto my answering machine. The computer knows how to play them back and write them up. Then the program writes up the column, using my own style. I don't even have to pay attention now. And you know, my friends say they can't tell the difference," he said, beaming.

Back at his office, as evening fell, he talked of his fiction. "I'm like every other writer, especially the ones here: We just want to reach the widest possible audience and communicate our views. Obviously, we've done a good job. I sometimes flatter myself that our work helped bring about what happened here in California."

"How?" I wrote.

"Well, you know, we always wrote about the collapse of the old, liberal, intellectual-ridden society. We showed that collapse might not be such a bad thing. It may be that we helped persuade our audience -- the tough, resourceful types -- that the old society wasn't

much worth fighting for. Let it go, then fight for a newer, more effective government.

"That's the way it worked out, anyway," he finished, leaning back on a plush couch. His still-handsome features were bathed in the lambent glow of minor building fires beyond the colony wall.

Since the other administrators hadn't yet returned from their hunting expedition, I expressed regret at not being able to meet them. "Don't worry about that," said the great patriarch. "They all think like me. If they didn't, they'd be asked to go off and start their own colony. That's just fair."

The Master

But there was still one person to meet. Apparently unsettled by my request, Pournelle reluctantly assented. "You know, if this weren't for the Inquirer, and if you weren't such a brilliantly talented and eminently fair reporter," he said, "you'd be sent out the gate right now. Very few are allowed to meet the Master nowadays."

Solemnly he and a couple of armed guards escorted me to a sub-basement beneath his office. Tendrils of water vapor curled beneath a vault door.

Pournelle cautioned against touching anything or smoking. "You won't actually be able to talk to him. His sensory apparatus has malfunctioned. Our fault, we bought foreign models. Before his hearing went, we asked how he was doing. He said don't bother replacing the senses; it's just the way he likes it now."

A few quick passwords and we were inside. There, almost lost amid a bank of life-support machines, diagnostic consoles, and freezer units, lay a long plexi-glass tube rimed with frost. In it lay the man himself: Heinlein.

Pournelle nodded to a technician in a white lab coat. The tech stooped near a speaker hookup, from which a stream of spoken words poured without interruption.

"He's dictating his new novel," Pournelle whispered

reverently. "His seventy-eighth. I read the first thousand pages in manuscript last week. I was raised in a time when men were taught not to cry, but I shed real tears reading it. Be sure to tell your readers: With this book, the old Heinlein is back. This time we mean it."

A Fond Farewell

While escorting me out, Pournelle himself raised the issue of the notorious protests against Heinlein Colony, and his cheerful features, for once, turned grim.

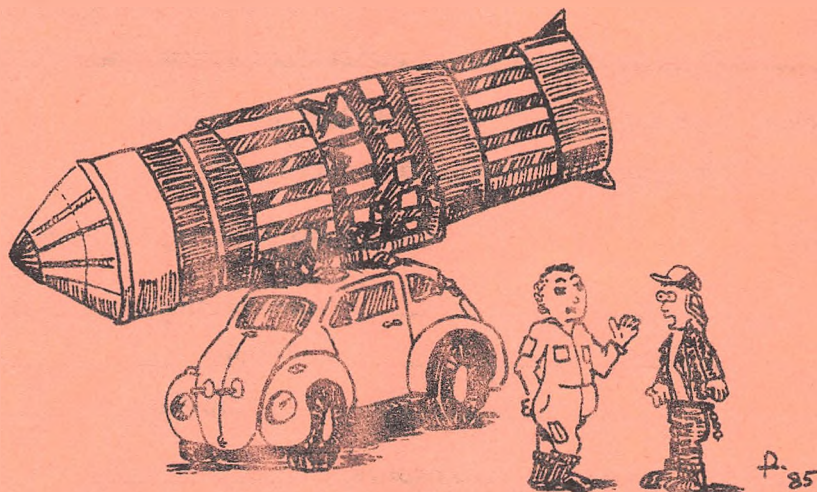
"You'd think people could have read the signs all around this place. I suppose they thought we don't mean it. Those people were not our readers, obviously. They didn't know about fighting for one's beliefs and security."

"No, I think those protesters, if they read at all, were the college types who say a work has to be depressing in order to be good. Their view of life is that inevitably you get stepped on. That's just not true; I don't see why they think it is. Life certainly hasn't stepped on me!" As another coincidental punctuation mark, machine-guns fired in the night. Pournelle's broad smile, never long away, returned.

I was taken back to the gate by a worker still a year away from citizenship. He looked tanned, strong, healthy, happy. His eyes held the wide, distant, slightly glazed expression of far sight. "This is a great place," he said. "Someday I hope everybody will live this way. I think the administrators are working on it, too. To hear them talk, you have to wonder why everyone doesn't start living this way."

He left me at my urbmobile, the gates closed, and he went to calm the guard dogs. As I drove away from that happy place, I too wondered why everyone doesn't live that way. But I had further journeys to make before I could return, and more great 21st-century writers to visit.

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The Last

CHEAP TRUTH

"Node Zero" Demolished!
Omniaveritas Shot!

(Austin, Texas, November 1986)

"Node Zero," the global infonexus of the CHEAP TRUTH publishing empire, has been reduced to smoldering wreckage in a poorly-realized action-sequence right out of the worst tradition of macho adventure fiction.

A dead Hollywood stunt-dummy, with several burst squibs of chicken-blood attached to its head and torso, was discovered by hard-boiled investigators. The body has been identified as that of CHEAP TRUTH editor Vincent Omniaveritas.

Credit for the attack was immediately claimed in phone-calls to a fictional news service where guys wear snap-brim hats that say "Press" and have teletypes that go clacka-clacka-clacka. We are reprinting the statements in their entirety.

(Version I)

"This is the voice of the Skiffy Defense Initiative. On November 26, 1986, our armed counterterrorist strike force received authorization from the National Security Council, or guys who looked and acted just like them, to surround the CHEAP TRUTH terrorist cell and neutralize them by any means necessary.

"A leak in the Marxist publication ROLLING STONE allowed us at last to establish irrefutable proof of linkage between CHEAP TRUTH's

activities and the blustering madman known as the "Qaddafi of Technosleaze." At the modest cost of half a billion dollars, an attack was launched in a healthy condition of total press secrecy.

"Off-duty Dorsai mercenaries, freshly frown in from contra training camps in Honduras, opened ground fire with 9mm folding-stick Uzi submachine guns, silenced, Ingram Mac-10s, and Heckler-and-Koch MP5 automatic sidearms, meanwhile shouting a challenge and requesting all inside to identify themselves. They were met with savage return-fire from Czech-made Skorpion automatic pistols and cheap, cruddy, but witheringly effective Soviet-supplied AK47 automatic rifles.

"To our surprise we found that the supposedly simple wooden cabin known as Node Zero had been armored in Kevlar and crammed with dozens of Cuban construction workers. Rescuer casualties mounted, and it became necessary to call in an airstrike.

"Blueprints of the Stealth bomber then strafed the terrorist fortress, followed by blistering orbital fire from X-ray lasers, particle beams, and magnetic rail-guns. This caused the enemies, with all their bad ideas, to vaporize without a trace and should have been done a long time ago."

(Version 2)

"Hello? Am I on the air? Well, this is Professor -- woops, this is the voice of the Humanist Peace and Justice Coalition, uh, calling... Well, as everybody knows, we Humanists have been putting up with a lot of guff from these cyberpunks, who've been wiping our Nebulas and ridiculing our angst. Then we heard rumors that they'd just called good old Robinson a 'no-talent hippy-dippy arch-wimp.' The time had come for a final showdown.

"So we took Connie's, uh, Comrade Tanya's, writing grant, and bought Amtrak tickets for everybody. We met in Austin and had some Campari-and-sodas downtown, then marched on their den of iniquity. And we stood in the alley downstairs and yelled challenges, until the CHEAP TRUTH staff finally heard us over their blaring heavy-metal punk drivel. Then Vince and Sue came out, and stood on the porch upstairs, and yelled abuse, and threatened to grab Nancy and Connie and Karen Joy and dip their braids in the inkwell. And that was followed by a barrage of spitwads and legal-sized paper airplanes with paperclips in the noses that really stung.

"So we had to get tough! First we gave 'em the introduction to PLANET ON THE TABLE, where Stan as the long talk with James Joyce. We could hear 'em vomiting inside, but they fired back with hard-tech expositive lumps from Toffler and Ilya Prigogine. So we hit 'em with both barrels: a chunk of self-reflexive metafiction and some third-hand magic realism.

"They reeled back howling and we rushed upstairs to the door, only to find it barricaded with J.G. Ballard re-issues... That was the last straw, because we know Ballard officially belongs to us... Our blood was up, and we swarmed into the place, yelling the sacred name of LeGuin and lashing out right and left with our shepherd's crooks...

"Then suddenly Vince slipped on the slick footing of a copy of OMNI and crashed into his massive bank of computers... Big zaps of electricity jumped out of all this Frankenstein equipment which literateurs were not meant to know, and given all the paper, the whole place went up as fast as Shepard's reputation... Sue Denim sneaked out by disguising herself as a progressive feminist writer, and the last thing we heard was Vince screaming, "I meant Spider Robinson, you assholes."

(Version 3)

SFAW Grievance Committee Report

"When rumors reached us of Mr. Omniaveritas' death, we reacted with grave concern. He had, after all, been semiprofessionally published in INTERZONE, and could be broadly regarded as one of us, even though his name and address never showed in the Directory and we never got cent one of dues out of him. So we despatched a crack investigative team of myopic geeks and pudgy women in satin to clarify the situation. If foul play was discovered, we were perfectly prepared to threaten to sic Harlan's lawyer on any publisher involved.

"Our team travelled to the stated address of the CHEAT TRUTH headquarters, 908 West 12th Street in Austin. We were annoyed, and more than a little angry, to discover that 908 is the address of

House Park Bar-B-Que, a working-class Texas eatery that has been in continuous operation since 1943. It was full of rude mundanes in baseball hats and overalls who looked us over and laughed aloud.

"The SFAW have been made the butts of a calculated publicity stunt. We may now assure the membership that there is no such publication as 'CHEAT TRUTH' and definitely no such person as Omniaveritas.' There is no 'movement' of radical hard SF' writers threatening to reinvent science fiction from an eighties perspective.' It

was only hype and everyone can relax.

"However, the joke is on the hoaxsters. Although there is no such thing as an actual cyberbunk ideology,' the term itself has become a viable subgeneric marketing category. Our sources in publishing assure us that the use of the term 'cyberbunk' in cover blurbs guarantees a modest, but solid sales increase, which may well be useful to younger, less established writers.

"A SFAW member in good standing has prepared a helpful beginners' manual, 'Cyberbunk: What It Means, How To Write It,' which will include a glossary of useful subgenre jargon, such as 'wetware,' 'retrofit,' 'download,' and 'biohazard.' Other chapters will analyze typical cyberbunk plot structures, including tips on how to have the anti-hero lose the girl in the end without being too downbeat. Younger SFAW members should consult their agents as to whether they too can profit by joining this flashy, but flimsy bandwagon."

INTERVIEW WITH VINCENT OMNIAVERITAS

Saddened by the death of this fabled gangster of Eighties SF Criticism, we decided to re-visit the Cross Plains Dairy Queen (Cheap Truth 11 & 13) and contact his spirit for a post-mortem interview.

To our surprise we found Omniaveritas, apparently very much alive, sipping a Dr. Pepper with his wife, sometime CT graphic artist Sherry LaPuerta. Omniaveritas wore his usual "Captain Harlock - Space Pirate" t-shirt, a black leather bomber jacket, jeans, and Chinese kung fu shoes. Ms. LaPuerta wore a maternity jumper and mirrorshades.

CT: Vince! Heard you were dead.

VO: (grunts) Not a scratch on me.

CT, though, is definitely history.

CT: How come?

VO: (with a heavy sigh) A lot of reasons, really... First, Sherry and I have a kid on the way.... Yeah, thanks, we're thrilled about it too.... I have a book to do... And we bought a house. I had to change addresses, so it's a proper time to put an honorable end to this phase of operations. We don't want the next 12th Street tenants to be deluged, and possibly mentally harmed, by CT's twisted mail.

CT: Why on earth stop now? When the stuff you've been touting is really taking off?

VO: That's the very reason. I mean, when CHEAT TRUTH was mentioned in ROLLING STONE I knew the end was near. For CT to be cultural currency for those clapped-out yuppie breadheads... Jesus, what's next? The WALL STREET JOURNAL?

CT: But wasn't publicity the point?

VO: The whole point of CHEAT TRUTH was that anyone can do it. All you need is something to say, and a xerox. You don't need a clique or a bankroll or PR flacks. But now I've got crap like that, so I've changed. CT was a garage-band effort and looked it, deliberately. But I'm not a garage-band guy now. I've taught myself how to play, I've got my own label and recording studio, I'm even big in Japan. I could lie about it, and pretend I was still really street-level, but it would be bogus. It would betray the whole ethos of the thing. Truth plus lies always equals lies.

Besides, a lot of the original freedom is gone. People know who I am, and they get all hot and bothered by personalities, instead of ideas and issues. CT can no longer claim the "honesty of complete desperation." That first fine flower of red-hot hysteria is simply gone.

CT: You sound bitter about it.

VO: Fuck no, man, the thing did exactly what I wanted it to. It

was a successful experiment and had a big pay-off for all concerned. But it has limits. It's too small to get into the really heavy issues, at length. And it's okay as a straight propaganda broadside, but it's not much use as a forum for balanced discussion.

The work has to come first. The publicity can handle itself now. It's already a fucking juggernaut, so I don't see much point in getting out to push. I got better things to do.

CT: So you're saying you've cut a successful niche for yourself, is that it?

VO: The skiffy establishment, such as it is, still doesn't have the foggiest idea what we're up to. They think we're a bunch of PR hustlers, an inch deep, all candy-flake and chrome. They read CT and think, "Gosh, what a hip publicity stunt, this year's model, they can't mean it, though." (Pauses, then bursts into sinister laughter)

CT: What about your readers, though?

VO: If they miss what CT offers, let 'em start their own zines.

It's easy! Personally, I'm going to read Steve Brown's SF EYE (at Box 3105, Washington, DC 20010, \$7/year (\$12 overseas)). Brown's a hip guy and will have some good people working with him, including me if truth be told, though I'll be cleaned up, wearing a shirt and tie, and using another name. I have high hopes for this mag, because it's got room and inclination to tackle the real problems of the field.

And I'll be reading Scott Card's SHORT FOR M (at 546 Lindley Road, Greensboro NC 27410, \$10/year). Card has no taste at all, he gets all damp-eyed over the most laughably inadequate pulp kitsch, but he's usually good for a hoot... It's good to know there's some Neanderthal out there who has the c-word people figured for effete literateurs...

But for now I'm hanging up my shoes. I did what I wanted and I'm quitting while I'm ahead. Could be THE COMPLEAT CHEAP TRUTH will appear as a retrospective, with a copyright and everything.

Oh, and everybody should buy the new Arbor House collection, MIRROR-SHADES: The Cyberpunk Anthology (\$16.95). It's a solid memento of the scene and has the best single summary of Movement ideology.

Someday I may try another zine. But CT's too big now and people lean on it too much. I wanted to point at the mountaintop, I don't want to be the mountain myself.

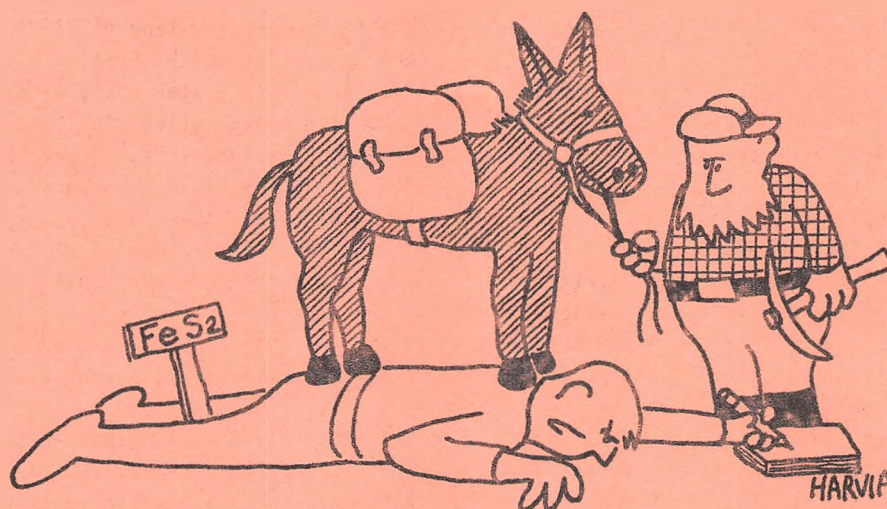
CT: I guess I see... Any final words?

VO: I hereby declare the revolution over. Long live the provisional government.

CT: Same old Vince... Goodbye all.

The Last CHEAP TRUTH
Austin, Texas, USA
The Late Vincent Omniaveritas,
editing
Todd "Need a Job" Refinery, Graphics
Not copyrighted

"Don't mourn, organize"



I wouldn't mind being an acclaimed writer so much if it didn't mean always having some ass on my back.

the five BEST and WORST of television shows »Alan Laska«

THE BEST

1) The Twilight Zone -- CBS-TV (1959 - 1964).

"The Twilight Zone" is perhaps one of the few television shows that became a piece of American history as well as a popular phrase. Created by the late Rod Serling, it was the first real "serious" science fiction show. It won several Emmy and Hugo Awards, and many of the episodes (like "Time Enough At Last," "Monsters Are Due on Maple Street," and "The Invaders") are considered classics.

Unfortunately, the 1983 film based on the TV series failed to capture the TZ spirit. Whether the new version on CBS-TV (which premiered in September 1985) will live up to the original has yet to be determined.

2) The Outer Limits -- ABC-TV (1963 - 1965).

"Outer Limits" was a very well done hour-long sf series created by Leslie Stevens. It featured aliens from outer space, many of which were not the stereotypical "invaders from Mars".

Two episodes were written by Harlan Ellison: "Demon With a Glass Hand" and "Soldier". Ellison sued the producers of the mega-hit film, "The Terminator" claiming the idea had been stolen from "Soldier". The case was settled out of court.

The show was cancelled in the mid-1964/65 season when ABC-TV decided to run it on Saturday against CBS-TV's highly successful "Jackie Gleason Show". A poor decision on the network's part.

3) Star Trek -- NBC-TV (1966 - 1969).

I could say a hundred things about this series -- and then many fans would say I hadn't said enough.

Gene Roddenberry created this series around 1964; the original pilot, called "The Cage", was turned down because a woman was second in command, etc. Roddenberry was given a second chance with the idea, and came up with the most famous television show we know today.

NBC-TV decided to cancel the series after its second year because of low Nielsen ratings. But, fans wrote in by the millions asking -- begging -- to keep the show on the air. It was renewed for a third year but it still did poorly in the ratings. Even though a million-plus letters asked NBC to keep the show on the

air, it was cancelled. However, years later it is one of the most successful television shows in syndication. And four successful Star Trek movies have been released. Need I say more.

4) Doctor Who -- BBC-TV (1966 - present; introduced to the United States in 1978 in syndication).

This is probably the longest-running science fiction series ever done.

At least six different people have played the main character. If an actor wanted to move on to other things, the producers came up with the idea of "The Doctor" regenerating his body into another form. The most popular actor to play the Doctor was Tom Baker, who also played the main character the longest.

The special effects on the show are of very low quality, no better than the B films of the early 1950s -- but this is more than made up for by the witty and clever stories.

5) The Prisoner -- CBS-TV (1968 summer season; an ITC production produced in England).

"The Prisoner" was a limited-run series created by Patrick McGeehan, who also starred in this program as Number 6. It was a type of "1984" program (or was it?) about a member of the British Secret Service who resigns and is mysteriously kidnapped; he finds himself in a place called "The Village."

Some view the series as McGeehan's version of "1984"; others view it comparing life in the Village as no different than life in society today. Other people have their own view of the series. Whatever, "The Prisoner" is a show that must be judged by the viewer.

THE WORST

1) Voyagers -- NBC-TV (1982 - 1983).

This program was intended to be a kind of time-travel history lesson for young viewers. A special repairman named Fideous Bogg is supposed to travel back and forth through time, making sure history goes the way it should. In the year 1982, he accidentally takes a 12-year-old boy named Jeffery with him -- yet his time machine device (called an OMNI) cannot travel past the year 1972 (we're not told why he can't).

The Bogg character looks like a Han Solo clone.

A certain vocal pressure group complained of the show's violence (what violence????) -- but educators around the country also complained about historical inaccuracies in many of the episodes. After one year, time ran out on this program.

2) Galactica 1980 -- ABC-TV (1980, mid-1979/80 season).

"Battlestar Galactica" premiered in 1978 and, despite the ranking #25 in the ratings it was cancelled. There apparently were a lot of fans who thought the show was good and wrote to ABC-TV to keep it on the air. In late 1979, ABC announced the show would return, but most of the original cast was dropped.

When the first "new" show premiered on January 27, 1980 it was nowhere close to the series "Battlestar Galactica" of a year earlier. The plots were on the level of a Saturday-morning cartoon. Since "G: 1980" was being aired at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, the show had to follow tough guidelines for children's programming and had to be somewhat educational. (Around the fall of 1980, after the show was cancelled, I met a 10-year-old girl who was buying the BG: The Foto Novel at a bookstore. I asked her what she thought of Galactica: 1980; she said she didn't like it. At least this show did teach kids how not to do a TV program.)

In the spring 1981 issue of Fantastic Films magazine, an article called "Who Killed The Galactica?" reported that ABC-TV wanted really big bucks for BG in advertising and couldn't get it, so they came up with "Galactica: 1980" mainly to rid themselves of all the mail and complaints after they cancelled "Battlestar."

ABC-TV apparently didn't think much of Galactica 1980 to start with -- the title suggests how long they expected the show to last...

3) Whiz Kids -- CBS-TV (1983 - 1984).

This program apparently tried to cash in on the hit summer film "Wargames." It dealt with a bunch of computer-wizard/hacker kids who solved crimes, etc.

What this show needed was an electronics expert to tell the writers a thing or two (or three or four) about electronics and computers. In one episode, the kids make a radio direction finder to find out where a transmitter is located. But, any amateur radio operator can tell you that you need two direction finders to locate a transmitter. One finder can only tell you what direction it is in (either the next block or the next county).

In another episode, we find the kids in the local police station using the station's terminal. None of the police officers wonder or ask, "Do these kids have permission to use our computer?" No wonder the police have so much crime.

And no surprise that this show got its program cancelled after one year. Syntax Error.

4) Project: UFO -- ABC-TV (mid 1978-1979 season - 1980).

This series was created by the late Jack Webb, who brought us such shows as "Adam-12" and "Dragnet."

Just before the movie "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" was released in December, 1977, ABC announced that Jack Webb had created a new series from the files of USAF "Project: Blue Book." This led one to believe that ABC was going to show recreations of actual UFO cases. They didn't.

"Project: UFO" was about 20-30% based on fact; the rest was dramatized. Certain episodes dealt with several cases that were either many years or miles apart, which the writers tried to link together. Actual cases with logical explanations were written up in such a way that they became more mysterious than they really were -- or vice versa.

A press photo that was released before the series premiered showed the two major characters (who are U.S. Air Force officers) reading a map of the United States -- backwards.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who spent 22 years as scientific advisor to Project: Blue Book, didn't think very much of the series. He indicated that the USAF did not investigate cases like that and that Project: Blue Book was more of a public relations department rather than a UFO investigation department.

"Project: UFO" was cancelled in 1980.

5) V: The Series -- NBC-TV (1984 - 1985).

This was probably the most over-advertised science fiction series ever made -- and it only lasted one season.

In 1983 NBC-TV showed a mini-series called "V" -- to their surprise, the show was a ratings hit. So NBC asked creator Kenneth Johnson to come up with a sequel. He did; but NBC thought his script was too expensive to make, so they asked him to cut it down. Johnson could cut it down so much that he left the project in frustration. So NBC-TV got some other writers and they came up with a script for "V: The Final Battle." It was nowhere close to the miniseries a year ago, but it also did well in the ratings.

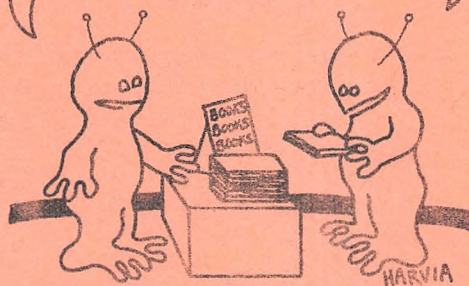
Johnson had told NBC that "V" wouldn't work as a weekly series. And when the series premiered it was such a ratings disaster that NBC cut the cast in half in mid-season. And worse yet, those later episodes contradicted what had happened in earlier episodes.

NBC-TV wished they had listened to Kenneth Johnson when they had the chance...

Final Note: Prior to the 1977 sf hit movie "Star Wars," telling Hollywood that there was a market in science fiction, everyone agreed that the worst sf tv series was CBS-TV's "Lost In Space." Since then, other networks have come up with some real losers, too. Now "Lost In Space" can feel safe and sound.

It's a novel about an astrologator who doesn't know his xyz coordinates.

No plot, huh?



From the Recliner

by Edw. A. Graham, Jr.

The Christmas season has come and gone, the decorations have disintegrated or been carefully put away, and we're all broke. Isn't that the way it always goes? And here I am, in all of my nastiness, tempting you with some good books to rush out and buy, beg, borrow, or ... never mind. You know what I mean.

To start off with, a hardback. You know I don't usually review hardbacks (mostly because I can't afford the SOB's), but this is a special occasion: Mirrorshades, the "official" C-Word (yes, it says "Cyberpunk" on the cover) anthology, edited by Bruce Sterling. One of the reasons to buy this book is that it is the first collection of the hottest new sub-genre in SF since The New Wave. (Everyone who didn't throw up over that last sentence may continue reading.) The stories are not new; they've all been published at one time or another. They're not the real hard-edged stuff, such as Neuromancer. What they are is Good. Stories and collaborations by Gibson, Shirley, Shiner, and somebody named "Sterling." Never heard of him. (Just kidding, Bruce!) He did an excel-

lent job editing the anthology; the introductions are insightful and thoughtful, and the stories selected were well-matched. What more could you ask for?

Would you believe a space opera that involves a genetically-manipulated mutant, a mercenary intelligence officer (this is the "token" female, but she can get real MEAN!), and a doctor from a planet where there are no women? Sound a little skewed? It's Ethan of Athos by Lois McMaster Bujold. Bujold has crafted another lively tale with twists and tangles to really keep your interest up. She handles all of the characters well, especially Ethan and his reactions to the "outside world." (Athos is the planet previously mentioned, which no one ever leaves because they don't want to.) This is a good, entertaining book.

Surprisingly enough, so is Stalking the Unicorn: A Fable of Tonight by Mike Resnick. Resnick recently wrote a gritty space opera with a real Message called Santiago: A Myth of the Future, which was excellent. And now for something completely different. Take one hard-boiled detective (e.g., a Sam Spade type), put him really

down on his luck (his wife just ran off with his partner who had cheated some of their clients who have just sent some rather nasty-looking gentlemen to have a "talk" with aforementioned gumshoe who has had a little trouble at the race-track to boot), throw in the fantasy elements (an elf who has lost a unicorn, plus leprechauns, alternate universes, cat-people, demons, the whole schtick), mix well with Monty Python, add a dash of the Marx Brothers, and sit back to enjoy. The tone is so very different from Santiago that it took me aback. Light and fun is a hard combination to work, but Resnick did it with style. It reminded me of the first time I ever read a Xanth book, minus the puns. Don't shoot me, but I'm kinda hoping for a sequel.

Another fantasy (or not, depending on how you look at it) is the third in Steven Brust's tales of Vlad Taltos. Teckla starts rather quickly after the end of the last Brust book, Yendi, and starts off reading like the first two. You know: fun, a couple of bodies thrown in the way, that sort of thing. But, unfortunately, Brust has tried to write in a Message. Vlad's wife has become a revolutionary. Right. Revolutionaries are dying because they're tramping on the toes of the area boss, a Jhereg like Vlad. Of course Vlad wants to save her, but puts himself up as a target as a result of his meddling. This could have been another fun romp through the back streets of the Empire, but nooo! What we got was some preaching. It seems. This one's mediocre in terms of entertainment value, mostly because the action is too spread out.

Okay, I'm going to do it again. Timothy Zahn has another new book out. He's starting to get prolific, but as he shows in Spinneret, he's not getting sloppier. If anything, his writing is tighter but no less enjoyable. Spinneret involves a U.S.-backed and U.N.-mandated colony mission to another star system, one that none of the other intelligent races wanted. No metals. Hmmm. As it turns out, there's an anti-

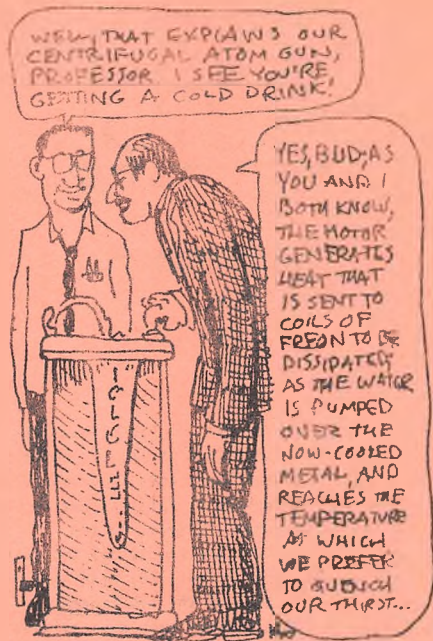
fact there: the Spinneret. Makes some interesting stuff, too. The problem is, everyone wants it: the U.S., the U.N. (actually the Third World), the aliens (all five or six races). And who's caught in the middle? Right! The colonists! Zahn has a good mix of intrigue, wheeling-dealing, idealism, and the blindness of idealists counteracted by the hard-core realists. Good stuff, Maynard.

Also good stuff is The Hercules Text by Jack McDevitt. This is a SETI novel that brings out ALL of the skeletons that contact with a superior race would involve. McDevitt even drags in the Catholic Church. The protagonist isn't even a scientist, but a mid-level bureaucrat who's having problems at home because of this project. The story moves along fairly well, but I had a problem with the novel's final ending. McDevitt wimped out on us. Maybe. I don't know; I didn't write the book and maybe McDevitt had something in mind when he finished. If there was something there, I missed it. So did others. There's also a real BIG technical goof, but I'm not going to tell you about it -- you'll have to find it for yourself. I was so engrossed in the plot and characters that the error slipped right by me. But I'm paranoid anyway. Highly recommended.

Now, Victor Milan's Cybernetic Samurai sounds really dumb, doesn't it? Don't be fooled, folks. A hard-SF story about creating the first sentient computer being is tough enough on its own, but to set the entire tale in Japan, AND to make it all so believable -- wow! When I read it, I felt as though I was THERE. A good sense of the fictional present? I don't know. I also don't know if Milan has spent any time in Japan, but if he hasn't, he's fooled me. This is a very strong book and deserves recognition.

For insightful reading, try a one-two combo with Voyagers and Voyagers II: The Alien Within from Ben Bova. Voyagers is an older book and involves Earth's shaky unifica-

tion to figure out what the hell is that alien artifact that's looping into and out of the Solar System. Why was it orbiting Jupiter, etc.? Keith Stoner is driven to find out -- and he does, the hard way. Voyagers II cannot be read on its own -- you must read the first one, first. Together, they closely present a unified whole and Bova is a damn good writer. It's a good tale and worth getting.



CLASSIC "EXPLANATION" SCENE

Greg Benford's Artifact is a big book, physically. The story inside is slightly ponderous. The beginning is simple: archaeologists have discovered an artifact from an ancient Greek civilization that displays some extremely unusual properties, aside from the fact that it was hidden in an unusual space and the technology for making it was unusual. Well, it's an unusual book. We go from digging in ruins to quantum mechanics with maniacal Greeks getting in the way. Artifact is slow-moving and some of the characters were definitely cut from cardboard (the Greek Army officer is stereotyped to Hell and back). Pretty routine reading.

I read the comic, I saw the movie, I read the book, in that order. Yes, I'm talking about Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Assuming that everyone has at least seen the

movie, I won't bother with any semblance of a synopsis. The comic barely presented the plot (don't they all) and none of the fun and humor that was in the movie. The novel by Vonda McIntyre puts in a lot more background that, naturally, wasn't in the movie. I think that by seeing the movie first and then reading the book, the gestalt was much better than either alone. 'Nuff said.

Lastly, the possible Turkey. The reason I say "possible" is that Dawn for a Distant Earth by L.E. Modesitt, Jr. is Volume One of The Forever Hero. Oh, boy. Another series. The hero, Gerswin, is a devilkid, a more-or-less superhuman mutant, living on a destroyed Old Earth when he's picked up and recruited into the I.S.S. for the Empire. Sounds pretty bad already, doesn't it? Hang on... Gerswin returns to earth and pushes and shoves and does everything he can to start the rebuilding of Earth (it wasn't atomic war that destroyed it -- we used pollution and stripping of resources to kill the ecosystem). Now, he doesn't age at all in fifty years or so and nobody in the Empire seems to notice the fact. Dumb. The book is not TOO bad in places, but a lot of it just sits there, doing nothing. I might pick up Volume Two; I might not.

Whew! Now that I'm done here, I can put those books in the shelves where they belong and go start a new stack. My book dealer (I call him my "pusher") is very nice and considerate. He also knows my weakness. Know anyone else who gets a Personalized Invitation (notice the caps, please) to a sale? He likes me because I keep him in business. ***SIGH***

P.S. Just out now: The first volume of Wildcards, a mosaic novel edited by George R.R. Martin. It stars such notables as Waldrop, Zelazny, Shiner, Milan, and many more. I don't want to say anything else about the plotting or stories because that would spoil things, but you had better read this one. If you don't, you'll probably hate yourself later. 'Bye now!

OFF THE RACK

Book Reviews

WILD CARDS

Edited by George R.R. Martin
Bantam Spectra, 1986
Paperback, 410 pp., \$3.95
Reviewed by Allen Varney

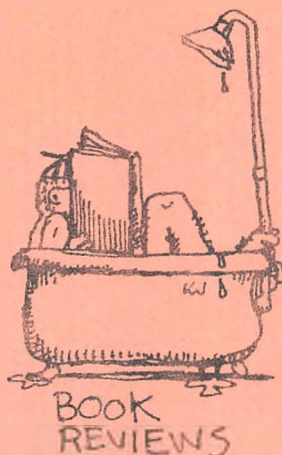
It's not just Austin chauvinism that leads me to think our local writers show forth best in Wild Cards Volume 1, edited by George R.R. Martin. Howard Waldrop and Lew Shiner show more creativity and skill in their contributions than the lackluster pros and barely-competent novices that accompany them.

You may already know the premise: In 1946 a tailored alien virus is released over Manhattan, killing lots of people, deforming more horribly, and turning a select few into superhumans with comic-book powers. From there, the book proceeds on an alternate-history path to the present, showing these heroes fighting in Korea, facing HUAC during the McCarthy era, protesting in the heady '60s, and so on. This idea of "What if superheroes were real?" has been floating around in the comics field lately, as shown in the brilliant Dark Knight and the even greater Watchmen. Wild Cards was in the works before either of these; "when it's time to railroad, people will build railroads."

The various writers in this shared-world anthology seem to enjoy themselves, but only our local boys do anything extravagantly entertaining with the premise. Howard Waldrop contributes the "origin" story, "Thirty Minutes Over Broadway! Jetboy's Last Adventure!" which is a true kick; Lew Shiner's "The Long, Dark Night of Fortunato" introduces a fascinating antihero who gets his powers through Intrinsic sex. Unfortunately, his story stops just as it's getting started. (This is the first book of a series, folks. Stay tuned for next issue, right?)

Roger Zelazny and Edward Bryant (with Leanne Harper) contribute professional but emotionless efforts, while Stephen Leigh manages to communicate a modicum of sincerity in his "Strings." Walter Jon Williams gets up on his hind legs once more to produce yet another pointless angst-maker using someone else's idea. George Martin himself enters with an amazingly routine story of the Great and Powerful Turtle, a telekinetic who hovers above the fray in an armored Volkswagen and, golly gee whiz, fights crime.

Martin's story is intriguing in that, for all the alleged premise of "superheroes in the real world," Martin introduces the same kinds of distortion in society that comic books have to assume (otherwise the whole idea falls apart). The Turtle could be taken out with one tear-gas grenade, in the story as written; but nobody does it, because that would ruin the



story. The plot, by the way, is so completely comic-booky that Martin must have intended it as a tribute to the funnybooks, or even (God forbid) as a superhero roleplaying game scenario: that's how stale it seems to me.

The other authors are new to me, and there's no one in the bunch I feel like reading again. Victor Milan (author of the new Cybernetic Samurai) produces a story even more evidently based on superhero RPGs, a true idiot plot. Melinda Snodgrass is possibly the biggest fumbler in the lot: "Degradation Rites," set during the McCarthy witch-hunt (superheroes instead of Communists, get it?), shows little understanding of the era. At one point a character says "They were happy to get my input." I know zero about Snodgrass, but I'll bet a nickel she wasn't around in 1950, or she'd know nobody but an engineer talked about "input" then. Her main character is a congresswoman's wife who has absorbed the personalities of Albert Einstein, Oppenheimer, and other brilliant intellects; but for all this, darned if she doesn't talk and act like a young woman in the 1980's, the kind who might very well start -- yes -- writing science fiction.

Basically most of these stories seem shallow. None but Waldrop manages to convey a clear understanding of any time before their adolescence. (I think it's significant that the virus was released in 1946, while Martin was born in 1948 and the others probably later -- they all seem comfortable once they're into the 1960s, when their protagonists who were kids in 1946 are about their own age then, doing the things the writers did.)

A big horse-laugh to the "Appendix," which offers a pseudo-scientific explanation for the virus and its effects. It all comes down to "psi," which is the same as saying, "It's magic." Waste of space.

A disappointing volume, overall. One more point: It's called "a mosaic novel"; in an

Aggiecon panel in 1986, Martin took pains to differentiate this from a "shared-world anthology," without offering a shred of solid evidence for the distinction. Sure, Mr. Martin, and the trade for Nick Daniloff wasn't a "trade," and the Reykjavik summit wasn't a "summit." For all his liberal leanings in his story here, Martin seems to have embraced the Reagan Era of Orwellian Newspeak wholeheartedly.

(Allen Varney is a freelance writer and game designer who lives in Austin, Texas.)

THE SECRET OF LIFE

by Rudy Rucker
Bluejay Books, 1985
Hardcover, 246 pp., \$14.95
Reviewed by Howard Coleman

Nick Herbert, in a marvelous book called Quantum Reality, notes that there are two types of quantum physicists: Those who wonder about what quantum mechanics implies for the nature of reality, and those who don't. It isn't necessary to understand the implications in order to use the theory, after all, and it can be pretty uncomfortable-making to worry much about what all this really means. Substituting "subject-of-interest" for "quantum mechanics", we can probably find the same delineations among other varieties of scientists, among mathematicians, among computer scientists, and among SF-readers, as well. Unexamined relativity theory or taken-for-granted artificial intelligence can prop up a story just fine, and serious inspection of the props is hard to carry off in a readable fashion, anyway.

And if the writer succeeds, he will very likely have plunked the reader down in a distinctly odd place, different indeed from the standard "Variations on the World As We (Think We) Know It" as performed in most SF, most of the time. SF readers (Us) being not all that different in many respects from mainstream readers (Them), this can make Us as uncomfortable as SF makes Them.

Fortunately, some writers try. By the grace of Ghod, some of these succeed. Which brings us to Rudy Rucker, who, for some years now, has been pointing out just how strange a place the universe really is, and how strange and wonderful the mathematical, scientific, and science-fictional ideas we take for granted really are. Somehow, he writes good books in the process.

Only, in terms of Rucker's work, the universe is maybe not so strange and wonderful as it is, er, wacko. Take The Secret of Life, for example.

The Secret of Life is about Conrad Bunker. Conrad is sixteen years old, growing up in Louisville, Kentucky, when we meet him. Now, when you were sixteen, growing up in Plinkton, Ugh., you either were Conrad Bunker, or you knew him pretty well. (It's probably a safe bet that Rudolf von Bitter Rucker knew Conrad von Riemann Bunker pretty well, too.) Conrad has discovered Sartre, he has discovered that he is going to die (someday), he has discovered that no one else understands these things, he has discovered that there is no point to it all, and he has discovered that there is great pleasure to be had by getting drunk. If you remember

how different you always thought you were, it won't come as any surprise to learn that Conrad thinks he was left in Kentucky by an alien spaceship in 1956, or that he believes he can fly (however unreliably).

In the natural way of things, Conrad goes off to college. He encounters different people, drugs, but still no meaning for existence. The world is such an inexplicable place that, when it turns out that Conrad really can fly, that's just another piece in the puzzle. Along about here the pace, which has been downright tedious by Rucker's standards, begins, to, er, pick up. Flying, it turns out, isn't the half of it. Conrad, as he always suspected, really was left in a meadow by a flying saucer.

And if you want to see just what makes Rudy Rucker different, this is a good place to look. Everything I've described above is the perfect setup for the standard SF-nal wish-fulfillment power-fantasy. Conrad really is a Slan. But would the secret of life really be any different just because you were assembled out of pigmeat by aliens in Cornelius Skelton's pasture in 1956?

HOWARD WHO?

by Howard Waldrop

Doubleday Science Fiction

Hardcover, 181 pp., \$12.95

reviewed by Robert Whitaker
Sirignano

This book is subtitled, "Twelve Outstanding Stories of Science Fiction." Well, it comes close. There are a few here that don't work for me. There are a small handful of jokes (good ones, but jokes, nonetheless), which however good, aren't outstanding (they are hampered from becoming good stories by their construction). George R.R. Martin is right, in one way, "the only thing like a Howard Waldrop story is another Howard Waldrop story." And that's the problem.

Problem? Oh, there is one. However fine each individual story is and was in the place it first appeared in print, alongside some other story by some other writer on some other topic and theme, adding all of Waldrop's tales in one place may have resulted in a partial overkill, because Waldrop does use similar repetitive concepts. However, in all fairness, I must admit to liking the book -- but there are faults to the collection, and faults to the stories.

Also perhaps more picknickety than most, I think the prose is, in some of the stories, too clipped and quick. The stories are over too quickly. A concept becomes involving with detail. Though a rule applies to Waldrop: The more jokes and sillier the concept, the shorter the sentences.

"Dr. Hudson's Secret Gorilla" is a rundown of old low-budget Grade-2 "transplant his brain into a gorilla and kill 70 minutes" film cliches, and works fine as a good extended joke. This is one of the most clipped and "stream of deadpan consciousness" stories I've ever read.

"Save a Place in the Lifeboat for Me" postulates the universe as being run by Groucho Marx. It isn't very convincing. It's funny if you let it be funny. I kept resisting it because I expected more from the idea. There's no

real description or characterization here. Waldrop lets the images carry themselves, and doesn't try or attempt to contribute to the characterization (the characters stepped on him by their archetypal force?). This is one of Waldrop's problems: When he uses a well-known image, he doesn't add anything to it. You expect what you already know. This story is probably a very good piece to read to an audience.

"The Ugly Chickens" is so convincing, I was wondering what sort of reception it would have gotten if it were not presented as fiction in UNIVERSE 10, but as a fact article in FATE... But nonetheless, this is one I read three times in one month after encountering it. It's very fine as a story: It invokes the feeling of loss and the desire to know more about the incident described, and perhaps, maybe, someone overlooked at least two of these ugly chickens...

"Horror We Got" is disturbing and ghoulishly funny, only because it can be presented back to itself for suggesting what it attempts to repudiate. (And it suggests: What if all this anti-Jewish propaganda is true? What then?) The slipperiness of the topic and ill ease it could provoke make it a potentially dangerous story...

"Heirs of the Perisphere" is enjoyable, jokey and strictly off the wall. Robot cartoon characters of Donald and Mickey and Goofy (somewhat disguised for legal reasons) reactivate in the distant future when the amusement parks have long closed. It is underdeveloped, and fairly rushed, but the Idea and Concept are marvelous. (I sit here and think the ecology and geology used in the story

are wrong, wrong wrong!) One could hope that Waldrop could see its absolute potential and revise and expand on it so that it could be affectionate as well as funny.

A lot of the stories are alternate universe stories, and they gain no momentum. It's very easy to present a topic that sounds like a joke (or a good idea) as in "Ike at the Mike" where Elvis Presley is a member of the US Senate and Dwight D. Eisenhower is a jazz clarinet player. Beyond the incidental smile the concept invokes, the details are piled on one another until the story is all filler (a bit of this to explain this and then there's this and this and this) and a few images and scenes that might have invoked the plot. (I also think a man as stupid as Elvis Aaron Presley was, couldn't have become a Senator.) The same is true of "Die untergang des Abendlandesmenschen," a German Horse opera (Cowboys meet pre-Nazis) which I think would be fine in a collection of stories unlike itself. It suffers greatly in the company of other similarly constructed stories. The stories bang elbows with a lot of other stories constructed in a familiar fashion. Ditto for "God's Hooks." It is nice enough to write one or two alternate universe stories and then something else... gosh, what if Howard Waldrop didn't write any alternate universe stories? Then what? What would he write?

Despite some of the repetition here, this is a good collection. Don't read it all at one sitting, though.

ON THE SCREEN

Movie Reviews

Let's Do The Time Warp Again! some thoughts on Star Trek IV by Hank Graham

Keynote: 1 Cor 13:11

If you ever want to waste some time on an activity of the intensity of chewing gum, attempt to deal seriously for a moment with the phenomenon that the TV series Star Trek has become. I've come to the conclusion that there is NOTHING that can happen now that will affect it AT ALL.

Consider that last statement. Extreme, isn't it? But what could happen? One of the major players could die. Think they'd stop producing the movies? Take a look at the grosses on this latest one. And even if there were no more Star Trek movies, there would still be the books, multiplying like rabbits on the shelves of your local bookstores. Starting this fall, supposedly, we'll be seeing the adventures of an all-new crew hitting the airwaves. In all the ways that matter now, Star Trek has become eternal.

This isn't SF any more -- it's a going concern.

Now, I'm not making a value judgment here... but it does mean that, in a practical sense, this review of Star Trek IV doesn't matter. But that doesn't mean that I'm going to shut up, either.

But, to start at the beginning. There is this latest movie, Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. In which an alien whale probe, sorta kinda like an intergalactic Coke can with a glowing marble attached, enters wailing (yes, honest!) and advances on Earth from the depths of places Really Far Away. Emitting an incomprehensible, untranslatable signal that is wiping out all the technology in its path and flipping out the weather on Earth. At the very same time Kirk and the gang are on their way back to Starfleet to turn themselves in for all the things they did in the last movie (i.e., stealing a starship, disobeying direct orders, screwing up Federation foreign policy, blowing up the aforementioned starship). Things get tricky when it turns out the incomprehensible, untranslatable signal is the songs of space-

Reviews

going humpback whales looking for more of their kind but humpbacks are extinct in the 23rd Century, so Kirk and the gang zip through a time warp to 20th Century Earth in the command-decked Klingon ship they so handily picked up in *Star Trek III*, with the intention of nabbing a couple of humpbacks to bring back to tell the whale probe to be cool. They succeed.

I think it's obvious that no one is going to see this movie because of the plot. And a lot of people have been going to see it. And a lot of the reviews have been very, very positive. *Newsweek* magazine had Mr. Spock on its cover. The newspaper ads are choked with taglines declaring it to be the best of all the *Star Trek* movies. I don't agree.

To put it bluntly, *Star Trek: Intravenous* is nothing more than one of the bad episodes. Not as bad as *Star Trek: TMP* (at least here someone successfully resisted the urge to spend an hour or so travelling in, around, and through the interior of the whale probe) but bad, nonetheless. What's interesting is that while *Star Trek: TMP* was recognized as "good" only in the relativistic context that it was better than no *Star Trek* at all, *IV* is being hailed as a highwater mark.

To give the picture its due, it is funny. One of the strengths of the TV series was its ability to see the humor involved in its adventures and galaxy-spanning, and that has been heavily stressed in the new film. *Star Trek IV*

is a very enjoyable experience. And there is, of course, a warm affection for these old, familiar characters. Hell, I enjoyed the movie, even as I was thinking how silly it was thinking how silly it was, how long in the tooth Shatner and Nimoy are looking (though not, interestingly enough, in the movie posters), and what a reversal this movie is on all the interesting directions they'd started pioneering back in *Star Trek II*.

The plot this time around seems an achingly artificial contrivance designed to arbitrarily resolve all the situations left hanging at the end of *Star Trek III*. Get the crew back on the Enterprise pattering around the galaxy, and enough already with how they've aged. Don't let Spock keep the reconciled understanding of human emotion he had developed — let's get back to the cool, aloof being of the old TV series. And it should always be "Captain" Kirk, none of this "Admiral" stuff.

The question of Kirk's rank is the perfect example of the direction the series seems to be going in. The first time someone at a convention (Hi, Bill!) expressed to me a resistance to Kirk's promotion, I thought he was joking. Since then, it is with a touch of amazement that I've realized how many *Star Trek* fans felt strongly about the matter. "Admiral Kirk? It just doesn't sound right, y'know?"

But why in hell should anyone have a resistance to a supposedly able (indeed, superior) officer receiving a promotion, for God's sake? Everyone is used to it being "Captain" Kirk, though, from fifteen years of reruns, and, with the new movie, that group of fans is getting what it wants.

Finally, the topical stance of the new movie (and incidental to that, let me clear the record and report that it is just rumor that a practical joker at ILM slapped a "Save The Whales" bumper-sticker on the back, right engine nacelle of the Enterprise for its final warp-out in the film) is being hailed as a return to the "commitment" of the TV series. Save the whales? Who's kidding whom here? It's great that Leonard Nimoy cares about the many species nearing extinction, but to simply take an attitude on such a subject, à la the '60s, without trying to identify the forces at work, seems woefully naive from the perspective of the '80s.

I believe the many changes of direction in the new film are an attempt to roll things back to the situation of the original TV series — a time warp, indeed. Judging from the critical approval, and the level of business, this is the *Star Trek* that many people want and accept. Well, it may be entertaining, and thrilling, and clever, but it also is giving up the chance to be as moving as it was in *Star Trek II*. Its characters are losing any semblance of reality. I don't how anyone else feels about that, but me it bugs — that damn thing had some promise.

And, on the personal disappointment side, I really wish, seeing as how they had Kirk at large in 20th Century San Francisco, they'd managed to have had him extricate himself from some situation by flipping open his old communicator and telling Scotty to beam him up, as there was a lack of intelligent life in the vicinity...

Column

At the Launderette

Been away for awhile. Hadda go out to Nevada on a job. Pay's good, but there ain't much one can do out in the middle of the desert. Sure, I hit the casinos and the brothels like any other tourist when I first got there. But unlike most tourists, I hadda stay longer than "four fabulous days".

Let me tell ya, the glitter pales real fast by the second week — especially if, like I was, you're stuck out in the middle of hot, dry, barren, radio-active Nowheresville, NV.

When I fancied I could see the Joshua trees moving at night, I decided that I needed something to occupy my mind. The local lending library had a complete "run" of those new sf novels I'd been hearing so much about. So I figured, what-the-hell — can't go any more bug crazy than I all ready am — I'll read 'em.

So what's all the fuss about? These books ain't such a big deal. I admit a couple ain't worth the trouble to read — too many made-up words and needless political crap — but hey, most of 'em are good stories.

I did notice that the majority of 'em deal with puzzles rather than your more traditional, "Hey, let's build a Galactic Empire" type plot. Instead, the poor schmuck of a main character has to figure out what the hell is going on.

It ain't easy for him, either — what with all the drugs he takes, money he owes, and shits he

has for friends & brains. And of course everyone is either wired, plugged, jacked, chipped, 'faced, bio'd, augmented, enhanced, modified, or artificial. But otherwise it's a mystery-style story.

Now all this here high-tech, bio-computer, state-of-the-art stuff is okay. I mean, its nothing more than today's sfnal equivalent of yesterday's space travel, zero-gee, habitat stuff hung around a good read.

Except some of these books are pushing it. I mean, okay, a non-USA environment is fine — it shows vision, a broad world-view outlook, a feeling for the underdog and above all, research ability. But enough is enough.

Reading a book where the main character is an Aleut living in Baffin Bay with an augmented sled dog and who creates aurora borealis influenced wet-ware poetry while trying to live his drug soaked life free from the global spanning NET but can't 'cause he's got a conscious is A BIT MUCH TO TAKE.*

These books show a lot of promise. I hope they stick to good stories and leave the esoteric stuff to the boring folks. Otherwise I'd going to spend my money over at Fran's Ranch, at least there I know in advance I'm going to get screwed.

by Ernie Scrapple

* *Nanook of the NET* by Frank, Spider & Kim Stanley Robinson

Editor's Note — cf. Hank's keynote with mine: Matthew 19:14.

Polly Freas Dies

Polly Freas, wife of award-winning sf illustrator Frank Kelly Freas, died of cancer on January 24, 1987 in Norfolk General Hospital, Virginia.

A number of sf conventions are holding Polly Freas Memorial Auctions to help with Polly's huge medical expenses. Auctions have been held at Confusion and Boskone, and more will be held at Millinicon, Contretemps, Capricon, and Lunacon. If you would like to help, please send items to be auctioned to Dick Spelman, PO Box 2079, Chicago, IL 60690, or to Rusty Hevelin, Box 112, Dayton, OH 45401. Cash donations should be sent to Steve Prichard, HAROSFA (Hampton Roads Science Fiction Association), PO Box 9434, Hampton, VA 23607 (phone 804-596-0269).

So far, these auctions have raised several thousand dollars. Maia Cowan writes:

"We heard first thing Saturday morning at Confusion that Polly Freas had died, and that Kelly was left with oppressive medical bills. By noon a benefit auction was scheduled to precede the regular art auction.

"Dorsais Irregular Bob Passovoy and Steve Simmons were auctioneers along with David Stein. Kiz Pearse's "Team, Eh?" ran the show. Contributions were generous, creative, and typically fannish:

"Julia Ecklar's promise of a 60-minute tape of any songs she knows or can learn brought \$110. Another bidder paid \$100 to be drawn into her and Tom Howell's new graphic novel, Honor Among Thieves.

"Tim Zahn's offer to use the high bidder's name for a character in his upcoming novel, Dead Man Switch, also raised \$100.

"Among other items auctioned were a Darlene Coltrain pin donated by Elan Litt, which went for \$225; a Hungarian peanut butter cup which Bob Hohman bought for \$20 (whereupon a friend pointed out that he's diabetic and can't

even eat it); boxes of cookies and a box of shrimp for \$20 each; and numerous artworks which the artists pulled from the regular art auction. As the auction progressed, people spontaneously added contributions like a 30-minute backrub and a Tarot reading.

"The last item was a Kelly Freas drawing of Bob Asprin, Gordon Dickson and Mike (Moonwolf) Longcor. As the bids approached \$150, auctioneer Steve Simmons announced, "You're not just bidding against each other, you're bidding against what we think we could get for it at Capricon." Brookline MA fan Josh Shain asked from the corner, "How much have you raised so far?" Upon being told \$1,430, he promptly bid \$570. He won a five-minute standing ovation along with the drawing.

"Benefit auctions are also planned for Boskone, Capricon, and Lunacon. Confusion challenges other conventions, particularly Boskone, to meet their final figure of \$2.00 per attendee.

"Curt Clemmer informs me that Kelly would appreciate any copies of photographs of Polly that people might have. They can be sent to his home at 4216 Blackwater Rd., Virginia Beach VA 23457."

Kelly Freas has also requested that donations be made in Polly's name to the Children's Welfare Fund, which Polly helped to establish. The Fund's address is:

Children's Welfare Fund
c/o Stabur Graphics Inc.
23301 Meadow Park
Detroit, MI 48239.

Polly was well-loved, and will be sorely missed.

the Texas SF Inquirer

Coming next issue:

- An interview with William Gibson, by A.P. McQuiddy*
- Bob Tucker on Candid Convention Reporting
- "The Empire Strikes Back!" -- fans on both sides of the ocean respond to Dennis Virzi's "Open Letter to British Fandom" in issue 17...

• "A Short History of ArmadilloCon," by Monica Stephens and Robert Taylor

• A previously unpublished report on ArmadilloCon I, by Fan Guest of Honor Jeanne Gomoll

• "From the Armchair," our regular book-review column by by Edw. A. Graham, Jr. (host of ArmadilloCon 9's "Late Night with Science Fiction"); plus two new columns: "Life Is All A Rerun" by Neil E Kaden, and Gen. Lee Natter, ret. talking about Comicdom...

• The latest update on FACT shenanigans

• And -- finally! -- four tons of letters!

• Don't miss it!

* that is, if Andy finishes writing it up in time to include it...

The Texas SF Inquirer

Issue 20, Feb./March 1987

Contributors this issue:

News: Marty & Robbie Cantor, Cl. Crouch, Sue Denim, "Harbinger", Neil E Kaden, Katharine Kimbriel/Hap Henriksen, L Manning, Leah McGrew, A.P. McQuiddy, John Moore, Theresa Patterson, Robert Teague, Allen Varney, Edd Vick, and Judith Ward, among others.

Columns, reviews articles, and other stuff: Richard Brandt, Howard Coleman, Janet Coleman, Maia Cowan, Cl. Crouch, Cathy Doyle, Edw. A. Graham, Jr. (who deserves a medal for ALWAYS meeting a deadline), Hank Graham, David Herrington, Steve Jackson, Alan Laska, Pat Mueller, John Moore, Vincent Omniaveritas, Paul D. Ortega, Ernie Scrapple, Robert Whitaker Sirignano, Allen Varney, and Dennis Virzi.

Art: Teddy Harvia/David Thayer: pp.21, 24; Stu Shiffman: p.4; Jim Thompson: p.36; Phil Tortorici: p.17; Mel. White: p.3; Kip Williams: pp. 2, 5, 10, 13, 25, 26, 32, 34.

AT THE CONS

Convention Reports

LOSCON 12 -- 1985
report by Janet and Howard Coleman

Over the Thanksgiving weekend, we ventured to exotic Pasadena (subset of L.A., not Houston) for the purpose of visiting the twelfth installment of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society's local con, LOSCON 12. Nestled securely in the Pasadena Hilton, not far from JPL (where remnants of a planetary exploration program still draw breath), and Mount Wilson (where remnants of a famous observatory still draw breath, for now), LOSCON set forth to entertain and enlighten.

And entertained and enlightened we were, thanks to Craig Miller and his merry band (who brought us LAcon II). The only major disappointment of the con was the indisposition of Daniel Pinkwater, whose absence was mitigated in part by videotaped interviews and an autograph session in which the part of Pinkwater was played by an Apple Macintosh. Attendees were invited to sign a get-well card (or get-well poster) which has, we are sure, been delivered with all due ceremony.

Major satisfactions of the con were many. In addition to GoH Robert Silverberg and FGoH Terry Carr, such folks were to be seen around as Greg Bear, Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, David Brin, A.J. ("call me Algis") Budrys, Harlan Ellison, Raymond Feist, Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, Bill Rotsler, Norman Spinrad, and last but not least, the remarkable Mel Gilden. Mike Hodel and Mel Gilden interviewed Silverberg, Carr, and Budrys in an "Hour 25" broadcast from the hotel, live! (Actually, it was more live for those who hadn't surrendered two hours to time zone shift.) Jerry Pournelle and Norman Spinrad and various buffer states participated in panels on SDI and military presences in sf. (One attended these panels by the simple expedient of being anywhere in the hotel while they were in progress.) Julius Schwartz conducted a panel promoting a new line of graphic novels. (This panel started out with Ellison, Silverberg, Bloch, and Bradbury in attendance; when Bradbury made an early exit, his place was taken by some youngster named Niven. Later on, conversing with a local fan, we were asked why anyone would come all the way from Austin for "our little con." We were forced to admit that this particular weekend was inaccountably slow in Austin, so we decided to relax in the provinces.)

There was no Cyberpunk panel. Well, you can't have everything.

High points at random: GoH interviews, of Terry Carr by Bill Rotsler and of Robert Silverberg by Harlan Ellison (during which Ellison described his parting of the ways with "Twilight Zone"); the "Hour 25" broadcast (wow, the Mel Gilden!); all the free beer, courtesy of folks we couldn't possibly remember but whom we will certainly vote for should they happen to run for anything. (That's right, all of them.)

And, last of all, the Doo-Dah Parade. We attempt no description of the Doo-Dah Parade, but we really think Austin ought to have one (given the abundance of raw material and all).

Lots of things went on that we haven't talked about: art show and huxter room and film room and video room and costuming panels and so on and so on. If you want to find out about these, we suggest contacting LASFS, since they seem bound and determined to do it again next year. We'll probably attend again, especially if Mel Gilden's there.

CONFEDERATION
The 44th World Science Fiction Convention
August 28 - September 1, 1986
Atlanta, Georgia
report by David Herrington

Opening Ceremonies started off with a witty skit about science fiction's humble space-opera origins, and how the genre has evolved over decades -- back into space opera. The Honorable Newt Grinsing made an address to the audience; Ray Bradbury would not attend because he was stuck in traffic at the airport.

Panel: Fandom Down Under. All about Australian fandom, which is small compared to the U.S. Attendance at their larger cons is about 500. Nick Stathopoulos talked about his artwork, and the time he spent as an illustrator for Hanna-Barbera. I found it interesting that HB makes all their cartoons in Australia...

Party: Meet The Program Participants. This party occurred (you can't say "held" -- there were too many people) on the tenth floor of the Marriott. I managed to briefly chat with Harry Turtledove, mentioning to him the criticism in "Science Fiction Review" that his Sim series would be incomplete if he didn't write a story totally from the viewpoint of a Sim. He said he'd heard of it, but didn't want to answer it at that time. I also met Kees van Toorn from the Holland in

'90 Worldcon bid. We talked about the Perry Rhodan series a bit. It's going strong in Holland -- up to #800. Kees was surprised that PR had stopped publication in the U.S. several years ago.

Autographing: I made the Ray Bradbury autographing on Friday a half-hour early to get my copy of Martian Chronicles and Thrilling Wonder Stories signed. Even at 9:30, there was a long line.

Panel: Upright & Rigid -- SF Magazine Columns. The only small, intimate panel that I attended. (There were fifteen of us there, including the panelists.) Jay Kay Klein revealed his writing criteria for Analog -- always keep the column on a positive note and keep the dirt out. Klein also revealed that Herbert Stoltz, the art director at Analog when that magazine belonged to Conde Nast, had a prejudice against hippies (i.e., long hair). Whenever a long-haired SF author turned up, the picture was cut off in the middle of the forehead. Also revealed was the answer to that oft-asked question, "Who posed as Kelvin Throop in the Analog spoof issue?" The answer: a hapless editorial assistant.

Panel: A Thing Called "National Science Policy". At present, there is no national science policy.

Panel: Is Interstellar Warfare Possible? This was the worst panel that I attended at Confederation. Nothing worthwhile was said on the subject. The panelists were too busy shouting at each other, interrupting each other, and grabbing for the mike.

Panel: Return to Kitty Hawk. A one-man panel starring Martin Caidin. Mr. Caidin took a very critical view of the space shuttle; his comments included "The people who designed it ought to be put up against the wall and shot"; "All of the announced modifications to make the shuttle safer, won't"; "Ten out of every one hundred missions will statistically end in disaster"; and "The Air Force's old X-20 project should have been upgraded and used for the shuttle project."

Panel: World-Building 101A: Creating a Physical World. The first and only of the several "World Building" panels that I attended. What began as a consensus panel soon degenerated into "Let's make it this way, because we're running out of time." This attitude was certainly understandable, but it ruined the panel for me.

Panel: By Sealed Bid: How to Win A Hugo. Various concerns about the Hugo voting process were discussed. Not enough people vote; the people who do vote haven't read every nomination -- they vote for what they've read; and there's a serious possibility of manipulation by publishers if they can find out who regularly votes.

Other Comments: The Art Show was poorly done, in my opinion. I thoroughly detested the bidding system, and having two auctions a day is really stupid. Artists lost money. I didn't get to see everything. Everybody doesn't arrive at the con on Friday.

The Belly-Dancing panels (?) were inappropriate -- they had nothing to do with science fiction.

On the plus side, the coverage of the masquerade over the hotel video system was excellent. Selling videotapes of the con was a good idea, and future cons should continue this practice if the demand warrants it.

CONFEDERATION

From Obscure Fan to Established Pro
in One Easy Weekend
report by John Moore

Wouldn't you like to avoid those long registration lines at conventions? Hobnob with the great and near great of SF at lavish private parties? Spout off before an enraptured audience on subjects you know nothing about? Well, you can! I did! All you have to do to qualify is...nothing whatsoever!

NOVEMBER 1985 -- A huge packet came in the mail from Sue Pavlat. Inside was a questionnaire asking me if I wanted to participate in the program at Confederation and, if so, what topics was I interested in. There then followed a list of topics one half inch thick. I checked off all the topics having to do with sex, drugs, or rock and roll, and returned it with a letter saying, "I think your computer has made a mistake." At the time, I had only a few small press credits to my name and could not believe that anyone who would want to see me on a panel. As things turned out, I was right.

JUNE 1986 -- Charles Ryan, editor of Aboriginal SF, confirms that my story will be in the premier issue and it will be ready for Confederation. "Good," I think, "I can wave it around to prove that I really am a writer." He asks for a picture and a bio to publish with the story. I send him a Sears Portrait Special.

JULY 1986 -- The preliminary schedule arrives for the Worldcon. I'm still on it. Three separate panels, in fact. None of them are on sex, drugs, or R&R. The first panel is called, "After Civilization's Collapse; an 18% Profit?" I have no clue as to what it will be about. David Brin and Lois Bujold (Shards of Honor) are on the panel. The second is called "Space Habitats as Transport Vehicles." Jim Baen and Jerry Pournelle are listed. The third is called "Life Extension, How Long Can You Go?" I spend the month frantically reading up on space habitats and life extension.

AUGUST 1986 -- Doug Potter and Rory Harper look at the schedule and say, "After Civilization's Collapse; an 18% Profit? Sounds like the Libertarian panel." I spend the month frantically reading up on Libertarianism.

THURSDAY ... I arrive at the convention and register at the Program Participants Room, thus avoiding the long line. Great. I am given a ticket for a free drink at the "Meet the Pros" party and one of those chemical fluorescent plastic strands to wear at the party so the fen can identify me as a pro. "Don't

Reviews

release the chemicals until the party starts," I am warned. I show the strand to Martin Wagner, who promptly breaks it.

My first panel is at two o'clock. David Brin isn't there. It turns out the subject is survivalism, not Libertarianism. Lois Bujold, who has actually prepared notes to speak from, is a little miffed when Robert Adams immediately opens up the floor for questions.

Seven o'clock is the Meet the Pros party. The place is bright enough so that the fluorescence on the plastic strands doesn't show. I get my free drink.

FRIDAY ... The Space Habitats panel draws a big crowd. Jerry Pournelle decides he wants to talk about the National Science Policy and the National Report on Space and other government stuff he's written and I haven't read. Fortunately Jim Baen realizes that the crowd has come to see Pournelle and keeps the mike away from me. After the panel a dozen technoid types surround me and question me about space drives. It quickly develops that they know far more about it than I do and they stalk off in disgust.

I check the message board and discover that I have a message. It says, "I saw you on the Space Habitats panel and really liked you. If you would like to meet me, leave a message for...Crazy. P.S. I am a male."

I am appalled.

I go to the L5 party. They were all at the panel. One of the members asks me what qualified me to speak on space habitats. I decide to be candid. "Actually, my credentials aren't that good..."

"We didn't think so," he replies. I resolve to avoid L5 members for the rest of the weekend.

SATURDAY ... Rory Harper and I go down to the dealer's room to meet Charles and Mary Ryan. Charles takes Rory's picture for the next issue of *Aboriginal SF* and I buy extra copies at contributor's prices to send to my parents.

Steve Gould takes me up to the SFWA suite. I have never been in there before. It is filled with writers. Steve gives me a "Guest of SFWA" sticker to put on my nametag. He explains that it will get me into all the publisher's parties.

I go down to the art show and meet Charles Lang, who did the illustration for my story. The painting is on display. "It's gotten a lot of attention," says Charles. "People ask what it is. I tell them to read the story."

At that moment a middle aged women comes up and says, "I can't figure that one out."

"Read the story," I suggest brightly. She looks at me as though I am demented and stamps off.

SUNDAY ... My last panel. I actually manage to sound intelligent on this one. That's because everyone is so dragged out after three days of partying that it is easy to scintillate.

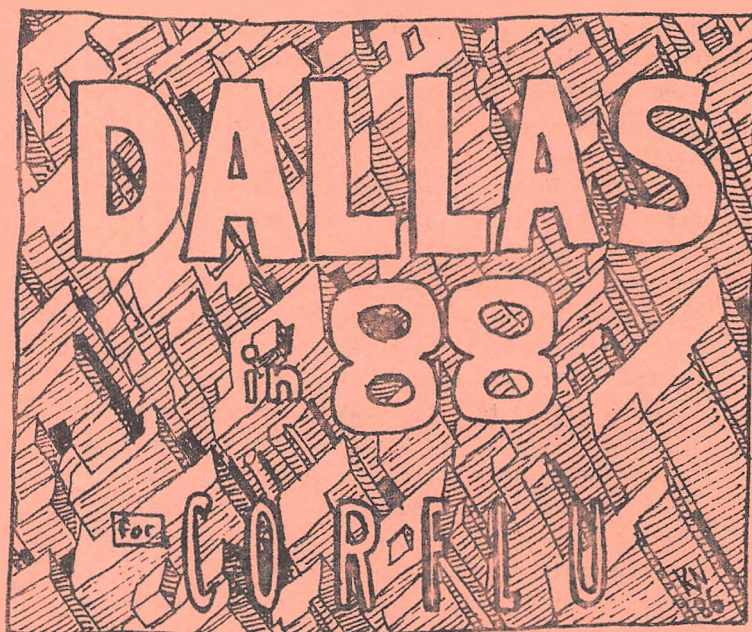
I meet Loren McGregor (The Net). We go up to a publisher's suite and talk about writing while helping them prepare for a party. I slice a huge salami while Loren picks grapes.

I go to the Abo party. Everyone tells me how much they like the illustration to the story.

Back at the Hilton a young couple asks me how much I've written about space habitats. I evade the question.

That night Martin and I go to the Publisher's party. A huge women bars the door and won't let us in, even though we have SFWA stickers. Behind her people are munching salami and grapes.

MONDAY ... Doreen Webbert, who is in charge of programming at Cactuscon, gives me a questionnaire. It asks me what areas of programming I would like to participate in. I write down sex, drugs, and rock n' roll, and hand it back.



Animagic

September 20 - 21, 1986 -- Dallas, TX

report by Paul D. Ortega

Animagic, a primarily Japanese animation con, was held September 20-21, 1986, at the Holiday Inn Central in Dallas, TX. Scholastic requirements (I want to graduate) prevented me from attending Saturday. While my experience with Japanese animation has primarily been *Speed Racer* and more recently afternoon showings of *Robotech*, I thought it was worth the \$3.00 Sunday con pass.

The GoH was Aline Leslie, voice of *Robotech* heroine Lisa Hayes. Ms. Leslie humorously related the difficulties of voice-over acting, among which are 12-hour-old coffee and sound engineers making faces when one is trying to record an emotional scene. Her autograph sessions also added to a favorable impression. This may read as somewhat gushy, but I have met at least one con guest who deserved to be on the receiving end of a hurled tomato.

Many cons could take a lesson in programing from this concom. The videos were displayed on what seemed to be (I didn't measure the screen) a 36" diagonal set in a small banquet/reception room. I have been to too many cons where the video room was a motel room (capacity 12, if they are underfed and tolerant) with a hotel TV set next to the door. The only complaint (and it's a minor one) is that the chairs could have been staggered (like the seats in a movie theater) to minimize the adverse affect of the 6'3" fan who insists on sitting in the front row. Few of the videos seemed to be the multi-generation 8-hour VHS copies I deplore. As I have told others, you are doing fandom a disservice when you penny-pinch with videotape (and yes, I do know how much the cassettes cost).

Overall, Animagic (especially for the price) was a fun little con.

From The Mediafan's Ghetto
ARMADILLOCON 8

October 10 - 12, 1986 -- Austin, Texas
report by Cl. Crouch

Sorry we didn't get to have our own hotel so we could be happy with our own kind, but frankly, I was having too good a time anyway to leave 'Dillocon 8! The entire weekend was, for me and about 400 others, a mobile party. The Dillo has finally come into its own, and I couldn't be happier. It means that Austin has a yearly place to go and party 'til you're a cinder, hear good guest speakers (the cyberpux are less rabid than they used to be, and are even getting a tad long in the tooth, maybe), shop in a well-varied dealer's room, meet new and old friends, and generally let out all the stops.

My one real disapointment was the art room, which was well run, well lit, but had too little art and was not spectacularly varied and had mediocre art with a few shining exceptions. There was one other tiny little quibble I had ... oh, all right, the dealer's room was claustrophobic. Turns out (after pestering Willie Siros long enough) that the hotel gave out the wrong dimensions when they were asking where the dealer's room should go, and a larger space was described. We made the best of it, hovering in the mountainous shadow of all those (*gasp*) books (everyone knows we illiterate mediafen drool in our socks and have shoe-sized IQ's) and selling our Doctor Who/Star Trek/Indiana Jones/James Bond stuff, fraternizing with fellow dealers and the many con-goers.

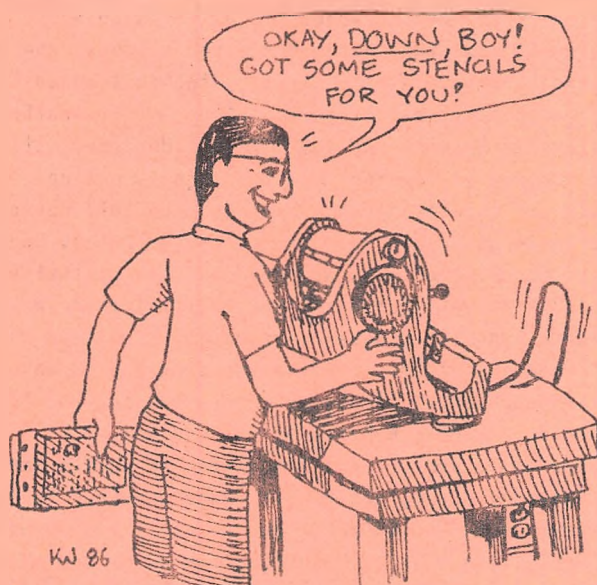
I was also disappointed that one local TV station (ABC) failed to come out and cover the display we Doctor Who fen had of our Time Lord Capsule (see elsewhere in this ish for more details on that), since we had told them in writing and had been on the phone and they had agreed to come. When I spoke to them they

said they knew nothing about it, which is so much tribbleshit. But that was not the con's fault, and we did manage to have a nice display, though I would have appreciated a bit more time to set up -- it's rather an extensive display and talk. A considerable little crowd stopped by, having seen the sign we put up (mention of the capsule had somehow been left out of the program guide and even the program update). Robert Taylor (known amont some mediafen as "the sexiest man in Austin" -- eat your heart out, Willie) moved heaven, earth, and the video-room schedule to get us the advertised space/time coordinates we needed to match our sign and verbal blurbs we'd been passing out for a week or so. Thanks, Robert. We OWE you one.

There was a party for all mediafen in Judith Ward's room Saturday night, and despite sage warnings to the contrary, we had NO BOOZE -- and we still had to beat off people with a stick! Smoffing for WC 91 and showing the latest pix of Tom Baker and Colin Baker (from Nashville's stop on their latest US tour) went on, as well as a Killer Pun-Off -- totally impromptu. If there were any mundanes trying to sleep on that floor, well... we never found out -- not even when the party erupted into the hall and spread out and around toward the elevator. After the Masquerade Party downstairs ended, and one of our members, Mike Ivy (who will very likely be next chancellor of the local Doctor Who club, "Who's Who In Austin") and other costumers came up gleefully telling us of winning first and second prize (big Bux, too -- 50 of them for "Dr. Strange" -- less for Mike's "Arthur Dent"). "Dr. Strange" amused us by pulling ice cold beers out of Between. Mike amused us just being Mike (but his Micky Mouse Meets Cochise hat and Texas-sized green/white polka-dot tie didn't inspire sobriety, either). We floated up to a party on the ninth floor where we had fun blowing smoke-filled bubbles and watching them sit on the carpet, and down to third, where we discovered sadly that the Blake's 7 party had been aborted by the hotel due to a neighbor's complaints. We passed a hotel guard racing from the elevator toward the ninth-floor party, though. Back on 7 at the multi-media party, though, things were still boiling! This party had a charmed life.

Mike Wright performed his annual miracle of staying awake for the duration of 'Dillocon to oversee the video room, which had a somewhat better variety than usual, instead of the rich diet of Japanimation that is its usual staple. As I passed by at one time I saw some special film projects from UT that looked really intriguing. Unfortunately, there seemed no other space for the video to be shown than the distractingly noisy spot of the convention area's lobby -- out in the open by the elevators! Surely something better could have been arranged!

Well, slight problems aside, The Press Gang has already paid to come next year!



ARMADILLOCON 8
report by Richard Brandt*

October 10: So, as soon as I get off work Friday, I hop into my trusty Isuzu pick-up and head east. I was hoping to beat my personal best for travelling between El Paso and Austin (nine hours and only got pulled over once), but I pretty well blew my chances by dawdling in rush-hour traffic looking for a good place to fill my tank. The sun was getting pretty low by the time I hit the desert headed for Sierra Blanca. The monoliths atop the foothills took on a pale rose aspect, and until the light faded entirely a broad, faint rainbow hovered like a mirage against the deepening sky.

The rainbow was okay, but as I travelled further west the weather showed its more savage face. Rain drove down from the heavens in great, blinding sheets. Jagged bolts of lightning split the sky, illuminating the countryside all the way to the horizon, as if a blue sun had suddenly bloomed overhead. Furious winds hurled themselves against my craft, tossing it about on the ~~WATERS~~ road. Peering into the gloom, I could barely discern the lettering on the signs looming up out of the mist: "PICNIC AREA" or other useful sentiments. (Like "CROSS WINDS." I could just see them stamping their little cloud feet and blowing, "Oh, pooh.")

Hydroplaning was the most fun -- that familiar sensation of just having run over a small animal or something. The other scary part was watching how much faster the fuel gauge needle starts falling after it passes the quarter-full mark. (I learned that, in my Isuzu at least, you do not have to stop for gas in Fort Stockton -- coming or going, however, there will be times you do not believe this.)

Things were considerably drier once I turned off onto 290, the road to Austin proper (the far reach of Lamar Blvd., I think of it). Without the storm to hold

my concentration, I had to find other pastimes to keep me alert, like counting the taxidermy shops I passed. I narrowly missed hitting what looked like an enormous skunk lumbering ponderously across my lane, and saw something skittering off the side of the road that was either a couple of armadillos or two very small kangaroos (after driving at high speeds for eight hours, things start looking a little strange).

On into Austin, making only one wrong turn on what is the easiest route in the world to follow and getting thoroughly lost for half an hour. Checked into the Sheraton a bit before four-thirty local time, the front desk being stymied not at all by their inability to find any trace of the reservation I'd phoned in. And so to bed.

Up bright and early, changing into my wedding duds, deciding I had time to pick up my Armadillocon membership on my way to the garage. Made only two wrong turns on my way to the Chapel in the Oaks, despite having a map this time. Managed finally to pick out the chapel, a low, innocuous building, part of a complex that looks like it might be hiding a summer camp somewhere behind it. Parked, went in, joined the party for the Pat Mueller-Dennis Virzi nuptials.

The groom's family sat alone, while all the couple's fan friends clustered together on the other side of the aisle. They came from near and far: Willie and Nina Siroos, Ferk, Ben Yalow, Karen Horan, many others whose faces I could not put to names (or, having lost my notes, cannot remember for sure were in attendance). I chatted with Lynda Gibson (who was running around doing last year's NASFiC Masquerade while I was running around doing Press Relations), until the processional signaled an end to idle fannish banter. (Karen: "This sure is a dull wedding. Let's find another one." Ben: "I'm sorry, this is a small con. We only have one track of programming.")

Enter Dennis in a conservative grey suit, looking for all the world as if he had a hotel to talk turkey with. Enter Pat, a vision in white (but not, Willie hissed, wearing her beanie.) Followed a ceremony that was refreshingly brief but meaningful.

The minister turned around to present us to the newly wedded couple. At which point, as if on cue, the whole crowd of us bolted up and rushed over to the groom's side of the aisle. Our hearty applause covered the more frivolous of the giggles.

Stood in line to pay my respects. My appearance was greeted with all due surprise and joy. Went back to my truck and drove back to the hotel.

Skip ahead seven hours to the reception in the Fan Lounge (oops, better change back into the suit first). This time, Pat is wearing her propellor beanie: a creation that came in the mail from Ferk, white satin with a flowing lace veil attached. Two cakes were provided (these were supposed to be wedding cakes, but I didn't see the Pat and Dennis action figures that are supposed to go on top.) Pat agrees to help cut the cake, but isn't going to start doing dishes. Pat

explaining fandom to the family. a Pat trying to scotch any rumors about Dennis's "Duncanville in '94" bid. Dennis promising not to submit the Inquirer a report on the honeymoon. ("Texans Stranded in Honeymoon Suite..." No, the thought is too dreadful to follow through.

"It's a kind of gutter exudation that happened to take the form of text on paper." That's Bruce Sterling describing his view of science fiction, in his role as moderator of the freewheeling Cyberpunk panel. Yes, I did attend some of Armadillocon's programming, as long as I was in town for the weekend. here was an opportunity for the panelists to take potshots at what they don't like in the genre ("I'm bored with the apocalypse," says Bruce), condemn the chain stores who want all SF novels to be an ideal length that fits in the racks best, debate whether something like the C-word movement would have come about anyway without William Gibson ("The label hasn't helped him. It's helped me," says Lewis Shiner), and remember that cyberpunk's influence on present-day SF is still negligible compared to the dominant trend: Reagan-Youth fiction. John Shirley was especially harsh on the impact this stuff has on fans. "Their personalities are malformed, soft and inchoate, and Jerry Pournelle is stamping out fascists, like the Play-dough of fandom!"

Between events, I check out the Fan Lounge. Pat has provided everything from a mimeo to stencils, cement, lettering guides and corflu -- but does anyone put out a one-shot? Nahhhh. (What a bunch of fakefans.) One wall is being covered with entries to an amateur art show: I submit a cartoon (Fan being handed a zine: "Held up a long time at the printers, was it?") I mention to Neil Kaden an idea for a fanzine title that I got from a Garry Trudeau punchline: "Celestial Insider." "I can already tell you I don't like it," says Neil, who proceeds to a thorough analysis of both the zine and its flaky editor's philosophy, based solely on the title. Neil instigates a round-robin in the communal typer, and someone named M. Young leaves an inspired bit of parody ("Her pure, sterile flesh disgusted me. I wanted dirt. Filth.") Pat has brought an impressive display of zines from her collection (including --*gasp!*-- mine), treasures such as the Double: Bill Symnposium ("SF -- It's a man's field." --Philip K. Dick). David Thayer has sent a bagful of fanzines and oddments to give away, including some strange Quebecois stuff and one item I can't resist: the program from the 1979 Festival de la Science-Fiction in Metz, with a great photo of Norman Spinrad in a funny furry hat. (Also an ad for the ultimate Philip K. Dick novel: Le Bal des Schizos. Why can't we get that over here, I ask you?)

Glory misses me by inches: Robert Taylor asks me if I'll be available to fill in on the fans' panel for Science Fiction Family Feud, but the scheduled participant shows up after all. The pros handily whipped the fans, matching survey responses to questions like "What is the average advance for a science fiction

novel?" -- The respondents had reeled off figures in the twenty-to-fifty thousand dollar range, to the derision of the pros -- or, "Name something you bring to a convention." "Booze," says one fan. Robert, emceeing, ponders. "We'll accept that," he says. "The fourth most popular answer: Food." Effinger says he had to read an author's 15-book series before he could write a Maureen Birnbaum parody. The unfortunate Mr. Effinger also lost everything in an apartment fire, about which more later.

Back in the fan lounge, Pat is making up colorful harlequin masks; rumor is that no one will be admitted to the Saturday dance without some kind of mask. I patch together a mask out of a mimeograph stencil, stencil cement, and corflu. "It's -- Repro Man!" I wander in and out of the ball and a couple of parties, chat about bad movies for a while, then my z's catch up with me.

Sunday morning's panel was on "Writing Book Reviews for Big Bucks and Glory" -- which Martin Wagner likened to "Becoming a Jesuit Monk for Lots of Drugs and Great Sex." One of the panelists is Michael Point, everyone's favorite correspondent on the NASFiC beat last year. Mike had the good fortune to sit next to Jay Sheckley, who lashed out stridently at critics who would rather look clever by taking cheap shots than deliver useful insights into the work. Bad journalism, says Jay. She also laid into Tom Disch; Martin began selling ringside seats to next year's Nebula banquet.

Gardner Dozois interviews Ellen Datlow; what we really want to hear about is what it's like working next door to Forum and Variations. Gardner and Ellen describe the tasteless sumptuousness of Bob Guccione's bachelor pad. "Torch it!" Effinger screams.

After catching Howard Waldrop reading a powerful story he calls "He We Await," time to attend the Auction and Fire Sale being held to benefit Effinger. Willie Siros won a heated bidding battle with Karen Horan and took home a manuscript and marked galleys for the Burning Chrome collection for \$400. Other things I didn't get: the manuscript for Effinger's next novel, and the Japanese paperback of Neuromancer. Things I did get: a rarely-seen poster for Fantastic Planet (double-billed with UFOS: Are They Real?), Ancient of Days with Bishop's self-portrait, a "Rick Brant Scientific Adventure," and a signed Greg Hildebrandt print of a naked lady and a unicorn. Things I forgot to bring: A jacket. The drive back was milder but cold, cold.

(Excerpted from LIGHT IN THE BUSHES #3, Richard Brandt's personalzine which is available for the usual, obscure quotes, odd newspaper clippings, program books of cons Richard missed, or a really good, tractable one-point rule. Richard says he also accepts dead presidents. Richard Brandt, 4740 N. Mesa #111, El Paso, TX 79912.)

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Reviews

SCI-CON 8

November 7 - 9, 1986

Virginia Beach, VA

report by Cathy Doyle

Yes, it was Sci-Con weather again. It rained on us all week, but as we all gathered the weather began to clear and on Saturday it was sunny and in the high 70s. That might not mean much to you down in Texas, but it was a welcome relief before winter finally set in. The perfect weather to enjoy a weekend on the beach, see some friends and party.

Sci-Con featured C.J. Cherryh as Guest of Honor this year. She gave a low-key but informative speech on the importance of maps in her work and in general. Panels on World Building from both the author and artist viewpoints proved popular. One of the more interesting panels was "Ask Kip Williams, he know's sic everything." I suppose I should point out that Mr. Williams is my husband, before I say that a rousing good time was had by all as Kip provided witty answers to inane questions.

This year's convention was improved by the relative absence of young children wandering around with toy guns. They had their own game, "Reklone", this year. Thanks for finding them something to do, Steve. Also improved over last year was the art show, which had both more artwork than last year and was attractively arranged.

One of the highlights of Saturday evening was the Astroid Home Companion show before the masquerade. Featuring local performers singing, belly-dancing and doing magic, it provided a welcome break from panels and a rousing good time.

The hottest party at Sci-Con was given by the hot new Worldcon bid on the block, Mars in 2095. Look for those boys at cons throughout the south, and watch out for those cherries!

Sci-Con was a most enjoyable, small, low-key con. There was programming for those who wanted to be entertained, good friends to chat with and the beach to walk on when all else fails. It's nice to see Virginia Beach when you can actually see the beach! Y'all come and join us next year.

