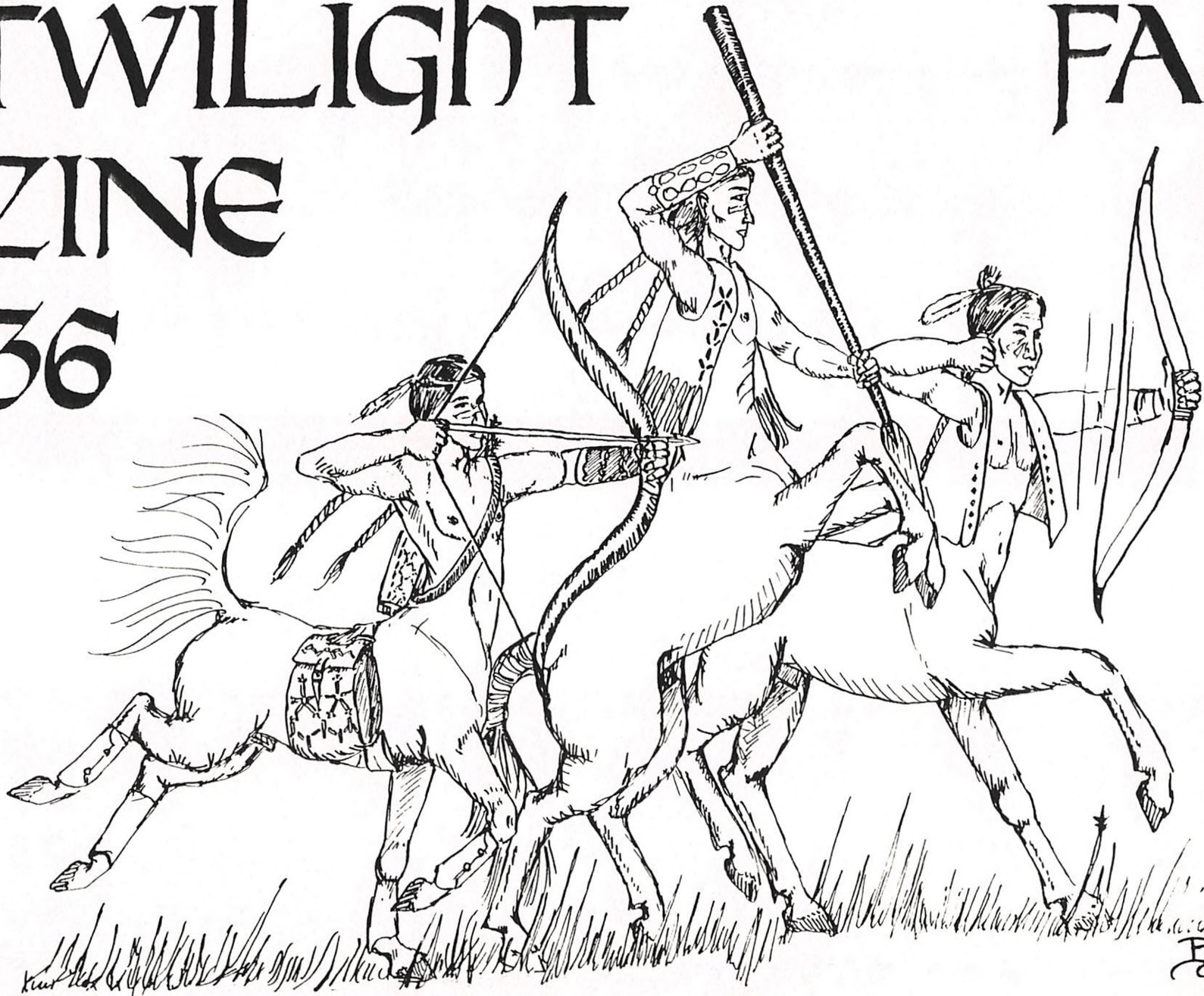


TWILIGHT ZINE 36

FALL 85



Fine Print

The Twilight Zine (that's Zine -- as in magazine -- dammit, not "Zone" or "Line"!) is published from time to time by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Science Fiction Society (MITSFS), which is a member of the MIT Association of Student Activities and is recognized by the MIT Graduate Student Council.

Neither Twilight Zine nor MITSFS is in any way connected with the original "The Twilight Zone" television show, the upcoming new "The Twilight Zone" television show, the currently-published "Rod Serling's The Twilight Zone Magazine" or anything else that has the words "Twilight Zone" in its name.

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The MITSFS's address is:

MIT Science Fiction Society
Room W20-473
84 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

and our phone number is (617) 225-9144 (from inside MIT, that's dormline 9144; mnemonic is "nine gross"). If you call us, don't be surprised by anything you hear. Any correspondence regarding Twilight Zine should be labeled "attn: Jourcomm".

Casts of CharactersMITSFS Star Chamber

President & Skinner
----- Andrew T. Su

Vice ----- Adam G. Mellis

Lord High Embezzler
----- Susan L. Pitts

Onseck ----- Susan S.D. Tucker

Twilight Zine 36

Jourcomm (editor)
----- Bill P. Starr

Awesome Typist -- Lisa A. Kroh

DeLorean Time
Travel Consultant
----- Janice M. Eisen
(Jourcomm Emerita)

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Editorial

by Bill Starr

Well, here it is, finally. Twilight Zine 36. The eighth TZ in the last ten years, only two years after TZ 35 -- we've given up pretending that TZ is published quarterly (once every quarter-decade, perhaps?) -- and all in the same typeface!* Gosh wow golly.

Why, you ask, is there a TZ 36, and why am I editing it? Well...

Twilight Zines are published by the MITSFS for many reasons, none of them very good:

- o They're a medium for transmitting our Want List of needed magazines. I don't know whether we've ever actually acquired anything through them, but we keep trying.
- o It gives us something to trade for other fanzines.
- o We print book reviews in TZ and send copies to the books' publishers, which (we hope) inspires them to begin/continue sending us FREE 'review' copies of their books -- we're an incredibly non-profit institution, and every free book we receive is one less that we have to buy.
- o Some nice people somewhere in the MIT beauracracy regularly give us a small (i.e., less than we need for the purpose) grant to help us publish a literary magazine. We publish TZ instead, but they give us the money anyway.
- o (all together now) "We've Always Published A TZ!"

Why am I editing this sucker? Simple: it was either that or do Shelf Maintenance. You see, our Library is big. We have tens of thousands of hardcovers, paperbacks and magazines, all of which are constantly being un- and re-shelved, usually in the wrong places. The duty of keeping it all properly ordered falls upon those hapless MITSFS keyholders who (a) want to keep their Library keys and (b) can't find a more useful job to do for the Society. It's a dull and boring job and most people who are stuck with it will do almost anything to get out of it. (One guy even offered to marry the then-Skinner in exchange for an exemption from shelf maintenance duty. She double-crossed him, though, accepting his proposal and then assigning him Hardcover M through P anyway.)

*thanks to the Interactive Data Corporation (my employer), their tame IBM/360 mainframe word processing facility, XSCRIPT (which is probably the clunkiest WP program in the Universe, but it makes reasonable output), and their Xerox 2700 laser printer.

So there I was, facing a lifetime of walking around with my head tilted sideways from reading the spines of shelved books, when Shawn Gramates, editor of TZ 34 and co-editor of TZ 35, announced that she had to punt as Jourcomm due to lack of time and that TZ 36 would need a new editor... and thereby hangs the tale.

However, it's a long and dull tale (not unlike a Frank Herbert novel) so I won't bore you with it. Suffice it for me to paraphrase a line from Berke Breathed's Bloom County and say of TZ 36: "Anyway, it's done and you're gonna read it."* Read and Enjoy!

Bill P. Starr

* * * * *

Editorial postscript the first: In case you've seen and are wondering about a pair of juvenile sf books titled The Way to Dawnworld and The Treasure of Wonderwhat, both by "Bill Starr", let me set the record straight. They are not by me, although I am vaguely connected with them -- not for nothing is one of my official MITSFS positions "Son of Famous Author".

Editorial postscript the second: This doesn't really belong in an editorial, but I've got to share it with you. On the cover of the new Bluejay Books large paperback edition of Harlan Ellison's Approaching Oblivion is the following blurb:

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+-----+
| "Harlan Ellison is my favorite writer. |
|      Good author!  Good author!"      |
|                                         |
| -- Richard Dawson, Host of "Family Feud" |
+-----+

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Editorial postscript the third: One of these days (Real Soon Now!), we're going to start work on Twilight Zine 37, and we'd sure like to have things to print in it. We'll need book and movie reviews, fiction, articles, artwork, letters to the editor, and just about anything else that's printable. If we print your stuff, you get a free issue and lots of ego-boost. Our basic covenant with contributors is: we'll edit your stuff to death if we think it needs it, but we will never publish it in a form of which you don't approve. Obviously, we don't yet have a submission deadline for TZ 37, but the sooner the better. Our address is given on the "Fine Print" page at the beginning of this issue. Please help!

+-----+

*the original line, spoken by Milo Bloom at the conclusion of his saying Grace over a Christmas turkey, was: "Anyway, it's dead, and we're gonna eat it. Please give our respects to its family... Amen."

Letters of Comment

Dear Friends:

Hope you really enjoy all the stuff enclosed [mostly news articles on the place where Tim now Air Forces: the "Blue Cube", the USAF's spy satellite-control building, a structure which (a) is within bazooka range of a major highway, (b) sits very near a major fault line, and (c) has no backup facility -- ed.]. I don't know what to make of the stuff from the Professor [the "Science on the March" article -- ed.]. He followed me out to California and works for Lockheed now. When he found out I was writing in, he insisted I send his contribution in.

California is very agreeable to me. It has rained three times in as many months. The Air Force has been OK. I learn to fly satellites at the beginning of next year.

Last ish was fun, looking back on it. Merryl's Disclave report was good. Will there be another "Tales of the Star Chamber" in this ish? [no -- ed.] It was fun being a comic book hero in Janice's story. All in all, it was pretty good.

I'm going to try to come out for Boskone -- please send out a membership flyer.

Interesting items: has anyone else besides me noticed that the opening music on "The Questor Tapes" and the "Night Stalker" theme are one and the same? Also, near the end of "Batman" (the movie), there is a thrilling battle on the top of a sub with people fighting with double-ended gavels. Really.

Not much else to say. You're all lucky I never carried through with my plans of writing a comic book review, although I will urge everybody to check out American Flag!, Swamp Thing, and Myth Adventures at fine comic book stores everywhere. Can't wait to see how this ish turns out....

Your's in Science Fiction,

Tim Hucklebery
Ex-Skinner
Mount View, CA

[The Disclave report in TZ 35 was by Robert van der Heide, not Merryl Gross. Tim's excellent memory and his attention to detail were tremendous assets to the Society during his tenure as Skinner -- ed.]

* * * * *

Dear Shawn or Janice or Dr. Whoever:

I can sympathize with the editorial in the new Twilight Zine about weight discrimination. But I have a special reason for sharing your belief. When I was young and even into early middle

age, I was so phenomenally thin that everyone was stout by my standards. So I couldn't develop this current prejudice against Rubenesquesque bodies, at peril of finding myself hating all my fellow men and women. Once I took a couple of aspirin for a headache and someone at the office punched me playfully on the shoulder and scolded me for starting to develop a beerbelly, to give you an idea of why I still find it a normal thing that many people should be heavier than others: everyone shared the same characteristic of being heavier than me. I also like the idea of reverting the masquerade to the old fun motivation instead of the recent prize obsession at cons. (I'd also like to see the art show freed from commercialism, with artists receiving only a few awards of a non-monetary nature and being compelled to do any selling of their art from their hotel rooms.)

This is the third or fourth parody of Poe's "The Raven" I've seen in fanzines in the past couple of years. Previously, I didn't encounter this particular choice for parodizing in any fanzine since Al Ashley wrote one about three decades earlier. Claude Degler held the title role in the Ashley parody, incidentally. Apparently there is a zeitgeist in fandom that causes such things to run in cycles.

I also liked the essay on gavels in fandom. For no particular reason it reminded me of Vic and Sade, the long ago daytime program from the golden age of radio. Sade was president of some women's group or other and she was chattering all the time about the gravel rather than the gavel which she had lost or had done something wrong with or otherwise gotten into trouble over. But time passes; not only are Vic and Sade forgotten but by now, I suppose, there are lots of younger fans who have never heard of the much later Marat/Sade drama.

I don't see how anyone could complain about fanzines running fiction, after reading "Rock and Roll Refrigerator". It's a complete delight, all the way through. I don't understand the significance of the milk container at the very end. Tentatively, I have concluded that there was once a television commercial involving a milk container which I somehow failed to see, because most of the story seems to be influenced by the life of the individuals who appear in commercials on the tube. John Juliano's story exercised a slight but perceptible influence on my life the other day. A few hours after I read it, I came across a copy of the Beatles' White Album at the local Goodwill Industries secondhand store. I decided some force stronger than coincidence was at work here so I bought it, a purchase I probably wouldn't have made without the story. (I don't know if it's an original edition or a more recent re-issue, but it looks like the description of the folder I read when it first appeared, the records are in good condition, and it cost only \$.59.)

The Disclave report was amusing reading and looking. You made me envious for your chance to see an Avengers episode again. That series disappeared from television channels available in Hagerstown just before I acquired my VCR. The most recent Barnes & Noble catalog lists a video cassette of one episode and a

running time of 55 minutes, which might be significant because it presumably contains footage that was missing from that episode even when first shown on the network in prime time where I believe commercials reduce program time to 50 or 52 minutes. But I hate to think of plunking down \$45 for less than an hour of tape which will presumably blank out to nothingness after the seven-year lifespan of the average video tape.

Diane Fox was speculating in her loc about the cannibals' methods of eating their victims. This caused my more morbid elements in my id to start to wonder if any cannibal tribes which survive in today's modern world could indulge in their favorite food with little or no attrition to their captives. If the cannibals stocked up good supplies of bandages, surgical thread, anti-biotics, and sterilization facilities for their knives, and if they maintained a large enough stock of captives, couldn't they periodically slice off a half-pound or so of flesh from each victim in a non-vulnerable area and immediately close up the wound? This would provide a fresh supply of meat in good condition at all times and shouldn't be much harder on the victims than donating blood every six weeks is to those who do everything Heinlein tells them to do.

The surprise correspondence at the end of the genuine loc section was among the finest things in the issue. You left me wondering if this is something a MITSFS member wrote, or if you reprinted it from some mundane source. Whatever the source, it has exactly the tang and flavor of the faanish legend-making that individuals like Lee Hoffman and Chuck Harris indulged in around the middle of the century.

I appreciated the fact that you used type large enough for me to read easily throughout this issue. But the Scot element in my genetics was left uncomfortable by all those pages in which you used line-and-a-half spacing. It must have run your paper and postage bills up to a perceptible extent.

Maybe you'll forgive if I don't launch into an extended dissection, critique, and evaluation of "More Tales of the MITSFS". This installment was so exciting that I was in no condition to give it an extensive analysis by the time the tremendous climax burst upon my frightened eyes. Maybe next time you'll deal with a comparatively peaceful and placid matter like a Ted White-Harlan Ellison feud.

Yrs., &c.,

Harry Warner, Jr.

Hagerstown, Maryland

[It's always good to hear from you, Harry. I don't know anybody who claims to understand the ending to "Rock and Roll Refrigerator", but I'm glad you got a good record out of it. I remember "The Avengers" well -- Mrs. Emma Peel *sigh* is very close to my idea of the perfect woman. The show was originally produced for the BBC, which didn't run commercials and therefore

had 55-minute 'hour' programs. The American versions were probably trimmed. Your ideas on cannibalism might work, but I doubt they'd be cost-effective. The 'correspondence' at the end of the loc section was "Beware, Bears!", an original short story by William Ware; TZ 35 is the only place we know of where it's been published. And lastly, I hope you like the nice big 10 point type used in this issue. Yes, it will make this thing more expensive to duplicate and mail... but just think of how much money we saved by not printing the other seven 'quarterly' issues which should have come out in the last two years! -- ed.]

+-----+



What Is This Thing Called MITSFS?

by Andrew T. "I'm [going to be] a doctor, not a writer!" Su

Hmmm... Gee, that's a good question. Since I'm now President & Skinner of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Science Fiction Society (that's in case you didn't know what "MITSFS" meant), one might expect me to have a well-worded, detailed answer. Um. To tell you the truth, I haven't given the matter much thought. Sure, I know we've got the World's Largest Open-Shelf Science Fiction Collection*, with lots of books and magazines of all flavors -- old, new, rare, common, good, bad, ugly, etc. But MITSFS is more than just print on bound paper sitting on the shelves, right? Well, after due consideration of the subject (oh, three or four minutes, at least), I shall try to explain what MITSFS really is.

To begin with, let's take a look at that print on bound paper on the shelves, since that's the first thing people see of the MITSFS. The Library is located on the Mass. Ave. side of the MIT Student Center, in room 473 on the fourth floor. There resides SCIENCE FICTION and FANTASY (in great big capital letters). Did I say lots of books? Well, "lots" translates into "over 36,000", all of which may be read in the Library by anyone and most of which may be checked out by MITSFS members. You name it in science fiction or fantasy and we've got it, from Abbey (Lynn) to Zelazny (Roger)**, from Danny Dunn and the Homework Machine to Chapterhouse: Dune from Leonardo Da Vinci's The Deluge to the very latest releases, from foreign-language books and magazines to an excellent reference section, from -- get the picture?

You say you'd rather read magazines? Hey, MITSFS has, to put it mildly, an awesome magazine collection, from Weird Tales #1 (1923) to all of the current magazines -- over 97% of all the issues of every science fiction or fantasy magazine ever published in the United States!

Assorted Star Trek scripts and one Lost in Space script (not our fault -- someone donated it!), many fanzines (including our own Twilight Zine), and even a few radio programs on tape are some of the other weird and wonderful things you can find at the MITSFS.

Many of these things weird and wonderful live, breathe, and at least pretend to intelligence. They, even more than the books and magazines, give MITSFS its own unique personality. In fact, they give the Library life itself. From the Star Chamber to the

*there are a few larger collections around -- the Library of Congress and Forry Ackerman's, for example -- but we're the biggest that lets you just walk in off the street, grab a book, and start reading.

**actually, it's from Aarons (Edward S.) to Zucker (Joseph), but not too many people have heard of them.

members who just like to drop in and read a book occasionally, all are important to MITSFS. The Star Chamber consists of four poor souls who attempt to keep everything in the Library ship-shape, up-to-date, and running smoothly. They are aided and abetted by the Keyholders, the (supposedly) eager individuals who have keys to the Library. For this privilege, they help to keep the library open and perform various and sundry other duties essential to the well-being of MITSFS. And, of course, even the members who want nothing more to do with us than to read our books are necessary. The few dollars that each contributes add up and are used to keep MITSFS constantly growing and improving.

Our membership fees, incidentally, are eminently reasonable: \$6.00 -- the price of two paperbacks -- a year; \$21.00 for four years; \$150.00 for a Temporary Lifetime membership (it expires when you do) and a mere two thousand dollars for a Permanent Lifetime membership (it never expires; you can leave it to your heirs).

Every Friday, many of the above-listed people, plus the occasional random, gather in the Library for a singularly bizarre event: a MITSFS meeting. Beginning at precisely 5:00 pm SST (Society Standard Time), these meetings are generally indescribable, but here goes... Anyone can flame about anything -- movies, books, authors, television, other members, news, politics, the Library, work and life in general -- all of which may or may not have anything to do with science fiction. Just about the only thing forbidden at a meeting is Serious Business.

Curious? Confused? Drop by for a meeting and be enlightened, or at least entertained. Interesting mass dinner and/or movie expeditions often follow meetings, too.

During the rest of the week, Keyholders and members are in and out of the Library (check the schedule posted on the doors for hours), talking about and reading science fiction and -- cute segue coming up here -- waiting for May to arrive and bring with it the Annual Food Rally. Every year, a few days after our wonderfully democratic elections (come and vote for the candidates of ~~your~~ our choice!), everyone treks out to the Great Blue Hills to devour roast beef sandwiches and other tasty treats, throw frisbees at each other, participate in the death-defying Gavel Toss (our Gavel is a three foot long cast iron wrench), observe the incredible Coconut Bash and the Sacrifice of a Virgin Watermelon to the Great Rain God Nimbus, and in general have a fun time. Best of all, it's free to all MITSFS members.

* * * * *

So that's the MITSFS -- fantastic books and magazines, silly traditions, and great people, all one big happy family, having fun together at the Center of the Universe. Come up and see us sometime.

+-----+

The State of the MITSFS

by Janice M. Eisen, Skinner Emerita

[with heckling by the editor]

I suppose you're all wondering why I've called you here... Well, our current Jourcomm decided that some of TZ's more masochistic readers might be interested in reading news of the MITSFS, and I, of course, was only too happy to oblige (after all, I like my kneecaps the way they are [Heh heh heh -- ed.]). He posted a notice asking for suggestions on what to include, and received all of one -- count it, one -- such idea. So, by default, this article will reflect my prejudices and cover what I think was interesting over the past year or so (a period roughly corresponding to my tenure as Skinner). All complaints should be sent to the MIT Student Center Committee.

Power Politics

It was a hard-fought election, but in early May four strongly unopposed candidates survived to become the current Star Chamber of the MITSFS:

- o President: Andy (Who) Su, LSC (Lecture Series Committee) Projection Person, protege of Tim Blueberry and former LHE (Lord High Embezzler) who still hasn't made the traditional trip-to-Brazil-with-the-MITSFS-funds.
- o Vice: Adam (Anti-Ballistic*) Mellis, former Onseck with terrible handwriting and the only person who can find anything in the files.
- o Lord High Embezzler: Susan (That's-Enough) Pitts, red-headed snake-handler and LSC Refreshments Person.
- o Onseck: Susan Tucker**, mild-mannered lover of black leather and Harley-Davidsons.

After much soul-searching, President Su, in an act of blatant nepotism the likes of which we haven't seen since, uh, the last election, appointed himself as Skinner of all the MITSFS [for those who don't know: the sole duty of the President is to appoint the Skinner, who actually rules the MITSFS. The reasons for this are too obscure to go into -- ed.].

*Adam signs things "AGM", but his 'G' looks more like a 'b', so for a long time we thought his initials were "ABM" -- ed.

**At the Election Meeting, someone-or-other kept nominating "Yalda, the Crimsom [sic] Queen", and somehow the name got associated with Susan, who was nominated and elected as "Susan (Yalda) Tucker". She, however, refuses to be associated with "Yalda" until someone explains to her what it means. I can't say that I blame her -- ed.

Non-Organic Members

- o Our beloved but ancient manual typewriter, Harlan, was replaced by an ancient IBM electric named Cordwainer. Alas, Cordwainer suffered a serious wound to his drive belt while engaged in deadly combat with the MITSFS Minutes, and was himself replaced by Ella, an even-more-ancient IBM electric, so named for her salmon color.
- o Tron, the Electronic Onseck went AWOL, much to the dismay of his owner and, we assume, the gratification of an <expletive> tape recorder thief. He was replaced by a bigger and clunkier loaner from a member [me! -- ed.] who also supplied us with four feet of chain and a stout padlock to keep it from straying. In honor of its state of bondage, the new E.O. was named "Tarl".
- o After weeks of desperate combat with a particularly oafish UPS non-delivery person, we obtained three banana-colored kickstep stools named Huey, Dewey and Louie.
- o And finally, we got as a gift an ancient (that word seems to crop up a lot in here, doesn't it?) non-Xerox xerox machine, which we named "Mr. Fusion" (if you're one of the six people in America who haven't yet seen "Back to the Future" then that won't mean anything to you [you're also missing a very good movie -- ed.]).

Where Are They Now?

We do try to keep track of former Star Chamber members [we never know when we may have to silence one of them -- ed.]. Tim Huckelbery, after being listed in the MIT yearbook as "Buckelbery", succeeded in graduating despite the dual handicap of being Skinner of the MITSFS and Chairman of LSC and is now stationed at an Air Force base in Northern California [see Tim's letter -- ed.]. Merryl Gross has returned to her homeland of Long Island, where she is God-Emperor of Ergonomics at Telephonics. Janice Eisen, yours truly, is proving that Political Science majors can so get jobs, working as a Budget Analyst for the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare (a job that really is more interesting than it sounds).

Oh, and by the way...

Nuptial Bliss

For what may be the first time in MITSS history, a Skinnerial/Telzeyian wedding took place (well, all right, it actually took place after we were both out of those positions). On June 23, 1985, I married my Telzey, Ken Meltsner, at the social event of the decade... well, at least of the day [astute readers may notice a connection between this report and an item in my editorial -- ed.]. The bride and groom then spent a week in St. Lucia, drinking, snorkeling and getting tan. Aside from the bride's attack of food poisoning midway through the honeymoon, everything was as disgustingly blissful as could be.

'Other Important People' [other?? -- ed.]

- o The MITSFS was visited by Jack Dann, who signed everything in sight, including the titanium gavel block. He was at MIT as part of a series of sf readings sponsored by the MIT Writing Program and pretty much run by Joe Haldeman, who is currently an Adjunct Professor here. The series also featured Tom Disch, Joan Vinge and Gardner Dozois, but none of them wanted to come to MITSFS and be fawned over.
- o Harry Harrison also gave a lecture here as part of his promo tour for West of Eden. About fifty people showed up for the almost-unpublicized talk, which was just as well, since that was about the capacity of the room we'd gotten for him. Almost everyone present was from MITSFS and/or NESFA, and Harrison expressed relief at being back among fans and not having to explain the concept of Eden to us in kindergarten terms. He also stopped by the Library and autographed a few books before going out to visit a local tavern.
- o George Takei spoke at MIT as part of his promo tour for Star Trek on videotapes and allowed himself to be dragged to the Library, where he autographed his book and added his signature to those of Gene Roddenberry and James Doohan on our Strek scripts.
- o The Skinner, L. Court Skinner, that is, made a brief stop at the Library with his family, but not too many people got to see him.
- o We also had a visit from George ("The") Phillies, the Permanent Deceased Librarian and President, who attended our Election Meeting and announced his plans to move to the Worcester area.

Filthy Lucre, and a Plug

The Endowment Fund established for the Society by Robert Sacks, under the auspices of the MIT Alumni Fund, is approaching fulfillment. Once it gets to \$5,000, we get the interest income regularly. This will be quite important to us, as every year it gets harder to convince FinBoard that we really do need all the money we're asking for and that it really wouldn't be a good idea for us to buy fewer books. Donations to the fund are TAX-DEDUCTIBLE!!! as they count as donations to MIT. Anyone who's interested in being a benefactor should write to the Skinner, c/o MITSFS [see our address in the "Fine Print" page at the front of this issue -- ed.].

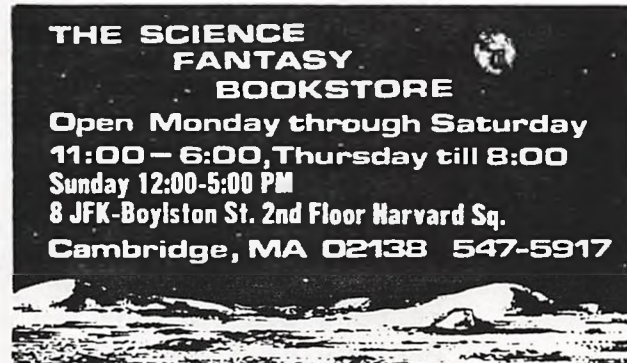
By the way, those of you who are MIT alumni and subscribe to Technology Review can help us at no expense to yourselves: just designate that your subscription fee go to the "MIT Science Fiction Library Fund". (Please let us know if you do that so that we can make sure the money goes to the right place.)
End of Plug.

Thanks, Spike!

Spike MacPhee, proprietor of the Science Fantasy Book Store in Cambridge, has for a long time given all his customers a 10% discount off list price on all new books*, magazines and games in the store.

Last October, he decided to give a trial November-and-December 15% discount (off list price, not in combination with the regular 10% discount) to members of the Boston Star Trek Assoc., the New England SF Assoc., and MITSFS. He kept score and, when it was over, more MITSFS people had taken advantage of the offer than the other two groups combined (this despite the fact that he gave NESFA an extra month because they, for five straight weeks, feebled on mentioning his discount in their weekly newsletter).

As a result of our demonstration of loyalty, Spike's made our 15% discount more-or-less permanent -- all you have to do is show him a valid MITSFS membership card. His store is a pretty neat place, he's a nice guy, and even non-MITSFS members still get the 10% discount, so, if you get the chance, you should shop there rather than at a chain bookstore:

The Invasion of the Snake People

It started quietly, with a boa constrictor owned by Adam Mellis (that particular snake later ran away and never came back [reassuring note: boa constrictors are non-venomous snakes -- ed.]). Then Susan Pitts bought one. Then Merryl Gross. Then Robert Weiner. Then Susan bought another one. Then... Arrrrrrgh!! Somebody stop them before MITSFS becomes the MIT Snake Friends Society!! (Actually, having all those snakes around has been educational. We have learned that boa constrictors kill their prey not by squeezing them to death but rather by falling out of trees onto them). [Update: Susan Pitts recently decided that she wanted a pet which would return her affection and traded her snakes in for a terminally cute kitten named Pumpkin. Could this be the start of a new trend? -- ed.]

*except Arkham House books -- his contract with them forbids it.

Horrible Tentacled Vampire People!!... er, Simes and Gens

Connected with the proliferation of boas has been a rising interest in the Sime/Gen books by Jacqueline Lichtenberg and occasionally Jean Lorrah. It's obvious that the snakes are an attempt to cure tentacle envy. At any rate, Householding Mitar has become a well-established presence around the MITSFS, claiming numerous members, including the current Skinner and LHE. All efforts at deprogramming have so far been unsuccessful. Oh well, they're better than Trekkies...

MITSFS Invades Boskone

I really should preface this section with the official MITSFS motto:

"We're not fans, we just read the stuff!"

However, we have, in our own non-fannish way, become a noticeable presence at Boskone. Our annual Dead Puppies Party (held on Sunday night) attracts more people every year, despite the fact that we don't serve booze (unlike Boxboro Fandom). Over its three-year existence, the DPP has hosted a variety of notables, and even representatives of (boo! hiss!) NESFA, including Leslie Turek and the dreaded A.R. Lewis. It's a good party.

At the last Boskone, we expanded into other areas:

- o We entered and conquered the Scavenger Hunt, winning an overwhelming victory for retrieving such items as Frank Herbert's "Submarine Trilogy" and ancient Boskone programs. Special credit here goes to Jenny Hawthorne, who actually organized the scavenging and was thus responsible for our triumph. The judges were particularly impressed by our habit of supplying two or three examples of everything requested [we were particularly impressed by the boxes of dangerously good chocolate which we won -- ed.].
- o The pre-Boskone receipt of several large donations -- most notably the one from the estate of former Member Mike Grano -- left us with many boxes of used books and magazines to sell, so we took advantage of NESFA's special one-fifth-the-price-for-half-a-huckster's-table deal. We sold books, magazines, TZ's and T-shirts. Well, actually, the T-shirts were nearly immobile, but the book and magazine sales were successful beyond our wildest fantasies [well, maybe your wildest fantasies, Janice... -- ed.]. And the number of TZ's sold, though small, proved once again that fans will buy anything at conventions [oh yeah? What about chocolate-covered hamsters on a stick? -- ed.].

Picnic Perils

Hal Clement's weather machine broke down this year, so our Roast Beef Rally had to be held indoors. It was an ill-starred affair in many ways, most notably the absence of bulkie rolls and the frozen state of much of the roast beef and cheese. Nevertheless, the traditional picnic activities took place, including frisbee (which is actually more fun indoors, if the room is big enough), the watermelon sacrifice, the coconut bash, and, when the weather cleared up enough in the afternoon, the Gavel toss [in which -- brag! -- Lisa Kroh won the female division and I the male -- ed.] The climb up the Great Blue Hill was replaced by an equally strenuous Trivial Pursuit match.

In Conclusion

The State of the MITSFS is Good.

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The "Incarnations of Immortality" Series

Piers Anthony

On a Pale Horse, 249 pp. hardcover, 1983, Del Rey Books.

325 pp. paperback, 1984, Del Rey Books.

Bearing an Hourglass, 292 pp. hardcover, 1984, Del Rey Books.

Reviewed by Adina Adler

As On a Pale Horse opens, the protagonist, Zane, is in a store attempting to purchase a magical jewel. He examines a Deathstone, which warns that he will die soon, a Lovestone, which indicates an approaching romance, and a Wealthstone, which can find money. Through the machinations of the store owner and the Stones, he is thrown into an encounter with the Incarnation of Death and comes to take his place. Suddenly, he must learn a new occupation, save the woman he loves, and fight a battle with Satan.

Yes, that's right, fight a battle with Satan. Satan really exists in this parallel world, as do God, Heaven, and Hell. Anthony is taking a fairly standard theological viewpoint here, with good people going to Heaven and sinners, however unconscious or unknowing of their sins, going to Hell. The Incarnations are supposed to be neutral in the ongoing war between God and Satan for the possession of humanity, but, at the same time, they must perform well in their offices so that they can go to Heaven when they die. Considering that this must put them on God's side, I'm not sure how an Incarnation performing his or her job could be considered neutral. I also had a few other theological problems, such as the question of whether performing a good deed the day before you know you are going to die is somehow less valid than performing the same deed twenty years before you die. I also have problems with Anthony's female characters, though Luna, the woman Zane falls in love with, is an interesting character who could almost stand on her own. Most of the others, though, are

fairly shallow, and I am getting very tired of his women being "cute".

Despite my philosophical problems with the book, I liked it. I found Zane's adventures absorbing and his musings on the nature of life, death, good, and evil interesting if a trifle naive. The powers he acquires as Death are neat, a pale horse which can transform itself into a limousine is a definite asset, and Zane himself is a pretty nice guy. The other Incarnations -- Time, Fate, War, and Nature -- also seemed interesting, and I looked forward to reading the other books.

Less than a year later, out came Bearing an Hourglass. This one, if the title didn't tell you, is about Time. Norton, the protagonist, is a nature-loving young man we first encounter in a city park. Like Zane, he is very poor at the start of the story. A romantic involvement ends unhappily, and a friendly ghost helps him into the office of Time. Norton, too, must learn a new job -- keeping time on its course -- and, also, battle Satan.

One of my problems with this book is that Time lives backwards, and even after two readings I still couldn't quite keep everything straight. Also, Norton is not as bright as Zane, and soon falls prey to Satan's evil machinations, causing much grief. There is a subplot involving the fantasy and science fiction adventures on which Satan sends Norton, but these are too cliched to be funny, especially when Norton takes them seriously. Furthermore, there really weren't any other major characters in the story besides Norton, which I found to be a serious short-coming.

As you can probably tell, I didn't like Bearing an Hourglass as much as On a Pale Horse. This was especially true on the first reading, when I wasn't sure of the purpose of the silly fantasy and sf plots. In addition, Death had a real job -- judging souls -- while Time's job seemed to be helping Fate untangle knotted skeins, which probably makes as much sense to you as it does to me, and I've read the book. About the only thing I really liked in Hourglass was Snig, a magic and sentient ring which Norton acquires early on and which almost does enough to be considered a real character.

One really neat feature of these books is the Author's Notes at the ends. It's rare that the average reader is privileged to have this much insight into how a major author writes, where he gets his ideas from, and how his writing affects his life. However, I'm not sure where this series is going. It's about time for another book, but I haven't heard of one, and I'm not sure how well received the first two were. I'll probably read the next one as soon as it comes out, but I don't think that I'll run right out and buy it; I'll just wait until MITSFS gets a copy.

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The Mists of Avalon

Marion Zimmer Bradley, 876 pp. hardcover, 1983, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

876 pp. trade paperback, 1984, Del Rey Books.

Reviewed by Lisa A. Kroh

Having always loved stories of King Arthur and Camelot, I was very excited when a friend told me about this really fantastic book on the subject by Marion Zimmer Bradley. The Mists of Avalon, like most Camelot stories, follows the life, reign, and decline of one Arthur Pendragon and the kingdom he created. Since almost everyone in the world knows the basic story, this is as far into the plot as I'm going. However, several things in Avalon make it better than the average -- and even some of the above-average -- versions of the story.

The major factor that I appreciated is the incredible amount of research and background that Bradley put into this book. This story is probably how things would have happened if they had really happened. In Avalon, Arthur's half-sister Morgaine is not a magical fairy but rather a Druid priestess educated in the Mysteries of Nature. She can still do magic, but it is not of the throw-it-around-and-do-anything-with-it variety. Spells, which, in fact, are usually just an advanced knowledge of nature, have limits and a price; they are draining both physically and emotionally. The religious cultures of the time, both pagan and Christian, are very accurate historically. In this period (assumed by historians to be in the late eleventh century), most of England and Wales are converting from the Druid religion to Christianity. Taken straight from historical evidence is the Great Marriage that Arthur makes with his kingdom. This practice of symbolically uniting the king with the land through a priestess of the Druids serves to keep him loyal to his subjects. If anything went amiss in the kingdom, he could be sacrificed to appease the Great Goddess.

I also liked the fact that the narrative is told from a female point of view -- that of the women who surrounded and controlled Arthur -- while still centering on Arthur and his accomplishments. First, there is Morgaine, who is more or less responsible for putting Arthur on his throne. Being a priestess, she makes the Great Marriage with Arthur, neither realizing that the union is incestuous because they don't recognize each other until too late. She tries to keep him loyal to her religion while his Christian wife, Gwenhywfar, wants him to convert to hers. Thus occurs one of the major plot conflicts of the book. The other major women in the story, Arthur's aunt Morgause and Viviane, the Lady of the Lake, add their touches to the story with their machinations to dethrone Arthur if he doesn't conform to their expectations.

I really loved The Mists of Avalon and I would recommend it to almost anyone, certainly to anyone who likes Camelot or medieval history. Its only drawback is that it can be a little slow at

times, but the overall action moved fast enough to keep me happy. The characters became real and material, even some of the minor ones, which, surprisingly enough, includes Merlin, who is only a bard, not a great wizard. So, my advice to you is to pick it up, kick back someplace comfortable (it is a fairly lengthy novel), and enjoy.

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The "Darwath" Trilogy

Barbara Hambly

The Time of the Dark, 263 pp. paperback, 1982, Del Rey Books.

The Walls of Air, 297 pp. paperback, 1983, Del Rey Books.

The Armies of Daylight, 309 pp. paperback, 1983, Del Rey Books.

Reviewed by Bill Starr

On a sword & sorcery world in a parallel universe, a ancient menace is returning. After spending several millenia out of the sight of and nearly forgotten by humanity, swarms of very inhuman creatures, known collectively as The Dark, are coming out of their underground nests at night and devouring humans' bodies and/or souls. Whole cities are being destroyed, and the very survival of humanity is doubt.

The last time this happened, three thousand years ago, humanity did survive -- but no one alive today knows how.

Leading the apparently hopeless battle against the Dark is Ingold Inglorion, sorcerer and swordsman supreme and occasional Gandalf look-alike. Helping him are two Californians he met during an emergency inter-universe trip and who are now stranded in his world until the Dark are defeated (to send them home while the Dark are still lurking about would very likely show the Dark the way to our world; all involved agree that this would be a Bad Thing): a rather cold and lonely history student named Gil (short for Gillian) Patterson and Rudy Solis, a young artist who hangs out on the fringes of the biker community and does most of his work on the sides of customized vans. In their new world, Gil starts training with the local militia and discovers that she's a natural warrior, while Rudy, who turns out to have some latent magical ability, signs on as apprentice to Ingold.

Unfortunately, after this promising opening (which takes up about the first half of the first book), the story begins to bog down. Gil splits her time between fighting practice and using her history and archeology skills to attack the mystery of just how humanity survived the last Rising, while Rudy, in addition to conducting a somewhat forbidden romance with the widowed young Queen of Darwath, joins Ingold on a long journey to the world's main stronghold of wizards, a university-town which has cut itself off from the rest of the world.

All of this takes a lot of time and pages, especially the subtle laying out of clues as to what really happened three

millenia ago (ironically, it's likely that hard-core science fiction readers will figure it out before the fantasy fans do).

To make matters worse, Hambly introduces early on two very flat caricatures who seem to exist only to pad out the story and make the good guys' lives miserable. The Chancellor Alwir, the Queen's brother and Regent for the infant Prince, is a complete asshole -- ruthless, brilliant at political infighting and scheming, but hopeless as a leader and far too vain to admit it. The Bishop Govannin, the female leader of the powerful Church, hates magic with a holy fanaticism and would rather eradicate all sorcery than allow it to be used to save humanity. It was obvious from their first appearances that about eighty per cent of our heroes' problems would be solved if these two jokers woke up one morning with their throats cut, and, as the books progressed, it became more and more unbelievable that, with the very survival of mankind at stake, no one even suggested such an action. I mean, it's all very nice to be Good and Righteous and Pure and all that, but with the stakes this high, a little pragmatism is probably a good thing too.

There were also a few technical problems with the story-telling, most notably

***** BEGIN MINOR SPOILER!!! *****

the "the rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated" syndrome -- on more than one occasion (I won't say exactly how many), a character would turn up missing in action and be presumed by everyone to be dead, only to show up later, alive and well. After a while, I simply refused to believe that anyone was really dead unless the survivors actually saw the body.

***** END MINOR SPOILER *****

And yet, for all the story's flaws and excesses (its telling should have required at most two books), I was still interested enough to read it through to the end, if only to check my own guesses as to the solutions of the books historical mysteries.

I give "Darwath" a strong recommendation to hard-core fantasy addicts and a lukewarm one to those of you who only occasionally dabble in the field. Barbara Hambly does have talent, though; as she improves with experience she should produce some very good writing.

The Ladies of Mandrigyn

Barbara Hambly, 311 pp. paperback, 1984, Del Rey Books.

Reviewed by Bill Starr

After the city of Mandrigyn is conquered by the evil Wizard King Altokis, who enslaves all the able-bodied men to work in his mines, the women of the city pool their resources and set out to

hire the best mercenary force that money can buy to free their men. Unfortunately, Sun Wolf, the leader of that force, isn't interested. He wants to get his troops to their winter home before the snows cut them off and, more importantly, he wants nothing to do with magic, especially when it looks as if he and his men will be on the receiving end of it.

So the Ladies go to plan B: they kidnap Sun Wolf, take him back to Mandrigyn, dose him with a poison which causes agonizing death, and then offer him the antidote in exchange for his training them -- women who've never dealt with weapons in their lives -- in the arts of war so that they can fight Altokis themselves. Sun Wolf knows that it's madness -- Altokis commands a mighty mercenary army and is himself the most powerful sorcerer known, having killed or driven into hiding every other magician in the world -- but he has no choice.

Meanwhile, two of his own women -- Starhawk, his tough-as-nails second-in-command, and Fawn, his current mistress -- set out to rescue him, heading for the right place for the wrong reason (they think Altokis kidnapped him to ensure that he wouldn't accept the Manwrigyn contract).

While Sun Wolf trains his cadre in secret and Starhawk and Fawn make the long winter trek to Mandrigyn, Ms Hambly builds a book full of interesting and very real characters, each with their own motivations and secrets. She also carefully sprinkles the landscape with subtle clues to the nifty set of internal mysteries she's set up, such as:

- o What is the Great Trial, the grueling ritual through which a sorcerer must pass in order to achieve his full potential?
- and
- o How did Altokis, a small-minded and lazy man, achieve great magical power when sorcery requires a discipline of mind and body far beyond anything he's ever demonstrated?

By the time Ladies reaches its race-against-time climax, all the questions are answered, Sun Wolf and Starhawk have both learned more about themselves and each other than they ever suspected, Sun Wolf has changed from a simple hard-bitten mercenary to a true hero, and the reader has been treated to a very entertaining and exceptionally intelligent story. I highly recommend it to readers of all persuasions.

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The Integral Trees

Larry Niven, 240 pp. hardcover, 1984, Del Rey Books.
 272 pp. paperback, 1985, Del Rey Books.

Reviewed by Bill Starr

Poor Larry Niven. He did such a good job of building his "Known Space" universe in the sixties and seventies that even when he writes a pretty good non-Known Space tale, like The Integral Trees, his legion of fans (myself included) are bound to be disappointed. Which is too bad, because it's a pretty good read; it just isn't another World of Ptaavs or Ringworld.

Trees is set in the Smoke Ring, a truly bizarre huge natural artifact in which there's no gravity, but there is air, water, sunlight and life, both native and imported. Floating within the Ring are hundreds of huge branchless trees, each a hundred kilometers long and of an integral-sign shape which gives them tidally-induced 'gravity' at their ends and makes them well-suited for human habitation. Niven backs all this up with carefully-detailed descriptions of the physics of the place, complete with diagrams, all of which utterly failed to convince me. But what the heck, I'm willing to suspend my disbelief if the story's good.

Five hundred years earlier, the twenty-person crew of an exploration ship from Earth had rebelled en masse against the repressive State which ruled them (the same State, incidentally, which appeared in A World Out of Time). They abandoned their ship (which couldn't enter the Ring) and its self-aware computer system -- an intricate piece of artificial intelligence based on the personality of a State loyalist -- and set up shop in the Ring. Today, their descendants, having lost to entropy most of their ancestors' technology, live in isolated and relatively primitive tribes of several hundred people.

The book deals mostly with the odyssey of a handful of members of Quinn Tribe after a natural disaster sets them adrift in the Ring. There they encounter various flora and fauna and several other tribes, one of which, the inhabitants of London Tree, still has some working large-scale technology and has used it to build a slave-holding empire. The last third or so of the book deals with Quinn Tribe's battle for freedom from London Tree.

The adventures are interesting and enjoyable, as are the characters (despite the fact that they're cut from standard Niven stock -- almost inhumanly intelligent and slightly cardboard), and the book does make a pleasant read, but....

I felt somewhat unsatisfied when I finished Trees. The main problem, I think, is that Niven has failed to come up with a story big enough for the setting -- what happens to the characters is of major importance to them, but pales in comparison to the scope of the Smoke Ring itself. It's as if Niven had gone to the trouble of creating all of pre-Columbian America from scratch and had then used it merely to tell the adventures of a few exiles from one minor Iroquois tribe.

Only at the end of the story does Niven get back to the bigger picture: the continued existence of the State spaceship and its computer, which is still trying to figure out a way of regaining control of the situation (for the good of the State, of course). Even then, nothing much actually happens; it's as if Niven deliberately defused the climax so as to allow himself the option of writing a sequel (doesn't anyone write self-contained books anymore?).

Still, I do recommend The Integral Trees to sf readers in general and Niven fans in particular -- for all its faults, it is a pretty good book, far better than most of the stuff being published today. It just doesn't entirely live up to the expectations generated by the name "Niven" on the cover.

Mercenaries of Gor

John Norman, 446 pp. paperback, 1985, DAW Books.

Reviewed by Bill Starr

A long time ago, when I was a horny fourteen year old boy (a condition which lasted for several years), I thought that John Norman's Gor books were the greatest thing since, well, sex. In my own defense, I can only say that (a) the seven or eight of the books in print back then weren't as bad as the ones coming out now* (Mercenaries is the 21st) and (b) well, I was only semi-sentient at the time. These days, I want to put on the rubber gloves before touching one of Mr. Norman's epics. All of which brings us to a caveat: this isn't really a book review so much as it's a commentary. I can't call it a review because I didn't -- couldn't -- read the book; I merely read the first chapter and hop-skip-and-jumped through the rest. So, keeping in mind the (remote) possibility that there are a few gems of brilliant writing buried in the dreck and missed by me, here goes...

This book is terrible! All of Norman's favorite themes are present in sickening abundance: women are 'naturally' slaves of men (even if they don't realize it yet); men are equally naturally masters of women (they all already know it); women can (and do, at about five page intervals) achieve stunning orgasms only after their enslavement and rape; the best men are the brave (stupid) ones who put on armor and swords and try to kill each other for no apparent reason; and, to judge from their behavior and dialogue, no one on all of Gor, male or female, slave or free, has an I.Q. over eighty or ever uses contractions in speech.

*It's been my experience, based on years of hanging around with people who'll read almost anything once, that just about everyone who's tried the Gor books will agree with the statement: "Well, the first n of them aren't all that bad." The disagreements arise when people try to figure out just what the value of 'n' is.

The plot seems to involve the continuing geo-political conflicts amongst the many city-states of the main (only?) continent on Gor. Armies march, spies spy, politicians scheme, would-be assassins are easily detected and killed by our narrator/protagonist Tarl Cabot, and so on, but it's really all nothing more than a soapbox from which Norman delivers his speeches. The book is mostly just pages and pages of lectures and brief morality (you should pardon the expression) plays on the subjects of war, bravery, and, of course, the 'proper' roles of men and women... and all so badly written that it isn't even any good as simple pornography.

I suppose that fourteen year old boys (of all ages) are still reading and enjoying this trash. If you don't fall into that category, though, I can't see any reason for you to have anything to do with this book.

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Night of Power

Spider Robinson, 287 pp. hardcover, 1985, Baen Books.

Reviewed by Paul Mailman

Spider Robinson has a tough job -- he has to live up to his early stories. His "Callahan's Bar" tales would rank him as one of my favorites even if he never wrote another word.

Robinson's proficiency at the short story can work against him in a novel, however. Night of Power is a tale with a fascinating premise, but it's marred by superficial characterization. The sketchy, sometimes cliché-ish way in which he draws his characters might have been sufficient in a short story but feels highly inadequate in a novel. It left me feeling as if I had bitten into an allegedly solid chocolate Easter egg, only to discover that it was hollow inside.

Night of Power is not 'scientific' science fiction so much as it's sociological sf, much as some of Ursula K. LeGuin's books tend to be. The theme of the novel is that of racial friction, an area which has been sorely neglected in sf. The setting is New York City in 1996; the protagonists are the Grant family: Russell, a white, American-born smart-guy inventor, now a citizen of Canada and living in Halifax, Nova Scotia (I wonder where Robinson got the idea for these characters...), his black wife, Dena and their thirteen year old daughter, Jennifer.

Coming to New York because Dena, a dancer (And a wife who's a dancer, hmm...), has an important engagement there, the Grants find a city rumbling with racial strife as the growing black majority in the city is becoming less and less willing to put up with their worsening lot in white-dominated America. The U.S. government is adding fuel to the fire by carrying on an unpopular interventionist war in Africa. Visions of another Vietnam loom, this time even worse for the blacks -- not only are they being sent to die in disproportionate numbers, but they are being sent by the white majority to fight other blacks.

The Grants have chosen not only the wrong city to visit, but also the wrong time: the "Night of Power" is near, a particularly holy night of the Muslim month of Ramadan, celebrating the revelation of the beginning of the Qur'aan to the prophet Muhammad. A well-organized army of black activists, led by a charismatic and enigmatic figure known only as "Michael", is seizing the occasion for a revolutionary uprising. We're not talking race riot or organized civil disobedience; we're talking war.

Through no fault of their own, the Grants end up in the thick of it, trying to do nothing more than save their skins and get the hell out of there. The latter, it seems, is quite impossible the former is, to say the least, difficult.

It's a pity that Robinson has populated this exciting scenario with caricatures rather than characters. Everyone is just a little too much of a stereotype, even in their failings: the ever-heroic Russell Grant, fighting valiantly to save his family; young Jennifer, a wise-far-beyond-her-years super-genius who has yet to either start menstruating or get laid; the saintly fanatic Michael; the infinitely streetwise Jose; and so on. I've seen all these people somewhere before....

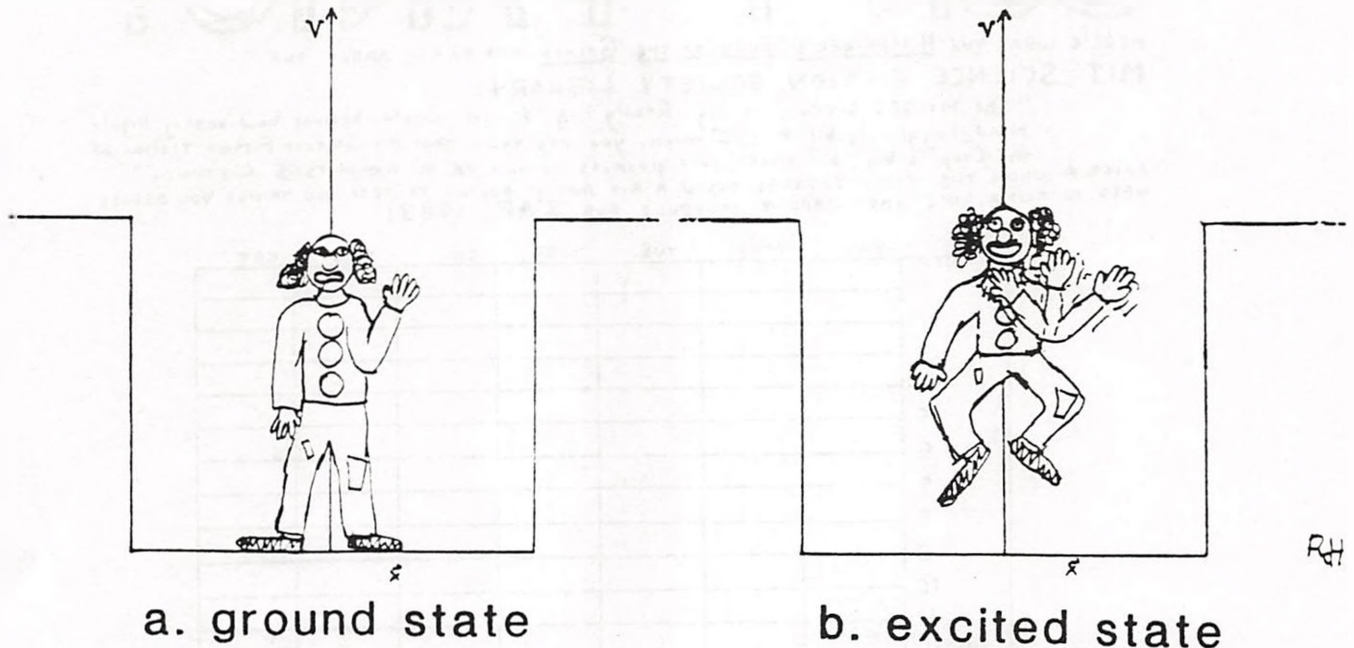
Aside: I mention Jennifer's pre-adolescence and virginity not out of prurience but because it's a subplot which Robinson seems to have thought important. I found the story of Jennifer's "passage to womanhood" an unnecessary distraction, riddled with the type of cliches I found so bothersome in the book: in one night, she experiences her first orgasms, gets her first period, kills two men, and participates in what a friend of mine once referred to in another book as "the obligatory fuck scene" -- all to make sure that we know that she is now a woman. End of aside.

But, complain as I may about the characters, I kept coming back to the book, eager to finish it. The theme is, after all, good sf, a very possible extrapolation of current trends, and the dilemma faced by Russell Grant is one that strikes home to anyone who has ever been close to the racial strife common in our cities: what do you do when people, trapped in a bad situation for which there seems to be no peaceful solution, turn to violence? You know that their cause is just, yet you also know that in the violence is, inevitably, pain and death for innocent people. More importantly, what do you do when you can't just walk away and ignore the problem, as have done so many participants in the "white flight" from our nation's cities?

Yes, Night of Power was a flawed book, but it still held my interest. The pace of the action kept me riveted and although I was disappointed by an ending which was yet another cliché, I certainly did enjoy getting there. I'll forgive Robinson his shortcomings and keep reading his books. I think he'll continue to improve as a novelist.

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Bozon Standing Waves in a Square Well



Schedules of the MITSFS

Conceived and Drawn by Paul Mailman

Just as the real world has its four seasons of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, so does MIT have Spring Term, Summer Vacation, Fall Term and IAP (the Interim Activities Period; normal people would call it "January"). As each of these seasons commences, MITSFS posts upon its portals a new Schedule, upon which keyholders are required to sign up for at least two hours of the week during which they will keep the Library open. It's an unwritten rule that, in order that the Society not appear to be normal, the Sign-Up sheet be decidedly weird and, if possible, amusing. That they are usually both is thanks to the hard work and slightly warped mind of our AnalogComm, which is cleverly disguised as a mild-mannered Paul Mailman. On the following pages, we, for your amusement, present a few of his greatest hits.

DON'T PANIC!

HERE'S WHAT THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY HAS TO SAY ABOUT THE MIT SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY LIBRARY:

"The MITSFS Library is big. Really big. You just won't believe how vastly hugely mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think that the Science Fiction section of the Coop is big, but that's just peanuts compared to the MITSFS. Listen..."
AFTER A WHILE THE STYLE SETTLES DOWN A BIT AND IT BEGINS TO TELL YOU THINGS YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW, LIKE THE LIBRARY SCHEDULE FOR IAP, 1983:

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
MID							
1							
2							
3							
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7							
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11	MRS						
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2	FR		MC	GF			
3	FR		MC				
4	FR		MC				
5	FR		MC				
6	FR		MC				
7	FR		MC				
8	FR		MC				
9	FR		MC				
10	FR		MC				
11	FR		MC				
MID							

THE GUIDE ALSO NOTES THAT THE DRINKING OF PAN GALACTIC GARGLE BLASTERS WITHIN THE LIBRARY IS EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN, UNLESS OF COURSE YOU OFFER ONE TO THE KEYHOLDER ON DUTY.



begat the Phillips, who begat the Hipert, who begat the Davidson, who begat the Timmreck. And the Timmreck, in a manner not known to mortal men, begat the Consolmagno, who begat the Bernstein, who begat the Goldberg, who but briefly begat the Efram, who begat Hy, who doth reign in the current day.

And Hy said: The days of the week they shall be seven, and they shall be known by their names, which are called Sunday though Saturday. And the hours of the day shall be divided into parts called the AM and the PM. And these parts shall each be divided into twelve parts called hours, and each shall be called by its name which is its number. And in this the Spring Term of the year of our Skinner Nineteen Hundred and Seventy-Nine those who hold a key to this the Center of the Universe shall each hold open its portals to seekers of the Truth that they may search for and discover the Light of Understanding. And those of the Key shall hold open the portals according to these divisions:

MID	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 AM							
2 AM							
3 AM							
4 AM							
5 AM							
6 AM							
7 AM							
8 AM							
9 AM							
10 AM							
11 AM							
NOON							
1 PM							
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4 PM							
5 PM							
6 PM							
7 PM							
8 PM							
9 PM							
10 PM							
11 PM							
MID							

dutifully and faithfully recorded by this scribe. analogcomm



So, my pitiful young friend... you have finally surmised that there could be more to your worthless life than watching Star Trek reruns for the 13th time.

I can show you adventure and excitement beyond your wildest dreams, here at the

MITSFS library, during **FALL TERM, 1980.**

Intrigued? Look for me here at any of these times:

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
MIDNIGHT							
1 AM							
2							
11 AM	FT		GF				
NOON	VT						SS
1 PM				GF			SS
2				GF			F ²
3	SAW						F ²
4	SAW						
5							
6		SC					
7	SC	SC		SC			
8	SC	SC		SC			
9		SC			EX		
10					EX		
11 PM	FW						
MIDNIGHT							

through analogcomm

Oh yes; I almost forgot... there's just one tiny thing I will ask in return. A small thing, really.

Vengence-Oath

by Lisa A. Kroh

(inspired by Piers Anthony's
"Apprentice Adept" series)

Some think they hath adventure here, in this
Dull world of mundane life and pleasures few.
Thou knowest not what be thy happiness,
Whilst I have found mine own adventure true.

Across a curtain myth and magic made,
I seekest friends amongst archaic beasts:
With unicorns and were-kind wolves, I bade
My lot at all unsure Adepts' great feasts.

With saber naked held, I ride my 'corn
Through strange demesne of spectrum colors all
To search for mine oath-friend vengance sworn.
To recompense her crimes, Red shall not stall.

As violet Adept, I sweareth by
The magic force I wield that Red shall die.

+-----+

Science on the March

by Prof. Winslow T. Maffi

In the last issue of Twilight Zine, I stated that I would finish my article on The Gavel Phenomenon in this issue. However, I have decided that story is A Tale That The World Is Not Ready For; that is, unless the world, or someone, is willing to pay big bucks. I refuse to disclose the incredible, but true, ending of the article for nothing, since the cheapskates at this mag refuse to pay for contributions. [ed. note: TZ did in fact offer Prof. Maffi our complete set of Perry Rhodans, but he turned us down]. [Hey! The preceding ed. note is fake! Do not be deceived; we'd never give our Perrys to anyone in California -- it would cost us too much to ship them! -- ed.]

So instead of that piece, here are some interesting science news tidbits that I have uncovered through my vast network of ~~informants~~ investigators throughout the world. (You will note, by the way, that my true name is printed above, and not the silly name someone made-up for the last issue. That person has been dealt with.) So now, onward with the news. Enjoy.

The Canadian government announced Tuesday that it now possessed a fully equipped and complete nuclear arsenal, with "ICBM's and subs and all that sort of stuff," to quote a high level spokesman. Military and civilian defense organizations from other countries across the globe reacted to this news flash

with extreme ennui: State Department officials confirmed this reaction, stating that, "nobody is interested and nobody really cares."

Scientists at Berkley revealed for the first time the real reason why they have not been able to totally nail down those elusive sub-atomic particles, quarks. Physicist Alex Tremaine disclosed that embarrassment is the primary cause. It seems the particles are not too pleased with their given name. "I have some sympathy for them," said Tremaine. "I mean, how would you like to have a name from out of a James Joyce novel?" In addition to a new name, the quarks are demanding equal billing with neutrons in 8th grade science class, a move physicists call a daring negotiating tactic. A spokesman for another quasi-discovered group, the gluons, declared solidarity for the plight of the quarks, and stated that his group refused to cooperate with scientists until they got a more dignified-sounding title. "My clients are tired of getting snickers from the other particles at the social functions," cried attorney Melvin ("Friendly Angel") Belli. In a related story, a new family of sub-atomic wave packets were convinced to reveal themselves, after being given the choice of their own name. They also got guest shots on "The A-Team" and "Remington Steele," and will star in their own series on NBC this fall. Physicists hailed the event as a major breakthrough.

A team of crack computer hackers managed to break into the main targeting computer for all the USSR's nuclear forces. Before they were discovered and cut off, they were able to determine the first priority target for the Soviets in WWII, which turned out to be Washington, D.C. Bet you were expecting a funny ending.

A new disease has appeared in the US and is spreading fast. Like the AIDS, it has become a major concern to the small minority which has been hardest hit by it. Unlike AIDS, which has struck homosexuals, this disease seems to affect mostly obnoxious right-wing television evangelists. Upon contracting the disease, they seem to undergo the formation of a conscience, which forces them to turn over all their money to charity. San Franciscans hailed this as a major breakthrough.

Harvard University scientists revealed at a press conference that all life on Earth was the result of a half-empty beer can left behind by joy-riding aliens several hundred million years ago. "Judging from our exhaustive chemical analyses," said Prof. Jay Elliot Gould, a Harvard evolution expert [that's funny -- I never knew that Harvard evolved... -- ed.], "we believe it to have been closely related to Billy Beer."

And finally, from Los Alamos comes word of a new weapon on the drawing boards. Dubbed the Z-100 Bomb, it is designed to destroy everything and kill everyone within a 40 km radius from ground zero. Those not killed outright die lingering and painful deaths a few days later, and the entire area is uninhabitable for many months. Sounds like just another H-bomb, right? "Wrong!" claims

Dr. Stanley Chill, inventor of the Z-100. "This bomb creates all these effects without radiation! It's a no-nuke bomb! And it's cheap, too! Yow!" Ronald Vapid, leader of Demonstrators United to Protest Everything Demonstratable, praised Chill's efforts. "It's really, really great, the way it does its thing without being a nuke, y'know?" When it was pointed out that the Z-100 was even more deadly than any nuclear bomb, Vapid replied, "Well, we were never against death, I mean like natural deaths or even murder-type deaths. It was just those icky nuclear radiation things we hated. That's not natural, right? The Z-100 is, like, a major breakthrough in clean killing."

THE END

The Television Child

by Elizabeth Graham Monk

Midge Rowans was an energetic, comfortable-looking woman in her sixties whose thick glasses sparkled with the blue shine of her eyes. She had her garden and her knitting, plus a few friends, so, after her husband's death four years ago, she managed without much trouble during the day. The hard times were the nights. Usually, she relied on television.

Tonight, she decided to watch a documentary on world starvation. She wanted to watch the program because she felt that she should. She stacked the dinner dishes in the dishwasher and went into the living room. She ran the dishwasher only twice a week, except when her two sons and their families visited. These visits were hectic, almost stressful occasions, but when she saw snapshots showing their happy smiles she was always amazed at how much fun everyone really had.

No matter what the season of the year, the picture window seemed too dark too soon, and the light from the lamps never bright enough. A weariness came over her, and she almost couldn't finish closing the drapes. Then, as sometimes happened, strange thoughts sneaked into her brain. She started thinking about the different ways time felt. How, she wondered, tugging at the slack cord, could time feel so slow and, just as they said, hang heavy and creep with relentless sameness, when it used to fly by, and why did the past seem so magical when it had been ordinary enough? Her hands fumbling the cord, she frowned, lost in abstraction, and her thoughts got even crazier: Why did people take sides and have wars? How could anyone kill? Why didn't people just love? She caught herself asking these unanswerable questions and jerked the drapes completely closed, a soft white barrier against the night, and hurried to the television.

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The television was an excellent, expensive new one in a handsome walnut cabinet. She justified its purchase because her fanciful musing persisted and because she was plagued by an obscure oppression that would not go away. She kept hoping the new television would help.

After flicking it on and finding the channel, she settled into the couch.

The documentary had already begun. An authoritative, omniscient voice entered the living room like a friend, while on the screen a parade of frightening strangers appeared: wretched, scantily clothed and shriveled bodies that seemed barely human. Although she had seen photographs and similar documentaries, she became appalled as she watched. The bodies were sluggish and the faces impassive, with dull, lightless eyes. The children had the familiar balloon bellies.

Midge could not stop watching, and not just because she was ashamed of her boredom. The compelling voice gripped her and she felt mesmerized by the display of tedious misery. Only when eating did the figures look alive, with quick, jerky movements and eyes that had too much white darting around. Seated in huddled groups, each acted as if alone and avoided looking at the others.

Why am I watching this, Midge thought, suddenly aware that her mouth gaped open. She felt that the voice promised something. Then she decided that the voice, which which had seemed so friendly and rational, had a definite seductive quality underneath.

She was about to change the channel when the face of a child of about five or six years appeared on the screen. *Poor little thing,* she thought. Then, irritated at herself for this outburst of sentimentality, she started toward the set, but stopped aghast when the child's head filled the screen and grew bigger, so big it seemed three-dimensional, and also seemed to bulge out as if emerging from the television as in a birth. Then there was no seem about it; the head actually protruded from the television set, and Midge stood staring as the rag-covered shoulders followed, wriggling through. Freed, the arms sprang up with small brown hands that gripped the cabinet and hauled the rest of the body out. The child tumbled headfirst to the carpeted floor with a shrill cry. It lay a moment before scrambling to its feet.

All she could think was *There's no broken glass.* She looked down at the child, but the presence in her living room was too strange to take in; it was somehow easier to think about the lack of broken glass and the miraculous fact that the child wasn't even scratched. She bent over to the television to touch the screen. The glass was thick, with a curved smoothness. She tapped and rubbed, then hit it so hard her palm stung. The glass screen was intact. The television was grey and silent except for a low, monotonous hum.

"I'm hungry."

When finally she turned her attention to the child, her first thought was to wonder what sex it was. The dark hair fell in long matted strands. A dingy, tattered pajama top drooped over the swollen belly to the knees. She did not like to stare, as the child was watching her closely. The child was all brown skin and big dark eyes. About half her height, it stood very still but seemed ready to move in any direction. Zombie-like, it also gave an impression of agility.

"I'm hungry."

When still she did nothing, the child repeated in a louder voice, "I'm hungry," and at last she reacted.

"How stupid of me," she said, automatically falling back on a facile social manner she had always possessed.

"I'll get you something. Right away."

She even managed a stiff smile that hurt her face. "We'll go in the kitchen. We'll find something for you to eat." *I sound like a nurse.* She reached out and tugged its hand gently. "Come with me." Nearing the child, she was suddenly sick; the child reeked and, without thinking, she let go and stepped back. Her hand was tinged with traces of grime from the contact. She forced herself to take the hand again. *After the meal, a bath.*

"Come on," she said, but when she pulled the small bony hand harder the child balked. At once she realized that the child not only did not understand her words, but also did not trust her. Perhaps it had not said, "I'm hungry." It had uttered what now, in retrospect, sounded like gibberish, but might have been another language. Had she assumed it was communicating hunger because she did not know what to do with the child besides feed it?

"I'm hungry."

This time she knew, knew it meant food. She prodded the skeletal shoulders, urging it to the kitchen. Suddenly docile, the child padded on bare feet across the carpet to the kitchen's linoleum, where it began to prance. The blank look vanished and a half-smile lit the child's face. *The linoleum,* she thought. The floor must feel wonderfully smooth to the child, who ceased dancing to paw its feet back and forth, humming a wordless droning noise.

Good. The linoleum floor would keep the child amused while she fixed a meal. From the living room another hum droned; she wished she had turned the television off. She knew that starving people should not eat too much at first. Bouillon should be good, and milk -- yes, she'd heard somewhere that milk was good for an empty stomach. Then, as she set water on to boil, she remembered the leftover roast lamb in the refrigerator.

Her mind, shrinking from the fantastical reality, ran for safety among practical concerns which helped make everything somewhat normal, and gradually her daze lifted. She mashed two bouillon cubes in a bowl and poured in the boiling water.

A sudden commotion. She glanced up sharply. The child was yanking a drawer. When the drawer resisted, the child pulled angrily, shaking and rattling it. She was wondering whether she should do something when the drawer slid shut with a thud and the child made a gleeful noise very much like a laugh. The drawer was repeatedly opened and closed with a racket. She even smiled, for the child's happiness was a delight to see. Now everything seemed safer.

As soon as the child grew bored with lurching the drawer about violently, she led it to the kitchen table. Then she fetched the bowl of bouillon. A second later, after she reproached herself for forgetting a spoon, she suppressed giggles at her civilized silliness. She was feeling better. Picking the bowl up from the table, the child tilted its head back and drained the broth. In that pose, the child looked appealing, like other children. The dark eyes glowed, and the hair that had formerly seemed matted now fell in luxuriant waves. She also noted that it was stronger than she had imagined. Not only was her first impression -- that the child was agile with lithe movements -- accurate, but the bicep muscles were like round stones. She was sure the child was a boy.

Now what? More bouillon? No, that might be too much liquid. She would make a sandwich and get milk.

The child returned to the drawers, pulling out the whole row and slamming them all back. Thank heavens the child did not empty them. She took the meat from the refrigerator and cut slices with her best carving knife. She made a sandwich, and again almost giggled when, out of habit, she was about to add salt and mayonnaise. She poured a glass of milk. Her hands were amazingly steady. She must be all over her fright.

As she hadn't been in charge of children for a long time, she had forgotten the need to constantly check on them. The minute she turned around, a set of mixing bowls crashed to the floor. The child cried out.

It trembled and whimpered. She grabbed the child under the arms and lifted it from the pile of debris. When she put the child down next to the kitchen table, she knelt to hug it and a warmth pervaded her. Strangely, she no longer noticed the smell. He was sweet, she thought, a child like any child, and she would not use 'it' any more in referring to him. She would assume the child was male even if she might be wrong.

She stroked him tenderly, saying over and over, "You're okay. You're not hurt. You're okay." He clutched at her, burying his head in her chest. She smiled to herself when, after a while, she recognized the unmistakable sounds of fake sobs. She stroked

his back and he forced hiccoughs and sighs. Children never changed. She might adopt him. Then she would be able to relive her happiest years. Raising this child would be an entirely new and different experience. His false cries began to sound like hard work and he plucked at her glasses, then poked the lenses. In the peremptory voice she'd sometimes assumed with her sons, she said, "You're okay. Everything is okay," and pulled away. Children could cry forever if you made it worth their while.

She placed the sandwich on the table. He hesitated before taking it and, although some of the meat fell out, he chewed steadily. He gobbled with big, fast bites. She went to collect the whisk broom and dust bin.

Stooped down, she picked up the large broken pieces and dropped them in the wastebasket, then swept up the shards. The small, shattered bits of china seemed to multiply and were scattered over a wide area. The job so absorbed her attention that again she was too late in checking on the child. He stood by the counter holding the knife, sawing at the roast. How had he moved across the kitchen without her hearing? She watched, trying to decide what to do. Should she do nothing? Unlike the linoleum and the drawers, the child was apparently familiar with knives and carved with a certain amount of skill, his face stern with concentration.

He underwent another transformation. Just as he had changed from a zombie to a exotic creature, then to a helpless, adorable child, he now appeared intelligent and quite adult. By the ease with which he handled the knife, carving carefully around the bone, she was certain that he really was a boy. But he was cutting huge chunks of meat, and she should not allow him to overeat.

She leaned against the counter, wondering what was the best thing to do. She might anger the child if she took the meat. But why was she afraid of a child's anger? She must be apprehensive because he was not really civilized.

From the living room, the television emitted irregular crackles of static and a stampede of hums.

For the first time, she thought about phoning for help. No, that was a cowardly idea. And even if she knew a place to phone, there was no time for it. Later she could track down an organization and make some arrangements, but for now the child was her responsibility. Probably he would not mind if she took only some of the meat away. But she would have to act soon; he had already consumed a lot. He shoved the meat into his mouth, his jaws working like a machine. She must not snatch the food; that would startle anyone. The television was an annoyance. She would turn it off as soon as possible. The sound still consisted of loud, penetrating static and hums. Something was wrong with the set.

She would talk to the child. Even if he did not understand exactly what she said, he would understand that she meant well if her voice was soft and kind.

"All that food," she began, as she approached him, "it's not good for you. Not yet, anyway. In a few days, you can eat all you want, but not now."

She went on talking as she scooped up slices of meat from the counter. He watched her with a quizzical expression, but kept on eating. "In a while you can eat whatever you want, but you have to build up your strength gradually.... I'll go to the store and buy lots of things: roast beef -- that's even better than leg of lamb -- vegetables and fresh fruit. Things that are good for you; and after a while you'll even be able to have things that aren't so good for you."

Once she started to talk, she could not stop, and she heard herself getting gabby. "I'll make you pies," she prattled, clenching and unclenching the meat. "I used to be good at pies. When it's berry season, we can go pick berries together and see if I remember how to make pies."

Finally she trailed off. He had finished the meat she had left for him and was reaching for the pieces in her hand. Instinctively, she transferred the meat to one hand and withdrew it behind her back. Slowly, with solemn emphasis, she shook her head, saying, "No. Not today. Not good for you."

He looked up at her and frowned. Again he held out his hand, and she stepped back, keeping the meat hidden. Suddenly he grinned, a spark dancing in his eyes. *Oh, dear God, he thinks this is a game.* She retreated further, and his expression changed to sullen confusion.

In the silence that fell between them, the noises of the television increased, crackling and murmuring ominously. Words stuck in her throat. Her heart was loud and her head spun. She wanted to scream. Then she thought *This is ridiculous, he is only a child.* She had simply gotten into a tricky situation. If he overate, he would recover. She was about to give him the meat when he grabbed the carving knife. He raised the knife to her chest. She dropped the meat to the floor. He moved closer, glaring up at her as he brandished the long, shiny knife. He thrust the knife toward her several times and she stepped on, then over, the spongy pieces. Watching her, his eyes glittering and narrow, he bobbed down after the meat.

Slowly backing away across the kitchen, she flattened herself against the oven. All she could think about were her glasses. They had slid down her nose and the world was vague shapes and blurred colors. If she couldn't see, she wouldn't have a chance. In desperation, she pushed the glasses up and clamped them to her temples. Once she saw the boy and the knife clearly, it occurred to her to run.

Her soiled shoes slipped on the linoleum and seemed to stick to the living room carpet. She started for the front door, but there he was, gliding into the living room. Charged with a powerful force, his thin, athletic body walked through the wall as it dissolved to open a perfect silhouette for him. He smiled in triumph, obviously loving his power, and did not even glance at her as he hummed to himself. The hum was loud, but musical compared to the television. She checked her glasses; they were still on, fitting snugly. Then, with the knife shining in his hand, he slipped into the television set and disappeared. The grey, blank set went on humming.

As she stood and watched the television, she feared that she was cracking up. Her body grew rigid. She was cold and shaking. She wiped her greasy hands on her dress, but the cold sweat of her palms kept reappearing.

Then the television screen rippled so fast that it was hard to tell if the movement had really happened. First his brown feet, then his legs, then all of him scrambled out onto the carpet. She was almost glad to see him. When he ignored her, she thought *He takes me for granted*, and, oddly enough, she liked that fact.

Seconds later, though, he again seemed a monster, and what she saw was so unbearable that she stared spellbound.

He slashed the couch, stabbing and ripping with the knife until the pretty cretonne cover was shredded and the stuffing oozed in billowing tufts. He gouged out the fluff in fistfuls. Next, he tried eating patches of the cretonne material and spat that out, his whole body seeming to shrug in disgust. Then he wandered around, wrecking things in fits and starts, and his good humor returned. Gallivanting with grunts and whoops that had a grotesquely comical resemblance to a child playing, he stabbed at everything within his reach. He upended a table and, setting the knife aside, tore off the legs. The splintering of wood sounded like groans. He lifted one of the legs and gnawed on it like an enormous, polished bone. He then threw the leg down and kicked it in fury, but when he took up the knife again, his spirits cheered horribly. He proceeded to destroy the whole room, using his teeth as well as the knife until the wood, the upholstery, even the walls had bite marks and gashes. The carpet looked as if it had been attacked by a pack of dogs. The drapes sprawled on the floor in ragged heaps. He paused, glancing around restlessly.

From where she stood behind the television she now heard a voice. The voice, chipper and glib, seemed the lunatic jabberings of another enemy. Eerily, the television was the only furniture left unscathed. Her body swayed and she almost sank into a faint. Her hands flew to her throat and fidgeted with her glasses. She gazed through the picture window at the lights in the neighboring houses. The houses were still there. The stars were in the sky, too. How small they were. The boy paced about the room. The television jabbered on. Then the boy looked

straight into her eyes, finally registering her presence. A thrill of fresh alarm shot through her. He resumed his pacing, making haphazard jabs at the ruined furniture. He left the television alone. He did not treat the television with any reverence; he just ignored it as he again ignored her. But she found herself angry at the television for standing whole and pristine amidst the rubble. She blamed the television for the boy's invasion into her life. If only she could shove the boy back into the television the same way Hansel and Gretel had shoved the witch into the oven! The thought gave her an idea.

She shrank along the window. Her breath was fast and shallow. She pressed a hand on her heart in an attempt to silence the loud beats. She headed to the opposite end of the room. All the while, she kept her eyes on the boy, who remained oblivious to her. Her right shoulder tight against the cold glass pane, she tiptoed unsteadily to the corner and quickly stooped down to the electric outlet. Hesitating, she hitched up her glasses. She knew perfectly well that the brown cord belonged to the television and the white cords were for the lamps, but, terrified of making a mistake, she had an irrational impulse to yank out all the plugs. As she crouched, she lost her balance, almost falling. Her brain buzzed with uncertainty. Could her problem be solved by just a flick of the switch? If she disconnected the lamps she wouldn't be able to see.... Her hands were wet and shaky. *Stop thinking*, she told herself. Then she yanked out the plugs.

Instantly, the television was silenced. The room dimmed, lit only by a little light from the kitchen. She looked for the boy. The room was full of dark shapes. Was he gone? She had to be sure. The light from the kitchen was too weak. There was no sound or movement. Still, she did not feel safe. The television must remain unplugged. She had to turn on the lamps, but was afraid she might accidentally start the television. She snatched up the brown cord and followed it to the television. She coiled the cord and placed it on top. When she plugged the lamps back in, the silent room was empty.

She searched the whole house, turning on lights. Her walk had gotten peculiar. Stiff with fright, she moved in a jerky, sideways manner, unable to straighten her shoulders. She felt she couldn't see and she constantly fumbled with her glasses, poking at the lenses, leaving smudges.

All that night she sat sleepless in the battered couch, with the lights on in every room. Her body curled inward, making itself as small as possible, trying to hide. She rocked back and forth, and her head ducked involuntarily as if to avoid objects dropped from above. She was filled with a heavy, grinding deadness. She muttered in rage until her thoughts were too wild for words and she could only moan.

When the white dawn came, she still sat hunched over. She noticed that her hand was patting the arm of the couch and she stopped. To her surprise, the wreckage of the room was not

disturbing. It did not seem important now. She stayed sitting and let the sun warm her. She wiped her glasses on a tattered bit of cretonne.

Gingerly, for she felt very breakable, she rose. Walking in small, careful steps, afraid to hope, she went to the television and picked up the brown cord. Excited now, she walked quickly and, before she could change her mind, bent down to the outlet.

The television came to life as soon as she plugged it in. She forced herself to face it. Her hands rubbed each other hard. She watched two well-groomed people, a man and a woman with chipper voices, and waited. She did not have to wait long. This time, the boy was propelled from the set and fell dexterously, jumping to his feet, the knife held loosely in his hand. A strange feeling pierced her, so painful and unfamiliar that for a moment she was unable to recognize it -- a shock of fierce joy. Tears wet her trembling cheeks.

She tagged after him to the kitchen and opened the refrigerator. He squatted down in front of it, still holding the knife, and stacked food on the floor. She squeezed around him to get out eggs for their breakfast, while he stayed squatted on the floor with an odd assortment of food -- a lettuce head, packages of cheese, a ketchup bottle and some apples. She wanted to take and hide the knife, but he pounded its handle and chanted while he ate, trying one thing, then another. The chant began to sound like singing. The butter sizzled in the pan and she stirred in the eggs, scrambling them.

Her mind was as busy as her hands. She told him of her plans. Somehow, she would have to make him presentable enough to take him to the store today. There was not enough food in the house for them both, and she could not leave him alone. "Not yet," she said. She got out two plates and plastic cups and poured orange juice.

He kept singing and drumming the knife handle on the floor. She put a plate of eggs and toast and the glass of juice down beside him as he beat the knife in a rhythm, chanting and humming a new kind of music, strange and beautiful.

THE END

Land of Long Spooks

(positively, absolutely, the last Doc Salvage Adventure)

by Will Murray

| Will Murray has adapted the Doc Savage novel The Thousand-
| Headed Man for "The Adventures of Doc Savage", a series which
| will premiere this October on National Public Radio. |

In a cover letter accompanying Land of Long Spooks, Will says "You've been running my Doc Savage satires for the last several issues. Here's the last one I have written -- or ever will write. It's a take-off on the rather racist Doc Savage novel, Land of Long Juju." Since Will's story contains strong elements of both racism and sexism, we should emphasize that they are present in the satire only because they are also to be found in the original book -- the words and concepts used in Land of Long Spooks do not represent the opinions of this publication or Will Murray. We both apologize if you find any of this upsetting.

The negro shuffled down the dark, deserted streets on feet that were as long as paddles. His manner was furtive and the whites showed all the way around his beady eyes.

He crept along, trying to look inconspicuous.

This was rather difficult, as he was twelve feet tall and built like so much beef jerky. He was dressed in a long black kimono and carried a glass globe under one arm.

Whenever passersby drew near, he stepped to the curb, put the globe over his head, and smiled, thus illuminating the frosted sphere.

Casual strollers passed him by, thinking that he was a street lamp.

He continued on.

Two things soon became apparent.

One: He was very scared, for his knees knocked together, rattling his scrawny black frame.

Two: He was unfamiliar with cities, for he often ducked into alleys as cars hummed by, gawking and muttering about "steel lions".

A little later, an Italian fruit peddler had a rather traumatic experience as he wheeled his cart home for the night.

As he passed what he thought was a street lamp, it reached out a skinny arm and appropriated one of his watermelons.

The vendor did not consider that so very newsworthy, for this was New York City, after all.

It was when the lamp said, "Thanks, Boss," that he fainted dead away.

Elsewhere, two weird figures crouched in an alley on a dead end street where a supposedly-deserted hundred story skyscraper reared.

A sign over the door of the building read: ACME WAREHOUSE.

The two weirdos watched this entrance and conversed in clucking tones.

At first, they seemed to be ordinary lurking thugs until closer examination showed conclusively that they were attired as giant chickens.

They scratched at the pavement with their claws as they cackled with each other.

"Think he'll show?" asked one as he clutched something that might be a blackjack in one wing.

"He's supposed to," the other replied, his voice muffled by his beak. "That there is Doc Salvage's headquarters and it would figger that he'd be going to that big brass boob for help."

"Damn! That'll ruin the whole setup."

"I know it. That's why we've got to stop him before he gets past the door."

One of them paused and plucked an object out of his feathers. It was a basketball hoop, which he set afire.

They watched the hoop burn.

This strange ritual was one that struck terror into the hearts of porters, maids and dishwashers throughout the nation and marked the chicken-garbed duo as members of the notorious Two Clucks Clan

The Two Clucks Clan was an organization of defrocked altar boys who believed that the messiah, who would appear to his followers as a purple chickenhawk, was due most any day now.

As true believers, they were charged with the sacred duties of running fried chicken emporiums (so that the Great One might eat upon his arrival) and chasing all non-natives out of the country.

So far, they had succeeded in chasing several nations of Indians back across the Alutians.

Unfortunately, they decided to pick on the Italians right after that, and the Mafia stepped in and undid the work of three membership drives.

The Two Clucks Clans, who once had booked the entire state of Texas for a Clan picnic, now held their weekly meetings in telephone booths and shower stalls.

"Am I seeing things, or did that lamp post just move?" clucked one.

"What? Maybe it did, at that."

"You don't suppose...?"

"One way to find out," said the other. He reached over to a garbage can, upon which a record player just happened to rest. Soon the strains of a jazz band filtered through the air and over to the lamp post.

The lamp post began to sway to the music.

"Is it moving?" asked one.

"Yeah."

"Has it got the rhythm?"

"Yeah."

"Then that's him! Let's go get him!"

They waddled over, one perched upon the other's shoulders in piggyback fashion.

Coming up from behind the suspicious street lamp, the chicken on top raised up one wing and brought a fried chicken leg crashing down upon the lighted globe.

The globe shattered and the post collapsed to the sidewalk.

It fell face up and the blinding glare of its frozen smile caused the two-chicken totem pole to collapse.

"See, I told you," one of them said as he groped for his chicken leg.

Just then, Doc Salvage stepped out of his headquarters and stumbled over the prostrant darkie, losing his hat in the process.

An eerie fluting sound rose up in the night. This was a sound that everyone believed was made by Doc in moments of excitement or boredom, as an outlet for his rigidly-controlled emotions.

Actually, Doc's lack of mental development precluded emotional response. The fluting was caused by the wind whistling through the holes in his head.

He put his hat back on and the sound ceased.

His piercing eyes and keen brain took in the situation as a single sweep of his cockeyed, oatmeal orbs.

He saw two giant chickens squawking and pawing around for a chicken leg. He had just eaten, so he ignored them.

Then his gaze fell to the twelve foot form beneath him.

His eyes lit up.

Here, obviously, was a member of a hitherto unknown race of people.

As a scientist, Doc was elated at the discovery.

As a man who had many business holdings which required cheap labor, he was ecstatic at the prospect of yet another lost race to be exploited.

Gingerly, he dragged the long, lean black into the lobby and up the elevator to his 86th floor suite.

He had to fold his burden in six places in order to fit him into the lift. He dragged the man into his reception room and slapped him about repeatedly until he straightened out again. Standing over the slightly-rumpled form, Doc Salvage resembled nothing so much as a statue of polished brass. It was this characteristic that led people to call him "the Man of Brass" (as well as other, less complimentary things) and made him very much in demand as a lawn ornament.

In fact, so like metal was he that the sun, striking his skin, caused a blinding reflection that prevented his friends from seeing that he was ugly enough to haunt a used Ford.

But more than for his unusual mutated body, Doc Salvage was known for his career of salvaging fortunes for himself, regardless of how much suffering he caused others. Every year, he managed to discover at least two lost cities and put their friendly inhabitants into forced labor camps in order to maintain his personal fortune, which was constantly being depleted by the destruction of his fleet of planes, blimps and submarines. He never arrived safely at a destination if it could be helped.

Far to the South, downtrodden Mayan Indians slaved in his personal salt mines, while, to the North, he had stranded a tribe of Eskimos so that they could watch over his Fortress of Ineptitude and be eaten by his pet polar bears.

His fortress of Ineptitude was a place where he lammed every time he did some damnfool thing that got him into hot water with the authorities, which was often enough.

In order to atone for these blunders, Doc frequently fought crime and assisted the government. He did his best to get out of most cases, often booby-trapping the entrance to his HQ, but, occasionally, someone would get through.

In which case, he would charge an exorbinant fee and con one of his five aides into doing it for him.

Occasionally, Doc got careless and took prisoners instead of wiping out everyone in sight.

It was at such times that he brought his old profession into the game. For Doc had a novel way of dealing with criminals: surgery.

He removed their vital organs.

Surprisingly, none of his patients ever returned to a life of crime.

Doc looked over his captive and chortled at the thought of yet another whole civilization to be exploited to the hilt.

Just then, the Brass Man's train of thought was derailed by the quiet entrance of his group of aides, who were reknowned as the Five Blunders of the World.

They came through the door without bothering to open it, making all the fuss and commotion of mice-ridden elephants.

First to stumble through was Mink Maypole, who looked like a human panda bear. Mink was clad in a mink coat that struck terror into the hearts of criminals great and small because of his habit of stuffing it down the throats of his enemies. It was a horrible way to die.

Mink arrived with a whoop and a cloud a smoke.

This was because his coat was afire from the umbrella/flame thrower wielded by the man behind him.

The latter was Hem Bricks, ex-lawyer and hopelessly-inept seamstress. He was arrayed in one of his own creations, a white and gold drum majorette's uniform.

He looked cute.

"Outa da way, you overstuffed teddy bear," he growled.

Mink rubbed his smouldering fur against a wall and came back with a vicious, seething retort.

"Elfchaser!" he gritted.

After Hem, a furry white giant bounded in.

This was Bunny Dipstick, professional simpleton and builder of sand castles. He wore the Peter Cottontail suit which he had donned one Halloween, many years ago. As it had been lined with super-glue, he was unable to remove it.

He smelled like a skunk.

"Duh, gangway," he said. Despite the terror mirrored in his pink little eyes, he managed to utter his favorite witticism without stuttering once.

He was proud of himself.

Behind him tumbled in an eight-foot tall man who wore a snappy sport coat that would have looked very well on a five year old. He shivered a lot.

This was Tall Tim Rabbits, whose favorite pasttime was discovering stange new ways to execute criminals with ordinary household appliances.

Once, he had been the executioner of a famous prison until he had accidentally fried the governor.

Even though he said he was sorry and it wouldn't happen again, ever, they fired him.

Often, he stiffened from exposure to the cold. His suit sported handles so that he could be carried from place to place in this condition.

In a tight spot, he made an excellent battering ram.

Last, and doubtless least, minced in Jenny Littleodd. He wore a shocking pink ballerina dress that Hem had sewn for him. It showed off his hairy chest and stubbled, bowed legs to great advantage.

Jenny had been a professor of Advanced Gibberish in a major kindergarten until he was fired for being a bad influence.

He tripped over his purse and swore, "I'll be geldednuetered-andemasculated."

It was his favorite expression.

He looked cute, too.

The fivesome stumbled over to a corner, huddling fearfully.

"Is it coming, is it?" Mink breathed.

Bunny wiggled his nose and closed his eyes.

Tall Tim swallowed until his adam's apple protruded from his belly button.

Hem and Jenny started to cry, ruining their dresses in the process.

Right away, Doc sensed that something COULD be wrong.

It was not the cowering attitude of his comrades-in-idioty that tipped him off; they did that a lot.

Rather, it was the fact that not one of them genuflected as they ran past.

Hell, they didn't even salute! What was he paying them for, anyway?

Then, a sixth figure stepped in, explaining everything.

It was an over-forty, broken-down brassy woman.

She was a wreck.

She was Pit Salvage, Doc's desperate, oversexed cousin. She ran a 42nd street bordello that catered to upper class longshoremen.

Frequently, she joined in on his escapades, only to be kidnapped.

Her kidnappers were invariably hung as horse thieves.

Doc took in the situation at a glance.

Pit was in heat and about to rape his men, who, to a man, were deathly afraid of women.

And she could do it, Doc knew.

Doc unlimbered one of his special thirsty pistols, which fired a continuous stream of water-filled pellets.

Doc used these to subdue criminals and jitterbuggers. He simply tied them up, closed off their noses with a clothespin, and fired into their mouths.

They frequently drowned, which saved Doc a lot of trouble.

The dousing seemed to cool her off and the sexual inference of the gun was enough to send her into a painful orgasm.

Satisfied, she left, a goofy smile on her face.

Everyone seemed to breathe a sigh of relief, except Tall Tim who stiffened and keeled over from the cold.

Doc was not surprised, moments later when they heard a long, drawn-out HAAALP! come up from the street.

Looking out the window, they spied two giant chickens making off with Pit.

"Look, Pit's been kidnapped," Hem shouted.

"Again," Bunny rejoined.

"Third time this week," added Jenny, in his low contralto.

"Grab Tall Tim and follow," Doc ordered.

While Mink and Hem lifted the bony clod by his handles, Doc threw his twelve-foot captive out the window, not wanting to have to fold him again.

They piled into the elevator and pressed a button.

The cage remained stationary, while the building sank into the earth. They stepped out of the 86th floor hall and onto the street.

Doc caught the falling darkie.

His men, noticing the captive for the first time, inquired: "Wazat, Doc?"

Doc replied with a straight face that it was a new invention of his. An electric brillo pad which he was about to have patented.

His aides did not question him. Doc was always right, they knew.

They raced off in pursuit of Pit and her chicken captors.

As they hot-footed it, Doc paused briefly to perform one of his famous philanthropic gestures.

He shot a leper to death, putting the poor unfortunate out of his misery.

Doc felt good about it.

A trail of chicken feathers led around a corner.

Doc and his boys, having no sense and being unable to stop by themselves when they ran at more than five miles an hour, blundered into an ambush.

To a man, they were clubbed unconscious with greasy drumsticks.

When they woke up, Doc discovered that his captive was missing.

"Hey," Mink yelled. "They took your electric brillo pad, they did."

"Now why do you suppose they did that?" Jenny asked.

Doc said nothing, having bitten his tongue in two when he was struck.

His men, as usual, took that as a sign that Doc was lost in thought. Their eyes widened in blatant awe as they watched the phenomenon.

Except for Bunny.

Apparently, one of the desperados had chopped off his right foot to use as a good luck piece.

As the boys all gathered around Bunny and comforted him, Doc stole away unnoticed.

He wanted to investigate on his own.

His men, left alone a whole five blocks from the headquarters, all sat down in the middle of the street and cried.

They were immediately taken to a local orphanage, where they were adopted by a couple who walked disturbingly like chickens.

In the meantime, Doc had donned one of his simple, yet clever disguises and was prowling around.

His skin was as black as pitch. This had come about when he had fallen onto a freshly-tarred driveway.

That gave him the idea for the deception.

He supplemented the coloration with a leopard skin jacket, a purple beret, yellow boots, and green silk pants.

He electrocuted a beaver to death so that its fur stood on end and slipped it under his beret as a final touch.

He clumped around (he was on stilts) for about an hour until the experience of being twelve feet tall got the better of him.

He took a dizzy spell, which sort of undid his carefully laid plan to decoy the two mysterious chicken men.

It would not have been so bad, but he succumbed in front of a cigar store guarded by a wooden Indian and a totem pole that resembled two chickens, one atop the other.

A somewhat messed-up drumstick crashed down onto his beaver pelt wig.

He knew no more.

Fortunately, it was impossible for him to know any less.

When Doc awoke, he found himself lying by a road somewhere.

It was dark.

He was lost.

Worse, he was hungry.

He would have broken down right there, but for the fact that he spied a fried chicken emporium by the roadside.

He clumped in and ordered two buckets of drumsticks.

The two chickens behind the counter refused to serve him, pointing a wing to a sign that said: NO COONS OR SPOOKS ALLOWED.

"Beat feet, boy," one of them clucked ominously.

Doc was about to sneak out, planning to remove his disguise and return as himself, when he saw a sight that filled him with lemon juice.

His five aides were in back of the place, busily plucking chickens.

Doc immediately let out a yell in a tongue that only his men could understand, due to a life-long speech defect.

To kill time while his dull-witted men got their minds out of neutral, he began to thrash the chickens violently with his beaver.

Feathers flew.

His men, noses tickled by the cloud of plumes, sneezed as one.

The fried chicken emporium collapsed about them.

The sinister birds died when a tray of hot chicken fat spilled onto their heads.

They were deep fried in seconds.

Doc and the boys were reunited amid much back-slapping, head-patting, hand-shaking, eye-gouging, ass-kicking, and body-checking as their enthusiasm rose from confused indifference to tentative loathing.

As it turned out, they had liked plucking chickens.

Doc beat them severely, until they got back into line.

"Come on, sisters. We've got to get to the bottom of all this."

"I wonder where we are, I wonder," Mink wondered through swollen lips.

They looked around them.

There were hills all around them.

On top of one, a flock of huge chickens wre cavorting around an immense basketball hoop that blazed against the night.

"The Two Clucks Clan!" they exclaimed.

They walked around a bit.

Every third girl that they passed was named either Annebelle, Marybelle, or Scarlet, and said "Hi, y'all."

Every fourth man that they passed wore a white suit, carried a bullwhip, and was addressed as 'Colonel'.

There were fried chicken emporiums every three feet.

Every state trooper was a fat slob with a stogie who appeared to have graduated from the Roy Rogers Correspondence School for Cowboys.

Cotton grew EVERYWHERE.

"Holy Sow," yelled Bunny, his pink-lined ears standing straight up.

"It can't be," moaned Mink.

Hem split open Mink's furry skull with his umbrella to ease the pain.

"They've stranded us in the most hellish spot on earth," Jenny cried.

"We're lorsted," Hem moaned. "Lorsted in..."

"ALABAMA!" Doc supplied as Hem fainted. He was sickened by the base cruelty of his opponents.

More than at any time before, they were struck by the realization that they faced a terrible menace.

There was only one thing to do.

They ran.

In all directions.

Three hours of chasing themselves around in circles finally took its toll.

They collapsed from exhaustion in a heap.

Then they tried to hitch-hike their way out.

Unfortunately, every time a car slowed down to stop, the driver got a good look at the disguised Doc and, mumbling, "Let's go, Lucybelle. We'all don't want none of THEM kind around heah," they took off again.

As luck would have it though, they managed to flag down a wayward rickshaw.

"Where to, blass guy?" the Celestial asked.

Doc, at a loss for something intelligent to say, as always, made as vague and confusing a gesture as he could with both arms.

He said, "Yonder," and hoped for the best.

This worked out very well until the road before them led to a hastily dug pit that was filled with cold chicken fat.

They ground to a greasy halt and began to sink slowly.

Gangs of giant chickens materialized upon all sides and cackled and clucked with glee.

"Doc?" asked Mink.

"Yeah?" the big brass boob answered.

"I think this might be a trap, I think this might be."

"Glub...glub..." glubbed Doc, as he sank up to his ears in chicken fat.

When they came to once again, they found themselves chained together in a huge eggplant field.

They were not alone.

"Look," squawled Mink.

"Jungle bunnies!" supplied Hem. "Millions of them!"

"As tall as trees," gaped Tall Tim.

"Funny," muttered Bunny. "All I see are a bunch of electric brillo pads standing around."

Doc fed Bunny a carrot and he quieted down.

They looked around.

All about them, giant, lank negroes labored in chains.

Huge chickens ranged about, on claw and horseback, armed to the teeth. They lashed with long whips at the blacks, who sang Nat King Cole songs to ease the pain.

A few were bound to telephone poles to keep the crows away.

Doc recognized one of them as his erstwhile captive.

"What are we going to do about all this?" asked Hem.

"Get a piece of the action, if we can," he replied.

Doc drew his thirsty pistol and blazed away at his chains until they rusted. He flexed his muscles and gained his freedom and an excellent case of blood poisoning at the same time.

Doc gave his men their orders.

"Go raise a fuss and get yourselves captured again."

"AWWW, DOC," they complained.

"Go on, you goobers," he rapped.

A dejected, grumbling mini-zoo, they trudged off.

Doc watched as they were set upon by mounted chickens. Mink tore up his fur coat into pieces and force-fed a few of the birds. They died, gagging on the ratty mink.

Hem set a few of them on fire, as the others made damn fools of themselves by taking Tall Tim by his handles and using him to demount a few of their feathered friends.

Needless to say, they were promptly captured.

Satisfied, Doc moved on.

By the time he had reached the long spook on the telephone pole, Doc had removed his disguise.

The man was unconcious. Doc tickled his feet to revive him.

"Yowsuh?" the black asked.

"What's going on here, boy? Why'd you try to reach me?"

"Oh, Massa," the man replied. "Let mah people go, Massa. Ah heard how you set people free and thought ah'd sastigate mah bodily person down youh way, so's you could help us."

The Brass Man was elated. Obviously, they had never heard about what he was really like.

He struck an attitude of mock pity and promised to help.

"Oh, thank you, Massa, thank you."

The excitement proved too much for the man and he expired.

That saved Doc the trouble of having to untie him.

Doc moved off, not really understanding the situation, but actually not caring, either. Here was cheap labor just for the asking and he was determined to exploit it like a true American.

He saluted his flag lapel pin and kept going.

Soon, he found something he'd been looking for. A shadowy figure labored, picking eggplants.

He snuck up on it and captured it in a net he carried in his vest pocket. The Brass Man carried his burden off into the night.

At the same time, Doc's prize boobs were being brought before the Grand High Rooster of the Two Clucks Clan.

They were being held in a decrepid barn.

"Talk," clucked the Grand High Rooster. "Talk!"

They couldn't talk. They were laughing too hard.

This was because they were being tortured.

The torture involved being tickled with giant chicken feathers.

"Where is Doc Salvage?" he screeched.

The question was answered rather abruptly as Doc and his captive fell through a hole in the barn roof.

The Brass Man had intended to drop his benetted catch into the gang of chickens when he recalled that he was afraid of heights and fell down.

He rapped an order in his defective speech, instructing his men to take cover because all hell was about to waddle in.

They were too busy enjoying being tickled to hear him.

The net parted.

Then, horror of horrors, Pit Salvage reared up.

She was in heat again.

Slowly, drooling saliva, she advanced.

Doc watched calmly as he was treated to the sight of a bunch of chickens trying to go through a solid wall where there was no opening.

They kept bouncing off, picking themselves up again, and running into blank walls.

In the process, Doc saw the chicken head fall off the Grand High Rooster to reveal the white-haired Colonel Slanders, political gadfly and head of the world's fried chicken emporiums.

He was not surprised, having figured out the whole plot back in chapter two.

He waited while the chicken men dashed their brains out against the wall in their frenzied efforts to avoid the lusting Pit.

Though they were dead when Pit finally caught up with them, she raped the lot of them anyway.

Doc called it justice, which he said was just another way of getting even.

The Brass Man freed his men, not that they were of any use, and proceeded to reap the rewards of his triumph.

Unfortunately, as in all his great discoveries and inventions, there was a catch.

Though the long, lean negroes were excellent workers who needed no rest and only one meal of chitlins a day, he soon discovered that they had an unfortunate tendency to fall over whenever the wind blew.

This made them useless as field workers.

There was only one thing to do.

Doc installed batteries in each of them and sold them on the open market as electric brillo pads.

He cleaned up.

Investigation later uncovered the origin of the mysterious tribe of blacks.

As it turned out, they had been a peaceful race of farmers who raised cane (sugar) until they got the exceedingly bright idea of going to the moon, many centuries ago.

Admittedly, they had a novel approach to the problem. They climbed up upon each others backs and tried to form a human ladder. They figured that once the top man touched the lunar orb, it would be just a matter of pulling themselves up. To

their credit, they got pretty high. Regrettably, some damn fool sneezed and the whole shebang tumbled into the ocean, drowning most of them.

The lucky few at the top (the whole column was as tall as the ocean was wide) landed in what was primitive America where they lived peaceably until the Two Clucks Clan came along and enslaved them, mostly because it made them feel good to do it.

They were forced to harvest useless eggplants for no other reason than to keep them busy. At harvest time, the Clan would make a big thing of pelting their slaves with the vegetable, which they had toiled so long to grow.

Doc and his crew got back to New York by the simple expedient of lashing Bunny to the rickshaw and dangling a carrot on a stick in front of his pink little nose.

They were forced to leave Pit behind, she having perished from lust. There was no room for her in the rickshaw and besides, she had already begun to decay.

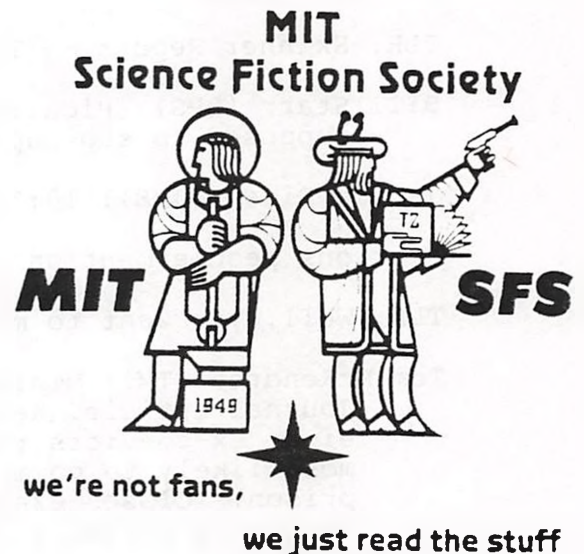
Upon their arrival, they were arrested for cruelty to rabbits.

THE END

Official MITSFS T-shirts!

They've got the official MITSFS insignia* -- that's it over there on the right, shown at about 30% of full size -- in bright red ink, silk-screened onto a grey 75% cotton, 25% polyester shirt. The red-on-grey sounds bad, but it really looks pretty good.

They cost \$5.00 each and may be purchased at the Library or by mail. If ordering by mail, (a) be sure to specify the size (Small, Medium, Large or Wookie) and (b) add money for postage, handling and graft: \$1.00 for the first shirt, 75 cents each for the second and third shirts, and 50 cents for each shirt thereafter. Please allow an unreasonable amount of time for delivery -- this is the U.S. Mail we're dealing with, after all.



*which is itself a hack of the official MIT insignia.

Eep! It's Friday, the whole issue has to go to Graphic Arts for copying on Monday if we're going to get it back in time for the incoming freshlings to be awed by it, and yours truly, the erstwhile and slightly senile Jourcomm, has just realized that we don't have an installment of the Minutes to run. Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa (which is Latin for "Oh, Lordy, Ah done screwed up big!").

All is not lost, however! A quick dash to the Doomsday Machine drawer of the cabinet yields... the 1984-85 Minutes of the Society! But, you ask, what about the 1972-73 Minutes? You know, the ones we've been running in installments in recent issues (with the exception of #35, which featured Janice Eisen's E.A. Poe pastiche). Well, I don't know where they are, and I don't have time to search for them, so... set the controls on your Way-Back Machine or TARDIS or DeLorean or whatever for the relatively recent past, as TZ 36 hesitantly presents:

Last-Minute Minutes of the MITSFS

Transcribed by the then-Onseck, Adam G. Mellis

17:00 SST, 5/11/84

President & Skinner Timothy L. Huckelbery (TLH) presiding over the Election Meeting.

Susan Pitts (SLP): BarbiComm -- "Ken Johnson" is the writer and producer of "V".

TLH: Skinner Report -- This is the last meeting that I will run.

Bill Starr (BPS): PicnicComm/Finger -- What time are people supposed to show up tomorrow for the Picnic?

Janice Eisen (JME): 10:30.

(various people mention that the Picnic isn't till Sunday.)

TLH: Well, you want to make sure you get there early.

Tom McKendree (TM): Minicult -- According to a Wall Street Journal article, Ken Johnson is a police target, one of the eight ex-convicts that the Minneapolis Police Dept. feels is most likely to commit serious crimes now that he is out of prison. Closer examination of the article reveals that the ex-con is actually "Ken Johnson (a pseudonym)". Oh well.

George Flynn (GF): Minicult -- a struggling California writer, unhappy that his sf novel was rejected by (a) twenty publishers and (b) a TV station as a donation for a telethon, tried to burn copies of the book in a vacant lot and almost burned down someone else's house.

GF: Minicult -- the winning entry in the annual San Jose State Bulwer-Lytton Contest (for the opening sentence to a hypothetical terrible novel) was: "The lovely woman-child Kaa was mercilessly chained to the cruel post of the warrior-chief Beast, with his barbarian tribe now stacking wood at her nubile feet, when the strong clear voice of the poetic and heroic Handsomas roared, 'Flick your Bic, crisp that chick, and you'll feel my steel through your last meal.'"

Shawn Gramates (MSG): Minicult -- letter from Ursula LeGuin in the 4/20/84 Science News explains how *she* would have designed Rolls Royces and research engineers.

ELECTIONS:

Onseck, nominees -- Klyd [SLP's boa constrictor]; Tim Buckelbery [sic]; R. vanser Hude [sic]; Adam Mellis; Spofford.

Onseck, final vote -- Adam 16.44, Klyd 2.53, Tim 0.41, studs 0.09, Tron 0.05, and 3.29 random.

Lord High Embezzler, nominees -- Ken Dumas; Klyd; Janice's right antenna; naughty bits of Mr. Edwin Meese; Mr. Ed; Andy Who; Dr. Su.

LHE, final vote -- Andy 8.40, Ken Dumas 4.50, Klyd 2.62, various naughty bits 0.09, and 4.27 random.

JME: I took 18.01 and 18.02, and I say that's a majority.

Vice, nominees -- Spofford; Klyd; Merryl Gross; Susan That's-Enough second; Mick Jagger; McMuffin; Opus; closed; I can't read this; We seem...

Vice, final vote -- Merryl 11.02, Klyd 3.17, Opus 0.01, and 3.79 random.

President, nominees -- Simson L. Garfinkel, Messiah; Dune, Messiah; Robots of Dune; Heretics of Dawn; Janice, goddess; Excited Nude Skinners of Gor; Tim's handwriting.

President, final vote -- Andy Su: "This is incredibly arbitrary: Janice won." (an addendum to the Minutes gives the final vote as: Janice 10.22, Klyd 2.05, and 6.003 random.)

Janice appoints herself Skinner amidst cries of "We Want Klyd!".

Klyd is made Official Second to appease the crowd.

* * * * *

17:00 SST, 5/18/84

President & Skinner JME presiding.

SLP: PicnicComm -- We were 17 cents under budget! (applause).

JME: Pseudo-PicnicComm -- The Picnic was a great success and if you missed it, you lose.

Adina Adler (AA): Despite the fact that *somebody* forgot to bring a knife.

JME: And somebody else forgot to bring a coconut.

JME: Ken Johnson has compiled a special Hugo Nominees Section so you won't have to hunt for them all over the Library.

BPS: Where are the reels of film for the Best Dramatic Presentation?

JME: We're working on it.

More flaming by BPS. JME makes an Albanian Motion on BPS. Passes, everybody (including BPS) to nobody to 2 plus Spehn.

Merryl Gross (MG): ViceComm -- I want to know who took my whip. I get a whip with this job, and I want it.

Ken Meltsner (KM): Move to allow the Vice to use the whip on whoever moved it. Passes (no vote taken).

BPS: *Everybody's* going to be moving it!

Adam Mellis (AbM): Fritz Lang's Metropolis has been set to music; Adam Ant, Pat Benatar, etc.

KM: By the way, my thesis is done. (applause)

* * * * *

17:00 SST, 9/7/84

First meeting of the new term. President & Skinner JME presiding.

JME declares special suspension of the rules: people attending their first meeting (lots of frosh) may not be Finger Motioned.

JME: Move to commend Tim Huckelbery for no longer being here. Passes by decree.

MG: Vice Report -- I still don't have my whip, and I'm ready to use it on whoever took it!

AbM points out that the whip is in the top drawer of the Emergency Back-Up Desk, and the Vice retrieves it. The Vice fails to find her Smurf (tm) disintegrator ring, and is told that it's currently locked away. JME note with pleasure that there are no Smurfs (tm) in the room.

Andy Su (ATS): We made \$770.88 last month, but because the books were done a little late, that includes some of this month's (Sept.) transactions. (Many heavy sighs in the background.) It's not my fault. Nothing's ever my fault. Current equity level is \$3,062.24. (Cheers for the equity level.)

JME: The Official Second (Klyd) has received an honorary membership, and he even signed his membership sheet all by himself.

AA: Old Business -- Greetings from Carl Hylin.

KM: Minicult -- Janice and I are engaged.

Several people ask the traditional, "In what?"

KM: If you have to ask, you probably wouldn't understand anyway.

JME: Note on Offensensitivity -- A woman came to the MITSFS table at the Activities Midway and turned over John Varley's Demon because she was offended by the cover [the goddess Gaea in her fifty-foot-tall, nearly-nude Marilyn Monroe guise]. It was noted that she was a math graduate student and that that apparently had nothing to do with her actions.

AbM: Minicult -- "Rolling Stone" claims that the most promiscuous college in the U.S. is Boston U. and the hardest is MIT.

KM: There is also a guide to college that says the best dormitory to live in at MIT is Senior House. It also says that Senior House is the worst.

JME moves to commend Robert van der Heide for finishing his thesis. Passes, some not terribly enthusiastic arms and legs to fewer not terribly enthusiastic arms and legs to several squawks and a few wings and thighs plus Spehn.

BPS: Minicult -- In Canada's national parliamentary elections, the Rhinoceros Party, running on a theme of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll, came in fourth out of the twelve parties in the popular voting, getting over 100,000 votes (about 1% of the total). No Rhino candidate received enough votes in any district to win a seat, though.

JME: We just signed up a priest as a member. Now we have a priest to give last rites and a campus policeman to remove the body.

* * * * *

17:00 SST, 9/14/84

President & Skinner JME presiding.

MG: FweekComm -- We have on the order of 144 new members this freshman week. However, it's unclear how many are new members and how many are renewals.

KM: MooComm -- LSC [Lecture Series Committee] is showing Mike Jittlov's "The Wizard of Speed and Time" tonight. (Much applause) Oh yeah, they're also showing "Star Wars" after it. (Very little applause)

Abm: PianoComm -- New version of the Keyholders' Notes will arrive tomorrow.

Robert van der Heide (RvdH): "Real Soon Now!"

AbM insists on "tomorrow".

JME: Old Business -- We got a letter from Marc ("The") Alpert, former Skinner.

BPS interrupts to say, "He's Cool!"

JME: He congratulates us our new Library and wants a picture of it. He also sent us some donations and wants a letter for tax purposes.

Some discussion of which letter to give him; "Q" gets a lot of support.

John Dumas (JD): Minicult -- a personal from the Boston Phoenix: "DWM 6'4" 220 lbs Ivy grad sks tall 5'8" to 6' Earth woman of superb figure and intelligence for a sane sophisticated highly imaginative and creatively sensual exploration of Gorian contra culture."

JME authorizes RvdH to write the person a letter. KM suggests that a picture of the Skinner be enclosed. Janice declines. BPS wonders what counter-culture on Gor is, and is corrected -- it's 'contra'. Discussion of Nicaragua ensues.

* * * * *

17:00 SST, 9/21/84

President & Skinner JME presiding.

A new member says something Finger-ish. Chip Hitchcock says, "Finger Motion!" JME explains that we aren't Fingering new members. BPS asks member, "Is this your first time?" JME: "Don't worry, we'll be gentle." MG gets out her whip.

JME: BananaComm -- A woman in Florida paid for a used car with 999 bananas, according to the boston glob. Chip notes that the used car dealer, stuck with 999 ripe bananas, will not make that promotional offer again.

Malcom Skerry (Y) asks if she got a lemon. JME proposes an Albanian Motion on Y. Passes by decree.

JME asks about Keyholders' Notes.

AbM: PianoComm -- Squirms, then explains how It Wasn't His Fault, and says that they'll be ready tomorrow.

JME moves to commend RvdH for having been right last week.
Passes, 3pi to pi/2 to Spanish pie plus Spehn.

Ken Johnson (KRJ) starts to report on his List. Chip is (unluckily) heard to say, "If he doesn't want to tell us about his Listz, he can tell us about his Chopin." Many people move for an Albanian Motion on Chip. Passes by Skinnerial decree.

KRJ continues: he's entered into his PC a checklist of every American pro SF magazine that ever was and which ones MITSFS has. We have 97.06% of them.

JME: Old Business -- Note from Hy Tran (former Skinner).

BPS inquires about what he's doing, and JME points out that all the note says is, "Hello. [signed] Hy Tran". JME moves to commend Hy Tran for brevity. Passes, unanimous to nothing to Spehn.

BPS: Minicult -- A terminally ill man who will die by year's end is offering to take messages from the living to the dead for \$20.00 each.

JME wonders what he's going to do with the money. KRJ says, "Take it with him." MG wants to know what happens if he recovers, and KRJ points out that he can always be helped to unrecovers.

BPS updates that a follow-up article a few days later said that the man was being deluged with calls from people responding to his offer and that he considered himself to be "in way over his head," which is an ironic choice of words, considering that he's dying of a brain tumor.

JME: Den Mother-----Comm -- Barbara Feinman, the new head of Campus Activities, responded to complaints about the ceiling leak that soaked and killed some of our large paperbacks by saying, "Oh, yeah, I heard about that my second day here. Put down some plastic sheeting, all right?" We all know what she can do with her plastic sheeting.

AA: Move to award Barbara Feinman a banana.

JME: No, that's too good for her.

Y motions for attention and JME says, "There's an Albanian waving his hand." People laugh. BPS says, "That's a variation of the Albanian Motion." People boo. Albanian Motion on BPS passes.

KM: Move to commend RvdH for having a banana-colored shirt.
Passes, 17 1/2 to a fist, some feet and a few fingers to an elbow or two, a hockey stick and a few others plus Spehn.
Meeting adjourned 17:25 SST.

The MITSFS Want List

Compiled by Ken Johnson

Here at MITSFS, we still don't quite have everything, but we're working on it. What follows is Ken's list of some of our Most Wanted magazines. If you have a copy of any of these which you're interested in trading or selling, or if you know of someone who has, please write to us (our address is given in the "Fine Print" page at the beginning of this issue). Please note: we are seeking only copies which are in good enough condition to be bound into volumes.

AMERICAN MAGAZINESAdventures in
Horror/ Horror
Stories

1970/1971 all

Amazing Stories

1927 Jan

1978 Jan, May

Amazing StoriesAnnual

1927

Analog

1970 Apr, Jun

1973 Sep

1975 May

1976 Jan, Apr, May

1977 Jan, Mar, Apr,

May, Jul

1978 Jan, Feb, Jun,

Oct, Nov

Doctor Death

1935 Feb

Dusty Ayers and HisBattle Birds

1934 all

1935 Mar, Apr,

May/Jun,

Jul/Aug

Fantastic

1972 Jun

1975 Oct

1976 Feb, Aug, Nov

1977 Feb, Sep, Dec

1978 Apr, Jul

Galaxy

1969 Jul, Aug

1972 Jan/Feb

1973 Nov

1974 Jun, Nov, Dec

1975 Jan, Jun, Sep

1976 Oct

1978 Jan, Apr - Jun

Ghost Stories

1926 all

1927 all

1928 Jan, Feb, Apr,

Jun - Sep,

Nov, Dec

1929 Jan, Mar - Dec

1930 Jan - Apr,

Jun, Jul

1931 Apr, May

Girl From UNCLE Mag

1967 Feb

IF

1969 Sep

1970 Apr, Jul/Aug

1972 Jan/Feb

1973 Jan/Feb,

Jul/Aug,

Nov/Dec

1974 Jan/Feb,

May/Jun

Isaac Asimov's SF
Mag

1978 Jan/Feb,

Mar/Apr,

May/Jun,

Jul/Aug,

Sep/Oct

1979 Jun

1984 Jul

Mag of F & SF

1973 Mar, Dec

1974 Jan, Apr, Jun,

Jul, Sep

1975 Feb, Nov

1976 Jun

1977 Feb, Sep - Dec

1978 Feb, May,

Jun - Nov

1979 Feb

Marvel Tales

1934 May(#1)

Mind Magic

1931 all

My Self

1931 all

Other Worlds

1957 May

Scientific Detective
Monthly

1930 Mar

Amazing DetectiveTales

1930 Jun,

Aug - Oct

Sky Worlds

1978 Aug

Startling Mystery
Stories

1967 Winter(#7)

Strange Stories

1939 Feb, Jun

1940 Feb

Tales of Terror From
the Beyond
1964 Summer

Thriller
1962 all

Weird Tales
1923 Apr - Nov
1924 all
1925 Jan - Oct, Dec
1926 Jan, Mar, Apr,
Jun - Sep, Dec

Whispers
#1

Wonder Stories
1930 Aug
1931 Jul, Oct
1933 Dec

BRITISH MAGAZINES

Amazing Science
Stories
#1

British Space SF
Vol 2 #1, 3, 4

Fantasy
1939 #2

Futuristic Science
Stories
#11, 14, 15

Mag of Fantasy & SF
1954 Apr

New Worlds
1960 Jul(#96)

Out of This World
#2

Phantom
#1 - 5, 7, 9 - 14,
16

Science Fantasy
1964 Feb(#63),
Apr(#64)

Science Fiction
Adventures
1958 Jul(#3)

Scoops
1934 #2 - 20

Supernatural Stories
#6, 9 - 12, 16, 20,
21, 30, 31, 33,
34, 37 - 39, 41,
45, 101
(Out of This World)
#13, 15, 17

Tales of Tomorrow
#8 - 10

Tales of Wonder
#1, 3, 13

Vargo Stratten SF
Mag
Vol 1 #5

Vortex
1977 all

Wonders of the
Spaceways
#8

Wonders of the
Universe
#1

Worlds of Fantasy
#11, 12

AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINES

Thrills, Inc.
#3, 11, 14, 22

Void
#1

CANADIAN MAGAZINES

Astonishing Stories
1942 Jan, Mar

Super Science
Stories
1945 Apr, Jun

Uncanny Tales
1940 all
1941 Jan - Nov
1942 Jan, Mar,
May - Dec
1943 all

You're getting this (Twilight Zine 36) because:

- ☐ You're Spike MacPhee, and you give MITSFS members a 15% discount at your Science Fantasy Bookstore, 8 JFK-Boylston Street (second floor), Cambridge MA 02138, (617) 547-5917, open Mon. thru Sat. 11 to 6 (Thurs. till 8), Sun. 12 to 5.
- ☐ You contributed something we published in this issue.
- ☐ You contributed a quantity of small, unmarked bills, which we didn't publish in this issue but which we did appreciate.
- ☐ We (trade/think we trade/used to trade/would like to trade) fanzines with you.
- ☒ You're on our mailing list, but we don't know why. If you know why, tell us or we won't send you TZ 37 when and if it's published (uh... that's supposed to be a threat).
- ☐ You're cute. ☐ You're silly. ☐ We're silly.
- ☐ You're Shawn Gramates and you almost edited this one.
- ☐ You've been a good little boy/girl/whatever.
- ☐ You've been a bad little boy/girl/whatever.
- ☐ You paid for it? With real money?? Wow.
- ☐ You're Lisa, and I'm yours (*sigh*).
- ☐ You're a blast from the past.
- ☐ Oh, we have our reasons...

MIT Science Fiction Society

W20-473

84 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Dear People,

Hey, look! It's an Official MITSFS Form Letter, xeroxed especially for you!

You may notice that on the back of your copy of TZ36 we've checked "We don't know why you're getting this...". This is because our mailing list has fallen into a state of deep chaos, and the 3x5 index card with your name on it either doesn't say why you're on our mailing list or says that it's been a long time since we heard anything from you.

It's a sad fact that we, as a non-profit organization, have to watch our expenses. We plan on losing money on each issue of TZ (this one, for example, sells for a dollar but cost us \$1.22/copy in printing costs alone), but we do have to try to limit our losses.

If you want to keep receiving copies of Twilight Zine, please write to us and let us know just what your relationship is to us. If you don't know what it is either, you can always establish one by becoming a subscriber -- just send us money (the more the better!) and we'll credit it to your account and send you future issues of Twilight Zine at a per-issue cost of either one dollar or the cover price, whichever is lower, until your account runs dry*.

Whatever you decide, please write to us -- we really don't want to drop you from our lists by default!

Thank you very much.

Bill P. Starr

Bill P. Starr,
Jourcomm, Twilight Zine 36

*or our Lord High Embezzler absconds to Rio with our funds, whichever comes first.