

# The Texas SF Inquirer

Issue 30



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**Alexander R. Slate & Dale Denton**

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## State of the Zine

Welcome to issue 30.

Yes, we are well aware that it follows issue 32. This issue will be followed by issue 31, which in turn will be followed by issue 33, which should make everything copacetic.

We are still in the process of getting all our mailing lists straightened out. We think we have all the members right, and have just about gotten the trades correct. Now we have to find the addresses for all the contributors. If you are, or have been, a contributor (particularly of artwork) and have not been receiving this fanzine, please contact the editors so we can straighten everything out.

With this issue, we hope we have addressed the comments of those who found issue 32 to be less than readable due to the reproduction. At the same time, we hope that the article contents still satisfy those of you who commented favorably to us. To all those who commented on Dale and my last issue, whether with praise or correction, thank you.

As for issue 32, there are some goofs that are my responsibility, that I apologize for. First, the Archcon con report was by David Means, not Dennis Means. And the Hugos were presented at Noreascon, not Boskone. For these and the other typos, too numerous to mention, forgive me.

-Alex

A six issue subscription to *The Texas SF Inquirer* is \$7.50; individual copies are available for \$1.50 or the usual. A membership in FACT (\$15.00 a year) includes subscriptions to both *The Texas SF Inquirer* and *The FACTSheet* FACT's monthly newsletter. All correspondence concerning membership or subscriptions should be sent to FACT, PO Bdx 9612, Austin

# What Is All This "Fandom" Stuff, Anyway.

Editorial by Dale Denton

Well, here it is, my debut in the TSFI editorial saddle. Since Alex made introductions for both of us last issue, I will only continue it to point out one other similarity between Alex and myself. We both feel that this column should be used in discussion of issues more important than whether the old or new *Star Trek* is best, or pontificating the values of Cyberpunk, Steampunk or New Age on the science fiction genre as a whole. The editorials will be more likely to lean in the direction of social issues, and how these issues may affect our future. After all, that is what science fiction (sans space operas) is all about.

However, I would like to keep this first discussion fannish. This brings up a question. What is fandom?

I was involved in fandom before I realized that there was a fandom. I attended and participated in AggieCons when I was in college, and really had no realization that there was a fan community. By the time I left A&M, I was aware of fandom, but still did not appreciate the magnitude of the community.

So what is fandom? It is the community of fans. Okay, that was easy. However, what is a fan?

I came into fandom as a literary fan. However, the actual door which brought me into the fan community was gaming. A back door, you might say. After joining the community, I found that there were many subsets of fans.

Something I thought was rather interesting was that most of the members of the SCA in College Station were also part of fandom. If fandom entailed the interest in science fiction, it would seem that people who were interested in recreating medieval society would be the last ones

interested in the future. This turned out not to be so.

So, what is a fan? It may depend on who you ask. Is a costumer a fan, if this is his or her only tie? The literary fan may well say no. Costumers will say yes. Then there are those who prefer to watch their sf, rather than read it. Are they true fans? Yes, although I have heard them talked about as a kind of second class citizen on a couple of occasions. Then there are the gamers, comic book (ahem, graphic novel) readers, filksingers, artists, APAs, 'zines, plus many other sub-groups. All of these constitute potential fans, and are therefore portions of fandom.

So what makes a fan a fan? What separates that person from the rest of the world? Is it just the interest in science fiction or one of its related groups which make that person unique?

When I let it be known at work that I was editing a fanzine (my perzine, *The Nature to Wander*), I was surprised at the interest. It has brought me artwork, reviews, and proofreading help from my coworkers. These people have an interest in science fiction, although it was not apparent in the work environment. Are these people "fans"? As "fans" are generally conceived, the answer is no.

For the moment, let's go back to that first question--what is fandom? Generally, when I hear fandom mentioned, it is in conjunction with some aspect of a convention. Are conventions the connection? I believe the answer is an undeniable YES! This is where fans get together to meet with other fans, professional writers and artists, and participate in the activities which interest them. However, the common bond is the convention itself.

Continued on page 11

## SCI-FI RADIO

### The Birth of a New Radio Drama Series

by John O. Williams

In the summer of 1987, Kevin Singer of radio station KETR-FM in Commerce, Texas, had an inspiration. He perceived that radio drama in general - and science fiction in particular - was about to make a comeback. He decided to act on this hunch and began the preparation of a grant application for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Putting his ideas and aspirations down on paper was easy. The stumbling block came when he read that a full-blown production of one of his envisioned dramas had to be sent in with the application! This was a real catch. He was seeking a grant to create the productions, but he had to have a production in hand to get the grant! Then fate stepped in in the form of a friend named Ronnie Ellis. Ronnie was a musician in a small band called the Sidemen that performed in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. On hearing of Kevin's dilemma, Ronnie informed him that another member of the band, Ron Dilulio, was experienced in creating scores for films and audio-visual productions and just might be able to help him out. Kevin contacted Ron and they arranged to meet. Ron also invited longtime production collaborator, John O. Williams, to attend this meeting. Kevin opened the meeting by explaining what he needed to complete his grant application. First, a science fiction story would have to be selected for adaptation to a radio drama format. Kevin thought that one of Isaac Asimov's "I, Robot" stories would work well. Next, a script would have to be written, actors chosen to play the parts, rehearsal held, and a voice tape recorded and edited. Then sound effects would have to be created, recorded and synchronized to the voice

track, followed by the composition, recording, and synchronization of a musical score. "When does all this have to be done?" Williams asked. Kevin responded, "The application is due next week."

Both Williams and Dilulio agreed that, though the deadline was close, it wasn't an impossible task. They decided to give it a try. First, Williams solicited the aid of writer Clay Charles Brown of Dallas. The two had worked together on writing projects in the past and were accustomed to working on tight schedules. Following Kevin's suggestion, they decided to develop a script based on Asimov's "I, Robot" story called "Liar". Simultaneously, Williams contacted top Dallas actors Ric Spiegel and Gloria Hocking to see if they were interested in working on the production on speculation. Happily, they agreed. James Edward Kerr, a unique voice talent who had narrated a number of audio-visual productions for Dilulio and Williams, was asked to act as the Host. His acceptance provided the project with a readily identifiable voice signature.

The project began to take form. The script was ready in a matter of days and a recording session was set up at the studios of Audio Visual Associates in Euless, Texas. Key roles in the production were performed by Spiegel and Hocking, with Ric also doubling as a robot. Other roles were enacted by Williams and his wife, Jonthy. Ron engineered the recording in the studio, creating an on-the-spot processing of Ric's robot voice that was highly appropriate. Following the editing of the voice track, Ron immediately went to work on the sound effects and music. Doors opening and closing,

footsteps of the characters, the sounds of a robot manufacturing plant, and the sounds of the robot's movements were all challenges that were dealt with in order. Then a musical theme was composed and musical "bridges" and backgrounds were also created and blended into the story, after the fashion of the scoring of a dramatic motion picture. Finally, the finished production was sent by overnight mail to arrive on the last day that it was due, September 15. Then the nail-biting period began.

Kevin had learned that the evaluation process followed by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting was as follows: first, they would read the synopsis of the written application; then, if that interested them, they would read the entire application; finally, if they were still interested, they would listen to the tape. This last step would take place in a room with about a dozen jurors gathered around a table. The tape would be turned on and left on as long as the listeners wanted to listen. That might be as short as a minute or so. Our tape was about 13 minutes long. We hoped they would like it enough for a full hearing. Apparently, they did.

The announcement of the grant awards came in December and there was much excitement when it was learned that the fledgling SCI-FI RADIO PRODUCTIONS had been awarded full funding to produce 26 half-hour episodes of science fiction radio dramas. The name settled on for the budding series was simply SCI-FI RADIO. And now, the real work was about to begin. The proposal was to adapt "classic" works of science fiction for radio play. "Classic" was defined to mean, essentially, works from an earlier era of science fiction, from twenty or more years ago. Award-winning and anthologized stories were also considered to be a priority. To that end, an extensive search for stories began. This search

involved much reading on the part of Singer, Williams, and Brown, along with the soliciting of suggestions from SF authorities and anthologists, such as Isaac Asimov and Martin Greenberg.

Williams and Brown established criteria for the "adaptability" of a story. These criteria included requirements that the story could be best told through action and the interplay of characters. That is, stories which already possessed a fair amount of dialogue were likely to be stories that would be easier to adapt. This did not mean, however, that such dialogue could just be lifted from the story verbatim. Lines written to be read would not necessarily sound right when acted. Adaptations would have to be carefully and skillfully done to maximize the dramatic impact of the lines while retaining the integrity of the author's original story. On the other hand, stories written in a heavily-textured narrative style were deemed less likely to be adaptable to a dramatic form suitable for our purposes.

As story selections began to be made, Kevin initiated contact with author's agents for the purpose of securing radio broadcast rights to the stories. One of the first things he discovered was that our pilot story, Asimov's "Liar", was not available! Another producer had acquired all broadcast rights for the purpose of developing a TV series based on "I, Robot". This revelation was a disappointment, but everyone felt that the story had certainly served its purpose in helping to secure the grant.

Gradually, a list of suitable stories for which rights were available began to gel. Philip K. Dick's "Impostor" and "Sales Pitch" and Arthur C. Clarke's "Wall of Darkness" were among the early acquisitions. Later would come Ursula K. LeGuin's "Field of Vision" and "Diary of the Rose", Ray Bradbury's "Frost and Fire", Henry Kuttner and

C. L. Moore's "Vintage Season" and many other award-winning examples of the genre. Ironically, because of problems over rights, it would come to pass that none of Asimov's stories would get into the series. One, "The Last Question", almost made it, but was dropped at the last minute over a failure to obtain an option to release it later on audio cassette. An audio cassette option was strongly desired, as producers Singer and Dilulio both felt there could be some subsequent demand for the programs in that format. Finally, after many months, the story list was complete and production was in full swing.

As Series Director, Williams was responsible for the auditioning and casting of all voice talent to perform in the dramas. Two major auditions were held, one in Fort Worth and one in Dallas, in addition to soliciting voice demo tapes from local talent agencies. In all, about 300 actors and actresses were heard, from which about 50 were subsequently cast in one or more roles. Among those who had made it all happen, James Edward Kerr was selected to be the on-air Host of the series. Williams was given final approval on all scripts and designated Clay Brown as script supervisor to assist in this process. Brown was also assigned to adapt several of the episodes.

The next major development was an agreement reached with National Public Radio to distribute the series. They were interested in it for their Sunday night *NPR Playhouse* and this development meant that they would be responsible for making it available to all NPR stations via satellite. Under the terms of the grant from CPB, it would also be available at no cost to any other public radio station for a period of three years.

The first program sent to the satellite was Jack Finney's "I'm Scared". As an added nostalgic touch

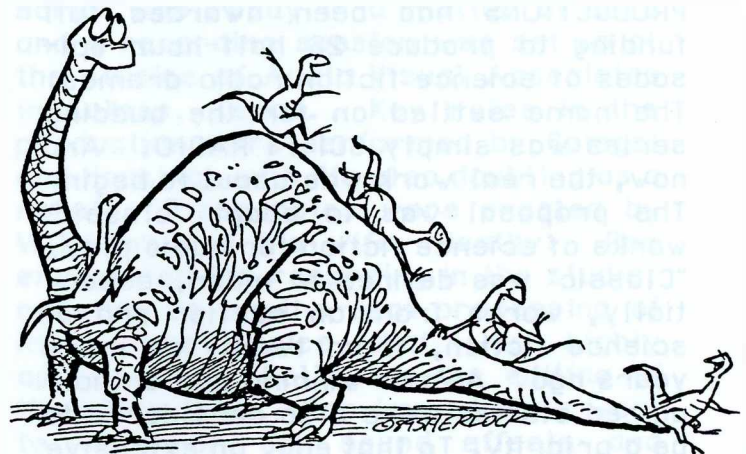
to this episode, the leading role was given to David Kent, a member of Orson Welles' Mercury Players who had performed in the original broadcast of "War of the Worlds". "I'm Scared" was downlinked to all interested stations on July 2, 1989, and the new series was under way!

As of this writing, SCI-FI RADIO has been confirmed as airing on at least 90 stations nationwide. Markets covered include such major areas as New York City, San Francisco, St. Paul, Cleveland, Miami, and Los Angeles. Ironically, the NPR station in the home area for the production, Dallas/Fort Worth, has not yet chosen to air it. However, early indications are that it is being very well received elsewhere and it is hoped that it will eventually reach an audience in Dallas/Fort Worth.

Will there be more of SCI-FI RADIO? The answer to that question should be forthcoming in January of 1990, when the Corporation for Public Broadcasting announces their next grant awards.

November, 1989 Copyright, 1989 by John O. Williams

ADDENDUM: Anyone wishing to correspond with Mr. Williams about SCI-FI RADIO may write him at P.O. Box 9242, Fort Worth, Texas 76147. In the event the series is renewed, story suggestions will be welcomed.



## Behind the Scenes at Noreascon 3: Program Operations

by Fred Duarte and Karen Meschke

It all started at ArmadilloCon 9 in 1987, where Noreascon 3 chairman Mark Olson was Fan Guest of Honor. Mark, his wife Priscilla, and Ben Yalow asked Dennis Virzi and Pat Mueller to head program Ops for N3, myself to head the Green Room, and Willie Siros to head VIP relations. I was extremely flattered to have been asked; however, panic soon ensued as the convention got closer and closer. I began to recruit from the Texas and surrounding area corps of fans.

This all changed with the mid-July 1989 delivery date for Pat and Dennis. They both resigned from working at Noreascon 3 as they would be happily busy with Madeline.

Attending SmofCon in Phoenix in December 1988 I was again approached by Mark Olson, Priscilla Olson, and Ben Yalow, this time to take over Program Ops for N3. They suggested I incorporate the Green Room with Program Ops since there is some overlap between the two. After accepting the additional responsibilities, I immediately called Debbie Hodgkinson and asked her if she wanted to be in charge of the Green Room, assuring her it would be different than her experiences with NolaCon II.

Recruiting the Program Ops staff was made easier since Pat and Dennis had laid the groundwork through a strong base of workers from the Pacific Northwest, the Midwest, and other areas of the country. Using information gathered by the Noreascon 3 program APA and numerous phone calls, I was able to add staff members and begin coordination of Program Ops.

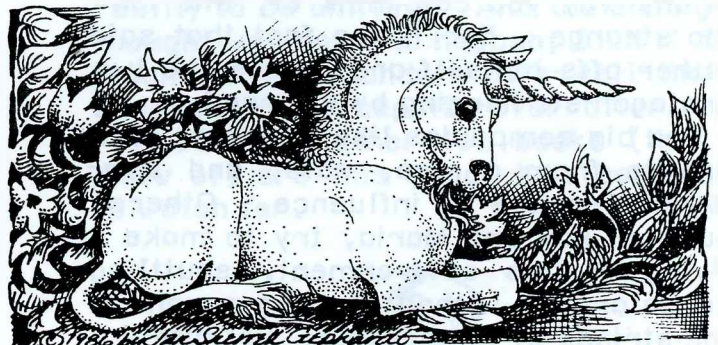
Arriving in Boston on Tuesday night before the convention officially opened, I was able to help in the set-up of the Program Ops room. Once the

convention officially began, my job remained both busy and constant. Keeping the program running smoothly and on time were the unspoken watchwords; I was able to achieve this through the combined efforts of the Green Room staff and the Program Ops staff, which included such FACT and ex-FACT members as: Debbie Hodgkinson, Mary Wismer, Kenneth Smith, Angela Philley, K.T. Fitzsimmons, Richard Wright, Ed Graham, Casey Hamilton, Cindy Guyton, Spike Parsons, Bear Philley and Karen Meschke, and soon to be FACT member Patty Wells.

Having to open the Program Ops room at 8:30 AM and sometimes close it at midnight limited the party going I could do. This had been understood from the beginning and was part of the job I had accepted.

One of the things I need to point out; running the program on time was made much easier by the work that Mark and Priscilla Olson and Ben Yalow did on the program. They essentially lived with the entire program for the year leading up to and through the convention.

Running Program Ops was fun; I learned some valuable lessons in running a Worldcon program and in working with fans from around the country.



## FROM THE RECLINER

Edw. A. Graham, Jr.

Ah, the smell of fall (what passes for it in Central and South Texas) is in the air. Sweltering days and nights have given way to unpredictable temperature swings, crazy school bus drivers stopping and putting on the warning/stop lights every chance they get, and policemen getting nastier, especially if you force them to get out of their comfortable, warm cars when they've forgotten to bring a coat. As for me, it was time for the annual repairs to the tacky, green vinyl recliner -- I wonder how much longer the damn thing is going to hold together! But, it's still comfortable to sit in for a couple of hours with a good book.

**Angel Station** by Walter Jon Williams  
(TOR, hard - \$18.95, July 1989)  
Rating: 3.2

Williams is undoubtedly one of the more under-rated of the new writers. He doesn't pump out thousands of pages a year, but he does continue at a steady pace, producing solid, good writing and, on occasion, some pretty good tongue-in-cheek humor. However, this book ain't funny.

Ubu Roy and Beautiful Maria were literally built by their crackpot "father" from bits of genetic matter and force-grown into what passes for adulthood in this far off time. Of course, when just about everyone is genetically enhanced in any way you can think of, this isn't too strange. Nor is the fact that said father offs himself and leaves the two protagonists hanging by a thread.

The big companies like the nice, safe profits from a nice, safe, and *controlled* sphere of influence. Others, such as Roy and Maria, try to make a living in this environment, shuttling cargo around without getting caught in the strings of the cartels. Definitely a hand-to-mouth existence.

But when the luckless two happen upon the first true aliens humankind has ever met, things start popping. They end up breaking laws, getting off, breaking hearts, getting off, and then they really get in the soup with one of their rivals. Roy and Maria, like true frontier pioneers, risk everything (including their lives) for one shot at the big time, to save themselves and everything else they love about the ends of humanspace.

Williams crafts a good yarn about the changes Roy and Maria, even the aliens, undergo during this crazy time. The evolution of the protagonists is laid out for all to see: the choices, the agonies, and the ecstasies. It all lead to a tumultuous climax that literally had my palms sweating.

Then the book falters. It looks as if it was trimmed to "fit" (fit what, I don't know) and the denouement suffers because of it. It just fell a little flat. I don't know whose fault it is, Williams' or the editors', but the final chapters turned a really good book into just a good book. But, judge for yourself.

**Arrival** by a bunch of authors, no editor listed.

(TSR, paper - \$3.95, March 1989)  
Rating: 1.0

I love space opera, especially when it's done right. And I admit that I really liked the first season of the TV show *Buck Rogers*. So I approached this newest incarnation of the original time traveller with anticipation and trepidation. The anticipation was wasted and the trepidation turned out to be correct. This book is horrible. The stories are not written well, and there is little consistency between them as they are mostly concerned with introducing a whole slew of "continuing" characters that I could

care less about, especially Buck, the gung-ho, hot-shot fighter pilot from the waning days of the 20th century.

I kept on reading, hoping, even praying that ONE of the authors, like Robert Sheckley or Jerry Olton, would do something right.

No such luck. This book is nothing more than a gimmick to help sell TSR's *Buck Rogers* game. If this is the vein in which further books and the proposed revamping of *Amazing Stories* is to continue, TSR just sunk a lot of money into a big black hole. Anyone want to buy a paperback, cheap?

**The Barsoom Project** by Larry Niven and Steve Barnes

(Ace, paper - \$4.50, September 1989)  
Rating: 2.4

Return with us now (FINALLY!) to the wondrous world of Dream Park, the place where fantasies come alive. Well, in this case, almost.

I really don't know what I can say about this sequel because it seems a little muddled and confused. There are about five or six sub-plots running alongside each other that keep getting tangled, as do the characters. There is a murder mystery, some high-powered politicking, gaming (of course), and some other stuff that I'm not really sure about. Alex Griffin is back, but he seems to have been relegated to a minor role, even when he's the one that supposedly pulls the whole thing together.

Niven and Barnes seem to have lost the energy and the sparks that characterized the first book. I think it was the number of things that they were trying to do in such a short space. They did bring back several of my favorites, including the hacker-par-excellence Tony McWhirter, gamers Gwen and Ollie, and Millicent, formerly Griffin's secretary. Hell, I'm not really sure if the Barsoom Project was just Dream Park pseudo-reality or a push for a full-scale Mars shindig! I

enjoyed the book, but I was left with an overall feeling of disappointment. At least Alex got laid!

However, I have it on good authority that the next book will bring back the excitement and well-crafted plotting exhibited in the first one.

**The Armageddon Crazy** by Mick Farren  
(Del Rey, paper - \$3.95, May 1989)  
Rating: 3.7

Farren is a damn good writer. He's taken the current wave of TV religion out to a distasteful future with a preacher-President and a religious dictatorship in the U.S. of A. Combine that with the advances in high-tech showmanship, throw in a disgruntled cop, an under-cover agent for the Deacons (the strong arm of the holy), a high-class, power-hungry manipulator, and a populace that's about ready to blow it's collective cool in religious fervor and is ripe for a revolution (or revelation), and just about anything can happen. And it does. I can't give a basic plot sketch because it's really hard to describe such a whirlwind as this book, but it doesn't leave you scratching your head wondering what the hell happened when you're done.

Farren has crafted a real gripping drama that held my attention even when other favorite past-times were waved in my face. I couldn't put the book down! There were a multitude of characters, each very real, having to face each day as it came. The proposed government was close enough to reality to be chilling. And the ending I thought was going to happen, DIDN'T! So much for the standard alls-well-that-ends-well-live-happily-ever-after.

If Farren's other two books (that I know of) are this good, he's someone to watch for.



**Dawn's Uncertain Light** by Neal Barrett, Jr.

(Signet, paper - \$3.95, July 1989)

Rating: 2.7

This is unabashedly a sequel and the end of Howie Ryder's story (or is it?) that started in *Through Darkest America* (the ghoulish tale of America after the Big One). Neither is for the faint of heart; there is bloodshed and gore, dark greed and ambition, and other patently abhorrent things. The main problem I had with this book is the number of flashbacks that were used to flesh out the length and that weren't really necessary. Oh, well, maybe they were. I didn't think so.

As the narrative opens, Howie is still searching for his sister Carolee, following a trail that is six years old. America is not a pleasant country, torn apart by a government that wants to stay in power, rebels who want to be in power, and power-hungry manipulators that want to maintain the status quo because it makes them wealthy. A quasi-religion is starting to make itself felt, but most folks just want to live and be left alone with their own troubles. Howie would have, too, except his parents were killed (killing is a fact of life in this time and there's plenty of it) and he's discovered the truth behind Silver Island, where Carolee went, and (ugh) meat. That in itself is enough to make Howie a marked man, but getting pissed off enough to try and do something about it is a sure ticket to a firing squad or a knife in the back. If you want a thin veneer of adventure over the examination of the black psyche of mankind after the bombs fall, this one is for you.

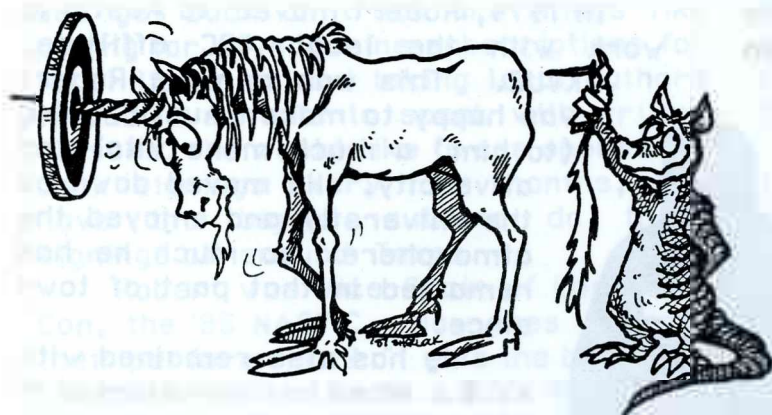
I really don't know what to do about this next one. I do know that I was inordinately fortunate to have a chance to talk to Ginjer Buchanan, one of the editors at Ace Books. She is Allen M. Steele's editor, whose book *Orbital Decay*, I raved about last time. In

fact, I raved at her! You know the routine: "Oh gosh oh wow what a great book when's the next one." She told me that Steele is working on another novel set in the same milieu. I frankly admitted I couldn't wait. Apparently, she took me at my word. I received, through the FACT PO box and Ginjer's tender heart, a huge package containing the next Steele novel. I almost [expletive deleted] a brick! I even tried (a mighty effort it was) to stop reading it so I could savor it. No luck.

Set some time after *Orbital Decay*, *Clarke County, Space* is placed on an orbiting habitat, peopled with agrarian "hippies", money-hungry corporations, the usual anti-social techies, and a Navajo sheriff. Add in a mobster's former girl friend on the run, a hit man, a bunch of quasi-religious nuts who believe Elvis ranks up there with J.C., a dash of nuclear war-head, a pinch of some apparent computer hacker that can be anywhere at anytime, mix vigorously with the old Globewatch goodies (from the previous book) and you have a really gripping tale that only spans a few days.

After reading it, I felt as though I had been through the wringer with the characters. And what a wringer! Steele has more monkey wrenches than a plumbing supply depot! Confidentially, I think he delights in producing sudden left turns. He even put in a real twist at the end that made me do a double-take (I don't think it was really necessary to the story, but it makes one wonder about some things, fer sher!).

I don't know when *Clarke County, Space* is due out or what the cover price will be. I do know one thing, even if Allen Steele doesn't win a Hugo (and I think he will -- good-bye, Brin, here's the new kid on the block), he is definitely a contender. This stuff is what I love the most about Science Fiction. It's what got me hooked over twenty years ago. Watch for it!



### Editorial (contd. from p. 3)

How many self-professed fans that you know do not attend conventions, excluding those who have burned themselves out?

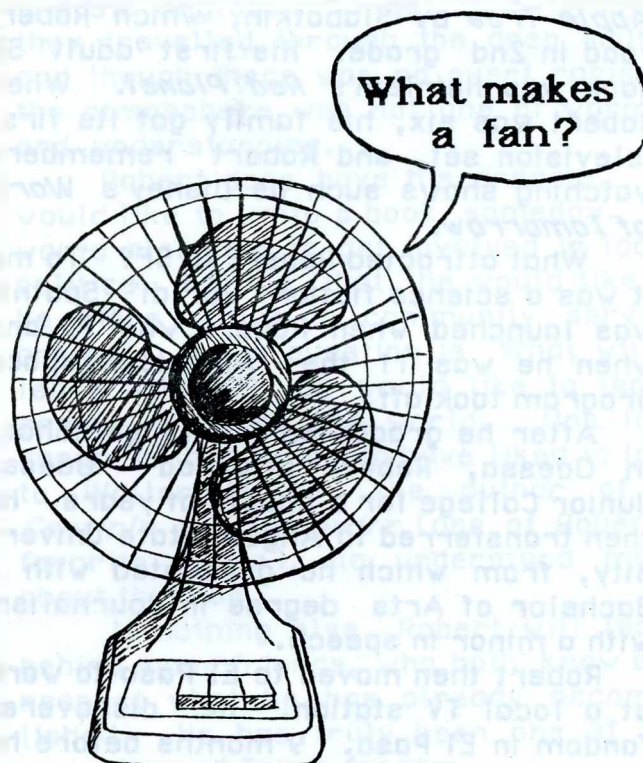
Now, what about the other people? You know, the ones who enjoy science fiction, but who don't attend conventions, the majority of the science fiction readership. Why aren't they "fans"?

For many of these people the major reason they do not attend conventions is because of the perception that the general public has of sf conventions. That perception is one of strange costumes, Spock ears, and the like. It is the perception that the conventions are simply a gathering of people who watch reruns of *Lost in Space* and *Battlestar Galactica*. These people (the non-convention attenders) are not interested in what they perceive an sf convention is. However, that is only a small portion of what fandom is, as we "fans" know.

What can we do to change this perception, and thus present a better and more realistic view of what fans and science fiction fandom is all about? Our ability to accomplish this will, in large part, depend on our ability to affect the emphasis that the press

gives to conventions. If all the press does is take pictures of people wearing long scarves or Spock ears, that is the impression they will give to their viewers and readers. If the pictures and words are about writers and artists, especially "name" authors and artists whose works can be recognized from book covers, then we can change the impression that our non-"fan" fans have, and bring them into the community.

If I had not come to fandom through the back door of gaming, and my first impressions of fandom had been those generally shown through the press, there is little likelihood that I would have ever become interested enough in fandom to go to a convention. While I was quite interested in science fiction, I would not have been interested in joining what was portrayed by the written and electronic media.



12/89 L. SLATE

## Robert Taylor: A Profile

by Alexander R. Slate

Robert Ronald Taylor was born in the middle of this century (1950) in Odessa TX. His father, Cecil, was in insurance and real estate. His mother, Imogene, was a housewife.

Robert has lived in Texas all of his life. When he was a child, his family moved to various places in West Texas (such as Midland and El Paso), but they always returned to Odessa.

We were "pretty much a Norman Rockwell type of family." Robert did much the same kinds of middle-American things that other kids at that time did. He enjoyed reading, particularly histories. He very much enjoyed the *We Were There* series of books. His first SF book was *Spaceship Under the Apple Tree* by Slabotkin, which Robert read in 2nd grade. His first "adult" SF book was Heinlein's *Red Planet*. When Robert was six, his family got its first television set, and Robert remembers watching shows such as Disney's *World of Tomorrow*.

What attracted Robert to SF? "To me it was a science fiction world!" Sputnik was launched when Robert was 7, and when he was 11 the American space program took off.

After he graduated from high school in Odessa, Robert attended Odessa Junior College for a couple of years. He then transferred to Angelo State University, from which he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism with a minor in speech.

Robert then moved to El Paso to work at a local TV station. He discovered fandom in El Paso. 9 months before he was to leave El Paso, Robert met Willie Siros at the local SF club. They attended their first sf convention together, the '74 Westercon in LA.

In 1974, Robert moved to Austin to work with the local ABC affiliate, KVUE. This was a move Robert was happy to make, Austin being (to him) a much more vital and alive city. He moved down by the University and enjoyed the atmosphere so much he has remained in that part of town since.

He has also remained with KVUE. When he first started in 1974 Robert worked in production, performing various tasks such as cameraman, air switching, and news direction. In 1978 he moved into the Traffic department. This is the department that manages the TV air time and is responsible for slotting commercials. Robert enjoys his work and finds it mostly fun. He says it is different from day-to-day, if not from season-to-season.

Robert doesn't expect to remain in the traffic department. He would like to move into the news department. He says that KVUE needs a historian, someone to keep track of new coverage, (what has and hasn't been covered) and to perform necessary legwork and research. This is the type of thing that Robert would enjoy.

In the Willie Siros interview we found out that Robert was one of the original group in both AramdilloCon and FACT. He is still very active, having been FACT's president for a number of years. He is also currently a member of the FACT Board of Directors, serving out one of the recently vacated, unexpired terms.

According to Robert, FACT needs to get some of its programs back on track, and that some reorganization is probably called for. Now that Armadillo Con is out of the way for this year this can proceed. Robert thinks that FACT



"needs to do more for the community, particularly in the area of literacy." The projects that Robert would like to see get back on track are things like paying for sf magazine subscriptions for local libraries and taking local authors to public schools to speak with writing classes. He would like to see sponsored book signings every four months, and have the bigger authors do these signings all around Texas.

Robert was Vice-Chair of Lone Star Con, the '85 NASFiC. How does he rate their performance? "I give the bid an A, the convention a C+ or a B-. We did OK for what we knew." Robert thinks that they created the right kind of atmosphere at Lone Star Con, but were they to do it all again he would try to find a way to fit everything in the Palmer Auditorium.

What does he think about the possibility for a San Antonio WorldCon in 1997? FACT needs to get its act together quickly. Because San Antonio is such a popular convention location, Robert views bids from non-SF conventions for use of the facilities to be more of a potential problem than other WorldCon bids.

And his role? He would be interested in running Member Services. He feels that cons can offer more to their members to make the conventions more convenient.

Concerning him being con chair? "It would be great to be immortal.", but that probably wouldn't be a good position for him. Job reality and career requirements could be problems. And since he'll be 46 in 1997 he's not sure he'll have the necessary energy level, either. "(I) don't know if I could really give it as much as I could ... as I could back in '85."

Outside of FACT and fandom, Robert likes to read. He reads "mostly best-seller type of stuff, mostly non-fiction." He also keeps up with the SF magazines, preferring short fiction to novels. "I think short fiction is where

you're going to find the upcoming writers." His favorite authors? A lot of the local authors, writers such as Sterling, Waldrop, Shiner, and Neal Barrett, Jr. as well as authors such as Gibson, McDevitt, Shepard, and Kim Stanley Robinson.

Robert's other hobbies includes going to the movies and "for real mindless fun" playing video games. He especially likes the really action-packed games. I like "something that blows up real good."

Robert is a sharp dresser. His normal convention "costume" consists of a sports coat and a turtleneck. He started going bald about age 22, following in his Dad's pattern, but retains a fringe of light brown colored hair. He also sports a moustache and a natty Van Dyke beard.

Robert's philosophy is to take it easy, "live and let live", to be tolerant. Robert remembers a scout trip to Gettysburg in the '60s. Along on this trip were 2 black scouts, 2 hispanics, and six anglos. To get to Gettysburg they travelled through the deep south, and though there was no overt racism, the atmosphere was not one of warmth and understanding.

Robert does have his dreams. He would like to write a book someday. He would also like to get involved in local politics. Failing that, he would like to be more active in community service projects. His question is "What will I leave behind?" He would like to leave some mark on the world. One lost dream is that he would have liked to talk to Walter Miller, the author of *A Canticle for Liebowitz* (one of Robert's favorite books), to understand more about the man.

If nothing else, Robert will leave behind many friends, who both know and respect what he has already accomplished. He has truly been one of the mainstays of Texas fandom.

## Trades Listing

### Alpha Centura Communicator #116, 117

ed. Jack F. Speer: Alpha Centura, Inc.:  
c/o Phil Hernandez: 4108 Mesa Verde  
NE: Albuquerque NM 87110

This issue deals mostly with  
Star Trek in its various  
forms.

### BCSFazine #196, 197

ed. R. Graeme Cameron: British Columbia SFA: POB  
35577, Station E: Vancouver BC V6M 4G9

A well done clubzine, though I often  
disagree with the tastes of the editor.

### DASFax Vol 21. #7, 8

ed. Mary Heller: Denver Area SFA: 153 Ellsworth  
Ave: Denver CO 80223-1623

Club news with just a little extra.

### The Dillinger Relic #61-62, DR #63

Arthur D. Hlavaty: POB 52028: Durham NC 27717

See the review on p. 15

### Don-O-Saur #53-55

Don Thompson: 3735 W. 81st Place: Westminster  
CO 80030

From a long time fan, this issue has  
Don's thoughts on education and a long  
loc column. Intelligent discourse.

### FOSFax #143

ed. Timothy Lane & Janice Moore: Falls of Ohio SFA:  
PO Box 37281: Louisville KY 40233-7281

Hugo nominated fanzine. The primary  
contents are reviews and the loccol.

### The Insider #152

ed. Deb Roe: St. Louis SFA: PO Box 1058: St Louis  
MO 63188 - Clubzine.

### Knarley Knews #17

Henry A. Welch: 66 9th St.: Troy NY 12180

A perzine. This issue deals with Henry's  
recent medical ailments.

### The NASFA Shuttle Aug 89, Sep 89

ed. Nelda Kathleen Kennedy: North Alabama SFA:  
POB 4857: Huntsville AL 35815

A little club news, some articles, but  
mostly locs.



### Nashville SF Club newsletter (no dates or issue numbers)

647 Devon Dr: Nashville TN 37220 -  
Clubzine

### New Pathways into Science Fiction #15

ed. Michael G. Adkisson, fiction ed. Chris  
Kelly: MGA Services: POB 863994: Plano

TX 75068

A semi-prozine, well laid out with quite  
a bit of fiction.

### Renaissance Fan #7

Rosalind Malin & Dick Pilz, Jr.: 2214 SE 53rd:  
Portland OR 97215

Has my vote for the most beautifully  
crafted fanzine around. This issue is  
about carousels.

### Riverside Quarterly Vol. 8 #2

ed. Leland Sapiro: Box 464: Waco TX

See the review on p. 15

### Stone Hill Launch Times Vol 3 #9, 10

ed. Ann Morris [Richard Byers]: Stone Hill SFA:  
POB 2076: Riverview FL 33569

A clubzine that reads like a perzine.

### Transmissions

ed. Anne Davenport: Nova Odysseus: POB 1534:  
Panama City FL 32402-1534 - Typ. clubzine

### West Wind #142

ed. Robert Suryan: Northwest SF Society: POB  
24207: Seattle WA 98124

A very well laid out clubzine, not just  
club news.



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## Fanzine Reviews by Alexander R. Slate

*Riverside Quarterly*, Volume 8, Number 2 is not exactly a new fanzine, but it is the latest version of this fanzine available. *RQ* is a serious literary fanzine, and the quality of the writing within reflects that fact. If you are looking for lighthearted banter, tips on costuming, the latest Star Trek gossip, this fanzine is not for you. If you are interested in serious discussions on sf, then this fanzine might interest to you. All this is not to say that there are no humorous articles or articles on movies, because there are.

To explain this lets look at the contents of this issue. The opening article is "Heroism in Science Fiction: Two Opposing Views" by Dennis Kratz. This article examines two different ways that Stanislaw Lem portrays heroes in two of his books. The next article is an interview with Connie Willis. Then comes "Blurb Happy" by Bob Tucker, a funny article about how publishers get their jacket blurbs. Next, Peter Bernhardt examines the movie, *The Last Unicorn*. Jim Harmon reviews Carlton Morse's *Killer at the Wheel*. The final article is a look at Conan Doyle's *When the World Screamed* which concentrates on hidden sexual innuendos. This article is written very seriously, yet may be a satire for all of that.

There are also letters of comment, a short introductory editorial, and a number of poems. All the writing is well crafted (lets leave aside the poetry- I do not pretend to judge poetry!), but not tedious. There is sufficient artwork, which ranges from mediocre to good (but none of it bad).

Physically, Leland Sapira (the editor) and his crew also get high marks. They use a crisp, clear type and the layout is done well. The only problems have to do with the paper. The paper is a light blue, which seems somewhat distracting. The paper is

also too thin, and sometimes the writing and art on the page behind the one you read shows through and this is distracting. My ratings (out of 10):

Content: 8.5

Technical: 7.0

Interest: 7.5



*DR #63*, is the renamed *Dillinger Relic* by Arthyr D. Hlavaty. Looking at this fanzine, it is easy to see why Arthur has been nominated several times for the "Best Fan Writer" Hugo. His writing is intelligent, but not stuffy, and is well crafted.

This is a very good zine which I enjoy reading, but I do not think it will satisfy everyone. The con reports and book reviews might well interest a large audience. The article on football will lose a number of people (it was my least favorite.). The two articles on Arthur's ongoing experiences as a graduate student at Duke University will be the least interesting to most readers (I enjoy these articles, because it gives an insight into Arthur, the person. Therefore Arthur I'm not recommending that you don't put in these articles, I'm simply saying that I don't think they will interest the majority of fans that I know.)

Technically, the zine is well done. It has a good layout and the typeface and reproduction are crisp, clear, and very readable.

My ratings:

Content: 8.0

Technical: 8.0

Interest: 7.8

## LoCCol

*Here is the very first LOC to be received by Dale and myself on our first issue. It's pure egoboo, and I figured I'd print it just for that very reason.*

Nina Ramberg  
25 October 89

Dear Alex,

You and Dale have gotten off to a fine start. I really enjoyed THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER, Issue 32. Your profile of Fred Pohl was quite enlightening, Ed Graham's reviews were informative, and I liked the idea of a series about FACT members. I especially appreciated Casey Hamilton's sensitive essay.

Thanks for a great issue, and good luck!

*Thanks, Nina. Also, thank you to those of you who let me know how you felt about the issue when I saw you at ArmadilloCon. And to those of you had had bits of constructive criticism, they have been noted and we will see what we can do to make the 'zine all that it can be. Please folks, keep those cards and letters coming in.*

## Tidbits

Joe Lansdale had four different items optioned for films lately. He is currently working on the screen treatment for **Dead in the West**.

Howard Waldrop is busy working on another novel, **I John Mandeville**.

Ursa Major is preparing to hold its writer's workshop in February. The workshop is without charge but space is limited. Contact 512-344-3414.

*The following is from a hand designed card sent to FACT, not to TSFI from the Narwoods. We felt we'd share it with you.*

With continuing support from family, friends, and all our beloved communities, we came through 1989 in better shape than anyone predicted./ Warren is still a medical mystery and is being treated for a variety of conditions, but his most important treatment comes from within./ Gigi continues to gain recognition for her writing and had several front page stories in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. She and Warren were both invited to teach at the Texas A&M fiction writers' workshop./ Gigi has also taken up the Celtic lap harp and gave her first public performance in August, accompanied by Warren on the mountain dulcimer. And so with love, hope, music, and a renewed spiritual joy we take one day at a time into 1990.

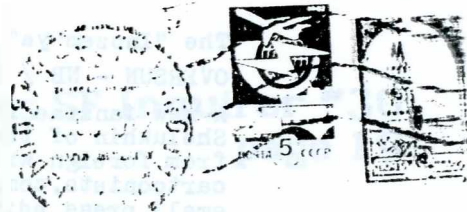
*And to you, Warren and Gigi, and the remainder of our readers we wish you the joy of the holiday seasons and the best of times in the coming new year.*

## About the next 2 pages.

The following two pages contain a copy of a letter that was included in the latest issue of Renaissance Fan. Since, most of our readers don't get a chance to see this fanzine, I felt it would be worth reproducing this letter, from Vladimir V. Shelukhin in the Soviet Union. Help support SF around the world.



USSR  
The Nikolaev branch of  
**OVERSUN**  
fan news agency



OVERSUN - NB, GOS-3, POB 22, 327003 Nikolaev, USSR

date 15.08.89 9/12 to No \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
from \_\_\_\_\_

To: Rosalind Malin & Dick Pilz  
2213 SE 53rd  
Portland, OR 97215  
USA

Vladimir V. Shelukhin  
OVERSUN-NB  
GOS-3, POB 22  
327003 Nikolaev, USSR

Dear Editors,

With my greatest pleasure I greet you heartily on behalf of Soviet SFantasy fans. My name is Vladimir V. Shelukhin, 29. I am an editor of a new Russian fanzine The "Inozem'ye" ("The Otherland"), intending to be a bridge between the Soviet and foreign small presses and fandoms and thus looking for submitters from other countries. The basic info about The "Inozem'ye" is enclosed. As for the OVERSUN FNA, it's an unofficial independent fan organization with headquarters in the Sevastopol town, issuing The "OVERSUN-inform" newsletter and two zines, "ABS-panorama" and "Oversun".

The Russian SFantasy small press at present makes it's first and somewhat staggering steps. It was born in 1988 only and is still weak and unexperienced. There are no market in the Soviet Union to sell or buy a message without knowledge of state functionaries, editors have no legal possibilities to publish their zines and hardly know anything of experience in this field stored in the West. Before now only Boris Zavgorodny has tried to find pen-pals among foreign SFantasy fans and professionals with appreciable results. Today the time itself presses to establish friendly and creative relations with colleagues from other countries. Alas, I have quite a little proficiency either in editing of a fanzine, or in establishing of international contacts, but would try to do my best at my own risk hoping you'll understand my problems. Among the fans I am acquainted with only Boris Zavgorodny, who lives in Volgograd, has got an old copy of the "Fandom Directory". Being his friend I asked him to send me the addresses of people who could be interested in contacts with the Russian small press and fandom. Some more addresses I've found in a tearsheet from the "Other-Realms", 1988, #23. This (along with Boris' one-word remarks like "fan", "editor" etc.) is all I've managed to know about you. But the fact your name is known even in this god-forsaken place tells you won a considerable position in the fandom or creative circles of your country. Then could you kindly tell to the Soviet readers of The "Inozem'ye" something special about yourself, your fan activity, your club, magazine or else about SF fandom and small press organizations of your country? Or would you advise me more ways of expansion of The "Inozem'ye"'s contacts in your country? My editorial colleagues and I will be much obliged to you for your early reply, every friendly advice or a message.

Sincerely Yours,

*W. M.*  
Vladimir V. Shelukhin.

The "Inozem'ye" ("The Otherland")

OVERSUN - NB / GOS-3, PO Box 22 / 327003 Nikolaev / USSR

A new fanzine from the Soviet Union edited by Vladimir V. Shelukhin of the OVERSUN Fan News Agency welcoming submissions from foreign writers (both established or unpublished), artists, cartoonists, comics artists, film, art and literature critics, small press editors and all those whose passion and work has clearly fantastic nature. Go, make your name known to the Soviets! Reprints acceptable. Well photocopied submissions and computer printouts OK. Looking for a short sf/f/h fiction (under 10 pgs of a standard ms format), but all length considered. Writing should be crisp, literate, not experimental and have impact, generate reader's identification and emotion. Weird and supernatural horror stories are preferred, but acceptance depends on quality and writer's tastefulness: no vulgarity, trivialised violence and gratuitous sex, but a bit of sensuality and erotic titillatory are welcome. The I will not consider poetry submissions. Also seeking nonfiction under 5 pgs length: commentary, film and literature criticism, etc. Authors should remember we in the SU have too little a chance to see a good foreign film or buy foreign book, so the readers of the I need at least a short plot description and references, along with clear photocopies of film ads and shots. Even the Universal horror classics are completely unknown here. Articles should be informative and educative, and a clearly visible author's personal attitude to what he writes about must be present in them. Articles on writing of sf or weird fiction (not exceeding 2 pgs) are welcome. Interviews with prominent writers, film stars and directors, wide-known sf/f/h zine editors are needed as well. Russian SFantasy small press is young, weak and unexperienced, and it lacks legal opportunity of publishing it's zines to boot. The last problem we the Soviets must solve ourselves, but speaking of the former we don't want to invent a bicycle. Therefore the I readily considers letters and articles on personal experience as an editor or publisher, especially about the very beginning of your career. Every friendly advise and information is OK. Letters become the property of the I and may be subject to editing.

Artwork will be considered readily & with great pleasure if it indicates elegance and style. Needed covers featuring classic Hollywood monsters or seductive female vampires and witches, or sf. Small inside illos alright. No extreme gore or "road accident" pictures, but sensuality is fine.

The Soviet Union never knew such a delightful thing as comics.

The I awaits for 1 - 5 pg comics (no comic strips). Must deal with supernatural horror or a science horror, be well directed and have an eerie quality. All artwork in b&w.

Payment in contrib's copies: 2 for coverwork, comics, fiction more than 6 pg size (one extra copy for exceptional work), 1 for a 2 - 6 pg contribution, tearsheet for less than 2 pg ms or inside illo, sincere gratitude for anything less or a friendly letter or advice (unpublished). Responds in 4 mo with a short commentary on submissions rejected and more lengthy and critically helpful to accepted ones (don't forget to enclose loose US stamps, not SASE or IRC).

DL for #1: postmarked Aug 10 for first class mail (late entries automatically enter #2). Usual frequency 4 issues yr. Digest, 150 pgs or more.

All accepted contributions will be translated into Russian. The ones that the I readers will call the best are to appear - in accordance with the author's will - in a semi-pro fold-up serial collection of short stories and authors receive a minimum of

4 copies.

Alas, the editor isn't sure how the overseas reader should order the I from this country of "prominent future" which citizens are safely protected from receiving of foreign money in hard currency. For the time being the I is projected for the Soviet readers and small press people to present them the foreign SFantasy fandom, literature, film and small press.

The I will be glad to expand it's foreign contacts. It's editorial can read and write, besides English, in Russian, Ukrainian and Polish and would be much obliged to hear from fans from the according communities.



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c/o The Fandom Association of  
Central Texas, Inc. (FACT, Inc.)  
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Austin TX 78766

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