



Labowitz here: Well, chaps, after a long rest we are definitely back. The con was great, the new job is great, my neck is much better (in case you're interested; oh, you're not). Cover artwork is still greatly appreciated; it's all we use and would like to get a few more months ahead. The tci copy in this issue (scattered throughout is The Critical Eye, Gary H. Labowitz solely responsible. See you all in November. Keep smiling,

This is Tightbeam 57, September, 1969, the letter column of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Tightbeam is published by Gary H. Labowitz, 1100 Betzwood Dr., Norristown, Pa. 19401. Correspondence meant for Tightbeam should be so marked. Cover by Jack Gaughan.

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See latest ROSTER for all addresses.

robert halfhill

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As I write this letter, our astronauts have returned safely to lunar orbit. It is reported that President Nixon will decide within the next thirty to sixty days whether the U.S. should aim for a Mars landing. Since most people do not bother to write to their elected representatives, a few thousand pro-space-program letters at this time might very well mean the difference between the continuation or termination of our space program. Therefore I am writing this letter to urge all the readers of Tightbeam to write letters to the President, their representative, and their two senators urging that the space program receive an immediate increase in funds and that the proposed goal of a Mars landing be adopted.

//Well, I personally thought the Manned Orbital Laboratory would have been a more worthwhile project -- it's cancelled. And, of course, more money for A probably means a bit of horse trading: more money for B and C. And we poor workhorses will pay those bills. ghl//

ed krieg

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ghl: Touche on your remarks in re: mine on sex and New Wave. The TV show the Prisoner will be shown for 17 weeks on CBS starting May 29. //Gasp! Almost over, now.// I indicated that Illustrated Man would be the picture. Now I take this fact back. IM, according to some fen, is bad! Planet of the Apes is going to have a sequel. This time Jim Franciscus is the rescuer of Heston and Victor Buono is the head of the NYC junta. The apes will go back, and I gather that Heston is supposed to find a group of people who do talk. I can hardly wait. Warner's book is worth the \$7.50. I am somewhat confused about certain points. FancyDigest had a different interpretation of certain events - Degler and the Cosmic Circle for instance. Nevertheless it is a good book. I can't wait for the second volume. The current (May) If has a hilarious novelette by Bloch entitled GroovyLand. It is Bloch at his punniest and funniest. I recommend for the best novelette. Zenna Henderson's People story in Dec. F&SF. Forgot the title - but I think Henderson, like James Schmitz, is deserving of a Hugo. 2001 should win the best drama. //Of course.//

Ann Wilson: Come on now! ST did have a poorer quality of mixmashes of shows this season. I don't call Kirk's involvement with Indians out of Fennimore Cooper or the crew's involvement in a rehash of OK Caroll (sic!) SF Times had listed some of the episodes as quite poor. //sic//

Andrews: "Zilch" is supposed to be a slang term for zero or nothing. I forget where I got the definition for it.

//Cummon, Ed, who sawed Courtney's boat? ghl//

tom goyett

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First I want to say that I have read TB for almost two years now and have really never said anything before but now I think it is time. I have read the last TB when people were telling about old and new line SF and how one guy was

putting down If, but now I want to go beyond that into something else. All the while these people are talking about these things people are being killed in Viet Nam, students were being hauled off to jail because of their protests against the Military Industrial Complex, the situations in the ghettos are getting worse, and finally if that is not bad enough there are people actually starving in the United States now!

With all this happening in the world today there are still people in the United States who "don't want to get involved." Now I know that most of us in N3F are aware of this because all you need do is read some of the zines that are published and you can see that. But the thing is people know about it but don't do anything about it. The only thing they do is sit there and watch the news and then after they sit in front of their TV and watch their favorite cowboy show and forget about it.

What I want to know is how do you get these people? What makes them sit in their easy chairs and just forget about what is happening in the world?

I know that some of you are thinking maybe this is the wrong place to do this but whenever people read something they should be informed of this because something has to be done before it is too late.

//Indeed! Many of us who read stf and participate in fandom are involved, Tom. Whatever gave you the idea we weren't? However, only the most dedicated, i.e. those who are giving their lives to the 'cause', go about with the problems of the world ever on their minds. People need relaxation and forgetfulness at times. There are stf authors making a wide audience aware of social and technical problems. I firmly believe that only a few individuals ever effect big changes, morally and monetarily backed by the masses. Mass change is either gradual or chaotic. Meantime, when I begrudgingly spend a little time fanning, that is what I do. Meanwhile, we are killing more people on the roads than are killed in Viet Nam; non-students are being hauled off to jail because of non-crimes (sex and drug related, usually); we are poisoning the entire planet at a rate the World Health Organization says will make the planet unable to support life of any kind by (was it really?) 2000; and whole countries are starving on the other side of this small, and rapidly shrinking, globe. Keep smiling, Tom; that's a human attribute you share with no other animal. ghl//

doug robillard

61 Chapel St., Milford, Conn. 06460

New Wave? Old Wave? Those are only terms that someone made up. They really mean nothing. The only two divisions in SF are good SF and bad SF.

We have a theory in our house about the Silverberg novel, The Man in the Maze, a really excellent book. The author seems to have drawn much of his story from Greek mythology. Muller, the heroic adventurer of the novel who is exiled in the Maze because of the psychic wound that is so painful for other people is much like Philoctetes, the great Greek warrior who was so severely bitten by a serpent that his screams forced the Greeks to abandon him on an island. When they need his mighty bow, they have to go back to him, just as Muller's friends must go back to make use of his special gift for communicating with the extragalactic invader. The Maze sounds as though it is a complex version of the famous labyrinth that Dedalus built for King Minos on the island of Crete. If this is right, it did give Silverberg an excellent plot to work with.

tc1

Aside: I take the addresses from the letters, and some of these letters are old. So, if you wish to write any of the members, please refer to the roster for the latest addresses I have.

Dallascon Bulletin (No. 2) via Tom Reamy, Chairman, P.O.Box 523, Richardson, Texas 75080. A nice looking reminder that Dallas is serious about it all; I hesitate to even mention it since you probably got one, it has a distribution of 5000. But just in case you're not on the list, you may want to be. I hasten to add that Minneapolis (and probably Chicago) is bidding, too.

Science Fiction Review (30) via Richard Geis, P.O.Box 3116, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403. This is the Hugo winner and well worth 50¢, \$3.00 a year. In it you will find many book reviews, a brilliant column by Banks Mebane, columns of sorts from Poul Anderson, Arthur Jean Cox, and Harlan Ellison (fighting the "book-burners," as usual). All is capped off with a sharp, literate letter column (I guess Geis can leave anything he wishes out, sigh) and excellent artwork, though the bulk of it tends to be on the cartoony side. If you have never seen a SFR, send for it immediately. (More of SFR later; No. 32 is at the bottom of my review pile. Geis actually publishes bi-monthly! Well, close enough.)

Riverside Quarterly (Vol. 3 No. 4) via Leland Sapiro, Box 40 University Station, Regina, Canada (Poetry to 1179 Central Ave., Dunkirk, New York 14048) Obviously, Riverside Quarterly is worth 60¢, \$2.00 a year. It is one of the few profanzines (is this a neologism?) where you can find good amateur poetry. At least, I think it's amateur. But, in any event, good. The articles themselves are serious; to me some are deadly so. Those which discuss a topic I find of interest are well written and interesting. Those which discuss (in footnoted detail) topics I don't like ("Tarzan and Rima, the Myth and the Message," "H. G. Wells, Critic of Progress (fourth of five parts)") I simply pass up. I suspect other readers will fall into this pattern with a different subset of articles chosen. The artwork is more "straight" than comic (no cartoons at all) and the letter column is refined to replies to responses to articles on notes, etc. until one might suspect the source of all this is the Talmud and such. But the source is science fiction. There are even two articles of a serious nature dealing with fandom (Jim Harmon's "The Seasonal Fan" and Harry Warner, Jr.'s "Opere Citato"). All in all, RQ approaches being a prozine (of the literary review type) and may even be more appealing to newer fans since you will not need to have the "who's who" background to read, understand, and enjoy RQ as you would the more faanish zines. Worth a try.

Various, miscellaneous things from Frank Denton, 14654 - 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, Wash. 98166. Most importantly there is Ash-Wing 3 (plus others) but they are N'APA material and to get them you will have to join N'APA or correspond with Frank, or the like. They appear to be a means to reach others in lieu of individual letters (as is tc1 from me) and apa oriented. I just wish Frank didn't electrostencil every page. Grrr...I wish I could.

The Nehwon Review (5) from Redd Doggs, P.O.Box 1111, Berkeley, Calif. 94701 is FAPA material but indicates a few copies are available for 10¢. This is a speech given by Dr. George Wald at MIT on March 8, 1969 which discusses the question: "What is Behind the Student Unrest." Of much quotable material in that speech I'll give a few samples; you can decide if you want to try for a copy (I doubt if there are many, if demand exceeds supply I hope Redd will forgive me for plugging it).

"...the Vietnam war is the most shameful episode in the whole of American history." "As for the draft: Don't reform the draft - get rid of it." "We have to get rid of those atomic weapons, here and everywhere."

rose-marie green

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I feel sure that most of you have heard the sad, and for some of you the great, news that Star Trek has been cancelled. //Letter dated May 1. ghl// This explanation of mine is the main reason why. Someone a few issues back stated that NBC was trying to "kill" ST. I believe that someone is right.

A month or so ago I was talking to John W. Campbell. Somehow we got to talking about ST and how rotten this third year has been. He said that a few months ago he had been visiting Gene Roddenberry in his apartment in California. It seems that during the summer after the second year NBC told Roddenberry they were moving ST to 10:00 Friday night. Roddenberry said move it to 7:30 if you wish, but not to 10:00. He realized that if they did ST would lose its major audience. Namely high school and college kids. He threatened them saying he would leave it if they did. They did. Roddenberry left. Of course since he created it his name still goes with the show and he still gets paid for it. But since he left, they have lost the importance of the "Believety Factor" he so strongly enforced. You know the rest.

//Aha! A secret plot. Probably financed by the Cops and Robbers Syndicate! ghl//

george fergus

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In the fanzine review section of TB 56 you stated that Slan "broke ground in its theme and style with the alternation of plot lines chapter by chapter until the two came together." Permit me to disagree. Unless I have misunderstood your point, was not Edgar Rice Burroughs doing essentially the same thing, particularly in his Tarzan novels, almost 20 years earlier? In fact, his 1917 novel The Lad and the Lion is really two discrete stories (with only the most tenuous of connecting links) told in alternating chapters.

//I don't know. I don't read Tarzan. However, my point had to do with two plots which depended upon one another for their resolutions, not tenuously linked. ghl//

Speaking of such alternation, however, reminds me that some tremendously good work is being done today in opening up such new ground. I would particularly like to call your attention to Anne McCaffrey's Dragonflight and Ursula K. LeGuin's The Left Hand of Darkness, in which the narrational viewpoint is made to alternate between the two main characters, each of whom gives different emphasis and meaning to the events in which they take part. The result is a sort of binocular vision that reveals more about the characters and their world and the elusive goal of human understanding than standard technique can usually hope to do. It's refreshing, in the midst of all this foofaraw about novels built out of film techniques and non-linear word constructions and incomprehensible abstractions that are supposed to blow people's minds, to find some real progress being made in the literary quality of science fiction.

The trouble with most of the experimentation in SF today is that it is blocking the communication lines between author and reader instead of increasing them. In the past, ground-breaking SF milestones were usually greeted with tremendous acclaim from the readers, usually after months of rejection slips

from conservative editors. But today's new wave appears to be losing a sizable number of readers because it is failing to communicate meaningfully to them. The reason appears to be (in the words of Michael Moorcock) these authors' "refusal to fetter their imaginations by torturing their inspiration until it fits an acceptable form." Is it that these authors want to be misunderstood? In direct contrast is the view expressed by Theodore Sturgeon in commenting on Zelazny's work: "There is always, for a resourceful writer, a way to maximize communication by means acceptable to a writer's arrogance; all he has to do is think of it." There is much to be said for the view that a writer is useless if he cannot translate his personal, non-linear, symbols and images into universals understandable to the majority of college-educated adults. There are taboos in much of the publishing world, but those who complain that they aren't allowed to do realistic treatments of sex and war would find things much easier if they tried to attain the skill and compassion of a writer like Mr. Sturgeon.

Writers may enjoy being able to sell the most abstruse products of their tortured psyches, but as a reader I prefer to see stories printed that have enough universality to communicate to me. I prefer to read stories whose major characters I can either like or have respect for, and who are doing something interesting with their lives. But most contemporary fiction and all too much modern British SF features characters who, though often portrayed with brilliant insight, are people I would avoid in real life and about whom I just can't give a damn! Example: D. G. Compton's Synthajoy. A well-conceived and technically well executed book, with an excellent denouement, but in which I hated every character and was either bored or irritated by their activities. Whereas, on the other hand, in a Delany story I find everybody interesting and worth knowing (and, by the way, Nova for the Hugo!).

The reason why Analog has such a higher circulation than the other prozines is probably its appearance, and the fact that it is well-distributed. By "appearance" I mean that Analog's covers are better printed than Galaxy's, and glossier than F&SF's; Analog's text is much neater and clearer and easier to read than the sloppy and badly-linked pages of the Galaxy and Ultimate groups of magazines; Analog is a haven for the interior artist, whereas F&SF is essentially incapable of doing justice to interior illustrations and seldom features them. Analog just looks more professional than the other prozines, which still carry many of the appearance characteristics of the pulps. So the occasional buyer, looking for the best purchase, is liable to choose Analog because it looks rich and distinguished. Fans, of course, don't care about appearance (or else they wouldn't be voting for If).

//Much to what you say. I've been buying the prozines lately, but have yet to see a copy of Galaxy for sale in the drugstore I visit. ghl//

joanne burger

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I think Analog's increasing circulation is partly due to the "good" (i.e. I enjoy reading them) stories it has in it. They aren't as enjoyable as the stories from the late 40's and early 50's, but I find them to be more fun to read than those being published in the other sf magazines. And other people appear to agree with me. Distribution is funny, tho. Locally, there is one place within 30 miles where you can buy Analog, while F&SF and Fantastic are available at the local supermarkets. I don't understand the reasoning, if any, behind the distribution of sf anyway.

Star Trek is finally getting onto British TV. The BBC has said that it will run at least until the end of the year. Now the English fan will learn what we have all been talking about, and, no doubt, will start talking about it as we go off on another kick.

Bob Roehm: It is my understanding that in the German con in '70 all the sessions will be held in German with simultaneous translation into English, like at the UN. Sounds like a good idea to me.

//I bet Ackerman could suggest a better language, couldn't you 4e? ghl//

The tape bureau is still going strong. I have been quite busy and haven't been as active as I wanted to be, but I have gotten several interesting tapes in the last month. Ned Brooks sent a copy of Trek-A-Star, Bill Desmond sent the Boskone VI proceedings, Al Ellis sent a tape full of X-1 programs (I haven't been able to copy the stuff he wants in return, but hopefully I'll make it this month //June//), and I have gotten some of the Baycon programs. So the library is getting bigger. The taperspondence is carried on by the members without going through me (thank Heaven) and so I don't know how that's coming.

Oh, yes, Shirley Meech ran off a copy of all of her Star Trek tapes for the bureau, so we now have copies of all of the ST episodes except for The Enemy Within and What are Little Girls Made Of? So naturally I am now looking for copies of those two episodes. Anybody out there have one?

//Way out of turn ... I usually review them in the order I receive them ... is Pegasus (5) from Joanne, see address above. Peg just gets bigger and bigger and bigger. And better. I keep wondering when Joanne will switch to mimeo or offset or printing or computer printout or whatever the next step will be. It is easily read spirit dupe, but a little light all the same. Much, much stuff concerned with scientific foofaraw (Murphy's laws, Finnagle, etc.) and Joanne's service to fandom, monthly stf lists of what's being published. And by whom. And the price. But not where to send, which I guess you can get from Science Fiction Review anyway. This issue has an item called "How to Frustrate a Logician" and since I'm sorta one I had to read it and found it odd. For one thing, you have the meanings (i.e. accepted logical meaning) of "valid" and "true" mixed up and reversed. That which is "valid" follows by virtue of reason from the premises; that which is "true" is that which corresponds with reality, i.e. that which is represented symbolically (verbally) is observable, operational, or can be experienced (if you include subjective or intentional reality). For example: the fact that unicorns have horns is "true" since the imagined beast, conceived in the mind, does indeed have a horn; the words convey meaning which corresponds with the concept in my mind. I need not be forced to admit that unicorns physically, "really" exist(ed) simply because I'm talking about them and imputing attributes to them.

Your argument, slightly paraphrased goes as follows: 1) No fact can be proven; it can only be demonstrated. 2) A proposition can be proven in logic, but this doesn't establish its truth. A theory may be valid but not true. 3) This means propositions which are not true can be shown to be valid. 4) But there can then be a valid proposition which can possibly be false; it can be demonstrated neither true nor false. 5) Also, there may be a true proposition which cannot be demonstrated as being true. 6) Therefore, there is so much uncertainty in life I'm not going to pay any attention to anything you say. (It's a very broad paraphrase, isn't it?)

The thing is not perfectly sound logic, naturally, it is simply a statement (windy) of a belief: any proposition is based ultimately on demonstration for its truth, said demonstration which may or may not occur again in the same way; therefore, lacking foreknowledge that an event will occur again as it has before I will not accept anything but this belief as truth.

Of course, this gets one nowhere (confused, maybe) so most people do accept "facts." For example, I know for a fact that due to the Earth's rotation (another fact) and the sun's position (a fact) and their interrelation (applying a physical, valid theory which is true) that the sun will "rise" tomorrow. I cite as, well not exactly proof, but as my confirming demonstration, the fact (trusting historical truth) that the sun has "risen" every day as the theory predicts for as long as we can trace back (i.e. for as many demonstrations we are able to observe). I personally, therefore, place a very high probability value to the proposition that the sun will indeed be observed in the East when my clock has its hands in a "7:00" position, said position having been arrived at by "running" in a normal fashion and not set there by me at whim. In other words, the sun isn't there by virtue of the hands of the clock being placed in a given position -- there is no cause and effect there -- but rather due to the motions of Earth and Sun according to a theory which has been demonstrated over and over again to closely match observations. Current scientific outlook allows for the error of approximation in theories taken as true at any given time. New observations which do not correspond to the theory either mean the theory is wrong in some point(s) or the observation is in error. Or both.

I can really get carried away with this stuff. See B. Russell Our Knowledge of the External World or Moore's Some Problems of Philosophy for these sort of arguments. ghl//

andrew phillips

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Did Delap's "Cul-de-Sac" really win the N3F Story Contest? Not with the pathetic syntax of his letter in the May (?) TB, I hope. In any case "pathetic" seems to be the only appropriate adjective to describe his mental processes (if any). It is a sad enough comment on his mentality that "Miss Goody Twoshoes" is the only alternative he can see to stories about stfnal prostitution and the mentally ill, but his innuendo that J. J. Pierce's opposition to the NW implies racism must take some prize for fuggheadedness, not to mention intellectual dishonesty.

Science inaccuracies in fiction aren't so bad. I remember a "science" article in F&SF that blithely assured its readers that galaxies had been observed receding at Hubble speeds greater than c. Yeth.

If the N3F needs a dues hike, and is willing to itemize what it's for, I'll consider it, but I don't find the "everything else is going up, why shouldn't we?" argument at all appealing. The fiscal year change idea isn't at all bad, though.

John Andrews: ZILCH n. Gibberish; double talk; meaningless language. never common. That's from Dictionary of American Slang (1960). On the other hand what usage I've heard of it is as a simily for "zero" or "nothing." Also as a verb.

Where in hell does Ron Smith come off with this Big Brother business. "Toe the line, Mr. Pierce, or we will Austrocize (sic) you." Gad, what a horrible fate. One trembles at the very thought. What is it anyway?

By the way, when in 1965 did Galaxy publish "Repent Harlequin", etc.". Vonnegut has a piece (I don't have the title) in the 11-16-65 National Review which is very similar - just substitute Handicapper General for Ticktockman. I also have vague memories of a Pohl/Kornbluth story that also involved handicapping to make everyone "equal." Would appreciate confirmation (or otherwise). Maybe I've just read V's story before, in a Merrill anthology or something.

Never, never, NEVER insult your coverartist. You might never get another.

//Gasp! I never insult anybody! (Well, hardly anybody.) First, let me point out that the Story Contest judges the stories, not the letters. Second, sometimes (once in a google of issues) the phrasing, punctuation, spelling, etc. of a letter may suffer due to some lapse of the editor. Also, same editor has some difficulty figuring out what the letter says and therefore how to edit it. You should see some of the stuff that comes in here. It's just that fans then to write letters as though they are talking; there are run on sentences, fragments, phrases, etc. that simply have to be cut apart and pasted together by little ol' me. And I sometimes goof; I always am willing to straighten it out. Your "Yeth." is a good example. Is that a typo for "Yech."? Or is it the spoken (lisping) "Yes"? I can't guess. I have to assume you meant what you typed and print it as is. Everyone uses "it's" incorrectly sometime; I try to catch them but will miss occassionally. I try to correct spelling with my GPO hyphenation guide; I misspell words sometimes.

By the way, in the first paragraph of your letter I'm assuming the "(if any)" refers to the "appropriate adjective" that may or may be.

Just remember, gang, I'm not taking sides; I'm just here to stir up trouble. Heh, heh, heh. ghl//

ron fortier

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In this May issue //May TB// you made a very interesting comment that some of your readers may have passed over too lightly. I am referring to your aside to Paul Doerr's letter where you stated surprise as to how readers often read a book through to the end though they are disgusted with it from page two on.

You advised that said reader drop it if he can no longer enjoy the book.

It's great advice, Gary, unfortunately I think if we all went along with this we would certainly miss out on many fine works. Isn't it true that most books today are broken into three major portions: the beginning, center and ending? Go along with this assumption, I think all of us are familiar with writers who have weak beginnings or centers but fantastic, grace-saving endings. By quitting a writer at chapter two you do both yourself and him a disservice.

Of course, this can only apply to new writers. As for old favorites, a reader usually knows what to expect and can easily muddle through the few unenjoyable portions to reach the good stuff.

Unfortunately new writers have to depend on our stick-to-it-ness to make the grade. We would lose many of these new talents if we followed your advice, Gary. Now, I don't totally disagree with you. If I have gone through a weak beginning and center only to find a weak ending, you had better believe I will never give the author another opportunity to bore me silly. But at least I will have given him an initial chance. That's all any of us should be able to do.

//OK. But I refer also to "classics" and "mainstays" of genre. Odd John is a roet novel; it's a classic! You must read it. You can't understand stf without having read it. I say: if you start reading it and don't like it, forget it. There's plenty of stf you will enjoy that you should be reading. This does not apply if you are a student or professor or reviewer or dedicated as hell. But I read for pleasure and I'll be damned before I'll waste time on something I don't like. ghl//

jerry lapidus

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People, do you realize something? In the last three or four issues of this magazine, things have actually become (almost) exciting. Several very stimulating discussions have started, and we've had quite a few excellent opinions expressed. Probably because of this, I've noticed some fairly good fanzine reviews of TB. This, I feel, is the way to break the N3F-neo image. PROVE that all members aren't limited to Pierce-type comments, and I think the organization stands a much better chance of being accepted by fandom at large.

And while we're generalizing -- I find it amazing to notice how Our Editor manages to remain so cool, fair, unbiased, and detached. After all, we're discussing some pretty volatile topics here; but through it all, Gary goes along, unaffected, pointing out holes in each argument. Even Geis is affected by his secret powder -- what's your immunity, Gary?

//Aw, shucks! Let me point out that I am affected by much of what is said herein, but as editor of a club magazine I have no right to speak out loudly and directly what I feel (other than in tci and a 'letter' from me). The power to break into others' letters is difficult to resist sometimes and I do try, though some of you may think I don't. ghl//

Delap: very nice, Richard. Well thought-out, and devastating -- much better job on Pierce than I was able to do last time! About Redd -- it's too bad you didn't point him out sooner. By now, you probably know that he did not make the ballot. But at least "Sunbeam Caress" should have been nominated; it's certainly unusual enough to merit attention, if not some award. Did you notice some of the really bad short fiction that DID get nominated? "The Steiger Effect," by Betsy Curtis and (guess what) from Analog, for instance; nothing more than a mediocre (at best!) Analog gimmick story. Absolutely no redeeming quality at all, no logical reason for nomination. Then there's Anderson's "Sharing of Flesh," from Galaxy/If; that's another typical gimmick story, this time with a touch of sentimentality. Anderson is at least competent, so the story isn't that bad. But it certainly isn't Hugo caliber. Neither is Anthony's "Getting Through University," for that matter; I consider it the worst Anthony I've seen yet, and only some interesting aliens make it at all interesting. But that novelette category is certainly barren -- besides these two, we have Aldiss' "Total Environment," interesting, but not as much so as a lot of other Aldiss I've read, and Wilson's Nebula-winning "Mother to the World." Haven't seen Orbit 4 yet, haven't read it.

Andrews: Not at all a bad idea. In fact, your idea of awarding a Hugo for the best translation has already been picked up -- at least in several OTHER countries, where they have their own awards. In at least Germany and I think in other places as well, awards are made for the best translation. In essence, the idea is good, but to get it past fandom, you'd have to prove there were already a number of eligible contenders. Are there a large group of recently translated works? If so, I'm not familiar with them. The problem is a circular one -- there won't be Hugos till there are large-scale translations, there won't be translations until there are fans ready to buy them (or readers, at least), and there won't be readers until an interest is created. The basic problem, as I see it, lies in the translators. If we can see a number of such works in the next several years, then I think your idea would stand a chance. Perhaps a start's already been made with the translation of a Perry Rohdan (whatever you think of the quality) into English.

//When we had to leave St. Louiscon (to catch a plane) the business meeting was just taking up the various proposals to officially recognize the Hugos as an English language award. This, coupled with the proposals on con site selection and the rotation of the title of Worldcon to national conventions which would be held every year regardless of whether they would be Worldcons or not would mean that the Hugos would be given every year by the North American Science Fiction Convention. That would leave the Worldcons held in other countries (or, more properly: overseas) to give whatever awards they had to give. But not "Hugos" which would then be officially English language awards. Does anybody know how the business meeting went? ghl//

Bob Stahl: you're right about Carter and Tolkein. I've read about half of his A Look Behind LOTR, and it's really quite well done. And thanks.

Darrell Schweitzer: basically you and I should have little to argue about. On the basis of this letter, you've proved yourself to be a much more discriminating reader and critic than in past letters. What you did before was generalize totally -- "the New Wave is plotless, unreadable, and bad." By this, you make a blanket condemnation of everything arbitrarily considered New Wave. But what you meant -- as is obvious -- is that SOME of the work called New Wave is plotless, unreadable, and bad. There I can agree with you fully. Unlike Pierce you're willing to try anything, as evidenced by your familiarity (greater than mine) with New Worlds and your willingness to at least try New Wave authors. Certainly our tastes will differ, on "Riders of the Purple Wage," on BJB, etc. But at least you have the desire to read and experiment before criticizing; I just wish you'd made this clearer, before going off into a blanket condemnation of the New Wave. I do, however, feel somewhat sad -- sad that you just can't (for reasons I couldn't begin to speculate) see that in at least this story, Farmer's done do much more than simply be "daring," and particularly sad that you can't see that Spinrad's "pile of obscenities" has a very serious purpose. Spinrad uses them not for effect, but simply as part of his world, part of his amazingly good characterizations. I'm only sorry you can't for some reason see this.

george fergus

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I would like to correct Lisa Tuttle with regard to part of her letter in the March TB. Alice Mary Norton, the retired Cleveland librarian who wrote Octagon Magic and Steel Magic under the name Andre Norton, is not the same person as Mary Norton (author of Bedknob and Broomstick and the four volume "Borrowers" series), who is married and British and, among other things, the 1952 winner of the Carnegie Medal for outstanding children's books.

When I was trying to decide which prozine to nominate for this year's Hugo, I found myself passing over the fiction to choose on the basis of the features and columns (and, to a lesser degree, appearance and artwork). I realized that the majority of prozine SF suffers in comparison with regularly-appearing original paperback series like Orbit and Ace SF Specials. Even New Writings in SF is as good as any of the prozines. And I ask the question, if the other regular publications featuring original novels and stories were allowed to compete with the prozines on the basis of quality of their fiction, would not the prozines come off second best? And in restricting the Hugo award to the magazines alone, aren't we perpetuating the obsolete idea that the focal point of the SF field is in the prozines?

It might be more realistic to scrap the prozine Hugo in favor of two new awards: Best Editor and Best Critic or Columnist. Then credit would go where credit is due -- to the editor or the artist or the columnist -- and we wouldn't have any more of this "Should I vote for Galaxy over Analog because it has Budrys?" As it is, book editors like Ashmead or Ernsberger or Carr or Bensen and anthologists (so-called) like Knight and Carnell can get no recognition when award-time comes. To be fair and up-to-date, the system should be remedied, particularly in these days of senselessly-proliferating fiction awards (in two years, the number of short fiction awards increased from one to three!).

//The novelette category was dropped this year at the meeting; the novella will absorb fiction of the novelette class. Or was it the other way 'round? ghl//

klaus bcschen

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A most interesting belief of the Second Foundation can be seen in this excerpt from Renaissance: "We are opposed to the anti-science fiction of the "New Thing", with its emphasis on anti-heroes, plotless disaster stories, the condemnation of science and intelligence as fundamentally evil or useless and its aura of cynicism, cruelty and disgust." Or in another quote: "Tired of sick stories with sick characters by sick writers?" Hysterical ravings of John Pierce? Perhaps, but Isaac Asimov and Frederik Pohl have expressed similar sentiments, i.e. Pohl in an editorial in the May 1969 issue of If: "The great bulk of the so-called mainstream literature (and of New Whatchamacallit science fiction) seems concerned with petty anti-heros who whine over the lot of mankind but do nothing about it", and Asimov in a letter in the Nov. 1968 issue of If: "There are science fiction writers who think that Science is a Bad Thing and that science fiction is a wonderful field in which to make this plain. This is part of a much more general attitude that Society is a Bad Thing and must be destroyed before a new and better system can be evolved." It must be noted, however, that Asimov has taken a pro New Wave stand elsewhere, i.e. in his foreword to Dangerous Visions and in a letter in John Malone's fanzine DMSFT 1. There seems to be a tendency on the part of the Second Foundation to denounce any story that hints that humankind is not all that wonderful, as sick. As John Wyndham wrote: "When people live their lives by their beliefs objective reality is almost irrelevant."

On the subject of juveniles, the ones Asimov wrote under a pseudonym were quite good. I forgot both the pseudonym and the names of the stories -- they are listed, however, in the Asimov Special, Fantasy and Science Fiction put out in 1966. //Paul French. ghl//

Frank Denton: I passed up Star Well when it first came out. I bought the June Analog in which it was praised. The next day I came across it in a book store and bought it. The same afternoon TB came with your letter in it. Interesting. (Now, can you tell me why I wrote this?)

george willick

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Delap: The thought you evoked comparing in interest stories of Miss Goody Twoshoes versus stories about pimps, sadists, homos, and pros was this...these are proper subjects for articles, research papers and crime magazines. They are interesting and entertaining in stories only to the proportionate degree of the

perversion of the reader. Likewise, the author whose mind or motives or lack of skill requires these ingredients in a story is simply a hack or pornographer. I'm not saying hacking and pornography don't have their place because they do... but they should be clearly labeled and priced or valued accordingly. If none of the above ever again appeared in a SF story could you say, in truth, that the field was the weaker for it?

Cohen: Maybe someday we will find someone with enough guts to say that 'any formula using c or c squared as an absolute is a bunch of crap' and even Einstein knew that.

Hill: I second your first motion. //Dues raise.// But MOVE TO AMEND the second motion, that: the fiscal year shall begin on July 1, starting next year. Argument: Alma, fiscal years are notorious for starting on July 1. It would be after heating bills, school, maybe a bit before vacation when we have a little extra and warm weather makes us feel flush. Sept. 1 puts the edge at school clothes, icky heat after a bad vacation making us excited by the air conditioned light bills and beer busted. Would I kid you?

Smith: I can't help but wonder if our perspective about fandom isn't completely relative. Why should N3F fandom be less than 'mainstream' fandom? I've been in both and in 'mainstream' up to my ears. I didn't see any shining knights or "involved, responsible" people. There's much more responsibility in the N3F where correspondence welds the unit for years and not where local clubs rise and shine, burn bright, put on a one-shot World Con with all that responsibility and then die off and out. Poooh. 'Mainstream' fandom amounts to little more than an individualistic group of fans who try to test their will power against everyone else's until a rigid pecking order is formed. I guess it's great if you like that sort of thing. I prefer the relative apathy of the N3F...so do others.

Eisenstein, Denton: New Wave? Old Wave? I have a distinct advantage over everyone. I have just returned from seven years of complete gafia...pro and fan. So the differences stand out for me like a newly arranged room. Ain't any, folks. Whoever said SilverBob is New Wave hasn't wet his butt on the beach. Somebody dusted a little and rearranged the skeletons but that's all. Half of what's written still stinks. Values or approaches don't change...only the people holding them and only the people viewing them.

But there is one difference between //the pros// and us. They are just a little more lost than we are. So they look harder and explore further. As I once asked in an editorial long ago on Numbered Fandoms (this is an old argument you see)...what do you call the next wave? To me...most of you are New Wave Neffers! How's that grab you?

//You may have had a distinct advantage there, George, but you lost that when you came back. ghl//

darrell schweitzer

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Ann Wilson: I got the basic plot of 2001 from the movie though I got the impression that the stargate was not the monolith but something created by it as if the monolith had cut a hole in space and dragged the pod through it. This is but a small detail and really unimportant. I consider the real faults of the film to be all concentrated in the first part of the second segment. Here there are incredible technical blunders. The bus used to go from Clavius to Tycho had no rockets located on the rear to push it forward and the effects of lunar

gravity were ignored completely. And that base!!!! Why the hell did the Space-station-Moon ship have to be brought underground into a pressurized chamber? It only needed to land on the surface. If it is considered necessary, those orange peel segments of the dome could be used to protect it from meteors. I suspect that this sequence was used because it looked impressive and also Kubrick got the cavern cheap. I remember seeing something on the news a few years ago which told of the making of the James Bond film You Only Live Twice which showed several scenes from inside a mountain about the same size as the Clavius base. It also had an orange-peel segmented dome at the top. It was said that after the movie was completed they would have a slightly used mountain for sale. It's obvious that Kubrick bought it.

Despite this, the overwhelming immensity of the film was not damaged.

Vera Heminger: You forgot the greatest of all men-meet-aliens stories: Leinster's "First Contact."

Ed Krieg: True, Spinrad is better than Disch but the difference is between excellent and merely competent. Disch is one of New Worlds' best regulars. He can always be relied upon to write a story (which is not a very common thing in NW). My favorite Disch story is from F&SF, "Come to Venus Melancholy" (Nov., 1965). I'm surprised you mention Carter and Heinlein in the same sentence. I ask you this: has Carter ever written a good story?

Thought for a day: Paperback prices are getting so high that hardcovers can compete with them. If a fan buys Dangerous Visions in paperback he pays \$2.85 for three 95¢ volumes. If he buys it from the bookclub he gets the hard bound edition for \$2.50.

mike zaharakis

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As most of you know by now, President Nixon has asked for a postal raise for 1969. Although I really don't think it will help, perhaps if you all write your congressmen and pointed out that you don't like the idea of the postal raise, it might help. After all, fandom, and related persons, kept Star Trek on the air.

I think that if we compare two novels Dune and Lord of Light we'll get a glimmer of the best works pubbed in Analog and F&SF.

Lord of Light is better than Dune as far as being literate. Although I wouldn't call Lord of Light New Wave (I cannot for the life of me understand exactly what it is) it does go deeper than Dune.

Both deal with religion. Both also deal with the prophets of the religion. Now, we have to ask ourselves which deals with what and then decide which work fits our particular taste.

Dune is rompin'-stompin' up action packed adventure with a pretty thorough background of the world it occurs on thrown in. The religion presented is fundamental and the power of the prophet in the story is a combination of esp and destiny. We gain a superficial knowledge of the religion through quotes from books which do sort of fit into each episode quite conveniently. It's sort of a fundamentalist, no question approach with a Deus ex Machina thrown in every now and then in order to pull the plot out of a sticky spot. Of course, the book is well

structured and well written as well as believable in terms of science and psychology (Pavlovian in that missionaries had been sent ahead to condition the people to react in a given manner to certain phrases) while, I feel at least, the insight into the basic nature of a complex man is overlooked or perhaps deliberately ignored to be replaced by another effect.

Lord of Light is a novel of personal and racial insight and is, above all, literate. It takes the existing structure of an old religion and uses it to the hilt in order to provide comment and a vehicle for self examination. We have an atheist as a prophet who gains a type of salvation through the efforts of man. (Better mysticism through science.) The characters in the story are human (or non-human as the case may be) and shape destiny to a greater degree than in Dune. Sam, the prophet of the novel, does not have the handy dandy pre-knowledge of alternate time tracks as does his counterpart in Dune. Lord of Light reaches epic and classical proportions -- Dune is just another good book.

By the way, I think Charly was better than 2001. Cliff Robertson had faith and hope in what he was doing as he sought out a producer to put it out. In this case the actor played a human role in an sf movie, something that's hard to find.

//On the same basis, Kubrick had faith and hope in what he was doing, too. ghl//

steven goldstein

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Ha! I return to grace the pages of TB. I've been too busy to write lately what with attending Disclave (my first con) and everything. I'd like to suggest to all other neo's out there that they attend a local con as soon as possible. It's a worthwhile experience. I know it's converted me to a trufan.

//Agreed. Get to a con whenever you can -- how about Philcon this November? ghl//

Ron Smith: Aha! Threats to Pierce, eh? While I may not agree with everything he says, I do think he should be allowed to say it. My own opinion of new wave is that it could be good but generally isn't. I like the writing style of a lot of the new wavers but I wish they would do something with the style and not make the style the end all (see Riders of the Purple Wage which I too cannot find a plot in). I think that the only valid excuse for putting overt sex scenes in a novel is if the scenes will in some way aid the plot or if the scenes are necessary for continuation of the novel. Things like what was in Bug Jack Barron are totally unnecessary. I'd join the Second Foundation to rid stf of this type garbage, but I don't say all new wave is bad. Occasionally there is a decent novel (like Brunner's Jagged Orbit), but not often.

Perhaps a return to the old pulp days might not be too bad an idea. I've noticed that most stf novels as of late seem to be rather dry and seem to lack that sense of wonder that was in the good old days. Whatever happened to Null A/Slan/Mutant stories? The type of story that held interest, had new ideas, and were fun to read? Go to a newsstand today and all you can get are guts and gore stories like Conan (which I have nothing against) or sex laden new wave things with occasional reprints of old classics. I feel that this next generation of pros will be a dull one unless we can create new Vogts, Heinleins, and Sturgeons. Now they were real writers of stf, not authors like Spinrad and Disch.

to1

Here we go again with Quip (12) from Arnie Katz, Apartment 3-J, 55 Pineapple St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 50¢ or the usual. Harry Warner with All Our Yesterdays discusses the moon landing and mentions the beer can to the moon affair which gets amplifying in Terry Carr's "Inn A Mist (reprint)". The TAFF report continues with part three of Harrison Country. A promised Burbee ("The Watermelon Story") was missing from my issue. There is no telling what it could be about.

The only items of immediate interest to Neffers (that's almost as bad a term as New Wavicles) is some reference to the club by Arnie and by Ed Cox in the letter column. There was supposed to be a picture on the cover, I guess, but my copy had a Rotsler cartoon. Considering who was supposed to be in the picture I think I got the better deal.

Quip is a less serious fanzine (how's that Arnie?) which relies heavily on personalities for consistent understanding of what is said. However, if you are willing to read it regularly (a Good Idea) and can either meet the people involved at cons and such and cross correlate data from other zines it is probably as good a way as any to learn your way around fandom. At least around this piece of fandom.

By the way, Arnie, what's wrong with Lupoff being president of N3F? Can you imagine what a groovy thing we'd have going if the club had enough members who both knew who Dick is and wanted him for president?

Algol (15) from Andrew Porter, 55 Pineapple St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 really needs no review, just send \$2.50 for five issues, or 60¢ for a single copy. Do it now.

If you insist on critical run-down, here goes: It's difficult whether to place as first an article on Bug Jack Barron by Norman Spinrad or the portfolio by Michael Gilbert. I guess since they fall into different categories I can place them on separate lists and say they rate first in my estimation. Articles from Samuel Delany and Ted White were (as you can imagine) quite readable. A letter column with a fair proportion of N3F members; and some artwork which struck my fancy. Andy uses of the filler illo (none this issue) but rather gives the artwork contributors of his zine a full page in which to wail: I particularly liked the Lovenstein on page 44 and the Kinney on page 8. But as I've said before, the artwork appeals to everyone a little differently.

Forum International (1) from Scandinavian Science Fiction Society. This zine is edited by Per Insulander, Midsommarvagen 33 (dierisis on the a), S-126 35 Hagersten (dierisis on the a, again) Sweden. This is Scandinavian fandom, folks. Per describes it as "a Scandinavian variant of N3F" but I would disagree with that. It seems to be more the whole fandom of Scandanavia (correct me if I'm wrong) whereas N3F is a very small part of general fandom in the States. I can't imagine N3F (as it stands now) bidding for a convention, for example, whereas Per talks of the Scandinavian bidding committee for the 38th Worldcon (that's 1980, folks).

The zine itself is a neat, nicely illustrated issue with a lengthy review of various prozines, interviews with John Sladek and John Brunner, a poem, a love letter (to Roger Zelazny, with accompanying bibliography), and general fan muttering. I love the cover -- beautifully done. It comes, naturally, on that funny continental-sized paper and is listed for \$2.00 for five issues. Perhaps try for a single copy at 50¢ and see if you like it.

Procrastination 1) from Darrell Schweitzer, 113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford, Pa. 19087. I quote: "Now every the grubbiest crudzine has something to look down on." That says it all.

ned brooks

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As head of the Collector's Bureau, I would like to mention here that CB#10 is done, and has been mailed to everyone in my files. If you thought you were supposed to get it, and haven't, drop me a line.

I quite agree with Delap's put-down of JJ Pierce and his 'anti-New-Wave' nonsense. Al Snider mentioned in a recent fanzine a similar phenomenon from the fannish past, called the "anti-Mandarins" - does anybody remember them, or what they were against? The whole point of Snider's mentioning them was that supposedly noone did remember - but now I'm curious as to what they were!

Cohen is right that Analog publishes a lot of crud - including John W. Ghod's editorials. In the July issue, Our Hero takes up the battle against the proposed anti-cigarette legislation. Now, I am not sure myself whether the government should try to ban cigarette advertising, but Campbell's arguments are idiotic. He claims that the medical evidence against cigarette smoking consists of the fact that a high concentration of the coal-tar derivatives present in cigarette smoke will cause cancer on the skin of a guinea pig. Then he drags out the old thing about how a smoker would have to smoke 2000 cigarettes a day to reach such a concentration in his lungs. This completely ignores the statistical evidence on smoking and lung cancer, and the fact that a human lung is considerably more sensitive than a guinea pig's outer skin.

Campbell then starts in on the government's hypocrisy in condemning cigarettes while at the same time subsidizing the tobacco industry and collecting large amounts of tax money from tobacco products. I quite agree with this. But Campbell goes on to claim that the government will never make any really effective move against cigarettes, because they cannot afford to lose the tax revenue. But how much is this revenue? I wish Ghod had told us, I really would like to know. If the amount of the government subsidy of the tobacco industry, and the cost of dispensing it, and the cost of collecting the taxes on tobacco are all subtracted from the tax revenue on tobacco, just how much is left?

//I agree and disagree. First, there is nothing hypocritical about the government; it is a collection of agencies, each of which fights mightily to achieve autonomy. If several agencies each pursue a separate policy and those policies conflict, that's not hypocrisy -- it's confusion. I'm against controls on the use of tobacco by private citizens; they know it's harmful, taken in conjunction with the general level of pollutants in the air. As long as there is a voice pointing out the dangers to the citizenry, I feel each person should decide for himself whether or not to smoke -- and if so, what. ghl//

To mention the sf in Analog - in a weak moment I happened to glance at Mack Reynold's Five Way Secret Agent. In morbid fascination I read it all. I can't remember ever having read a worse piece of deliberate and premeditated garbage in a prozine.

I feel I must point out, as Chairman of the Directorate, that Alma Hill's "petitions" have absolutely no legal standing at all. In the first place, either of the changes she mentions would require a constitutional amendment, and should be presented in that form. The constitution does provide for an amendment vote to be required by petition, but the petition must be signed by 25 members, or 5%, whichever is less. At the present, 5% of the membership would be about 16 members.

Someone recently brought up the question of whether such a petition would have to be signed by the required number of members all on the same piece of paper. In my personal opinion, this would not be necessary -- I would be satisfied if I simply got letters from the required number of fen. But do not write me that you want to support Alma Hill's 'motions'. The constitution requires that a petitioned motion be voted exactly as originally worded, and these 'motions' are not properly worded, because they contain no mention of the fact that a constitutional amendment is required.

To consider these motions on their own merits, rather than from a legal standpoint - I think a dues hike to \$3/year is excessive, and a motion to present an amendment to raise them to \$2/year has already passed and been sent to Wally Weber for publication.

I rather like the idea of starting the fiscal year on Sept. 1. The arguments for it make a lot of sense. Before any vote on such an idea is considered, I would like to see some discussion, however. I am not an expert on such things. And there may be difficulties that don't occur to me at the moment.

The 'personality' of Analog is Campbell's policies, I think. Dragonrider, good as it was, seemed out of place. It seems to me that the personality of F&SF arises mostly from the editorial comments at the beginning of most stories, and from a group of writers who appear generally nowhere else in the SF field, at least under the same names. Besides these two, the remaining prozines don't seem to me to have any personality.

//Ted White is doing a remarkable job with Amazing and I think it can be included in your list. Wouldn't it be nice if Ted brought Amazing back to a position where we could legitimately vote it a Hugo? ghl//

eli cchen

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Paul Doerr: You say, "I see no reason why foreign authors couldn't send their stories to US prozines and articles to US fanzines, in English, of course." There's a big difference between learning to communicate in a language and learning to write effectively in it. The Heicon publicity and letters that have been appearing around are a good example. Their meaning is clear, but Germanisms and misused idioms occasionally creep in (how do you explain when to use "still" and when to use "yet"?). It's OK for articles, but it's the kind of little thing that could destroy the particular mood a writer was trying to convey. While editors could help, it's obvious that even under the best of circumstances writing in a foreign language is much more difficult, and it seems unfair to force non-English speakers to compete for Hugos in our language. Even Vladimir Nabokov, who's certainly no slouch at writing in English, complains that one never really picks up all the subtleties and emotional connotations that words have for native speakers.

Does anybody know what proportion of people who go to conventions (Worldcons, I mean) vote for the Hugo? I mean that both ways, the percentage of voters who attend, and the percentage of attendees who vote. If voting is semi-independent of attendance, there's no reason foreign fans can't nominate and even choose a foreign book for the Hugo, regardless of where the con is held. Of course, if all of Perry Rhodan fandom got together, Ghod forbid.....

//Also heard from Harry Weatherby and Tom Purdom (attend the Philcon) and Tom Green.

This is intended as a shop-talk column for sf writing Neffers whether pro or amateur or (as we've said before) with the great semi-pro majority. Most fans have competent style; many of us sell a story once in a while; those who make a living by it are very few and not necessarily as happy that way.

Anyway, we have a question that might be of general interest. See what you think of it and our comment, and let's have your two-bits' worth added to our two cents. Surely all Neffdom has the Exchangers outnumbered by at least that much.

Question: "I notice that most of the fiction in fanzines is pretty thin stuff. In fact, that's the kind I find myself writing. What can I do to build up a story more?"

This writer is no beginner; it's easy enough for any reader to notice how strong other people's writing is; but self-criticism is a horse of another feather. So this questioner may not be far around the corner from prizes and sales.

But it's hard to say what any particular story needs to give it added dimensions. Maybe a little of everything would be needed. Story-making is a performing art; it takes practice. Who is really as well able to tell what enhances the intended effect, as the writer who knows what effect is intended? Maybe what the thin story needs is to sit in the file while you write ten or twenty more stories and then go and look at the early sprout again.

But if we say no more than this, it'd be copping out on an honest question with a good point raised. So here's a general idea that might fit.

Take a look at somebody else's thin story and -- in your own mind only -- tell it over again. Imagine the scene and broaden it to include a few inside sets the story doesn't really need. In these, you may find ideas that would not only fit into the action, but maybe could work it up to more depth of scene -- this takes judgment, so it exercises judgment.

We'll say this again: it's always easier to criticize somebody else's work. Yet having done a dry-run like that, imagining details such as color and shape, textures and smells, sound including tones of voices, you can put more of these things into your next story, for the enjoyment of the readers.

If you've been, as Jack Williamson said of his first efforts, using up all the material on the first page, you might take another look at the opulence of his present books.

There's another thing, however, even more valuable, and that's looking at the events of a story from the eyes of the secondary characters. Perhaps one of these would actually make a better viewpoint character. Have you noticed how often a beginner's story has a sympathetic main character whom you like (or dislike) but who wins (or loses) as a result of forces outside himself? That's not a story! No self-respecting MAIN character ever accepts an outcome as a free gift. It may be that life is largely a matter of luck, but not entirely. As a rule it's luckier to be energetic, alert, and concerned -- and all readers have a strong sense that stories should be a look at nature from that aspect of it. So maybe some other character is more of a doer; his thoughts and view would then be more interesting and more validly worthy of a leading part.

Even if the main character remains the same, you will find, when you consider the bit parts, that there are various ways that these can hinder or forward the action, and thus make for a livelier and more natural story.

Finally, try making things harder for the hero. Heroines lead a tough (fictional) life also. They just have to have stamina, aplomb, and an author back out of sight, tripping them up occasionally. Don't worry about getting them into impossible plights -- just go back and write in whatever superhuman brawn or brain they need. And don't be afraid to let luck enter into the story too, just so it doesn't settle everything.

C observations

n We gently floated to the roof of the Crass Park Pollution Hotel in Sauna Louis. We parked our fan powered balloon in section H. (hot as hell) and strode eagerly forward to attend the 27th Annual Appliance and Fix Your Fans Convention. The Sauna Louis sun shone down on us and we gave a loud huzzah. "Huzzah!" and perspired heroically. My husband, Wary, threw his arms in the air, lifted his face to the sun and said "Oh, Lord!"

"Wary Harry Itanofitz," I enchanted, "let's check in, register and stare at Big Fannies and Professionals."

We stoically rode the elevator down. The Crass grassiously allowed us to register and didn't charge us an extra 5 balloons a day for our daughter's cot but only charged us a reasonable 18 blimps a day which included many hot air extras. I'm sorry -- I didn't introduce my daughter and myself. My daughter is the lovely Bandanna Itanofitz -- a bright eight year old and I'm the slatternly Thisdressa Itanofitz.

Wary straightened his tie, I patted my twist and Bandanna squared her shoulders and divided the luggage. The lobby was brim filled with fans who bobbed up and down in a long line from the Registration Desk. We got in the swim and registered.

"OOOh, Wary," I squealed, "isn't that Woody Acre'sboy?"

"No, Thisdressa," said Wary, "that's Poll Candor'sson."

"Goshwow!" I entoned.

We squeezed into the elevator that was squirming with fans and sweated our way up to the eighth floor. "What a squirmish." When we reached the eighth floor we were greeted by the Air Wardens who gave us our gas masks to Ward off the air. We picked our way cautiously through the glass strewn gloomy hall and found our room.

Our room was sweating plaster and the walls were swarming with silverfish and roaches. We dumped our luggage and dumped the dump. "Dump de dump-dump." Taking temporary refuge in the refuge dump elevator, we went back down to the lobby. There as giants striding among us puny men and women were the Big Fannies and Professionals. There were the three R's: Robert Silverfish whose books swarmed over the walls of our room, Richard Lupine for whom they played Quentin's theme, and Robert Sidewalk who would wlak a mile to beat a camel -- he hates camels. We simply could not drink it all in. We choked and ran into the N3F room which stands for Funny Fan's Fantasies. We were greeted by a smiling lady who plied us with coffee, cards, chess, and checkers. Bandanna applied herself to chess and beat all the women she played. They bore their scars proudly. I dragged my scarred body from the table and after meeting Mike Hit-the-Deck and his wife Sandy, Wary, Bandanna, and I decided to try lunch at the Crass.

Wary became a waiter and Bandanna and I were waitresses (we waited while pulling our tresses). It was about 45 minutes before the food was carried to our drool covered table and with several throaty growls we bared our fangs and tore into the food. I got a lousy corn beef sandwich for 1.95 balloons. Ridiculous. Likewise, I'm sure.

As to the actual Convention sessions and parties, Wary was able to attend more of them than I because Bandanna always developed an acute case of wiggles if we stayed too long. However, I did get to see the "Who Rowed Courtney's Boat?" session with a panel of Robert Ping Pong, Robert Sidewalk, and Ice-Blue Secret Guest -- Lee Hoffwoman. I learned more about who was who of Movie Stars and Fans than "Who Rowed Courtney's Boat? -- Hallelujah!"

At the end of that session, I had my biggest thrill of the convention, I met the publisher of one of the most famous Fanzines of all time "Cluck Loud and Clear." His name is Ogden Nash Rooster and he wore red pants. I'll never forget him.

That evening we persuaded Bandanna to attend the Masquerade Ball with us and she loved it. The best costumes, in my opinion, were worn by Poll Canders's daughter and wife as "The Bat and the Bitten." Gandalf was there with a live lizard perched above his hood and a staff that lit up. (Gandalf never had a lizard. As far as I know, he was a wizard without a lizard and vice-versa.) Many of the people were lit up without costumes -- a state of true enlightenment. The Masquerade Ball was delightful.

The Sunday Evening Banquet was the high point of the convention because it was there that the Winterhalters were given to the Biggest Fannies and Professionals. It was truly a spectacle. The professional, Hardly Anyone, was Master of Ceremonies and Convulsed us with his sputtering wit. After several revulsions the Winterhalters were presented by Robert Sidewalk who before telling the Winner of the Short Fannies, among the running was Hardly Anyone, graciously wiped the floor beside Hardly Anyone's chair and then handed him the Winterhalter for the shortest Fanny. Hardly anyone was more surprised than I. Some of the winners of Winterhalters were: Arnie C. Clutz for 2222 Space Jaunt, Jack Gaunt as best Artist, Robert Silverfish - a bar mitzvah award, and Harry Letter Writer the Big Heart Award.

It was bleery-eyed Monday and we had to leave. Holding our noses nostalgically we shlepped our luggage into the hall and onto the elevator and steamed up to the roof of the Mighty Crass Park Pollution. There Hardly Anyone was being helpful by inflating balloons with his ego. After Hardly inflated our balloon ("Thank you, Hardly"), we sailed into the dusty Sauna Louis air and bid a fond farewell for the last time, "Thank Ghod!"; to the Crass Park Pollution. However, the Convention was a gas and we look forward to many, many more World Appliance Fix Your Fans Conventions.

Leah Labowitz

Con-tent: a better place to stay than the hotel.

Con-dissention: What to do with the money.

Con-fusion: Boys and girls together.

Con-ster-nation: A German Con.