

# TIGHTBEAM



MARCH  
1980



# TIGHTBEAM

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front and back covers by Anji Valenza

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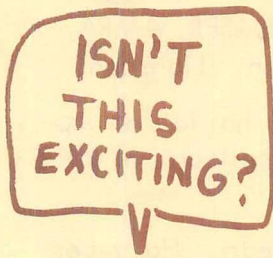
Since closing the letters' pages, I have heard from three people whose letters I will publish next issue -- Don Fitch, James Ridings, and Barbara Tennison.

Art credits:	Fred Jackson III	pgs 3, 17, 25	Deirdre Murphy	pg 9
	FMaki	pgs 6, 15, 19, 23, 27	Michael Roden	pg 21



# EDITORIAL

by Lynne Holdom



frejac

This typer is making funny noises and I just hope I can get the editorial done before it decides to quit altogether.

We still haven't had any snow here; all of it has been going to our south. I hear Virginia got buried. We need the moisture too. On the other hand, it has been very cold and windy -- colder than average.

Janie Lamb told me that a mail truck burned up in her area. Therefore if you think you renewed and never got a cancelled check back, that could be where it went. Any time you think a mistake has been made, check. You could be right. In fact three of the people who have renewal checks on their copies of TIGHTBEAM, have renewed. These are Jill Matthews, Michael Roden and Barbara Tennison. I often make out the lists before I get the latest renewal lists from Janie.

I am also starting a policy of charging \$1.00 for TB when you order a back issue that you missed because you failed to renew on time. If the P.O. loses it, that's another matter. When supplies run out, they run out and you are out of luck. I have back copies of the September, November and January issues. However, I must admit that James JJ Wilson has got to have rotten luck with the P.O. I sent him a back copy of the May TB to make up for one that got lost in the mail and the P.O. lost it too. Irvin also sent him a copy of the May TB and the P.O. lost that one as well. James, I believe you were not intended to get the May 79 TB. I am out of copies of it now in any case.

A couple of overseas members wanted to know how much it would cost to get TB and TNFF air mail. That would be \$9.00 US over and above your dues. Only you can decide whether or not it's worth it. Canadian members can get all copies first class (which goes air mail when appropriate) for \$1.00 extra. I usually send TB first class to Canadians when the third class is 40¢ and first class 41¢ but not when third class is 40¢ and first class is 54¢ as happened with the September and January issues. The difference for TNFF is 8¢ (28¢ compared to 20¢). I know this comes to less than \$1.00 but I dislike handling change.

The table of contents is wrong in two instances. William West reviewed THE STAND, not THE SHINING. Both are by Stephen King. And Paul Macdonald did not get his review in (I still don't have it) so Pat did a review of FIRESHIP instead. I hope that the New Members' List makes it here tomorrow. I don't know about it.

I went to a STAR TREK con over Washington's Birthday. It was the first Trek con I have ever attended. It was more expensive to attend than a SF con but I commuted to it so saved some money there. One night we went down to Chinatown to have dinner and got greeted with firecrackers -- it was Chinese New Year -- and one of our party got burned by one. We found out later that all the noise masked the sounds of a bank robbery. Well, it certainly was noisy enough. The food was excellent and a number of us had Dragon soup. It's very good.

Mitchell Hollander, 11 Oakland Park, Medford, MA 02155 will also store N3F materials you want to send for Noreastcon. Speaking of that con, I still haven't heard from the hotel, or rather the Tourist Bureau. William West mentioned that they may be holding an alternate Olympics in Boston in August. Just what we need to make hotel rooms absolutely impossible to find.

I guess that is all for March. I'm getting very nervous about using this typewriter. See you in May or whenever the typer is fixed.



# NEW MEMBERS

Michael DuCharme  
412½ Fourth St. S.  
Mil bank, SD 57252

BD: 6-11-54. Insts: writing, art, fanzines, cons. Has typer.  
Active fandom 2 years. Inst in SF 17 years. Reads SFR, AMRA,  
JANUS. Likes most authors and all kinds of fiction. Librarian.

Howard deVore  
4705 Weddel St  
Dearborn, MI 48125

A long time member of first fandom. Book dealer, has lots of dup-  
licating material. Has 50,000 fanzines and is a collector of all  
fannish material.

Maura Grady  
P-O. Box 340  
Manasquan, NJ 08736

BD: 11-8-63. Student. Active in fandom four years. Has typer  
cassette. Fav authors: Asimov, LeGuin.

David Heath Jr  
HHC 437, Armor WS  
Fort Knox, KY 40121

BD: 12-31-52. Insts : art, correspondence, mags, fanzines, editing  
pubbing. Does fanzine "NOSEX". Will do art for fanzines. Has typer  
and uses offset photo copier. Fav authors: Farmer, Niven, Laumer.

Robert McClain  
RD 1, Box 211A  
Hawley, PA 18428

BD: 5-1-64. Student/Writer. Inst writing, collecting, books, mags,  
corres, will write for pubs. Esp inst in fanzines. Has typer. Inst SF  
4 years.

Letty Smith  
143 River St  
Madison, OH 44057

BD: 8-30-63. Music student. Inst: writng, colls, reviewing. Active  
fandom three years. Has typer, cassette. Fav author: McCaffrey,  
Norton, Heinlein.

Robert Teague  
1900 Clay Ave  
Panama City, FL 32405

BD: 1-20-55. Water meter reader. Inst writing, editing, pubbing, art  
collects books and pictures, fanzines. Has typer, cassette. Inst fandom  
5 years. Prefers hard SF stories.

Kathleen Woodbury  
5315 Chestnut Ave  
South Charleston, WV 25309

BD: 9-4-52. Homemaker. Inst: writing, editing, reviewing, collects  
unusual names. Has typer, cassette. Fav authors: Tolkien, Heyer,  
Norton.

Phil Arny  
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Jacqueline Lichtenberg, 8 Fox Lane, Spring Valley, NY 10977  
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Patrick Price, P.O. Box 65184, West Des Moines, IO 50265  
FMaki Shimbo (Anji Valenza), 4555 Beachcomber Ct., Boulder, CO 80301

Renewals: Joan Conner 2/81, Kathy Drexel 2/81, Peter Graham 2/81, Mitchell Hollander 2/81,  
Frankie Jemison 2/81, Connie Jeske 2/81, Brod Klinger 2/81, Barbara Krasnoff 2/81  
Lynne Morse 2/82, Keith Walker 2/82, A-D. Wallace 2/85, James JJ Wilson 2/81

Amelia Ahlstrom 3/81, Ed Bryant 3/82, Richard Jasinski 3/82, Jacqueline Lichtenberg 3/82  
Chris Martin 3/81, David Rorer 3/81, Bobbie Marie Smith 3/81, Richard Smith 3/81  
Anne Zeek 3/81, Scotty Matthews 4/81, Michael Roden 4/81, Barbara Tennison 4/81



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Donald Franson.

It's time to enter the 1980 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest. We are going back to the old rules, defining an amateur as someone who has sold not more than two stories to the professional science fiction or fantasy publications. This rule, made in the Sixties, is now even more logical, since the Science Fiction Writers of America now require three short stories or a novel to join their ranks.

The definition of short story as anything up to 7500 words conforms to the Hugo and Nebula rules. Short stories are easier for us to handle, cost less postage, and are best for beginners. No lower limit is set, but if you write a short-short, it should be good enough to compete.

A big effort will be made this year to get more entries, both inside and outside the N3F, so publicity is welcome from anyone who can help. Extra blanks are available from me; no SASE required within N3F.

The fees are set high enough so we don't lose money, but low enough so we can attract more entries. It's hard to predict whether we will break even this year -- we never have yet.

Winners of the 1979 Contest may have been announced elsewhere, but here they go again:

First prize, \$25, to David L. Travis, for "The Mongoose of Fat."

Second prize, 2 years membership in N3F, to Peter Silverman, for "Teddy Bear's Picnic."

Third prize, 1 year membership in N3F, to Jack R. Patterson, for "Yan Genesis."

Honorable Mention, to David L. Travis, for "The Talent."

Thanks to Janelle Holmes for doing a good job running the 1979 contest, and to Jack Chalker for being Final Judge.

Now forget about last year and start afresh. Write the very best story you can. Don't just send your old rejects, at least without polishing and retyping. Write a new story, or rewrite an old one, just for the contest. This may be your stepping-stone to prodom. In any case it should be good practice. And don't wait for the deadline -- get your blanks and start writing now.

The other timely message I have is on recruiting. Application blanks will be made available to every member for a one-on-one campaign (have you a friend who might join?), and will be distributed as flyers. The Story Contest may get us some recruits too. As I wrote in TNFF in 1977, a membership of 400 or 500 is twice as useful to us as 200-250. Beyond that, the law of inverse squares takes over, and the workload gets too heavy to handle. But let's see if we can grow a bit now. DF.



# THE BLACK HOLE

reviewed by Anji Valenza

I have two infamous lists of SF movies. The All-Time-Best which hasn't changed in about a decade (although I have addended and appendixed it); and the All-Time-Worst. The All-Time-Worst list is my favorite of the two -- because I get to play with it so often.

Up until a year ago, the Worst of the All-Time-Worst was occupied by a movie called "Village of the Giants", a very early 60ish, pseudo-groovy take-off on FOOD OF THE GODS. The plot was silly, the acting was thin, and the effects could have been upstaged by M & M's melting in one's mouth and not in one's hands.

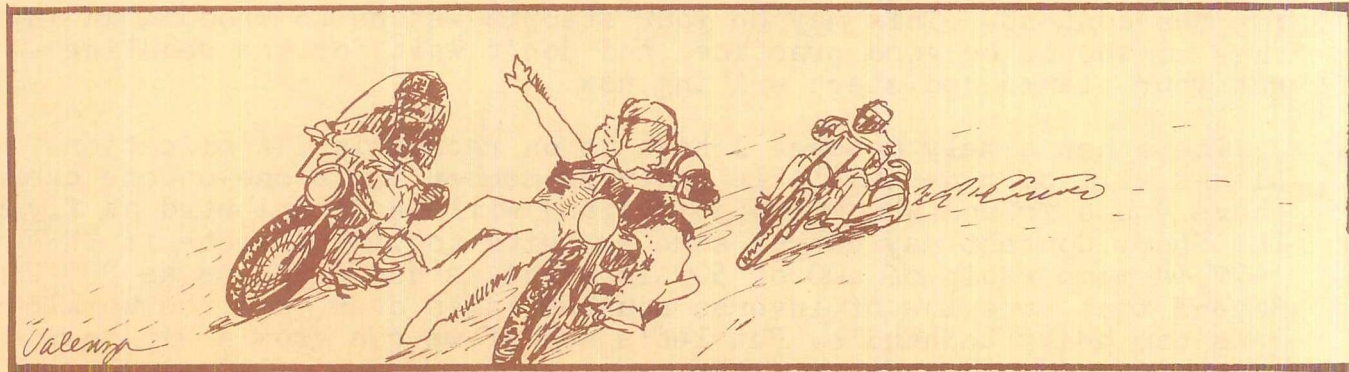
But about a year ago, even this was surpassed. By BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25th CENTURY, a movie which simply screamed, "I AM A TV MOVIE!" which has, I feel become permanently #1 of the All-Time-Most-Ghodawful SF Movies. But VILLAGE OF THE GIANTS stayed right down there next to last.

Until a couple of weeks ago when my once worst was jostled again, this time by a slick production called THE BLACK HOLE.

I gather that those of you out there possessed with at least the brains of the crew of the NOSTROMO can already guess what I thought of the movie. For those of you who haven't seen it, it goes like this:

Scientific crew (including cute but redeemingly obnoxious robot) discovers huge black hole. Goes to investigate. Meets Mad Scientist who surprises everyone with his presence, has a beautifully and elegantly appointed ship, and has killed off the noble father of the hero (or in this case, heroine) who has enormous psi powers etc (sound familiar?) The Mad Scientist wants to go through the Black Hole, but not before making the noble scientific crew ...(ta dah!) his slaves, and sending his evil army of ant-shaped robots to capture them. They meet another good robot -- with a Texas accent, uh huh?! who aids them in their escape. They go through the black hole, pass through Hell and Heaven in that order (what else would be on the other side of so awesome an object as a Black Hole, of course) and end up....well, I don't remember. I had dropped the prize from my crackerjack box onto the floor and was desperately trying to pry it up from the black juji fruits. Who knows where they ended up? For that matter, who cares?

Ghods! The movie was about an hour and a half long and contained about ten minutes of plot including the credits. The special effects, at times, were excellent, and fans of special effects might find the flick occasionally amusing. As far as speculations on Black Holes themselves, what they might be and what one can do with them, there is none. All there is is lots of advertizing. BLACK HOLE promises everything but delivers only grief -- it is truly the Ayatollah Khomeini of movies.





# So Bright the Vision

(THE WORK OF CLIFFORD SIMAK)

An Overview by Greg Hills

"The Grand Master of SF seems to have a bone to pick with technology...(his novels) fall mostly into the 'wilderness versus the city' category..." says John DiPrete in the September, 1979, TIGHTBEAM. This overview is spurred into existence by that remark, and will be, not so much an overview as a refutation.

I have a medium sized collection of Simak; for the curious I will list the titles at the end of this article. However, I have read widely enough to state with assurance that my collection, while not definitive, spans the major axes of his work. Thus I will restrict my references to volumes within reach, i.e. within my collection.

Simak is one of the longer running SF writers. His first published story appeared in the 1930s. In the time since then, he has developed a very clear and distinguishable style. His characters tend to be country-loving and (unless they are the villains) reasonable. They think before they speak, and say less than they thought. Pacing generally feels slow (though I for one have never become bored while reading even the longest of his novels), giving the characters plenty of room in which to hunker down and 'chew the fat'.

It is this very aspect, and Simak's all-too-obvious abhorrence of gadgets for the sake of gadgets that may lead John to think Simak dislikes technology.

The truth is more complex than this, however. As one example I will point out the situation in the short story "City", where a robot lawn-mower is lumped with the lot of the villains (such as they are) yet the private plane is hailed as the advance that allows people to resume the country life in comfort. Or throughout the collection CITY itself, where Jenkins the robotler is a vital character for good -- yet is a dauntless and remorseless foe of attempts to mechanize the world of the Dogs. And note that Dogs are given personal robots to attend to their grooming, etc.

In fact, one aspect of the reality is that Simak is neither pro or con technology. He is instead arguing for the traditional rural humanity and quality of life, backed by as much hard science and engineering as the situation will bear. He very carefully pans the 'noble savage' and the type of country gentleman who lives alone in a big house, with one or two handservants as the sole means of support. In point of fact, wherever Simak writes a rural gentleman into the tale, that person is clearly shown as living well mainly through the toil of the robots he owns, and the technology behind them.

Except for atomic bombs and the like, technology in Simak's worlds is not depicted as bad within itself. There are only bad users of technology. The robot lawn-mower in "City" is bad only because Gramp himself is a lazy bod, fully capable of mowing his own lawn without noticeable inconvenience.

In COSMIC ENGINEERS we find Simak at one end of his range of writing. Technology is the key to a sedate, godlike existence that Mankind must yet work to earn, since until we have striven for it, the technology would let us undo ourselves. CE is pure space opera, and even though I am a follower of 'Doc' Smith, parts of it made me squirm. Yet even here Simak's attitudes come through, his attitudes undiluted.

In CEMETARY WORLD we come to the other end of the range, where the scenario -- Earth turned into a gigantic mausoleum/burial ground -- is merely the screen on which the characters play.

"I watched him amble down the slope and go into the house. The sun was warm on my back and I knew that I should get down off the fence and move around a bit or find something I should do. I must look silly, I thought, perched on the fence, and I felt a sense of guilt at not having anything to do nor wanting any-



thing to do. But I felt a strange disinclination to do anything at all. It was the first time in my life I'd not had things piled up and waiting to be done. And, I found, with some disgust, that I enjoyed it." (CEMETARY WORLD, pg 79 of the 1977 Magnum paperback.)

This quote shows, I think, several aspects of Simak's work. First, he is not a master of prose. Note the too similar repetitions. Yet this sort of redundancy is a part of Simak's style. His descriptions tend to nibble at something from all angles in slightly different ways each time. The character feels he should be doing something, yet has neither anything to do nor the inclination to do it. How many of us can recall just such feelings when sitting around in a motel or lying on a beach while on holiday? In one paragraph, we are given a feel for the character, his thought patterns, his attitudes, his upbringing -- and even his history.

Thus the second aspect, that of characterization. Simak takes great care with his characters. They are living entities. They are consistent with themselves, and where one steps out of the role designed for them, it is because such a breaking of bonds is consistent with that character's persona. Human beings are a ~~contradictory~~ lot, and Simak's skill in characterization consists of bringing out this feature without destroying a character's credibility for the reader. A lot of the trouble with modern writers -- such as Herbert or Cherryh -- is that they have not mastered this. In DUNE and THE FADED SUN: KESRITH, the writers are so busy making their characters suit their cultures that they fail to make them into credible personalities. If Muad'dib or Maelin stepped out of their cultural masks and did something on impulse -- not to further the storyline -- it would crack them completely. They are too controlled, and don't convince me. Simak, while no shakes at making realistic aliens, cannot easily make an unbelievable character. Thus, on a walk, a character is quite likely to take a swerve from the path ~~wants~~, for no clearly shaped reason, and nothing nasty of plot advancing will happen to them.

Loose plotting? No way. When Simak ties up the plot at the end, that plot stays tied up. This is a third aspect that may be illuminated by the paragraph quoted above. The character is doing nothing, and this lack of action is unimportant to the storyline. Yet the novel is not stopped by it. It is not the pre-planned and significant event that Herbert or Cherryh would make of it, but rather just seems to have appeared there on Simak's whim. So he uses it.

Finally the quoted paragraph is a nice example of the way Simak uses words to create atmosphere. "Ambles" rather than "walks"; "perches" rather than "sits". The character watches someone go down the slope rather than thinks as that person walks away. Many writers would have used something like "As he walked away down the slope and into the house, I knew..." This is more succinct and concise -- but lacks Simak's atmosphere and flavour. It wouldn't fit.

In RING AROUND THE SUN we find technology that can be good or bad depending on your viewpoint. I cannot explain why without ruining the plot for those who haven't read it yet (~~how few~~ would they be?) Suffice that the gadgets in the story have two sides. Accepted or rejected totally is the only viable course for anybody. Trying to accept some and reject others will merely result in falling between the hills. It is interesting that Simak has his characters accept the situation totally.

WAY STATION. You knew it'd turn up. Once this was (to me) the supreme example of Simak's work. Nowadays CITY has edged it out, but it remains high on the list. It is the clearest single example I can find of his style. I don't intend to review it here; just make it required reading (in advance) for anyone wanting to argue against this dissertation. In this deceptively simple space opera will be found clues to Simak's philosophy toward life, toward towns and cities, toward characters, people, plots.

I will point out that the interstellat transporter that the tale centres around is an extreme example of technology; it is shown as neither good or bad in itself. Instead it

(con't on pg 14)



# THE ROAD TO CORLAY

by Richard Cowper

reviewed by Dennis Jarog

THE ROAD TO CORLAY is the extrapolation of "Piper at the Gates of Dawn" and is a story of unusual power in the sweep of the narrative. Tom, the Piper trained by the mysterious Wizard of Bowness sets out seemingly to join the Minster choir at York, in reality to be at the appointed place at the turn of the millenium to welcome the White Bird of Kinship. The legend goes that after the drowning, the Bird of Kinship will come to give everyone a message of friendship and brotherly love among all people. The legend also tells that the White Bird will be slain by a darker one, who in the passage of time becomes the White Bird and spreads the message anew. So Tom died, and the pipes were taken by his slayer, Gyre and so on. The Church Militant saw the legend as a threat to its own power and uttered the clarion call of heresy and persecuted the Kinsmen. Tied in with this is the out-of-body contact that is made between Michael Carver, a scientist of the pre-drowning 20th century, and a drowned Kinsman of a thousand years later.

It is a story of unusual power with a quantity of the very elusive factor sometimes called mythic content. By the same token, the story maybe has a shade too much of black and white -- the Church Militant is heavily dealt with and the hierarchs of the Church seem much more interested in protecting their own privileged positions than in the possibility that the White Bird of Kinship is at cross purposes with the mythos of a carpenter in Palestine three thousand years before. It would seem that the White Bird carries a message very much like that of the Carpenter and that those aforementioned hierarchs have assumed the position of preservers of the status quo for fear of actually having to go out and work for a living.

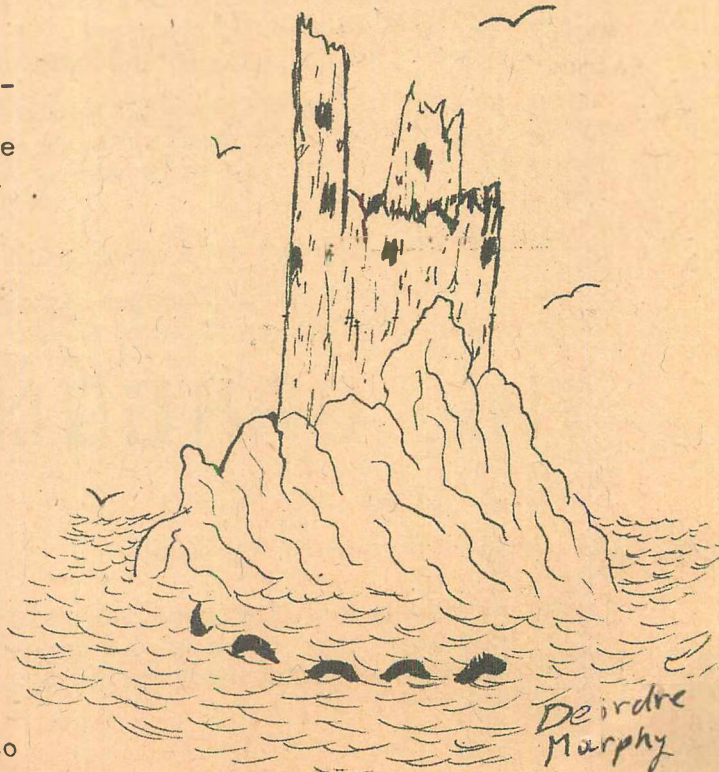
"The Archbishop snorted derisively. 'And where does that leave us? A legend: an old rogue of a story teller; and a boy who plays the pipes. Smoke, Francis, Moon-shine. Nothing.'"

"Surely enough, my Lord, in all conscience, if God chooses them.'" (RC p 93).

Father Francis, the second speaker, has seen through the White Bird to the message it brought. It would hardly seem to be of heretical content. The Archbishop tells us that we must content ourselves with Holy Writ. He also would probably not recognize the Second Coming if it happened outside his bedroom window.

A document of the Kinsmen known as MORFEDD'S TESTAMENT prefigured at (as it turned out) both the boy's death and the coming persecution. "...I (Francis) believe it to have been couched in such a way that the author intended it should be interpreted as a profound spiritual triumph." (RC p 98). It is funny to note that the Church did not learn over some three thousand years that persecution is the worst way to deal with something unless one is willing to go full way to extermination. So it is safe to say that the Kinsmen will grow in strength and numbers.

THE ROAD TO CORLAY is a superb book, a joy to read and is highly recommended.





# WALL OF SERPENTS

by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt

reviewed by Sally Ann Syrjala

Fashioned of valor and woven of dreams is one way of describing the Finnish national epic, the KALEVALA. It is grand reading in itself and has lent itself as the basis for various SF and fantasy books, as well as being the source for HIAWATHA.

Emil Petaja has done the best job of translating its lore into SF in his novels, SAGA OF THE LOST EARTHS and THE STOLEN SUN. WALL OF SERPENTS does a credible job of weaving the magic of the tale into its pages.

SERPENTS is a fun book. Harold Shea is the main character. He can be likened to Dr. Who in the way he makes his way through different space-time continuums. As Harold is an amateur enchanter, he has no need of such devices as Dr Who's TARDIS to transport himself from one area to another.

Shea's wife, Belphebe, could be compared with Leela who accompanied Dr Who in some of his travels through time and space. Both women are of the warrior sort who would just as soon engage in a good battle as anything else.

This is the concluding tale in the adventures of THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER. It is the first book in the series that I have read and there was no trouble with events from preceding pages inserting themselves.

The story concerns the adventures that befall our amateur enchanter, Harold, and Belphebe in their quest from the land of the Ohio to the land of the KALEVALA to find a missing policeman. They had managed to misplace him in a different time-space continuum and needed to retrieve him so as to avoid charges of kidnapping an officer of the law.

The people of the KALEVALA are the first to be met on this quest. Lemminkainen, the warrior-lover, is the Kalevalan hero that is encountered. The Elk of Hiisi, the fair Kylliki, the evil Pohjola and the verse magic of the KALEVALA are all in evidence.

An adventurous romp through these lands is embarked upon. From here it is the lore of the Irish that is entered. It is interesting to note that the folklore of these countries presented side by side. Petaja did link these two peoples' tales in his SAGA OF LOST EARTHS. Therefore, it is only fitting this linkage should continue in other books which tell of the saga of the Land of the Midnight Sun.

The book is a light action/adventure reading excursion. The one striking plot deficiency is that one character is "lost" in the middle of the book never to be mentioned again. One can only wonder in which time and land he is to spend the rest of his days.

The book was fun and is a good whimsical reading experience.

WALL OF SERPENTS by L. Sprague deCamp and Fletcher Pratt  
THE ROAD TO CORLAY by Richard Cowper

Dell, November 1979  
Pocket Books, August 1979 \$1.95

## THE DRAGON LORD

by David Drake

reviewed by A.D. Wallace

This is among the very best fantasies that I have read during the past year. Or perhaps the most entertaining and amusing, because it is not really a good novel being too episodic, a concatenation of events, many of which could be deleted without af-



fecting the story line. A prime criterion for the quality of a novel is the extent to which the incidents are essential to it. Or so this seems to me.

The milieu is that of the historic Arthur, (circa 365-635), if indeed there is a historic Arthur. (My sources are at best secondary, if not tertiary). Among the actors are Arthur, Merlin, Lancelot, Gawain, Geraint and Cei (Kay), and none of these except Arthur himself appears in MSS of early date. Thus the book is almost disjoint from Mallory's MORTE and related stories. The principle character is Mael mac Ronan, and secondly Starkad together with the good and beautiful witch Velede. Arthur demands of Merlin some thing that will annihilate the Saxons. For this Merlin needs the skull of a monster for which Mael is sent to Ireland. With this object Merlin creates a wyvern which achieves its purpose, thanks to Velede.

The author provides adequate action and there are numerous bloody frays in which the details are given. In one instance Mael uses his 40 pound shield as a frisbee to kill a Saxon and save Arthur. The prose is usually successful but dialog such as "half a sec", "Bloody social event" and "do you need to be laid?" seems not to be in the venue. Contrary to much fantasy there is a blessed comic relief, and as an instance of this there is the episode of Mael entombed with Briargram. Comedy is, after all, the juxtaposition of disparates, or so it appears to me. Despite the author's patent efforts, the characterization is not entirely satisfactory. After the first half of the book, we learn no more of the three main personages, except Velede is more powerful than Merlin.

Most current writers of fantasy have an incapacity for, or a misunderstanding of, humor. Even the great LeGuin (the WIZARD series) eschews it, not noting that even Shakespeare had clowns in his tragedies. The premiere writer who pays attention to comedy is Jack Vance. It should be noted that fantasy is the literature of the impossible, the unreal, the irrational ... and that a balance is needed to make a good novel.

THE DRAGON LORD by David Drake

# # # # #

Berkley 1979 \$10.95

## DON'T BITE THE SUN

by Tanith Lee

reviewed by Kathleen Woodbury

The title comes from an inscription found during an archaeological dig in the story. "Don't bite the sun, Traveller, you will burn your mouth."

The narrator is a "predominately female" Jang, similar to a teenager, although the duration lasts at least half a "rorl", or century. She lives in a culture that is computer controlled -- government, environment, and all. Things are "paid" for by expressing large amounts of emotion, the energy from which is taken and stored to be used to run the place.

Children are "made" by two people who provide the necessary "halves", although only one is required to act as a guardian. The child is produced in test tube fashion a la Huxley and attends hypnoschool until time to become Jang, when the guardianship ends. After Jang ends, the individual becomes an "Older Person" and settles down to a more sedate life which includes watching plotless PictureVision broadcasts dealing with erotica.

The story deals with the narrator's attempts to find meaning in her life. She is extremely bored with being Jang, which involves trips to the Dimension Palace, the Adventure Palace, the Dream Rooms, the Jade Tower, and Silver Mountain; stealing things by not being profusely and ecstatically thankful for them; committing suicide frequently and picking a new body afterwards; wearing nearly nothing but flowers, beads, pieces



of wirl, etc.; and "having love" every so often.

Four BEE, where all this goes on, is a domed city, run by the computer and protected from the outside environment. (Another Jang activity is sabotaging the dome to let in all kinds of wild weather.)

The narrator attempts several ways of solving her problem and they all are unsatisfactory to some extent. Finally she becomes involved in the above mentioned archaeological expedition and learns something about her world and a little bit about herself.

The book has a sequel that is rather more satisfying in its conclusion, so I would recommend reading DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE immediately after DON'T BITE THE SUN.

They are interesting studies in human nature and I found them quite enjoyable. Anyone who has experienced an "identity crisis" ought to find something to sympathize with.

All in all DON'T BITE THE SUN is quite clever without being too cute. I'd recommend it as a real change if nothing else.

DON'T BITE THE SUN by Tanith Lee

DAW \$1.95

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE STAND

by Stephen King

reviewed by William West

One of the more interesting literary phenomena of the last decade was the spectacular rise of Stephen King to the bestseller list. Perhaps what makes it so amazing is the fact that he accomplished his feat in an overworked, cliched genre, the supernatural thriller. Beginning with CARRIE, King has placed five successive novels in the top ten bestsellers; at one point last year, two of them were there at the same time. One was his latest book DEAD ZONE, The other was THE STAND.

At first glance, the plot of THE STAND would seem to be indistinguishable from the great mass of catastrophe books. Returning to his SF roots, King hypothesizes a fatal accident at a U.S. Government biological warfare laboratory. Despite all the elaborate fail safe mechanisms, a mutated superflu is loosed upon America; one for which there is no antidote. Within a few weeks it decimates the country, leaving a few million survivors to pick up the pieces and rebuild civilization. And even that may be doomed to failure because no one can predict if their unborn children will inherit the parents' inexplicable immunity to the disease.

There the similarity to other disaster novels ends. For as the survivors begin to search out and find other people, they all discover that they share the same nightmare. Somewhere in the west, there is the Walking Dude, Randall Flagg, the living personification of Evil. He has no memories of his past life beyond his activities in the Sixties where he was the dark genius behind the violence of both the Left and the Right wing extremists. Able to take the form of the crow wolf or weasel, and to seemingly appear hundreds of miles from where he was an hour ago, he gathers to himself those people who have given into the darker side of human nature. Set against him is Abigail Freemantle, a 106 year old Black woman who claims divine inspiration. She also appears in dreams to survivors, a beacon of peace and security in the midst of their nightmares. Following their inner compulsions, people begin to travel to her home in Nebraska, and thence to Boulder, Colorado, where the Lord has directed her. It is from here that the forces of Good must face the threat of Flagg's imminent coming.

In the course of setting up this final confrontation, King follows some twenty char-



acters from their survival of the superflu to their eventual fate in the battle. Character development has been King's main forte, and this is possibly his best use of it so far. He shows what the characters were like before the flu, and how their past lives effect their survival, morally as well as physically. The cast includes a pyromaniac, a pregnant college student, a high school boy genius, a deaf mute, an East Texas good ol' boy, a mass murderer, a rock singer and a grammar school teacher. Their ultimate disposition on the side of Good or Evil is in some cases a matter of Free Will, and in others, Predestination. Some of the outcomes are never in doubt, but there are several cases that are studies of the strange inner call to self-destruction, despite the chance to avoid it. It is the measure of King's skill that he is able to inspire sympathy for those who choose Evil that, in some instances, exceeds that for the Good.

King's defination of the natures of the two opposing Forces is fascinating in its symbolism. Flagg's headquarters are in Las Vegas, the Sin City of America, and his sphere of influence includes the plastic world of the West Coast. To him flock the remnants of technology, drawn, as one of the good guys puts it, by "...an atmosphere of tight discipline and linear goals... They like it when the trains run on time.." (p396). Flagg provides all this, but the penalty for failure is a roadside crucifixion on a telephone pole, or worse. Yet as long as he displays his seeming invincibility, his followers will remain, simply because he is the strongest. Mother Abigail's followers, on the other hand, establish their Free Zone in Boulder, one of the de facto centers of the Rocky Mountain High philosophy of life. They struggle with the problems of setting up a democratic government, turning the power back on, and disposing of the flu victims. There is the intent to avoid the mistakes of the past, but as time goes on and the population swells, it becomes more and more difficult. King seems to be pessimistically predicting a return to the old patterns unless the survivors scatter into smaller groups.

One of the many interesting factors in THE STAND is its similarity to some of Tolkien's LORD OF THE RINGS. There is the Gollum like arsonist, Trashcan Man. A retarded character, Tom Cullen, is put under hyponotic suggestion by the San Gamgeeish desire to see an elephant. Most obvious is Randy Flagg's resemblance to Sauron, complete with an occult Eye used for spying. And the journey undertaken by four of the characters leading to the climax of the novel is comparable to the quest of the Fellowship.

Deapite King's simplistic view of Good and Evil, and a somewhat boring fifty pages from the climax to the end of the book, this is a book that will grab your imagination and possibly leave you with nightmares. On the back cover, there is a blurb announcing that the movie version of the novel will be filmed by George Romero (DAWN OF THE DEAD.) King himself will write the screenplay. Hopefully he will do himself justice, and the movie will be as great a thriller as the book.

THE STAND by Stephen King

Signet, 1980 \$2.95

\* \* \* \* \*

## FIRESHIP

By Joan D. Vinge

reviewed by P. W. Duncan

For some reason, despite her Hugos, I have never encountered a book by Joan Vinge. So since this issue of TIGHTBEAM was short one review, I decided to try this book to take up the slack. Now I am kicking myself for not having read it earlier. It is humorous and touching both at once and has as its protagonist, the charming rogue who manages to get through life by swindling you and making you love it.

Ethan Ring is victim as well as victimizer. He is an experiment of the melding of the consciousness of man and machine. When he discovers that the experiment is to be terminated, he ships himself to Mars as a crate of bologna. He works as a computer technician and things he has it made until, until he gets drunk at a pleasre palace and wins a lot of money, thus calling attention to himself and even worse, to his dual nature of man and computer.



Anyway he soon finds himself being blackmailed by a beautiful woman whom he would have liked had they met under other circumstances. Then there is the filthy rich Arab magnate whom seems to have ~~retired~~ retired to a monastery and a very unusual computer.

The other story in the book MOTHER AND CHILD, I did not like as much. Still it is much less sentimental than it might have been, being the love story of an alien xenobiologist and a young woman who has been kidnapped by her hereditary enemies. I still am wondering how humans got to the planet they were on and exactly why they forgot their past but....

So buy this book for FIRESHIP and if you also like MOTHER AND CHILD, you have a double bargain.

FIRESHIP by Joan D. Vinge

Dell \$1.75

\* \* \* \* \*

VISION by Hills (con't from page 8)

it is used by the Confederation to carry the life pulse of the galaxy, while the bad-dies use it to pull off their potentially catastrophic crime. Enoch Wallace's life is prolonged by machines, yet he lives a quiet, dignified life around the machines that he runs and which sustain him.

And this is the nexus of Simak's attitude to technology and cities, I think. He is against technology for the sake of technology. To desire technology, always, to be a tool for humanity, not humanity as in the all-embracing Machine.

This is not a new attitude -- watch the film METROPOLIS sometime -- yet Simak has the unique slant that technology is, and should be, exactly what we make of it. Not forced on us because it is technology. Not the Faustian robot in METROPOLIS, which is the forerunner of the machines intended eventually to run the other machines that are the sole reason the "workers" are allowed to live; but the tape recorder that has blackmailed people, toppled dynasties, and saved lives since it was first built. Not Big Brother but the computer that can ease our paths or throw up insurmountable obstacles -- all depending on the people working it.

Technology is no more or less a tool than Australopithecus' club -- break open a nut for food, or your neighbor's head for greed/anger, the skull of a predator that wants you for lunch....it is not the club that is dangerous, but the hundred weight plus of bone, muscle and brain(?) on the other end of it.

"The river rolled below him, and the river did not care. Nothing mattered to the river. It would take the tusk of the mastodon, the skull of the sabertooth, the rib-cage of man, the dead and sunken tree, the thrown rock or rifle and would swallow each of them, and cover them in sand or mud and roll gurgling over them, hiding them from sight.

"A million years ago there had been no river here and in a million years to come there might be no river -- but in a million years from now there would be, if not man, at least a caring thing. And that was the secret of the universe, Enoch told himself -- a thing that went on caring."

WAY STATION p 185

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BIBLIOGRAPHY-- (my collection): ALL FLESH IS GRASS, ALL THE TRAPS OF EARTH, CEMETARY WORLD, CITY, COSMIC ENGINEERS, ENCHANTED PILGRIMAGE, NIGHT OF THE PUDDLY, RING AROUND THE SUN, SO BRIGHT THE VISION, STRANGERS IN THE UNIVERSE, TIME AND AGAIN, TIME IS THE SIMPLEST THING, WAY STATION, THE WEREWOLF PRINCIPLE.

--Geg Hills--

The only books by Simak I have besides these are THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE TALISMEN, MASTODONIA and THE TROUBLE WITH TYCHO.



# LETTERS

Michel B. Smith  
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I am finally getting some time to read TB and TNFF for 1979 and would like to give my observations. The issues are not in order, but I'll identify them.

May TB: The short story "Whatever Happened to Mack W. Swain" by Steven Duff was touching. It was short, concise and held my interest throughout. So many people become old and just seem to fade away into obscurity, like Mr. Swain. Although this was only fiction, there are many real Mack Swains in the world who just grow old and die with no one to mourn them. It's a pity.

Also Sally Syrjala made a good point about BATTLESTAR GALACTICA's copying other TV series and movies. I don't remember the episode title, but there was a two parter that was a direct rip-off of THE GUNS OF NAVARONE. You'll remember there was a team of specialists dropped on an ice planet to destroy a Cylon space cannon or something. I couldn't believe that BG could be so obvious about it. No wonder it only lasted one season.

July TB: Of all the short stories presented, I must say that "Pyramid Power" was by far the best. It's story line and composition make it easy and enjoyable reading. My interest was held throughout and to find such attraction in an amateur composition is unusual. I hope to read more by the author, Brigitta Henry.

March TB: Greg Hills' comments on the male/female, Gorean society/feminist question were rather well put. His views roughly parallel my own. I guess that makes me a middle of the road person as far as Women's Lib is concerned.

I am neither for or against the feminist movement and personally hold an attitude that translates basically as "the best man/woman for the job." The Gor novels do not particularly appeal to me, but I can not condone removing them from circulation, or an organized boycott (girlcott) against them. Nobody forces people to buy these works. Extremists on both sides turn me off.

Jane Kaufenberg: So what if the Gor novels are sexist trash. There is a large segment of the population that happens to like sexist trash. Democracy allows for varied and opposing tastes and philosophies. Would you rather burn the books at midnight in a gigantic bonfire, complete with people in white sheets etc.? Maybe we could import a few ex-Nazis from Argentina to travel around the country giving seminars on the proper procedure for book burnings?

((I don't think Jane thinks you should go that far but.... Do you also believe that Nazis, Communists and other similar groups have the right to publish without being boycotted? I am not condemning the idea, I am just curious? I must also admit that I refuse to buy Gor novels.))

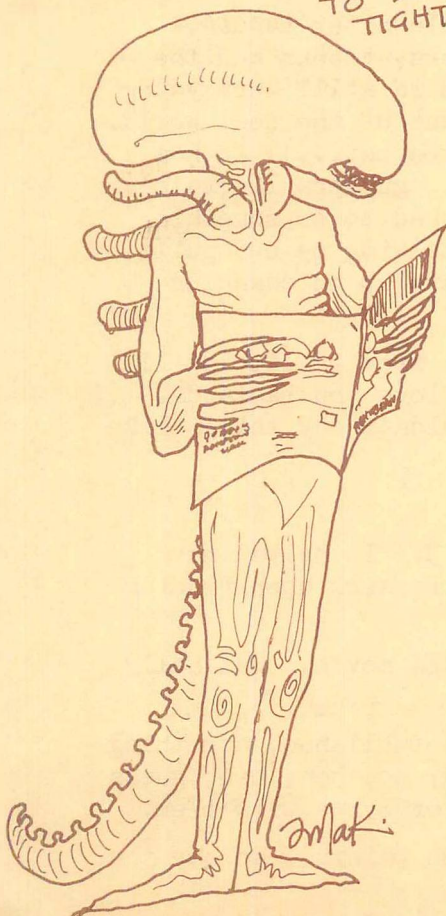
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Tom Cardy  
137 Richardson St  
Dunedin, New Zealand

Here I am about to loc my first TB and I have the strange suspicion that as soon as I send this away, the November ish will come wandering into my mail box snickering. Sigh. Such are the various vexations of living in New Zealand. Anyway I'd better get on with it.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE  
A NEFFER  
TO LOC  
TIGHTBEAM....

...BUT  
IT HELPS.





BOOK REVIEWS: tsk. tsk. I'm no great book reviewer I admit but Sally Syrjala's attempt with DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW was really just one long plot outline. Sure, she does mention Chalker's theme of the company vs the individual (a theme he has used to a useful degree in THE WEB OF THE CHOZEN, which I enjoyed) but the rest of the review is plot. Compare it with the review from Phyllis Eisenstein. ((I think you mean the review of Phyllis Eisenstein's novel written by A.D. Wallace.)) The differences are obvious; Phyllis looks at BORN TO EXILE as a whole. Not just an endeavor at some bland plot summary. Of course for all I know many of you may prefer plot summaries, but I look for more than book commercials. The same goes for the majority in TB 20. ((I prefer less plot summery myself but often have to take what I can get.))

I couldn't comment to many of the letters, mainly because they referred to earlier issues and discussion but I can satisfy fellow madman Duncan Lucas that Shatner did not have his shirt off in the first fifteen minutes of the movie. . .instead we got a ridiculous shot of his open mouth as he and Scotty circled the Enterprise. Ugh. I arrived at the opening of the STREK movie to be engulfed by hundreds of little kiddies on summer vacation (this is New Zealand ya know). In fact they turned out to be a good indication of the motion picture. Relentless yawns, wimpers and throwing of ice-creams persisted through out the showing. Some how I managed to watch the movie and discovered it had committed the ultimate sin. It was boring. The long, drawn-out views of the cloud entity, the gosh-wow light effects and the pretty coloured planets seemed to dampen and blur any of the luster Spock, Kirk and company could sustain. On top of this the plot was ruined by an anti-climax which came upon the viewer so suddenly; as if they'd run out of time and the film had to finish then. Not that STREK was the worst movie I've seen, but it infected me with a sense of uneasiness of not being satisfied. Mixed feelings. On top of this I must go again and go through another two hours because my opinions may change, hopefully they might unscramble themselves. ALIEN won't arrive here till late February and will have an "R" rating, but I've heard so much good reviews about it; this one I must see!

Chris Martin's lengthy letter brought up the subject of why people enter fandom. Luckily at WellCon last October I didn't meet many nerds, flammers, twonks and the like. (Well almost but I'm not saying who). New Zealand fandom is still very young and has not developed far enough to have some fen totally ignorant of the real world. ((The real world doesn't seem as bad in New Zealand. Duller maybe but...)) It has been pointed out at myself that many fen are what you would call 'gutless liberals'. We write and discuss about the future but turn apathetic when asked to do something concrete about changing it. If anyone could give me advice in solving my own guilt complex over the matter it would be greatly appreciated. ((I gave up on changing the world long since.))

Ironically, fandom with all its naivety and little walls to hide from reality still catches and holds me. Whatever direction fandom takes, I still love you bastards. (I just reread this shit. Somebody shoot me. Please?) ((You shouldn't say things like that in the NYC area. Somebody just might.))

\* \* \* \* \*

Fmaki (Anji Valenza)  
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Frejac: Thanks for the cartoon on page 3. It helped me  
'splain to a couple of friends why I go berserk upon finding  
my mailbox empty.

Along with my review of BLACK HOLE, I was going to review the TREK movie. But Sally Syrjala, you said it all....

Oh yes, in case any of you don't know, by the time this loc gets published, something rather unexpected will have happened -- I'll have gotten married; so, heh, heh, guess what? My new permanent address will be as at the left or wherever Lynne puts them.

Parthogenic reproduction via horses hunh? Really? That could be painful, to say the least.



Paula Crunk: Okay, as an arguer in the ALIEN controversy, ...no wait. I already commented on ALIEN. The parts of it I was awake enuf to recall anyway. As far as explanations of the critter's biology, forget it. There weren't any.

Wilson Goodson: Many years ago I used to judge SF films by theme. Now I've gotten old and crotchety and I judge them simply on the basis of whether or not I like them. I agree completely with your views of ALIEN though. I hear from fairly reliable sources that the ALIEN sequel is now a year into production.

Brian Earl Brown comments that right now people in this lettercol are "mostly talking about SF." OH, THANK GHU, HERBIE, THE GREAT SPIDER, SUPER BUDGERIGER and everyone else. I don't want to appear closed-minded, but I'm ghastly sick of politics, religion and ghods know what else appearing in fanzines. I came to fandom to get AWAY from such things. They bore me terribly.

I might as well comment on this computer thing here and now before I actually get to it in the zine. My opinion on computers is biased. Sitting behind me now, on the other dining room table, are two computers. One of them was built from scratch by my other half. The other one is mine. Mine is used for helping me write science-fiction -- it keeps track of my astronimical data to make sure of its accuracy, and now I am using it to keep records of a space-wargame I'm inventing, also to aid in a story. I may not get along all that well with Mycroft Holmes, but I like it muchly and find it a home indispensible for this type of thing.

Okay. Now that the nature of my bias is known, I will agree with R Laurraine Tutihasi about government overregulation. I will even venture to say that this is the biggest problem with computers. Now I was going to write a rebuttal to Tom Staicar. For example, I know of no instance where computers have eliminated an entire job group -- as a friend of mine put it on reading this letter, "First you have to find a job simple-minded enough for the computer to do the whole thing..." And you say, "there's a lot more chance for invasion of privacy..." Sure there is. But by whom? -- the computer or the programmer? In this instance, one can use the old argument used by anti-gun control factions -- "Knives kill; let's control knives." If people are untrustworthy that's hardly the computer's fault. And actually, I am sure that even if there were no computers, if the government really wanted to get you, they'd find a way. Governments have been doing so for centuries.

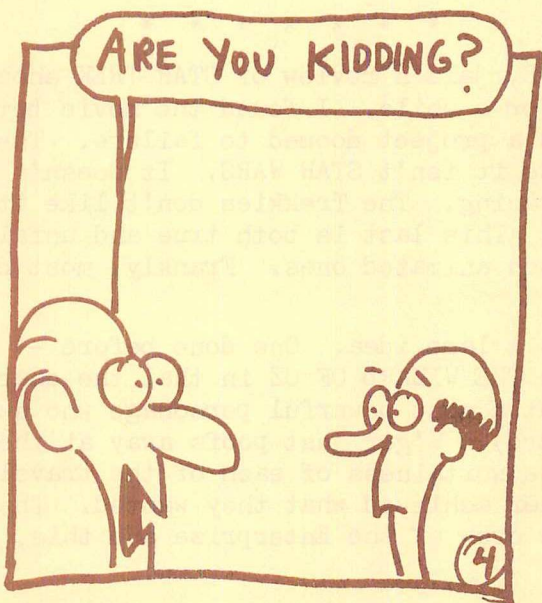
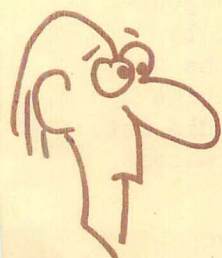
As far as "most computerization is out of our control." Out of your control maybe. But not mine. And I'm not even a government or multinational corporation. But really --

frejac funnies

ARE WE GOING TO  
DO SEXIST GIRLIE  
GAGS IN THIS  
STRIP?

ARE YOU KIDDING?

THOSE BUSTY BABES  
OUT IN FANDOM  
WOULD KILL US!





"Most computerization. . .is controlled by powerful forces..." Can you prove this "fact"? Can you show me concrete proof? If this is so, then where does that leave small businesses like me -- or medium-sized businesses, or schools? There are a hell of a lot more of those than there are governments possessed of reasonably efficient computers.

But the statement that bothers me most is "what goal has been reached if computers are the only ones to get to the planets and beyond". Isn't that obvious? Or would you rather not have seen Pioneer's pictures at all?

I think Mr. Staicar, you should study your "facts" a bit more carefully. It might even pay you to learn a little programming; (I tend to think you don't know any, because of the statement you made about 2001.) And that's my biased opinion. I didn't want to write one in the first place, but I am used to computers, and I tend to have a soft spot for them; and since they can't defend themselves....

Concerning medievalism: I don't care.

On Heinlein: I have of late become a devoted Space Opera freak; and I sorta found that somewhere in the middle of STRANGER I stopped liking Heinlein. My personal favorite is THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS. Why? Who knows?

\* \* \* \* \*

Gail Weiss  
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I am writing this as I watch "The Martian Chronicles", and I don't care what anybody else thinks of it; I thought it was superb. Due to a general reluctance to watch anything I have read and enjoyed, I missed the first two hours, for which I am castigating myself. You can believe that if it is shown again, I won't miss a second of it. ((I thought the first two hours were the best which shows how much I agree with Kris Andrews. That's what makes fandom interesting.))

I may be a little late to the debate? on medaeievalism, but I thought I would add my two-cents anyways. I see absolutely nothing wrong in the SCA, and why should they have to be realistic? Who cares if 98% of the club should be serfs? When I read a book, I certainly don't fantacize myself in the rôle of a spear-carrier; if I were going to do so, why bother fantacizing in the first place? ((And Space Opera fans don't imagine themselves natives of a blown-up planet.))

I happen to like the Middle Ages but you will never catch me wishing I had lived during that period! In a chivalrous fairyland, maybe, but not in the real thing.

I enjoyed my introduction to TB, #22, very much and am looking forward to a year of this enjoyable zine.

\* \* \* \* \*

Brian Earl Brown  
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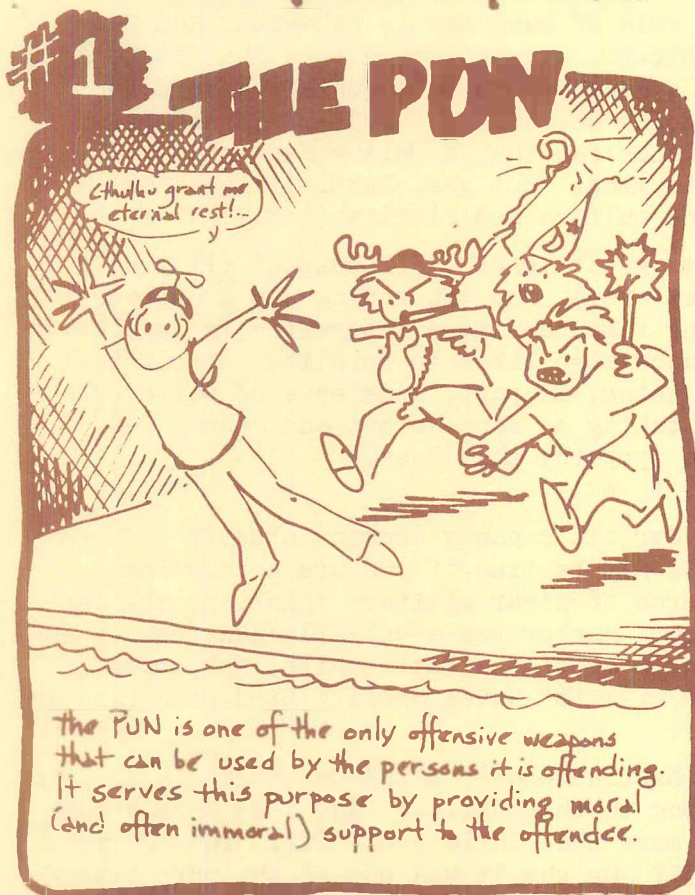
Sally Syrjala's review of STAR TREK should keep the lettercol busy for a while. I found the movie better than anticipated but it was a project doomed to failure. The critics don't like it because it isn't STAR WARS. It doesn't have dog fights, asthetic villains and breakneck pacing. The Trekkies don't like it because they see so many old plot devices being reused. This last is both true and unfair. STAR TREK had 79 live episodes and a couple dozen animated ones. Frankly, most of the best ideas had been used already.

Personally I thought V'ger was a lame idea. One done before -- and better -- in CHANGE-LING. As a story it resembles THE WIZARD OF OZ in that the characters embark on a journey fraught with perils to meet a most powerful personage who quickly turns out to be not very much at all (the Wizard). V'ger just poofs away at the end. But in OZ the journey to the wizard tests the worthiness of each of the travellers so that while the Wiz was a humbug, each traveller achieved what they wanted. The journey to V'ger did not, I fear, test the mettle of the crew of the Enterprize and this, I fear, was its greatest failure.

Its second biggest failure was having V'ger giving the Illia simulacrum clothes even



# Fannish Weapons<sup>the</sup> Galaxy



though it didn't have the foggiest idea why carbon-based units wore clothes. A modest machine!!

Some of Sally's complaints seem awfully petty. She complains of Kirk's obsession with commanding the Enterprise. Looking back at the number of times Kirk has overcome temptation or alien spores by the thought of losing the Enterprise, I find this an accurate reading of the man. He never was "Mister Goody-Two-Shoes."

Spock, likewise has long been obsessed by the conflict between Vulcan logic and Earth emotions, seeking V'ger -- the ultimate logical being is therefore - uh - logical. And that Spock's interest in V'ger differs from Kirk's makes for a great (but under exploited) conflict of interest.

One person liked the movie for being less talky than the TV episodes, but I differ, feeling that too much was left unsaid in the movie, too little debated, too little action of real consequence. A movie should have the right to be talky.

I don't quite follow Sally's comment "interesting to see how equality has spread", just because Dr. Chapel tended Chekov's injured hand. Just who, pray tell, was supposed to

fix it? McCoy did in former times; now that Chapel has become an MD, she does. Or is it sexist for women to become doctors? I don't see anything wrong with a woman doctor treating an injured person.

Women, this time at least, weren't forced to wear those ridiculous mini skirts.

And there were many nice touches to see too. Such as security guards that looked like security guards, and military security on a military ship. ST wasn't all bad, and I suspect they'll do better next time.

Linda Frankel confirms my worst fears about MOTHERLINES in a reasoned, perceptive and objective review.

Fine review of DIES IRAE trilogy by Stableford (a much overlooked writer). The trilogy does resemble the ILIAD and the ODYSSEY because (ahem) Stableford was writing them. Much of his output has been flawed by a need to produce adventure fiction suitable for DAW to support his college education. Future books, I suspect, will be much better.

Back to STAR TREK -- serves you right for looping the end of Greg's review before the ST movie review. If V'ger were so almighty smart, why couldn't it intuit the intelligence of carbon-based units and the necessity of its own biological origin. It's possible (and almost inevitable) that biological lifeforms arise, but machines are far less likely, in fact totally unlikely, to develop without biological creators. So V'ger strikes me as pretty dense. On the whole I think Greg Benford's "snark" and machine culture in IN THE OCEAN OF THE NIGHT more credible. The Snark was an interesting creature, something with real personality and openness/flexibility characteristic of sentience. And that machine civilization that sent it, certainly remembers biological life and finds it too messy and hostile to tolerate. On the whole Benford did a better job thinking about machine life.

The alien in ALIEN makes the most sense when viewed as an organic "Berserker." Its behaviour and biology is just too bizarre otherwise. What other creature lives to hunt and not to eat as the alien doesn't seem to actually eat any of its victims?



Lee Springfield brings up the use of linguistics in SF. You mentioned THE LANGUAGES OF PAO as the best SF work to speculate on the role of language in behaviour and perception. I'd like to counter with Delany's BABEL-17, a fascinating book that looks at how language interacts with personality. When a language doesn't contain a word for ONE'S SELF, how does one feel responsible for doing something? BABEL-17 is one of Delany's superior early works. ((I am more a Vance fan than a Delany fan which is probably the reason THE LANGUAGES OF PAO came to mind. But yes, BABEL-17 is an excellent book exploring language and also machine culture and civilization.))

I found THE FACE interesting reading despite its great length. (I suspect all long novels of being grossly padded these days. Most are.) And the ending was a supreme jest. ((I liked it too.)) Vance has for a long time been more interested in developing societies than conflicts and it shows here. Vance also likes to moralize on political positions within his stories: THE GREY PRINCE being, in part, a defense of white rule in Rhodesia. In THE FACE, Vance appears to be taking on John Norman and Joanna Russ at the same time with Norman getting a bit more sympathy than Russ.

% % % % % % % %

Harry Andruschak  
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San Gabriel, CA 91775

I object to Sally Syrjala's nasty comment about 7 December being a bomb. This may be true if you are a chauvinist Yankee. But in terms of clear military thinking, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was a well-planned, neatly executed attack. Also, it was torpedoes that sank most of the battleships, not bombs. Even the ARIZONA, which blew up, did so because of a 16" Navel Shell fitted with fins and used as a makeshift bomb.

Since I am way too late to get in on the Chris Martin debate, I suppose there is no point in stating that I am a Friend of Darkover, belong to the SCA..... and I do know about 20th century science, probably a hell of a lot more than Chris ever will. Does Chris know what rocket was launched 24 December, 1979?? Or why it was one of the more important launches of the 1970's??

Concerning HARRY JOHN NICHOLAS CAMERON ANDRUSCHAK. Harry Andruschak and Mr. Andruschak are the formal names, used for business etc. etc. etc. while "Andy" is the nickname. Just Andy. I am not happy about Andy Andruschak, but I don't really mind either. Still I don't call you Holdy Holdom, do I? Thus, I would prefer to be listed at the front of TIGHTBEAM as Harry Andruschak., with Andy used when mentioned in the interior of the zine. The slang term of "The NASAchist" may also be used. ((Now, that's official.))

& & & & & & &

Mark Hall  
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40291

The three issues of TIGHTBEAM I have recieved I have enjoyed immensely. Please leave TB alone -- it's one of my favorite fanzines.

The letter column seems to be full of what the "ultimate SF film" is; yet, most people seem to be missing a fine point on the word "ultimate". Ultimate depends on the person, that person's values, and the values of the decade.

Let's face it, every decade has had an ultimate film -- only to have this film replaced by another "better" film. This is true even in the SF field. In the 50s, there was THE FORBIDDEN PLANET, ROCKET SHIP X and THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL. Then the 60s came along and brought 2001. With the SF boom in the 1970s, people are now arguing about STAR WARS, STAR TREK etc. ((But isn't the mark of a good film the fact that people can appreciate it decades afterward? I agree that technological advances have made SF films more realistic in that you can imagine yourself in space better etc. But all too often the special effects substitute for excellence in other areas.))

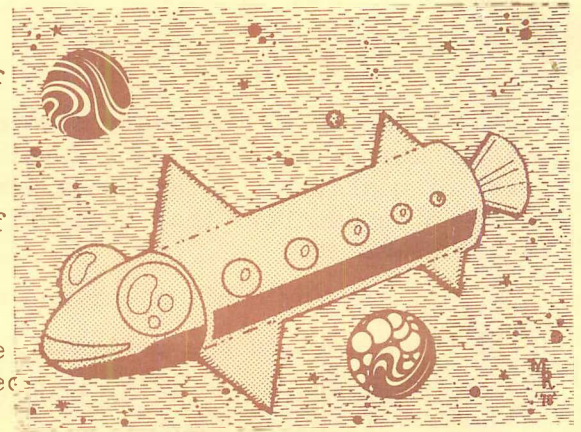
Greg Hills: Your points on works that survive and best are well taken. Works that survive may not be the author's best, but there is one major fact that causes it to survive. It has the ability to capture the interest of readers both past and present. In my opinion, a book that has the ability to do this could be considered the author's "best".

Tom Staicar: You seem to view the computer as an evil or a threat to man -- yet, try thinking where we would be without it. Man would have had a hard time exploring the solar system, and medicine would fair the worse.



Computers were created by man, to be used by man and controlled by man. People themselves are at fault for letting their offices, etc. become inefficiently computerized. A computer is a tool, like any other tool it can be abused or misused.

People may complain that technology puts people out of work. Yet, they also don't realize that increased automation creates jobs. Studies by various sociologists (W. Kenkel for one) show that one group gets put out of work, and another group is hired to service the machines. Also people must remember that increased technology does a job faster or better and saves them money.



Believe me, as an engineering student at the University of Kentucky, computers and calculators are life savers on many chemistry, physics and math problems. Calculations that took Kepler and Galileo years, can easily be done in minutes.

I really liked the astronomical photo on January's TB. Can we expect more in the future? ((You'll have to ask Andy.))

\* \* \* \* \*

Arthur Hlavaty  
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10801  
aka Pope Guilty I

As you see, I am writing this on my official Papal stationery, so you will be aware that David Bimler is not the only Pope on your mailing list. This does not mean that I dispute David's claims. As a Discordian, I believe that every man and woman is a Pope (or a Mome if they prefer), even that Polish fellow with the dumb ideas about sex.

Sally Ann Syrjala's review of STAR TREK is thoughtful, knowledgable, and well-written, and does not change my mind in the slightest. I still consider ST the best SF movie I have seen.

Some might say that this is because I don't know any better, never having seen ST on TV. I prefer to think this means I can see the movie impartially, without preconceptions about the characters. Neither approach is "right".

Sally points out the similarity of the ST movie to many of the TV episodes. But, of course, one can find "influences" on any movie, book, story, etc., and the harder one looks, the more one finds. If anyone ever did something completely original, no one would understand a word of it. Comparing STAR TREK to STAR WARS brings to mind the old saying: one source, plagiarism; many sources, research. ST does indeed resemble episodes from the TV show, but SW can be seen as a compendium of old-movie cliches, from the utterly standardized characters (lovable but dumb hero, wisecracking sidekick, spunky princess, old guru, bad guy in black, etc.) to the visual borrowings from Westerns, World War II movies (both sides), etc.

And I prefer STAR TREK, because it represents the science-fictional sense of Quest. I agree with Sally that it is a movie about obsession -- Kirk's obsession with reclaiming his ship; Spock's obsession with finding, then transcending, Pure Reason; Decker's obsession with Ilia; and V'ger's obsession with the Creator. These obsessions are all requited at the end, as Decker and V'ger/Ilia unite, while Kirk and Spock find an equally valid path (for them) in remaining organic and taking ENTERPRISE Out There.

I do share one of Sally's objections: the subordinate role of women. After Ilia is replaced by the V'ger probe, one is tempted to say, "She hasn't changed a bit," and I agree about the other female characters.

I'd like to say a good word for the S(trangely) C(lothed and) A(rmed) just in the interests of novelty. Of course, no one wishes to bring back serfdom, lice, outhouses and other elements of the real Middle Ages. ((I sometimes get the feeling that some environmentalists...)) But think of them as a science-fiction group. Imagine a medieval



future, where all the nasty elements I mentioned have been eliminated, and everyone can be lords and ladies. I'd rather have my manuscripts copied by a xerox than by a team of monks, but I can see a lot of elements in the middle ages (clothing, music, sense of community) that would fit well with the future, or at least a future I'd like to live in.

Greg Hills: Why can't a cur and a scoundrel be female?

~~My~~ FMaki's illos are delightful, as always.

Lee Springfield: For an SF book on linguistics and the effects of language, I would suggest Delany's BABEL-17.

Your creative typos on my loc introduced a military tone -- "admiral evenhandedness" and "strafing a movement" (the second may have been partly my fault; I may have written "strating.") ((You did.))

Tom Staicar's warnings on computers are well-taken, but it's the use of the computer, rather than the machines themselves, which poses the danger. There is nothing inherently centralizing about computers; indeed, the current trend is to small home-size models like APPLE and TRS-80. The trick is to move more of our lives into the countereconomy (cash, barter, etc.) to free ourselves from state domination, theft, and snooping.

Tom's last comment reminds me that if someone did figure out how to make a car that didn't fall apart as soon as you made the last payment, the UAW would be fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Big 2½ auto makers to suppress it. And some of the people who talk loudest about not letting machines take jobs from people also believe in the labor theory of value.

His Holiness Pope John XX (David Bimler) has written an excellent and illuminating letter. I envy his talent for thinking like a frog. When I tried it, all I wrote was, "Frigit. Frigit."

\* \* \* \* \*

George Laskowski  
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I received TIGHTBEAM #22 and read it right away (almost). I loved the opening cartoon by Frejac. Thinking back over the last year, I believe there was one, maybe two, days of mail delivery that I received none. That's impressive enough to my mundane friends, not so much to faneds though. While on vacation over winter break

from school, I asked a neighbor to collect my mail while I was gone for twelve days. During the nine days of mail delivery, she collected half a laundry basket full of mail for me. Boggled her mind.

Sally's review of STAR TREK -- THE MOTION PICTURE was well done, and aligns feelings close to my own. She went into much more detail, showing the comparisons of the movie with the former episodes, which made the review all that much more enjoyable, than I would have. In fact, the review was better than the movie. Harlan Ellison wrote a review of STAR TREK -- THE MOTIONLESS PICTURE as he calls it, which will be in the next issue of STAR LOG magazine. I heard him read it at a convention at Ohio State University at the end of January. He is not as kind as Sally. I urge you to read it when it comes out.

The reviews were interesting, especially the DIES IRAE trilogy reviewed by Greg Hills. I remember reading it several years ago when it first came out, and was fascinated by the portrayal of the characters, and the transformations of the heroic Greeks and Trojans into far future humans/beasts. I've always thought that Stableford did a particularly good job with the myth, and I did like the ending. Greg is right; it does expand the mind.

In the loccol Arthur Hlavaty does seem to have hit another of his perceptive assessments: the second volume of a trilogy does not stand alone. DUNE's second book is a mere interlude; Mary Stewart's THE HOLLOW HILLS cried for a sequel to finish off the Arthurian legend; Thomas Covenant, Deryni, Camber, all seem to have that specific flaw. Still, that might be the earmark of a good trilogy (although that's not true of the



# Finnish Weapons the Galaxy

## #2 THE LIMERICK

POOR MOTHER WAS FEELING UPTIGHT...  
HER 'AU' CHOC' LATE' TURNED OUT A FRIGHT!  
BUT WHEN IT MELTED DOWN, IT  
TURNED INTO GREAT BROWNIES,  
AND NOW SHE DOES WHIRL WITH DELIGHT!

TURNING INTO GREAT BROWNIES,  
AND NOW SHE DOES WHIRL WITH DELIGHT!

OH,  
AY, YI YI YI!  
YOUR MOTHER SPINS WHEN THE  
'MOUSE' DRIPS!...

१५५

Having be-  
latedly re-  
ceived the  
Sept issue

Tom Staicar seems to object to the use of computers to make businesses run more efficiently, thus requiring less workers and contributing to unemployment. Bear in mind that the consumer of the product or service produced by these businesses always benefits from such increases of efficiency. Consider the phone company; we could eliminate the computers and then whenever you make a phone call, you would have to speak to an operator and have her (or him) put the call through for you. We would thereby employ an enormous number of people as telephone operators; we also make it more time-consuming and difficult to make a phone call, and we enormously increase your phone bill (after all the operators must be paid.) Computers are not the only technology we could eliminate to increase employment. For example, if we cut out the use of all printing presses (even mimeograph) we could employ a million people as scribes (also causing all written materials to become at least a hundred times more expensive.) I think you will agree that this is not desirable.



((I watched CONNECTIONS on TV last fall and it had some very interesting ideas. For one thing, it seems the printing press was invented by three different people in a six month period. Gutenberg was the first. But the spur to the invention was a new, cheap way of making paper and the fact that there was a real shortage of scribes due to the Black Death. In fact, the two most technologically inventive ages before our own age, was the time just after the Black Death and the early Dark Ages -- both periods of severe depopulation due to plagues and wars and having, therefore, severe labor shortages. The Greeks and Romans both scorned the base mechanical arts anyway.))

The real solution to unemployment is not to make businesses less efficient so they employ more people, but for the unemployed to acquire the skills needed to do actually needed and useful jobs. More than enough job openings exist to employ every person in America, doing things that as yet only people can do, not things that can be done more efficiently by machines. Those who are unemployed either do not possess the skills needed for any of these jobs (in which case they should certainly acquire some additional skills) or just don't want to work (in which case they are parasites and should not be supported by taxpayers.) Perhaps this viewpoint will seem overly harsh and unsympathetic to the unemployed; let me therefore add that I would like to see every effort made by society (e.g. the government) to help people become better qualified to do useful jobs. Obviously many people would need a lot of help. However, to pay people for not working, or for doing useless work (as in FDR's public works program) is not good for anyone. It degrades the unemployed (or uselessly employed) and impoverishes the taxpayer, and ultimately ruins the economy. It is one of the most important causes of inflation.

((You also have problems with older workers who have great difficulty getting new jobs even if they have skills because of government pension regulations. It doesn't pay for a company to hire people much over forty and over fifty.... Another problem is that one adult in five cannot read well enough to fill out a job application form and it is the sort of job these people can do that is being wiped out. Those jobs created require basic literacy.))

I must agree with Nick Grassel that C.J. Cherryh's use of alien names and vocabulary is excessive. To read THE ~~FADED~~ SUN series you practically have to learn a whole new language, which is an investment of effort not adequately repaid by the novels' content. (Even though they are good novels.) However I think that Nick goes too far in saying that "I wish that Cherryh and other writers would minimize such devices in their stories." Alien language is an important source of flavor in SF, and while its use should not be carried to excess, neither should it be minimized. Rather, it should be used in judicious quantity. Poorly written SF often leaves one with the impression that every sentient being in the universe speaks English (for example, the STAR TREK TV series seems to have this premise, although the movie which followed does display some alien languages.) A good balance would convey to the reader (or viewer) that alien languages do have their role, without forcing one to actually learn them in detail. Some authors (perhaps most notably Tolkien and Lovecraft) have greatly enriched the whole genre with their creative use of invented language.

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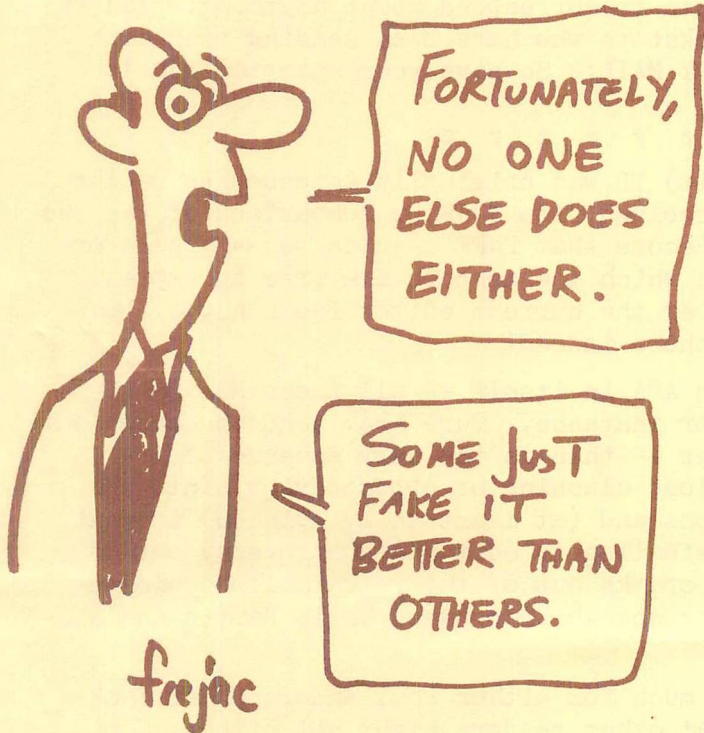
William West  
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Abington, MA 02351

TB #22 showed up at an oportune time; just before I dove into the new Darkover book which had stories from three contributors of #22. Congratulations to Paula Crunk, Linda Frankel and Susan Shwartz, and may you have many more sales. ((Susan just sold a story to ANALOG.)) As for the book on the whole, I enjoyed every story and found only the cover to be a disappointment. By the way, MZB has an interesting theory as to why many of our best new SF/fantasy writers are women.

I have to agree with Sally's STAR TREK review. I confess to having seen it twice. I had such a bad cold the first time I saw it and attributed my ennui to too much Dristan. No such luck. I think Gene Roddenbury's novelization of his original story line would have made a better movie, especially since what was cut out could have taken up some of the time panning the alien ship. If there is a sequel, and there probably will be, they had better wise up to the fact that most SF fans like a halfway decent plot to go along with



I DO NOT UNDERSTAND  
WHAT IS GOING ON  
AT ALL.



the grandiose special effects. ((Why should they learn this? ST is doing very well at the box office -- better than STAR WARS did.))

Which brings me to THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES mini series, which while not being as good as the book (but then again, what adaption is as good as the original?) at least was above the standard commercial TV version of SF. The sets were excellent, as was the music, which John Williams did not, for once, write. The acting was fair, but those rocket ships were really the pits. They didn't spend a hell of a lot on special effects on this one. And Richard Matheson's script, especially in the third episode, seemed a bit discriminatory. The fact that there was only one Black in the entire show, and that no woman did more than be a good little housewife (except for Bernadette Peters' character which was a different sort of sexist stereotype) were major drawbacks, in my opinion, in establishing some sort of credibility. But compared to BUCK ROGERS, it was a winner. My family liked GALACTICA 1980 better though. Yetch!

A.D. Wallace: I know not why you dislike Fafard and the Grey Mouser, nor can I "explain away your dislike". I'm sure there are books that you love that I dislike. But one of the joys of reading SF/fantasy is the discussions over the merits or faults of each other's books anyway. Different folks, different strokes, etc.

But what I really want to get into is the computer revolution discussion that started a few issues back. The whole thing has taken on a personal aspect for me within the last week. I am a garment worker and my job is to walk up and down a twenty yard table, laying down cloth. (This is called "spreading".) When I finish, I staple down master markers with the cutters, who cut them with skill saws. It isn't exactly what I planned to do with my life, but the pay is good and the work is interesting. Lately, however, the vision of Walter Reuther, that Tom Staicar quoted, has been appearing in our midst. First the foreman brought three automatic spreading machines that eliminate the need for a helper on the other side of the table and speeds up the process because you don't push these machines, you ride them. We were told that this would increase production and make it unnecessary to send work we couldn't handle out to contractors. Then management turned around and increased the number of contractors and decreased our hours. For four months, we had no overtime. Now because their Miami shirt factory was getting expensive (the cost of transporting goods rose due to gas prices, and, more significantly, the Cubans were organizing), our hours have increased and we're getting the most overtime we've had in a year. It was too good to last. One day last week, we heard the company was spending half a million dollars on a computerized cutting machine that could cut shirts five times faster than its human counterpart. If the prototype is successful, they will order more. In terms of the near future, it means less hours; in the long run, it means no jobs. The company has already switched to using computers for designing the master markers for the garments, thereby getting rid of five men. I have this gut feeling that most of the middle aged men I work with are scared. Most of them have never worked at any other trade. It is ironic that after all the years my friends and family have urged me to get into some skilled trade, I may lose my job to the machines I used to daydream about.

((And the machines will not go out on strike. However this will help keep clothing prices



down to an extent. The CBS consumer reporter said that there is more buyer resistance to rises in clothing prices than to rises in cost of fuel, cigarettes or liquor. And Pat designs logic circuits for computers so he's doing just fine. Maybe you should study computer maintenance. If you can't lick 'em, join 'em.))

On final note on the Age of Computers: needing to know how much interest I earned in my savings account last year, I called the bank. The clerk asked for my account number and my social security number, then gave me the information and hung up. It took me five minutes to realize that she never asked my name, and worse, that I never thought to give it to her. I just rattled off my numbers like a good little statistic. Maybe I'm foolish, but that really scares me. To quote Bob Seger, "I'm not a number."

Finally anybody out there who sees this and wants to correspond about anything: you're more than welcome to write. But mail order hucksters who have been sending your catalogues to my house, STOP! I DO NOT BUY BOOKS BY MAIL. So save your stamp and don't clutter up my mail box again.

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G. M. Carr                      Although (as I recall it) TB was originally intended to be the  
5319 Ballard Ave N.W.      spillover of the lettercolumn from TNFF, a comparison of the two  
Seattle, WA 98107          now shows that TB has become what TNFF used to be -- a more or  
                                 less general genzine in which the members are free to express  
themselves. In my opinion, it should be whatever the current editor feels happy about  
producing. Otherwise it would be a thankless chore indeed!

However, I am struck with its resemblance to an APA in itself -- all those MCs on the individual contris from the previous issue, for instance. Pure APA. And the occasional "personal attacks" by the regulars on each other -- this is the very essence of APA mailings. The brisk exchange of opinions and loud clashing of opposed viewpoints is characteristic of amateur publishing associations and (at least in my opinion) is what makes them so fascinating. It would be self-defeating to edit all controversy out of it. Without a few like Chris Martin to strike sparks out of the readers, TB could degenerate into a saccharine "blah". ((I'm aiming somewhere between Chris Martin and saccharine blah.))

Even in my heyday of SF reading, I didn't care much for either Poul Anderson nor Jack Vance so it doesn't surprise me to discover that other readers might not either. It does surprise me, a little, that nobody mentions that Jack Vance's detective novels are excellent. I only wish he'd written more of them. ((I just finished reading three detective novels he wrote for "Ellery Queen" and cannot admit officially that he wrote. Vance also wrote some Captain Video scripts.))

True, the increasing use of computers does wipe out jobs. But the real significance is that it changes the social structure in doing so. The jobs wiped out are eliminated because they have become obsolete. This is what happened when the power looms wiped out the use of the hand looms and eliminated an entire lifestyle in England. Weavers no longer worked at home in their cottages but were gathered into city factories, introducing the "sweatshop" concept of manufacturing. In spite of this deplorable development, I do not hear anybody denouncing the development of machine made fabrics, no matter how tough it was on the people who had formerly made the other kind of cloth. Same way, I suspect, with changes brought about by increased use of computers. When I was a young woman, every business establishment had "pools" of typists and typing was practically a "must" for a female looking for a job other than housework or waiting tables in restaurants. Xerox and its equivalents have practically eliminated this labor market. But do the young women lament? Not so you could notice -- at least, not so the Women's Lib at any rate. The women just turn to other and let's face it, pleasanter jobs, for a living. Like data processing. Or computer technology.

In my opinion, I think it is not a good thing for our American society to be so dependant on the auto industry that any upset in the manufacture of automobiles can seriously upset our economy. If the computer succeeds in doing away entirely with the automotive assembly line, it might be the best thing that ever happened to us. Walter Reuther shouldn't be



pessimistic... his laid off union members would just go on Welfare and continue to buy automobiles out of their government checks. Until the changing social structure makes automobiles obsolete... which could happen, whether or not Walter Reuther might believe it. ((But UAW workers on Welfare would not make Walter Reuther powerful. He, more than the workers, stands to lose in such a case.))

& & & & & & & & &

R Laurraine Tutihasi From reading Nick Grassell's LoC, I guess he deserves somewhat of 1217 Majestic Way an apology from me regarding his handling of TNFF. It appears Webster, NY 14580 he is not entirely to blame. However, I feel he is a bit tardy with his explanation. ((Perhaps he didn't realize the extent of the problem due to the fact that most people simply complained instead of writing to him about the problem.))

Greg R. Hills says "besides, you gave me ... By which I mean that it is of an age to make anyone who gaffiates with it with it a cur and a scondrel [sic] (Now there is an example of Sexist speech. It assumes that any such person will be male...)" I don't see where the sexism enters in. Am I particularly obtuse, or did something essential get dropped out when his LoC was printed? ((Nothing got dropped. I didn't get it either.))

Greg Hills's complaint about reviewers who give away endings is the last straw. For months it seems I have heard the same objection expressed by many people; now I want to have my say. I feel that a good book will not be spoiled by knowing the ending. The truth of this can be witnessed in the numbers of books that are reread. I believe the quality of a book is determined by the way in which an author builds up to his conclusion. Consistency is most important. I think it's a poor book that relies heavily on the surprise ending effect. I also feel that a reader who relies heavily on it will be unable to objectively judge a book.

## Fannish Weapons for the Galaxy #3 THE FANZINE



A close relative of the LETTER BOMB — However, the fanzine is more specific in its effect, damaging particularly the eyes, brain, sanity & wallet.

Brian Earl Brown must indeed be squeamish if he found too much terror in TIME AFTER TIME. I found suspense, but terror? Even the suspense, I felt, was secondary to the social commentary aspects of the movie. I am indeed sorry that Brian could not enjoy what I consider to be one of the better movies to have been made recently. ((He should also avoid Japanese films. I was reading an article recently that even Japanese kiddie fare is quite violent by US standards and JAL has real problems finding films to show on international flights that will not bring complaints.))

One last question: how is FMaki pronounced? ((As if there were an "a" between the "F" and the "M". Both "a"s are pronounced "ah".))

\* \* \* \* \*

Paula Crunk I believe I may have finally arrived as a full-fledged 1359 Deanna Neffer after all. I noted Cottage Hills, the criticism that I may be IL 62018 asking for ego strokes thru demonstrating a "poor-me" attitude. My friends, getting and giving ego strokes is the name of the game we all play, or there would be no need for zines like TIGHTBEAM. However, please believe me, any "poor pathetic Pearl" attitude on my part was purely unintentional; and I will guard against giving this impression in the future.

Ja & Rb



Could you explain whether the very peculiar method of conception is scientifically valid? ((Not by today's science.)) I was too stupified by the spectacle of --ugh -- that stallion doing his thing with the young girls so eagerly awaiting his charms. Come to think of it, maybe we'd be happier forgetting the whole thing. Alas, I have met such "wimmen" as we meet in MOTHERLINES, particularly among the "Free Fems" -- I'd sooner not think of them. Even given such a sexist society as is postulated by Charnas, surely there must be viable alternatives to the two female cultures portrayed. And I thought it was a cop-out that the heroine's baby was conveniently female. The author avoided the issue of what was probably done with a male child -- abandonment and exposure at best, probably. ((Even the ordinary children of the Riding Women was put out of the household after weaning to survive as best they might. They only reenter society at menarche.)) But then we must think highly of the Riding Women, given a few reservations which are probably based on our "standard Terran hangups." Pfui.

Sharron: I enjoy series books in which major characters grow and change after the manner of any humans experiencing situations that may either threaten or enhance their potential for self-realization and mastery of their personal situations. I am less troubled by inconsistency in terms of events and chronology from novel to novel than I am by "continuing sagas" in which we see good ol' Sheamus Swashbuckler arrive in his trusty familiar guise on a scene that seems exciting, trusty-familiar and all too repetitive of what has gone before. I believe Marion Bradley once said she dislikes the term "series" applied to her Darkover novels because in her mind, the most consistent series can have an old-fashioned comic book quality (Brenda Starr barely survives one kidnapping when she is ripped off again, this time by an Arab oil baron. Sigh.) that works against an author's creative growth. Well, considering the new version of BLOODY SUN (which I didn't think was wholly successful), MZB obviously now considers consistency important and that a novel must fit neatly into a well-planned universe structured by preceeding books. What do other people think about this? Unless I'm reading a trilogy straight through, I tend to judge a novel solely on its own merits. Incidentally, I recommend Evangeline Walton's MABINOGEON series to anyone who likes classic legends retold with a few modern touches. Walton's comments on the institution of marriage coming about as the result of a change from a matriarchal to a patriarchal culture, are particularly interesting.

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England

It's becoming very apparent that the higher the postal costs become, the worse the service becomes. In 1978 I found the average time sea-mail was taking from the USA was 3-4 weeks. Last year it was 6-7 weeks. I'm just wondering what it will be this year. ((I must admit that I found the service in the Edinburgh P.O. unbelievably awful. The stamp sellers kept chatting with each other and refused to sell us stamps for almost a half hour.))

There were one or two comments on series SF and it would seem some of my earlier comments were taken the wrong way. I never write clearly so this is not surprising. So I'd like to make one or two comments on the subject, especially in answer to Vernon Clark's comment on my previous letter.

My problem with reading series stuff is not from the actual reading of them because I like long series, trilogies, tetralogies, etc. but from the publishers failing to indicate which books do not stand up as stories in their own right. Much the same as the comments made by Sharron Albert in this issue. Further to this is authors (and I'm thinking especially of Philip José Farmer) who start on a series, then leave the concluding volume for some years as with the RIVERWORLD and the WORLD OF TIERS books. ((And neither has really come to a conclusion yet.))

I know there is a lot of SF/fantasy which is non series and I do in fact read it. With a rate of 10/20 books per week, I could not do otherwise.

True, I admitted I hated short stories and SF mags but that should not be construed as meaning I have never read them. In fact over the years I've read a fair number but I discovered I gained much more reading pleasure from novels and so tend to concentrate on them though I still do read a number of collections and anthologies during the course of each year.



Andy Andruschak: I for one would have no objection to seeing the dues in the N3F raised: and as long as I considered that membership was worth the dues, it would be no bar to my renewing my membership. In fact in this day and age with inflation running at what it is and the cost of almost everything going up daily, I do consider the dues at \$6 being maybe on the low side.

The weather is almost as good as it was over SeaCon -- in some ways maybe better because although cooler, it's at least dry. ((It's very dry here also with very little snow or rain.))

¢ ¢ ¢ ¢ ¢ ¢ ¢ ¢

Mary Tyrrell                      Sorry to hear about Najji. I just performed the Madison (Wisconsin)  
414 Winterhaven Dr            cat wrapping test on my cat, Walnut, and I think it may be weeks be-  
Newport News, VA              fore she completely forgives me. ((I tried it on Gabby and she just  
23606                            looked at me as if to ask "What's this idiot doing now?"))

We're getting snow here -- for the second time this week, which is highly unusual for us.  
The Frejac cartoon on page 3 was so true.

What's this lending library that Don is considering reactivating? Sounds interesting.

Thank goodness that someone, namely Sally Syrjala, agrees with me that STAR TREK -- THE ~~MOTIONLESS~~ PICTURE was boring. I was very disappointed. There were a couple of times -- Spock's entrance, McCoy's querulous complaint about being drafted -- when I thought things were finally going to get underway, but that hope was soon dashed. I didn't mind the borrowings from past plots; I just wish they'd managed to pick up some of the humor and cohesiveness as well.

I haven't read MOTHERLINES but I really liked the cover for the hardback version. I was disappointed to see that the paperback had switched to another illustration.

Brian, are you kidding? TIME AFTER TIME disturbed you that much? And I thought I was squeamish! I liked it. I have to admit that when we saw a trailer recently for THE SHINING that I clapped my hands over my eyes half-way through and kept them there until it was over. And all that was happening, at least when I chickened out was that an elevator door was opening. But as it took me a good three weeks to get over the effects of the book, I was not about to take any chances.

I think you made a good point about SF being a less rigid category than some. (It's certainly true that there are different types of mysteries, but they still tend to center around a crime.) There are many varieties of SF (and fantasy), and I think that's one of its main attractions for me. Sometimes I'm in the mood for humor, sometimes for great adventure, sometimes for intellectual puzzles, etc. etc., and I can find them all in the field of SF.

Actually Susan, I did read something by Samuel Johnson for pleasure once, but it's also true that I hadn't fully discovered SF at that time.

What! Barely have I adjusted to Dennis becoming Rick, when suddenly I am faced with an Anji who is now a FMaki. And gone off to Colorado to boot. Is there no pity in the world?

I guess animals are quite individualistic, too. You established rapport with your horse; I always felt mine was indulging me (and, yes, I did spend hours with him), but I have had dogs indicate concern for me.

A.D. Wallace: I don't know if it's long enough to be considered a novel, but LeGuin's juvenile, VERY FAR AWAY FROM ANYWHERE (ANYPLACE?) ELSE is not SF or fantasy.

"Turgid beyond comfortable reading" -- I must try to remember that phrase. Could come in handy.

What is a blue meany doing at the bottom of p 27? ((Is that what it was?))

\* \* \* \* \*

X If there is an "X" here, your membership ends with this issue.



I AM A SATAMURI FIRST CONTACTOR  
I HAVE VERY LARGE, VENOMOUS TEETH.  
MY SONAR IS MORE  
SENSITIVE THAN A BATS.  
I AM EXCELLENTLY  
TRAINED IN THE USE OF  
BOTH BLASTER AND  
SWORD. EVEN  
VIOLENCE AND  
SARCASM!...



...AND I  
LIKE THE  
CONTENTS OF  
TIGHTBEAM  
JUST THE  
WAY THEY  
ARE.

ANY QUESTIONS?

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