



Harman Barrett
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TIGHTBEAM

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TIGHTBEAM: May 1979. #18 is the fanzine and letterzine of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. TIGHTBEAM is published for the N3F in January, March, May, July, September, and November and is distributed to the members of the N3F and for trade of other zines. Persons mentioned in passing are invited to comment regardless of membership status. Contributions (especially letters) should be sent to the editor, Lynne Holdom, P.O. Box 5, Pompton Lakes, NJ not later than the 20th of the month of publication. (Please write TB on the envelope.)

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---front cover by Maureen Garrett---

---back cover by Chris Mills---

N3F President: Irvin Koch, 1870 Dresden Dr. NE B9, Atlanta, GA 30319
N3F Sec'y/Treas: Janie Lamb, Rte 2, Box 272, Heiskill, TN 37754
N3F Directorate: Joanne Burger, 55 Blue Bonnet Ct., Lake Jackson, TX 77566
Andy Andruschak, 6933 N. Rosemead, #31, San Gabriel, CA 91775
Judy Gerjuoy, F7 900 Kirkwood Hwy, Newark, DE 19711
Lynne Holdom, P.O. Box 5, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442
Mike Lowrey, 828 N. Milwaukee #3, Milwaukee, WI 53202

editorial-

Well, here it is May (already?) and the fruit trees have decided to stop goofing off and start producing fruit. The strawberries spread all over the lawn despite the fact that I forgot to cover them last fall. I don't seem to be bothered with hay fever as much this spring, possibly due to the almost constant rain.

I have also decided to make time to write a novel. I have completed four chapters so far (they may not be great but they are done which is a start). I will get to it in real earnest when this issue of TB is in the mail. After that I have JUMEAUX #6 to get out, then JUMEAUX #7 sometime before the Dark-over Grand Council Meeting in July.

Included with this issue for all US and Canadian members, should be a Hugo ballot for the N3F Hugo vote. Overseas members will get theirs air mail. Please fill it out and send it to Janie Lamb, Rte 2, Box 272, Heiskill, TN 37754. She will tabulate the results and send the club vote in. It has to get to England by July 31, so get the ballot in promptly. Try thinking of the deadline as July 1.

I will not be editing the July TB but will be editing the September issue. Contributions for July should be sent to Dave Minch, 3146 Smokecreek Ct., Atlanta, GA 30345. His deadline is July 1. After that send it to me and it'll go in the September issue.

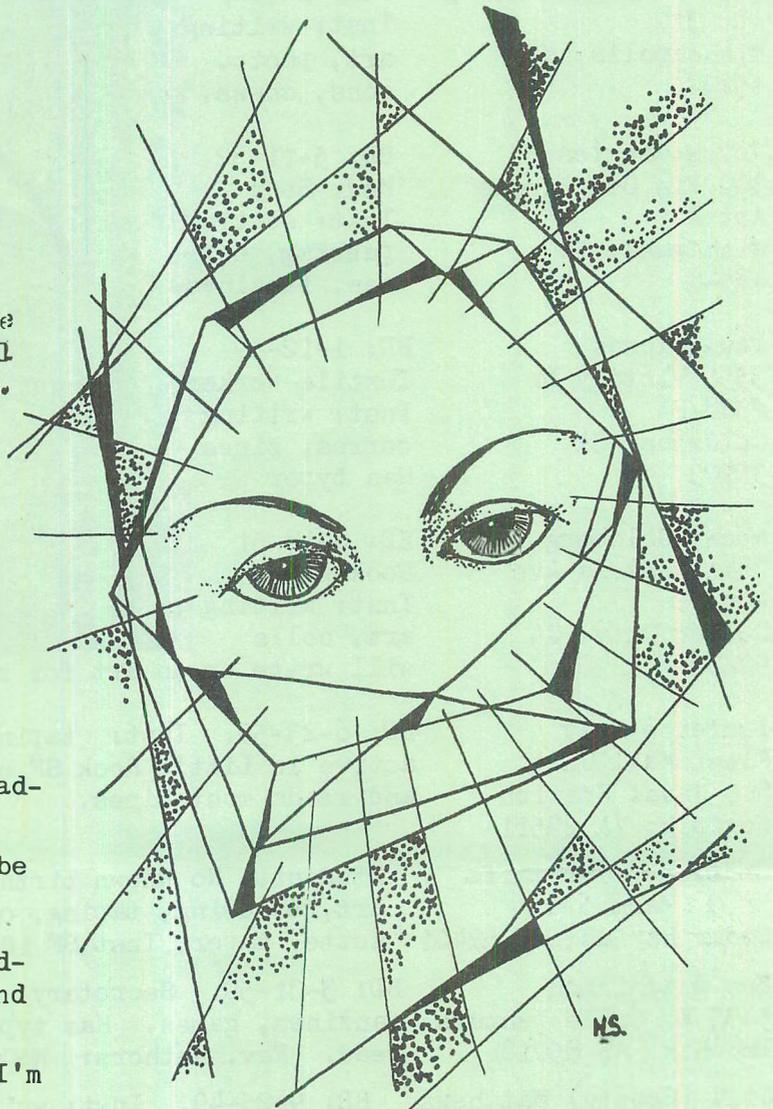
The illo on this page is by Helen Steere. I'm ~~pleading with, hoping~~ trying to get Helen to do the cover of the September issue. The illo on page 13 of last issue was also by Helen. I happen to like her style. The cover of this issue was done by Maureen Garrett who did some covers showing Well World inhabitants for LASFAPA. Since I am a Well World fan, I asked Maureen if she'd do a cover for TB and here it is. I wish I had it to use last issue but you can't have everything.

Oh yes, the table of contents may be a bit off as I did it before getting this zine in its final form. The letters through that of Chris Martin is correct but the articles are very iffy as I have four articles and few pages left for articles. Some will go to Dave for the July issue which will be larger than usual as it will contain an Annual.

Not much has happened since March, I didn't go to any cons. I'm still behind in writing letters, apas and other fanac. The PO has informed me that there is no such person as Anji Valenza ~~at~~ ~~Apple~~.

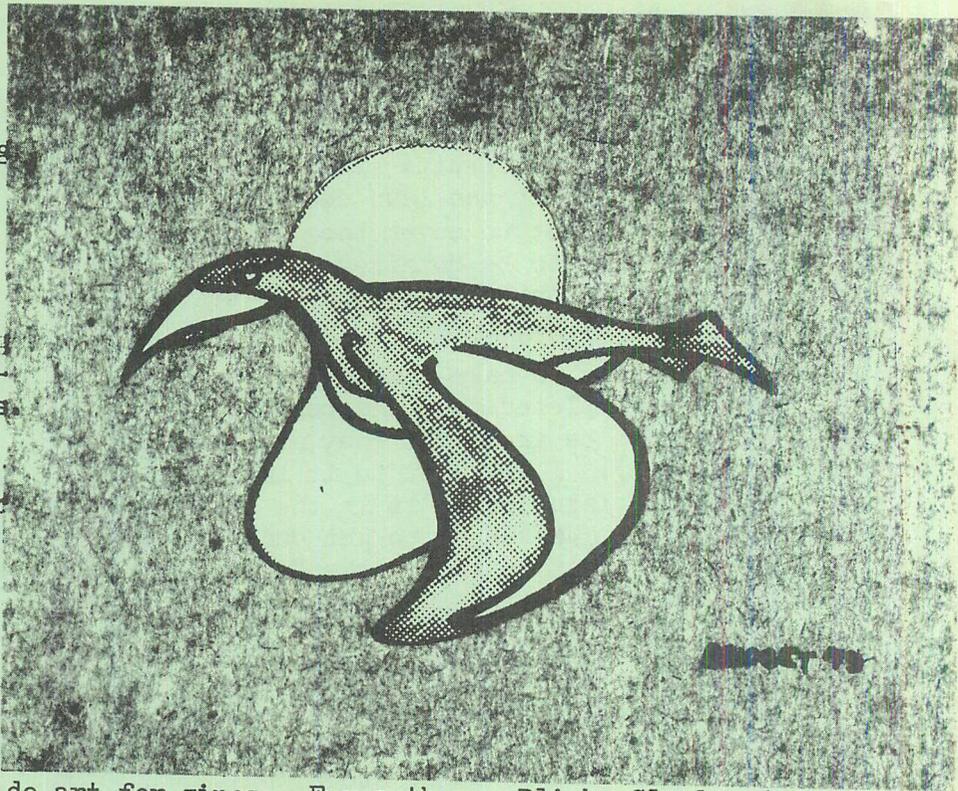
I did get my ticket for SeaCon and also a rail pass so I can travel all over England. I will be going to Edinburgh and coming home from London. I have six days that I don't know where I'll be though it looks like I'll be attending a medieval banquet. That's what I get for travelling with SCA people. And I hated the Middle Ages.

Some people asked what "pwd" stands for. It stands for Patrick William Duncan who is the other half of this team and often does stencilling for me. He did a lot of the March issue as I was sick.



New Members

- Warren Cartright BD: 2-26-49
 1901 Minnehaha Ave S Com. Sci.
 Apt 317 Inst: writing
 Minneapolis, MN art, photo.
 55404 cons, chess.
- Joyce Fickies BD: 5-11-32
 309 Pin Oak Circle Med. Secy
 Apt A-1 Inst: editing
 Mishawaka, IN pubbing, cor-
 46544 res, fanzines.
- Paul Flores BD: 1-12-59
 3551 Victory Dr Textile worker
 #308-F Inst: writing
 Columbus, GA corres, zines
 31903 Has typer
- Abner Goldberg BD: 8-18-51
 3841 Mentone Ave Bookkeeper
 Apt 19 Inst: writing
 Culver City, CA art, colls
 90230 will write or do art for zines. Fav author: Blish, Clarke, Asimov.
- Laurence Gray BD: 6-23-59. Inst: taping, cons, fanzines. Has cassette. Has been active in Little Rock SF club. Inst SF 11 years. Likes most authors and reads most zines.
- Charlene Hinchliffe Student. No known birthday. Inst: writing, editing, pubbing, cons, art, reviewing, taping, corres, fanzines, CB. Has typer, ditto cassette, taper, Inst SF 10 years. Likes most writers.
- Sue Hutchinson BD: 3-31-59. Secretary. Inst: writing, editing, colls, corres, cons, fanzines, games. Has typer, cassette. Inst in SF as long as she could read. Fav. authors: McCaffrey, Kurtz, MZB.
- Jill (Scotty) Matthews BD: 9-25-49. Inst: writing, art, reviewing, fanzines, cons, colls, S&SF S&S. Active in NE Atlanta pen people, Friends of Darkover, Lawrenceville, GA 30245. Inst SF 10 years. Reads almost anything; likes most authors.
- Owen K. Laurion BD: 6-3-50. Hotel auditor. Inst: writing, corres. pubbing, fanzines, will do club work. Prefers corres, editing clubzines. Has typer. Very inst in fanzines. Fav authors: Varley, McCaffrey, MZB, Sheffield.
- William E. Neal Jr BD: 2-10-48. Inst Colls everything. Will work for club. Could write for pubs. Has cassette, typer, never active in fandom. Member of SFF. Fav authors: Heinlein, Tolkien, Dickinson, Pohl, ERB, Simak.
- Pamela J. Nicholson BD: 5-4-55. Inst: books, fanzines. Has typer. Inst SF 6 years. Inst fandom 3 years. Fav writers: Marshak, Culbreath, Trimble, Yorba Linda, CA 92686
- Michael Roden BD: 5-14-52. Inst art, corres, pubbing, will do club work. Has typer, litho, will do artwork. Fav authors: Lovecraft, Derleth, Bloch. Reads Starlog, Omni, Future, and Heavy Metal.
- E.C. Schwartzin (Liz) BD: 7-6-55. Software Eng. Inst writing, corres, pubbing, fanzines, no time for club work. Has typer, mimeo. Inst fandom 6 years. Mem. LASFS. Fav authors: LeGuin, Lafferty, Niven, Clement.
- Pat Turner BD: 12-29-50. Tax clerk. Inst writing, editing, reviewing, colls, corres, cons, stamps. Would like to try pubbing. Has typer limited access to photocopier. Fav authors: MZB, Tolkien, McCaffrey



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Irvin Koch

I liked the We Also Heard From column. It was just the sort of thing I wanted to see in TIGHTBEAM. It should convince people that masses of letters are not being squeezed out by articles.

The July TIGHTBEAM will contain an Annual and will be produced in great enough quantities to be sold at Nasfic. Some copies will probably go to SeaCon as well. The editor for the July issue will be Dave Minch and the deadline will be July 1.

A project does not need to be supported by N3F dues money to be listed in TNFF. The Birthday Card Project is supported by donations. Anyone who feels very strongly about not getting a card can write to Elaine asking her not to send one.

There is another group in the Roanoke area that also was disgusted by Rovacon and plans to put on a rival con. It is usually better for security forces to wear armbands rather than dress up in costumes.

Donald Franson
6543 Babcock Ave
North Hollywood, CA
91606

Once again the subject of N3F ads in the prozines comes up (in N'APA, but it belongs here.) This is a good idea but it has limitations.

You won't get a flood of new members, as those who haven't tried it imagine, just a trickle. More important, much more important, is that the new members you do get may be disappointed.

Trouble is, they'll send in \$6, and expect \$6 worth of goods or entertainment at once. This is not possible, what with the zine schedules and postal delays. When they do get zines and information, they may not be interested in anything we have to offer, may feel like asking for their money back, but are too polite or apathetic to do so. Thus they stay on all year and account for some of our deadwood.

The way to go is to advertize a sample of each of our zines, which would also include some information on our activities, for a smaller sum. One TNFF and one TIGHTBEAM preferably: the latest, as activities date fast.

I suggested this idea two years ago. John Robinson, then president, approved of the idea and sent a letter to a prozine editor, making the offer. The letter was published and about a dozen responded. About half joined, and most of these became active, since we culled out the potential deadwood at the start. The 2 for \$1 deal has since been raised to 2 for \$2, and maybe that hurt it some. The idea is not to make money (nor to lose it) but to make sure that those who join know what they are getting into. The \$1 is convenient to send, and is still one-sixth of a year's dues for one-sixth of a year's zines. But it might work with \$2 if advertized more. Not only F&SF, but ASIMOV's now has classified ads.

We don't have to spend money on ads anyway. That's what the Publicity Dept. is for -- to get us free publicity.

And-- whatever happened to the Recruiting Bureau? I volunteer for this, if it's re-activated by the Directorate.

((A few brief comments. I think Janie Lamb mentioned that the bookkeeping on the Tufer deal was troublesome. It also makes it very difficult to plan exactly how many zines to publish. Yet I can see that the sample idea is a good one. Any comments?)

(Diane Potter: con't from page 28)

If you know of any artists that would like to draw for either the Venus Avatar series or the Cathouse in general (our loc column will be the "Litter Box": the ads the "Scratching Post"; so on and so forth). I would appreciate if you could send me names and addresses of willing ~~willing suppliers~~ artists or else Marye Wexford, the poor editor and Caryl Thompson, the poor publisher, might be doing most of the artwork AND THEY DON'T WANT TO!!! ((Well, I'm having a similar problem. But any artist who is interested can contact you.))

(Duff---"Whatever Happened... con't from page 8)

"It was a cold winter day in Chicago. Mack Donigan walked with a heavy tread down Taylor Street, his trench coat flapping in the sudden, gusting wind, a wind so chill it bit into his bones. Suddenly he heard a scream in the night..."

With a cracking voice I asked the old man, "Did he leave these things to anybody?"

"No," he said. "He didn't have anyone to leave them to."

"Do you mind if I take these manuscripts?"

"Go ahead," said the old man. "I was gunna throw everything in this apartment out to make room for a new tenant."

With shaking hands I reached for the manuscripts and picked them up. What would I do with these? I wondered. Sell them for high prices at conventions; brag about my collection of original Swain manuscripts? Suddenly, they fell apart in my hands, scattering to the winds, blowing out the window on a breeze.

"I have to get out of here," I said turning around and feeling sick.

The old man watched as I ran out of the apartment, clattering down the stairs like the devil was at my heels. I pounded toward the El station and raced up to the platform. I finally stopped, my chest heaving, sweat bursting out on my forehead. I looked back one more time at the old apartment building. I couldn't believe it; I just couldn't believe it.

Perhaps I would tell this story at a convention; perhaps I wouldn't. Somehow it seemed a thing that was better left quiet. No one knew him anymore, no one but me. Mack W. Swain had passed on, and he hadn't even left a ripple in the world of science-fiction.

"Damn!" I sobbed. "Damn!"

Lynne here--- it looks like I have room for some odds and ends.

As of today (June 4), TB is all ready to go out except that I have not yet received one page from Joanne Burger that I sent her to electrostencil. Once it gets here, I will run it off and collate TB for the bulk mailing. I just hope the PO hasn't eaten it.

Chris Martin definately gets the brickbat award this issue. Thereaare a lot of Poul Anderson fans out there who took his put down of Anderson's work, a bit hard.

Caryl Anne Thompson wrote in asking why she was not getting TB or TNFF. It seems she gave a coa to Joanne at Iggy and Joanne either misplaced it or forgot about it. I would suggest anyone with a coa send it in to Janie Lamb. That way it gets out to the zine editors.

Caryl Anne Thompson, 604 Vernet St., Richardson, TX 75080

art credits: Bridget pg 4
Rodan pg 10, 17, 19
Thilenius pg 21
Valenza pg 9

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO MACK W. SWAIN

by Steven Duff

Dear Mike;

Thank you for your letter. You know it's been over forty years since a fan wrote to me, and frankly I'm surprised that it should happen now. The stories you mentioned, "Swamp Girl of Neptune" and "The Jackals of Space," didn't strike any immediate chords in my memory. I had to dig them out and reread them.

Do you know that I still have my first encouraging letter from an editor framed and hanging on my bedroom wall?

Anyway, I'm glad you found more than just hack pulp adventure in my stories. You are the only reader I can remember who noticed the satire in my tales, and I always tried for the depth of characterization you mentioned.

As you know I didn't write many science fiction stories, only about ten. After that I started writing detective fiction, but quit after five rejections. I sold two true confession stories under the pseudonym of Lester Prather, and I wrote one novel about the Depression called "The Harlequin of Bleeker Street." It garnered poor reviews and has since then sunken into the obscurity that visited all my works.

Things aren't going too well for me these days. My wife died last year, and all that keeps me going is social security. I am somewhat elderly, and I don't get around very much.

The illustration you drew for "The Jackals of Space" was very inspiring. Looking back over that old issue of "Planet Busters", I can see that it is superior to the illustration which originally accompanied it. Come to think of it, I wonder what happened to that artist?

You mentioned that you would like to stop by and visit me. I would be delighted. That at least would make your efforts in discovering my address worthwhile. And it would be nice to have company again.

Hope to see you soon.

Sincerely;

Mack
Mack W. Swain

I took a bus to the Howard Street El. From there I rode down to Ravenswood and Morse. It was hard to believe this was really happening, that I was actually going to meet one of those old-time pulp authors face to face!

I walked down Morse, fast-stepping it, until I came upon the decrepit old apartment building. There was a dark, unwelcoming air about it. Though the rest of the world was sunny, it seemed there was something rotten and unhealthy about this apartment. The wood was decayed, the bricks were sooty, and an unpleasant odor wafted in the doorway.

I walked up to the small foyer and looked over the doorbells. There it was! Mack W. Swain, but it looked as if the tag had been half ripped out. I rang the doorbell, but got no answer. That was odd, I'd called Mack just that morning to arrange everything, the time and so on. I rang again, insistently.

An old man in a rumpled sweater came rushing down the stairs. He opened the door and snapped, "Whaddaya want?"

"Are you Mr. Swain?," I asked, hoping he wasn't.

"NO," he said, then more softly. "Didn't you hear the news?"

"What news?," I asked.

"Old crazy Mack died about an hour ago," he said, wringing his hands. "He was down at the bar as usual, and he was talking about some friend of his that was coming to see him after all these years, then all of a sudden, he just fell back in his chair and died. Out like a light."

I don't know exactly what looks passed over my face at that moment, but I recall that I became dizzy and had to grab for support.

"Do you think I can... see his apartment?," I asked.

The old man looked like he was debating it with himself. "Well," he said, "I dunno.... alright, sure, follow me."

He led me up the stairs to the apartment on the third floor which faced the street. The door opened with a creak and left me staring at a small, three room apartment.

Dust-choked sunlight struggled in through the cracked window shades, to fall upon a rugless floor. A single desk stood by the window, and an old, antique typewriter sat upon it. It was a monstrous, ugly contraption. All black and dead looking. I walked over and pressed on its keys, and it seemed they were cemented together. No wonder his letter had had such faded print.

In the kitchen I found several dirty pots and dishes piled in the sink, and the remnants of a breakfast of Chef-Boy-Ar-Dee lasagna. In his bedroom I found the framed letter, now yellowed with age, from Dale Sirkowski, editor of Sizzling Science Fiction. It read:

Dear Mr. Swain;

We're sorry, but "The Space Ferry" is not what we're looking for right now. However you show definite talent and fine narrative technique. Try us again with some thing else.

Sincerely;

Dale Sirkowski

May 8, 1936

There was a chest of drawers over in one corner, and my drawing from "The Jackals of Space" was propped against it. I stared at it wordlessly, my tongue refusing to form words. I walked over and doopened the chest, to find several yellowed envelopes, as well as a few stacks of mouldering manuscripts.

I picked up one envelope, took out the letter inside. It was very old, made from strange paper, and seemed about to crack along the edges. However, I had the feeling it had been read recently. I looked at it, feeling as if I were breaking in on someone's love life. It read:

Dear Mack;

I was really impressed by your story "Fire Maids from Aldebaron" in the September issue of "Worlds Away". I considered letterhacking the magazine, but since we've corresponded before, I thought it would be better to contact you personally..."

Practically wincing, I laid the letter back in its envelope, and put it back in its place. I looked over the manuscripts, and the top one was entitled, "Mack Donigan, Ladykiller." Obviously it was one of his detective stories. I read further.

(con't on page 6)

Two hawks from Earth

by Philip José Farmer

reviewed by Lynne Holdom

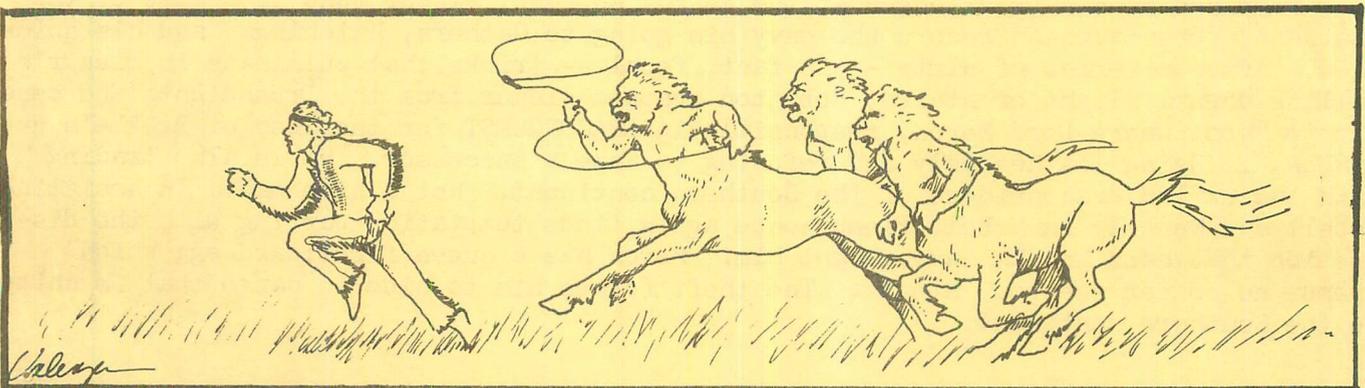
I am a sometime Farmer fan. I have enjoyed some of his books (the first two RIVERWORLD novels for example,) while with others I cannot get page 5. However I was anxious to read this one as it contained elements that normally appeal to me. One: it was an alternate universe story and these, if seriously developed rather than one where magic works, I usually like. Two: it uses American Indian cultures as some of the alternate ones with which the protagonist Roger Two Hawks, himself of Iroquoian background, comes in contact with.

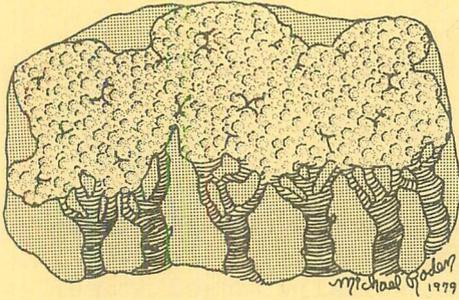
Before I go any further, I should state that this novel had a previous incarnation as THE GATE OF TIME. This version is quite a bit expanded as well as having some bowdlerized scenes restored. Farmer is dealing with some extremely brutal cultures and does not spare the reader the less pleasant aspects of primitive (or even not so primitive) cultures.

The story line is simple. Roger Two Hawks is a US airman on a raid to bomb the oil fields of Ploesti, Rumania to prevent them from falling into German hands. He encounters a German bomber; the two fight and time is wrenched. Two Hawks and one survivor among his crew, Pat O'Brien, a Chicagoan of Irish background. At first neither of them realizes what has happened as neither speak Rumanian, but Two Hawks is interested in history and anthropology and especially in American Indian culture and soon comes to realize what must have happened, impossible as it seems.

Their problems begin in earnest when the powers of this world begin to believe that there may be some truth in Two Hawks' wild statements. In any case they cannot allow him, with his superior technical knowledge, to fall into enemy hands. Since this world, like Roger's own, is in the midst of a world war, Two Hawks is sought by a great many people. He ends by working for Perkunisha which occupies the territory that Germany, Austria, Poland and Lithuania occupy in his world though the language is related to Lithuanian. But Two Hawks is in something of a dilemma. Just what does he owe any power in this universe? Certainly Perkunisha is not to be equated with the Germany of his own just because the two occupy the same space and have a similar ethnic makeup. So why shouldn't he work for the country with the most power and the highest standard of living? He is at a disadvantage because of his dark skin but that is nothing new. His erstwhile enemy, Horst Raske, is also in Perkunisha and agrees that feuds that began in one universe are pointless in another. Yet Two Hawks has an ingrained sympathy for the underdog which Perkunisha certainly isn't.

The parallel universe is well realized. It is a world where North and South American have stayed beneath the waves except for the peaks of the Andes, Rockies and Cascades. This affects the Old World through the lack of certain plants and animals such as horses, tomatoes, potatoes and quinine. But the most important





difference is the lack of the Gulf Stream which has given Europe much more brutal winters than they now have. Also due to the lack of the New World, various Indian tribes have conquered parts of the Old. Thus the Iroquois are in Southern Russia and the Sioux occupy our Hungary. This seems a bit far-fetched to me. The American Indian, according to modern theory, is descended from an extremely small original group (this is deduced from the great similarity of blood groups and tissue types.)

I would think that the Asiatic ancestors of the Indians would have been absorbed into varying groups there rather than preserving their identities. But this is a minor quibble which I mention in passing.

Horst Raske was well drawn. It would have been easy to make him an archvillanous Nazi type so common in books and films. Raske is none of this. He is an opportunist, a timeserver and something of a rogue. He joined the air force as that was the only way he could advance and live a comfortable life. He is at home in Perkunisha all the more so since he is half Lithuanian and that was the language of his childhood. He likes Roger Two Hawks personally and this affection is reciprocated. It is difficult to dislike such a charming rogue. All this does not make him any less deadly.

On the other hand, O'Brien is a caricature --- a stage Irishman --- who exists only to mention his dear sainted mother and various Catholic (Irish Catholic at that) aphorisms. Sure all Irishmen love corned beef, cabbage and potatoes. Arrghh!

The ending seemed a bit tacked on as well, rather than following logically. But it does, whatever else, show that the mores of one culture do not mix well with those of another, very different, one. I liked the book very much and would recommend it.

TWO HAWKS FROM EARTH by Philip Jose Farmer

Ace June 1979 \$1.95

Dragondrums

by Anne McCaffrey

reviewed by Susan Schwartz

While I was running, not walking into McBooks to grab DRAGONDRUMS, a metermaid was ticketing my car. Never mind, DRAGONDRUMS is worth it. Third in the series of Pern juveniles that McCaffrey began with DRAGONSONG and continued with DRAGONSENGER, DRAGONDRUMS begins with a musician's tragedy. Piemur, Menolly's first friend in the Harperhall, loses his voice right before a major Gather. Because of his many escapades, he nearly loses a place in the Harperhall as well, but Robinton, Menolly, and Sebell assign him to the Drum master and to a sort of musical spy detail that Robinton has instituted to keep Pern safe for Dragonkind.

Deprived of his privileged status as boy soprano, Piemur runs into some of the nastiest apprentices on record who envy his going to Gathers, Hatchings, and his quick mind. After a series of dirty -- in fact, fecal -- tricks that culminate in Piemur's falling down a flight of stairs, Robinton rescues Piemur from the Drumheights and sends him to Nabol where Lord Meron, responsible in DRAGONQUEST for the loss of Brekke's queen dragon, is dying loathesomely and refusing to name a successor. He is also trading with the exiled dragonriders of the Southern continent. Not a nice man. In assisting Sebell and Menolly in Nabol, Piemur once again finds temptation warring with the discretion that hard knocks have taught him. Meron has a queen firelizard egg which Piemur no sooner sees but steals. The theft forces him to hide in cargo that is shipped to the Southern continent.

Forced, like Menolly, to live Holdless, Piemur adapts and finds, to his delight, that he is more resourceful and independent than he imagined. He meets up with Sharra (seen as healer and Jaxom's lady-to-be in THE WHITE DRAGON), who teaches him the way of the Southern Continent. Meanwhile Menolly, Sebell, and Robinton are looking for him, but he doesn't especially want to be found. In the course of their search, Menolly's bronze fire lizard and Sebell's Kimi mate which means that so do Menolly and Sebell...and about time! When they find Piemur, they find a boy well on his way to manhood, happy in the place he has made for himself and which Robinton confirms by naming him Drumjourneyman and assigning him to Southern Hold.

I liked this book. McCaffrey's writing has steadily improved: she is the only writer I know who can handle childish pranks, or not-so-childish ones, without being cutesy. Her descriptions are good, occasionally pungent; she softens nothing -- regret at opportunities lost, conflicting allegiances (Menolly's, for example, to both Robinton and Sebell), or the realities of treachery, greed and death. All these issues are confronted in a way that's bound to be acceptable to people who buy the book for their children, though I suspect most will monopolize it themselves.

Menolly shows herself as a resilient and compassionate person, adapting well to love and security, determined to pass it on to Piemur, who is learning that being too clever or too submissive never endears anyone to anyone else. Certainly he has good friends to help him in the learning process; because we like them, we tolerate his occasional connivances, knowing they wouldn't bother with him if he didn't have great potential.

We trust McCaffrey too. No one is better than she at constructing warm human relationships or extending love to other creatures like dragons or firelizards. The book is worth having, even if -- like me -- you get stuck with hardback prices and a flaming parking ticket.

DRAGONDRUMS by Anne McCaffrey

Athenium \$8.95

THE FADED SUN: KESRITH

by C.J. Cherryh

reviewed by Mary Frey

C. J. Cherryh is a creator of worlds par excellence. Her alien civilizations are living, breathing things, complete with many small details that aid in lending them aura of reality. Kesrith is another such fine creation.

Kesrith is a world on the edge of a galactic treaty zone, now inhabited by mri (human-like) and regul (non-human). The mri are a society with three castes -- child raisers, scholars, mercenary warriors -- and numerous taboos. The regul are truly strange beings who live to incredible ages, gaining poundage as they go. A mature regul must rely on a mechanical sled for even the simplest movement from one place to another. Regul learn instantaneously and never forget anything. They run a galactic trading empire; the mri are their hired army.

Most recently a war has been fought with Terrans. It has been concluded by treaty between regul and human. In the opinion of the mri, the regul have sold out to save their well-fed hides. One provision of the treaty is that Kesrith be handed over to the humans.

What will the mri do now? Their numbers are sadly depleted, and, in fact, only a brother and sister survive in the youngest generation. Enter the assistant to the human ambassador, who gets himself in a real fix and ends up in the wilderness with the two young mri.

The theme of the book is the development of understanding and trust between alien races. This is handled extremely well -- there is no sudden camaraderie, and strange habits stay strange from both viewpoints. What trust develops comes from the pure necessity of survival and it is tenuous at best.

If there is a shortcoming in this novel, and I believe there is, it is that the main characters are too much enslaved to their respective cultures. Belief is willingly suspended for the cultures, since they are so finely portrayed. The characters, unfortunately, seem a bit cardboardish and two-dimensional in their emotions because of the need to represent their respective ways.

KESRITH is a book well worth your time. And time it does take to read, although Cherryh has used fewer "alien" words than in some of her other works. KESRITH deserves its Hugo nomination, but whether it deserves your vote depends on how much importance you place on characterization.

THE FADED SUN KESRITH by C.J. Cherryh

DAW \$1.95

THE MASK OF THE SUN

by Fred Saberhagen

reviewed by P.W. Duncan

I am coming to the conclusion that a great many SF writers are frustrated historical novelists. I recently read a novel by Mack Reynolds that would have been better as a stright historical novel without the SF trappings and now this book comes from the same mold.

Basically this is a novel about Pizarro's conquest of the Inca Empire. Only Mike Gabrieli has been sent into the past to prevent this from happening. As an aid he has a golden mask which enables him to see into the future and avoid his enemies. However though he has been told that changing the past will only affect an alternate reality, Mike isn't so sure. What happens if his present is wiped out by a changed past? And where did the mask come from? The agents he is working with have told him to shoot anyone on sight who is seen with a mask. They also think he is someone else. What will happen when they discover the imposture?

Unfortunately these questions are brought up but never answered. People keep telling Mike that his world is still there but he has not actually seen it at the time the novel ends. When Mike's brother, killed by Aztec agents, is alive two chapters later, I thought it would be explained by a fancy time loop. But it is never explained at all. Nor is Mike's fellow agents acceptance of the mask. True, it does cause Pizarro's downfall, but....

After all this, it sounds as if I disliked the book. I didn't. The story is compelling in and of itself. Saberhagen has quite obviously studied a great deal about Inca customs and about the Spanish conquest of Peru. This scholarship shows through. He ends with an alternate Inca state which will dominate the South America of his alternate reality. However I must admit that I do not see how a state which has control of all the minutae of everyday life -- the Spanish neglected the people being interested only in quick riches -- ever became a bulwark of freedom in this or any other reality. Yet I would still recommend this book. There is plenty of action to carry one through and it is so obviously a labour of love.

THE MASK OF THE SUN by Fred Saberhagen

Ace \$1.95 Feb 79

PLANET OF ADVENTURE SERIES

By Jack Vance

reviewed by Greg Hills

The PLANET OF ADVENTURE series is undoubtedly one of Jack Vance's greatest accomplishments. It is composed of four books: CITY OF THE CHASCH, SERVANTS OF THE WANKH, THE DIRDIR and THE PNUME. These are also known as the Adam Reith saga.

The "Planet of Adventure" is Tschai, 212 light years from Earth. Its sun is the "smoky yellow" star called Carina 4269. Tschai is inhabited by several alien races, and also by human beings. The chief aliens are the Chasch, the Wankh, the Dirdir and the Pnume. These four alien races live on Tschai in a stalemate situation that has paralyzed the normal state of warfare between them for thousands of years. The Pnume are native, and dwell in their underground cities all over Tschai. The other three came simply to prevent any of their number from seizing and holding Tschai for their own. Actually the Chasch came first as colonists; but that is of no concern in the time of the saga.

212 years before the saga properly opens, one of the many types of human being (the main ones being Chaschmen, Wankhmen, Dirdirmen, Pnumekin, wild men and Marsh men. There are also subgroups of the Yao, the Ziss, the Thang...), the Yaos, were in a state of religious fervour, believing that man's home-world lay in a certain constellation. (By chance, it does in fact lie in that constellation). They built powerful transmitters and sent a blast of radio waves in the presumed direction of Earth. Then the cities that sponsored the effort are destroyed by missiles from an unknown source, after which the "Cult" went into an eclipse --- was out of fashion.

212 years later, those signals were picked up on Earth, and a survey ship was dispatched to investigate. It locates Tschai, but yet another mysterious missile destroys the vessel as it orbits the planet. Only two men, the Scouts, escape the destruction, as they had departed the ship in a landing boat. The explosion damages the boat so that it crashes on Tschai, where one of the scouts is killed almost immediately. The other -- Adam Reith -- is taken prisoner by wild men in the first of his many harrowing perils.

Reith salvaged some things from the ruins: a scanscope (new, improved binoculars -- very like those in STAR WARS), a medical kit, a gun. With these, he must make his way across Tschai until at length he can find some way of returning to Earth. Most of his adventures are shared by two companions: Traz Onmale, ex-boy chief of the wild emblem-men, and Ankhe at afram Anacho, an outcast Dirdirman Superior.

In each book Reith meets one of the alien races, as the titles suggest. In CITY OF THE CHASCH he destroys the Blue Chasch (there are three types: Old Chasch, the first comers; Blue Chasch, who later came to dominate the Old Chasch; and Green Chasch, who were imported as mercenaries. Now the three Chasch groups are caught up in the stalemate mentioned earlier) dominance over human beings, and destroys a Chasch city with the aid of the humans and a renegade horde of Green Chasch. In SERVANTS OF THE WANKH he breaks the subtle power the Wankhmen had been holding over the Wankh....he also discovers who destroyed the senders of the signals that brought him to Tschai, and who destroyed his ship. In THE DIRDIR he hunts the predatory race as they normally hunt men. In THE PNUME he runs up against the subtle and powerful indigenous race of Tschai and, after terrible dangers, comes out of their dwellings with a Pnumekin girl who remains with him thereafter.

There is no secret to the ending: he obtains his ship and departs Tschai, in a most satisfactory conclusion to the series. There is also the possibility he may find Earth too tame for him after Tschai and that he may one day return in due course...

That is the basic plot outline, and there is no need to go on into more detail. It is well done and reasonably self-consistent (although Pnume float in one book but not in another!). It forms a well conceived work that other writers might well have run together into one

massive volume....although each book is a novel in its own right, the whole thing moves forward steadily, though the direction is not entirely clear for some time. Thus the alternate title for the series; "the Adam Reith saga".

Leaving Tschai for now, we should take a look at Vance in general. He has turned out a goodly number of books: your reviewer admits to possession of 24, and knowledge of at least 6 others. These include the Hugo and Nebula Award winners, THE DRAGON MASTERS and THE LAST CASTLE...both being thin volumes: THE CASTLE CASTLE won its Hugo and Nebula in the Novelette section, while THE DRAGON MASTERS won in the "short fiction" (Novella and down) section. Notable groups of books/stories include THE DYING EARTH/ THE EYES OF THE OVERWORLD; the Durdane trilogy; the recent Big Planet series which I believe is as yet incomplete. His first published novel was TO LIVE FOREVER and the fact that it is his first novel shows. Yet even in the first book, Vance's style shows through.

Vance has a very rich -- almost florid -- way with words. Most of his characters rarely say things directly; the subject must be approached in a more or less circuitous manner: indeed considerable effort is expended in being complicated. Vance's prose is extremely involuted (now a cliché term with relation to his works!), and full of colours. Colour forms a major aspect of almost all of his descriptive passages ("There were low crags and rolling hills, thickets of harsh vegetation: ocher, tan, yellow, bone-white, pale whitish brown. Below was a brackish pond, a thicket of hard white cactus-like growths..")("grey breaches, a dark blue jacket. The grey furze smock he decided to discard....She wore a dark green gown..."). For those who know most of the shades mentioned in the course of any of his books, the characters come alive in vivid tones, even scent and sound. Indeed, it is his skill with words and his skill with strange cultures that makes Vance what he is.

Compared to the prose and cultures that parade past the reader, Vance's plots all follow a stark basic pattern...or maybe, considering, most of them do. The plot: young intelligent, versatile and imaginative man gets into scrape (crashes on alien planet; gets into trouble with the local boobies; becomes dissatisfied with his lot and sets out for fame and fortune; chases villains all over the galaxy)...travels through many strange and wondrous places, either as active leader or passive follower...defeats the baddies (with help)...settles back to live happily ever after. Along the way he and those he consorts with (in all his books so far read, your reviewer has never found a heroine as Prime Character) are developed into distinct personalities, and the skill with which Vance constructs a believable and self-consistent stranger must be read to be felt (not understood...for if one understood how he does it, that would be 9/10ths of the way to being able to do it also...) However, similar though his plots are, he brings to each a vitality that carries them through; and all the plots are tight and well organized...rarely are there any loose ends to be haggled by critics. Other writers take note.

Essentially Vance writes borderline science fantasy. Some of his works are unmistakably SF, some science fantasy. The PLANET OF ADVENTURE series is SF, but only because it has science as its base. By the simple substitution of magic in a few key places, it would be fantasy without suffering at all.

PLANET OF ADVENTURE is recommended to almost everyone. It has aspects that will appeal to the mature reader, yet may also be read as straight adventure. I suspect many will look no farther than the adventure level, and go away swearing never to touch Vance again. Yet in PoA Vance slips in many satirical swipes at human culture; he creates truly alien races (insofar as any human can). What of the Phung, a creature apparently related to the Pnume? It is a solitary being much given to pranks and mischief, and utterly heedless of its own life and limb. "Mad" it is called, yet there is a sort of method to its madness. What of the Wankh, so alien that even the Wankhmen, raised from birth to Wankh ways, cannot understand them.

In short, whoever the reader, PLANET OF ADVENTURE has something for him. Get them.

PLANET OF ADVENTURE by Jack Vance

Mayflower and DAW

James J. Wilson
21 Spinning Wheel Rd
Hinsdale, IL 60521

I just received TBs #16 and 17, and found them fairly interesting. One problem was that you printed my name and address on the back of the entry form for the short story contest so no writers will have it.

One thing I found interesting was that few new members listed Harlan Ellison or Fritz Leiber among their favorite authors. Who, then, keeps voting them Hugos and Nebulas? (Or is that Nebulae?). ((Nebulas are voted on by other SF writers, not fans.)) I don't know how Leiber gets PRINTED let alone awarded for his writings, but that's just my opinion. As for Harlan, well, I tend to be a little impatient in my fan activities. ((So does Harlan.)) Not only can I not find his obscure items such as fanzines, I can't even find books by him. I'm thinking of starting a club or zine or something.

Another item of interest was Mary Zambreno's war stories of Winter in Chicago. I've decided that even that is preferable to spending another year as a student in Iowa. When I die, the worst possible punishment in Hell can't possibly be as bad as Iowa.

While I'm at it, I might as well bring up one more gripe. It seems that there is too much emphasis on fiction. Fiction writers have countless prozines, semi-prozines and various story contests. How can a person get experience writing non-fiction? ((I use more non fiction than fiction in TB and JUMEAUX. Send in a book review or something.)) So far I've been lucky in getting reviews in SFR. ((That's how I started in fandom.)) Also Stanley Schmidt is going to use an article of mine in the Brass Tacks section of January 80 ANALOG.

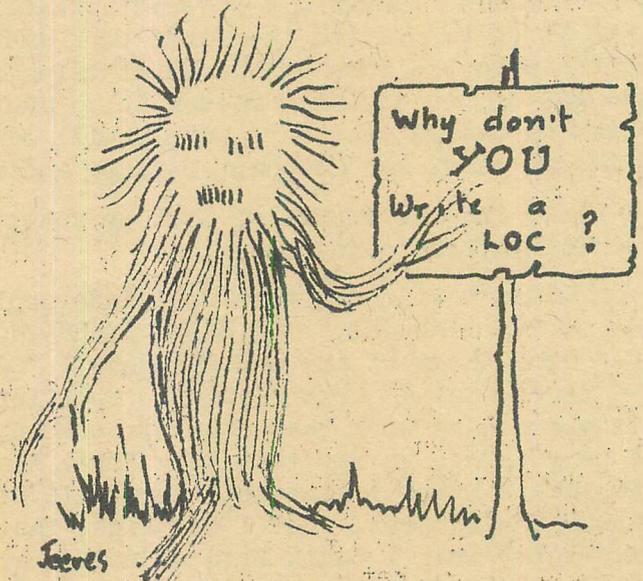
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Sally A. Syrjala
RR #1, Box 5E
West Barnstable
MA 02668

Enjoyed reading the Jack Chalker interview in the March TB. SF with political/social themes is of the most interest to me. I hadn't yet read DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW. However, the interview prompted me to do so. I went out and purchased a copy of the book yesterday. Now it sits before me awaiting reading as soon as a few locs are completed. Thanks for printing this most interesting interview.

Eddie Anderson---I have a few acquaintances (How can I call them friends?) who are less than ecstatic about SUPERMAN. However, I wonder if the general acceptance of the movie might not be a "hero search." There are so few who can fit into that category and every so often we all need something we can go "Gosh, Oh Wow!" over. This movie gives us that chance.

As the comic rendition of Superman spawned the movie, the movie is now affecting the comic. I have purchased a copy of a Superman Family comic with a cover depicting a helicopter falling upon Smallville and Superboy saving the day. The inside contains a tale of an earthquake-taming lesson for the future Man of Steel. Pa Kent's red pick-up truck falls into a chasm created by the quake. Mr. Kent then throws himself into said chasm to attract Superboy's attention. (I'm sure I would have found another way to do so!) After being rescued, Pa Kent tells Superboy, "Superboy is a champion of all the people! If you have a choice between saving one person or many -- you must save the maximum number....even if that one person is very close to you."



Irvin's message without his usual trappings, was rather bland and meek. And he has no doubt increased his chances at the next elections by showing that he is not the all-domineering dictator some people claim. (I intend to enter the 79/80 Story Contest just as soon as I find time to write this fantastic, universe-shaking masterpiece I haven't quite perfected in my head yet...)

Marahramahrama, what's in a name unless (like me) you don't know the correct form of spelling is? Marah, I gather. ((No. The book is called A VOICE OUT OF RAMAH. The planet it is set on is Marah. The editor got confused.)) No matter, it was an interesting review by Mary Frey and has fired me to find the book.

As I recall I've told you, have recently read and liked STORMQUEEN! It, and THE HERITAGE OF HASTUR are good books by any standards. They stand head and shoulders over all other MZB I've so far read.

Claw Mary Tyrrell time. No, I did not mean to imply that aliens arising from Eastern or other non Western but terrestrial cultures are 'truer' than those arising from Western. No. Never. ~~Though it does take more skill for a Western writer to use non-Western psychologies in his aliens.~~ Mary's assumptions are showing. By nonWestern, I meant just that: any source other than contemporary Western culture. To make it brief, I was railing against those writers who, through laziness or ignorance, simply take a person out of their own culture (in this case Western), exaggerate a few aspects, and add a few almost standard alien features (and a body to match). To make an alien. I'm not concerned (I should emphasize 'not') with creating a true alien. I am concerned with the creation of an original alien with observably different fundamental assumptions to those of the writer.

Mary, does have a point though, that a writer who succeeds well may estrange some of his readers. But what is this rubbish of comprehending the aliens? Does Mary really mean to claim she will like only a character in a book that she can comprehend, can grasp in their entirety? I'd never be satisfied with such a unidimensional puppet. I'm sure Mary wouldn't either (would you?). Such a person would have to reject books I gather Mary likes. No, the best human characters, say, are those who it is hard or impossible to grasp in their entirety. Why be chauvinistic and deny aliens the same prerogatives? A true person is multifaceted ~~though some politicians!!!~~ and the more one thinks one understands them, the more they surprize you...or so I've found. Is this an abnormal, unique finding? Now a true alien (we must assume) will also be multifaceted-but-different. They won't be just like someone from the human's own culture except by a veeerrrry long coincidence, although superficial aspects (say a mechanical culture) may hint at similarity. It's possible that they could, but I feel the chance is remote enough to justify my emphasis. And Anderson's aliens tend to be just this, remote chances. Monomaniacal humans in different flesh.

"Different but the same" is a valid literary viewpoint only if one cannot do better. Alas I feel Anderson can.

Brian Earl Brown. He could be right, he could be wrong. Personally I think that the attempt to mix what should have been a Flandry (or independent) story with the van Rijn stories is indeed the main reason MIRKHEIM fails. The strain of the attempted tie-in drained too much of his skill. And certainly, I did not expect to see the League crumble so fast. If Anderson really wanted to add the fall of the League to the mix in the book, he should not have attempted to bend already mined characters to the job. It would have been simpler to set the story 50 years later.

Can Brian name one long-lived social organization that was not, at core, selfish? He'll have to beat some mighty stiff competition such as the Roman Empire (which began essentially as a mercantile interest. The empire-building came later, after the effort of subduing Carthage had totally alterned Rome's mood. But the leaders of Roman society

were nonetheless more interested in their own interests than that of Rome. Carthage cut into their profits, not their city's security.) The Chinese civilization (which changed radically over the years but always retained its essential unique core, and its decadent, self-indulgent (excepting individuals like Ghenghis and Kublai Khan, who were in power very near the times that major changes had just occurred...e.g. the Mongol invasions that brought the Khans to power) leaders. It is the altruistic organizations that collapse early; collapse or go through convulsions, to emerge as profit-seeking as any other. I recall CORSO...do you have that organization in the US? ((I don't think so.)) Very corrupt, at least the NZ branch is.

And I still say van Rijn is inconsistent with previous development. He'd be far more likely to be looking for the most lucrative way out of the bind, even in his old age. He sounds terribly altruistic several times in MIRKHEIM. "Failing to display the self-centredness"? Correction, failing not to display the altruism.

Everyone is tired of IT, says Fred. In truth, there is very little IT to be had right now, and I blame it all on a military rally in China that

There are people in N3F who do not want it to grow, ~~it'd destroy their petty power~~ (sorry, political comment). They are few. They are quite noisy. When I came into N3F near the end of '77, I got the impression of a sunny place with no direction, nowhere to go. Since then, that impression has altered steadily. As the letters now in TB show, N3F is a lot more aggressive and forward-looking. It is attracting more neos or ex-gafiators than before. Its kudos in fandom has risen despite the wrangles.

And yet, looking at the March TB, I don't think it has lost the closeness that characterized the old N3F. It has gained a new dimension in addition, though. I feel that eventually the growth of the club will destroy this closeness.-- but only through sheer size. And then, of course, people will clump in smaller groups within the club and the closeness will continue that way.

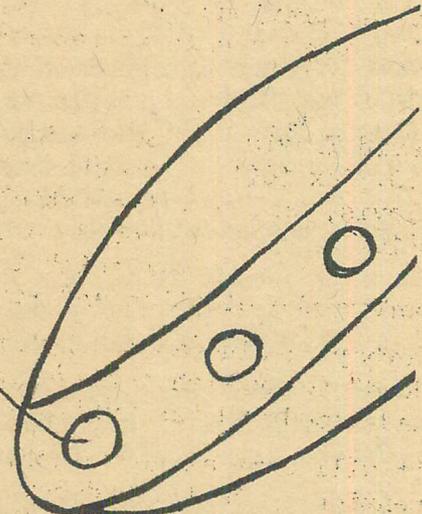
Of course I personally do care about N3F's 40 years of history. But I care even more about the 40 years to come, and the split second that is now. After all, the past is done, and the N3F is still doing.

N3F must grow, not because we're scared of decadence or for the sake of growth; but because enough N3Fers think it should grow if it is to fulfill the aims it has carried through those 40 years, to make it grow. Make sense? Why does a plant grow if it is placed in the right conditions and if its makeup is right? It grows because it can do nothing else. It would be very hard for N3F not to grow at present.

Frank Lee Linne
P.O. Box 45,
La Vernia, TX
78121

Just got the
March issue
and I thought
I'd comment.
First the cover,
it's well drawn. I'm tempted to

Stop worrying!
The guidebook
says they LOVE
people with green
thumbs!



try drawing the mer-creature freehand and I probably will. But for Ghus sake is it supposed to be a hermaphrodite or not? Mer-creatures come both ways. ((I thought it was male.))

About the Chalker interview: it made me realize what a strange situation I find myself in. For a year or two now I've been reading Poul Anderson and Andre Norton, no newer SF writers. I read his EMPIRE OF TIME, then WEB OF THE CHOZEN, ((Isn't THE EMPIRE OF TIME by Crawford Killian?)) and except for a book by Marion Zimmer Bradley and another by Michael Moorcock, all of the SF I have on hand is by Chalker. I wonder why Jack Chalker is suddenly haunting me? The only thing of his I read before this was a short story in ANALOG which didn't impress me as it seemed unnecessarily downbeat.

The only book reviewed in TB that I've read is STORMQUEEN. I always seems to have read the books that you review. I've also read THE HOSTAGE OF ZIR.

Arthur Hlavaty commenting on Anji Valenza's comments on aliens really set me off. Why does everyone seem to think that an extraterrestrial alien will be incomprehensible? Poul Anderson's aliens strike me as just the sort we're likely to find out there. I mean that seriously. When you come down to it, there's only one way of looking at reality (are you with me or not) and everything else is an elaboration of that. ((Needless to say I don't agree. Different human societies have different ways of perceiving reality. So do philosophers -- take a course in epistemology sometime. My own feeling is that if you write with a noticeably human viewpoint, why not use humans instead of aliens in your story?))

I found Chris Martin's comments on Anderson dismaying. I thought that had all been settled some time ago. One man said Anderson's work will be read and commented on when all the others, except maybe Heinlein and Asimov, have been forgotten. Like all great writer's Anderson's work is timeless.

Concerning Brian Earl Brown's comments on Anderson's fatalism: Poul Anderson is a Scandinavian-American which is just one step removed from Slavic. ((It is?)) As the Nordheimer grows old he becomes fatalistic. I know since I'm a Northern Celt which is at least as close to the previous Tribal incarnation. ((Actually I thought Linne was of Swedish derivation. I'm Norman and Poitouvan French with some Scottish and Yorkshire mixed in.))

David Travis So Fred Jakobcic is still fighting the election. Well, doubtless some
P.O. Box 1011 people are still worried about the Weimar Republic, Dr. Sun Yat Sen, and
Clovis, NM the Articles of Confederation. In our election only two people that I
88101 voted for, won (Congratulations Lynne! you were one of them) but regardless,
I think I am entitled to some peace after the election. We had vitriol
before the election and now we get sour grapes.

Perhaps a clue as to why Mr. Jakobcic lost can be found in his equating "better red than dead" to my wish for everyone to shut up about the election. My wish was written after I had voted and was published after the election. And it still goes.

It will come as no relief, but some interest to know that very shortly after my letter mentioning that I had never received any copies of EMPIRE was published in TIGHTBEAM, I received four copies in the same mail. Ah, the power of the press.

((I got a brief note from Mary Tyrrell saying she got EMPIRE #s 13 and 14. He has a new address: Box 967, New Haven, CT 06504.))

I would like to save the birthday card project. I agree with Harry Warner; when you reach a certain age, it is nice to be remembered on a day that once was very important to you.

Does BS Galactica get off the hook now that it has been cancelled? I never did get all the way through an episode.

Jane Dusek
125 East Wheelock Pkwy
St Paul, MN 55117

Thanks for the Jack Chalker interview; I'll have to check out WEB and AFTERGLOW. And you were right about MZB's STORMQUEEN. I "ran right out and bought it," and read it in one night!

Amid all the political pyrotechnics, there is something to note; in the recent special election we took yet another shot at settling the dues question, and voted on Irvin Koch's IRS/postal proposal. But reading the amendments, you found that the dues change was presented, in the same form, in both amendments. So the membership was asked, in effect, to vote on the same issue twice in one referendum. I find that very interesting.

Greg Hills: I agree with your comments for a balanced society (although "equality" is a far cry from test tube conception). Female and male are complimentary aspects, but unfortunately most radicals (there are sexist radicals, too) believe not that "all men (sorry) are created equal," but "some men are more equal than others...."

Chris Martin: It's nice to discover a fellow journalist in the ranks of fandom. I've never understood DNQ in the first place, anyway (maybe you and I and Greg Hills could form fandom's first Freedom of Information League).

Steve Duff: On board the Enterprise, eh? ~~Why/oh what~~ I know what "Bouncing Addresses" is like, with several friends (and some ex-friends) in the military.

I recommend you try to catch "Love at First Bite," a loosely written takeoff on "Dracula." Sure it isn't "Gone With the Wind," (npi) but it's marvelously funny, and the perfect cure for cabin fever. The trees started budding here only last week.

And speaking of Darkover, why doesn't Marion write in a character from Minnesota (You used to live here, Lynne? Tsk, tsk...) or Montana or Illinois (or wherever!) who knows how to deal with rotten weather? These Terranan from Arizona getting stuck in the Hellers during a blizzard crack me up!

((Someone from Montana told me that they used to get a radio message that the cold wave was over and the temperature was up to -20. Then there is the classic remark by Marty Cantor of Los Angeles that "it gets cold in Southern California in the Winter."))

Now that BATTLESTAR: GALACTICA has bitten the cosmic dust, we get to see it in a movie theatre with sensurround (I'd like to see how they manage the doom of Caprica)! Why didn't they give the writers (esp. "G.L.") over to the Cylons years ago?

Until next time, may you all find a gas station under 75.9!

~~*****~~

Roger Waddington
4 Commercial St
Norton, Malton,
North Yorkshire
YO17 9ES
England

Just received the January issue of TIGHTBEAM for which many thanks, though I don't know how long it's been on the journey; and indeed, I don't know whether I'm authorized to read it at all, for (and keep this quiet) I've let my membership in the N3F lapse....

Not for long, I hasten to add, and as soon as I realised, in went my six dollars; but there'll be a gap in my fanish history from December to April, that my biographers might have fun with; let's just say I was with you in spirit! Actually it was mostly the fault of the British winter and the British worker; the lorrymen went on strike, and then they closed the docks; and as soon as the mail started trickling through, the weather closed in and stopped everything again; oh, you don't know what a winter of discontent is until you've lived in England. Anyway, as a result, there were no issues of TB, no issues of TNFF to remind me that my sub was falling due, and very few fanzines at all; so I just pulled the shutters down, and went into hibernation, much like the rest of British fandom; and it's only now that I'm coming back to life again. ((The Feb TNFF was almost a month late. As of today -- May 26 -- I haven't gotten the April TNFF.))

Though I suspect all's not back to normal with the postal service, if that January TB went out on time. ((It was about a week and a half late.)) Certainly what's been taking two months now used only to take a month in the not-so-long-ago past, though I think that's only the price of progress. But there's a notice up in the local post office which tells of industrial (in) action in the London area, and that's the main site for sorting overseas mail; so I'm resigned to it for the time being, so long as some sign of life comes through! And, of course, there'll have to be a more positive response from this end.

And can I add my vote for the clearing of controversy from the pages of TB? The club and Koch-inspired variety, at least; for whatever we think, however we feel, we can surely live within the organization as it is, and there'll be time enough come August to make our votes and our feelings known; live for the day, is my motto. There's so much else we can get insensed about in the meantime.

I'm not so sure that I'm on the same wavelength as Greg Hills; for I'm a van Rijn and Trader team fan. I've read MIRKHEIM all the way through, and thoroughly enjoyed it, not being disappointed at all. Though maybe that's because of my outlook, or rather the other facets of life that I enjoy, which MIRKHEIM echoes, the (if it isn't being too flippant) "here at the end of all things" syndrome; that bitter-sweet memory of past things, past joys in the face of their coming destruction. It's why my greatest pleasure is to go out in the Autumn and watch the leaves fall from the trees, remembering their beauty; why a brilliant, sky-high blue day in the depth of winter with the memory of what's past means more to me than the most gorgeous summer's day, and why evening is my favourite time.... Mind you, I have to agree with him as far as the literary side of his criticism goes.

Of course SF on television is getting worse instead of better, and come to that so is SF in the cinema; it's all a part of growing up. We all come to it so young, so uneducated that all we can grasp is the wonder of space, the magic of all the ideas and we skate over the doubtless faulty and ill-conceived science, unknowing; it's only when we're taught more, when we're later on in life, that we can understand and see through all the faults, that laughable "scientific facts". I mean, I used to listen to the JOURNEY INTO SPACE saga on the radio, watch THE LOST PLANET on television (which incidentally came from a very successful radio series) put out on budgets maybe a hundredth part of that allocated to STAR TREK, with the now outdated Fifties view of the universe; and I'll go on remembering them when STAR TREK and CLOSE ENCOUNTERS and STAR WARS and SPACE 1999, for all their up-to-date science, for all the money spent on them, have disappeared. Of course in saying that, I must also realise that these will evoke as many fond memories themselves; I mean, they'll probably be as many people looking back on BATTLESHIP GALACTICA as the high point from which SF went downhill in years to come. ((That's a discouraging thought. I remember CAPTAIN VIDEO which was often corny and TOM CORBETT, SPACE CADET both from the Fifties more vividly than STAR TREK from the Sixties however.))

Anyway thanks again for TB; and I promise faithfully to keep up with the N3F from now on, and be more punctual and ready to answer. I mean if Yog can come up with all this delay, all this desert of empty postboxes when he's hardly trying, what will he do when he's really angry with me? ((Start a postal strike?? I should be over in your area of the world in Mid August sometime. I do want to see the ancestral village of Scagglethorpe and amyve get up to Scarborough.))

Sharron Albert
Box 80925
College, AK
99708

I certainly didn't expect to see parts of my letter to you pubbed. I don't mind --- it was just a surprise. You-all out there in the Lower 48 states may think -20F weather is cold, but up here in Fairbanks, we don't think cold until -40F. I personally enjoyed our cold waether in February. There are a lot of newcomers in our ~~Alut~~ fair city since the pipeline who probably thought our stories of cold weather were just that -- stories. But every day during the 2-3 weeks it lasted as I drove to work, I saw fewer and fewer cars and more and more parking spots, as cheechako cars quit running. Now maybe they will

begin to understand why we tend to help each other out when we see someone in trouble anywhere -- it's no joke when your car quits at a corner somewhere at -50. So when it warmed up to -20 it was WARM comparatively.

Greg Hills: what do you mean you've never read anything about a matriarchal/feminist society that is any more likely than GOR? Try reading WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF FOREVER. That's the best one I've read yet. Probably part of the reason is that very few have been written, especially with a female protagonist. (DISPOSSESSED comes to mind. It has the basic tenets of the newly-developing field of feminist utopias, but lacks the female point of view). I am in the middle now of THE RUINS OF ISIS by Marion Zimmer Bradley, and I am not sure about that one --- there are things I both like and dislike. A couple of basic differences between the male utopia (which is most often a dystopia) and female utopias are: women believe that all people are basically good, and given the chance will exhibit such. Men believe that people are basically bad and need to be protected from themselves (examples are BRAVE NEW WORLD and 1984.) Men tend to develop technologically without regard for nature, and women tend to go with nature's rhythms. These are of course generalizations about literary methods: they are not to be construed as negative thoughts on my part toward men, or any other specifics. I just took a course called Feminist Utopias and have more information about the genre, but unfortunately my notes are home and I am typing this at work. If anyone is interested in knowing more about what we discussed in class, drop me a line. I will answer eventually and after July will be able to correspond more quickly than I have to date. ((I suggest you read VENUS PLUS X by Sturgeon and ECOTOPIA by Callenbach. Both are by men yet describe utopias you describe as "feminine". About not getting where we are without the radical feminists, again I have to disagree with Greg. I don't think we could have given individuals the personal life choices they now have without the radicals bringing to our attention the facts that things were unequal and not good for all of us. I will agree that the middle-of-the-road person who lives her/his life setting example is the way in which the society will eventually change (it's called grassroots movement), but the radicals were needed first and still are, to make sure we don't backslide.

Chris Martin mentioned being surprised about the fandom interest in MZB and mentioned he didn't remember her being that big back when she started publishing. I don't know about anyone else, but I remember back in 64 or 65 when I first read SWORD OF ALDONES. And I never forgot the book or the author, even though I lost my copies and they were out of print. I wasn't a fan then, didn't know anything about Hugos even, but I knew a good story when I read it. And I was delighted when she began writing and publishing again. The growth probably does parallel the "feminist movement". Plus the fact that MXB added double the pages in her new novels, the addition being mostly characterization. The basic action plots were there but the characters were easier to identify with. I, at least, felt like I knew them after reading her most recent books. ((SWORD OF ALDONES was nominated for a Hugo so must have impressed someone besides you. I wish I could say that I was immediately struck by the worth of the Darkover novels, but I wasn't. The first Bradley novel I read was STAR OF DANGER and the second THE DOOR THROUGH SPACE.))

A general question for anyone: has anyone heard anything about the I ROBOT project since Iggy?

Jill Matthews As a squeaky-new Neffer, I thought I should pass along a few comments.
2 Pine Tree Rd I just finished my first copy of TB and enjoyed it emmensely, although
Lawrenceville, GA I did wonder about a few lettercol comments of the tacky variety. I
30245 kept wondering what I'd missed. ((A lot of bitter feuding.))

Before going any further, I'd like to thank Irvin for recruiting me at Chattacon 79 (he only twisted my arm a little). I run into him so seldom at ASFIC that I may not get a chance in person. Also Richard Trout of the Welcommittee for his nice letter. And to Jane Kaufenberg, re: her letter in the March TB --- I sympathize completely with your financial

problems. At current inflated rates, keeping up with my collection is killing me. My check-book is dying of chronic dollar-deficiency anemia.

On tomorow important things. I'd like to congratulate the various committees on their efficiency. I sent my first dues in less than a month ago, and already my mailbox runneth over. And I'm sure you know how nice it is to get something that doesn't have a plastic window on it, and upon which the word DUE does not appear. But I'm being questionaired to death, between the N3F and the SFC.

As an ex-military dependant (Marine brat) used to traipsing all over the country and halfway around the world, who has been stuck in Georgia since the family retired 10 years ago, I had almost forgotten there was still a world out there. After a gypsy existence, you get used to having "family" of a sort all over the place, and losing that family is one of the hardest parts of adjusting to civilian life. Now I find I have acquired a new family in N3F, and it;s like coming home.

Lest I have Cliff Amos breathing down my neck, let me say that I have nothing against the South, but to my way of thinking, 10 years stuck anywhere is too much.

As for TB I rank it among my favorites. Although it was a little heavy in the lettercol department, it contained enough diversity to keep me absorbed. ((TB was originally only a letterzine and some traditionalists got annoyed when I included anything else.)) I especially liked the Chalker interview (would like to see more such), the new member info, and the artwork (I'm a dragon freak). And most important, I understood what was being said. While I am not a new F&SF fan, I am relatively new to organized fandom. Most fanzines I have encountered are simply not geared to the neofan. I understand somebody has compiled a Neofan's guide to terms and abbreviations, but I haven't come across it yet.

So, To Whom It May Concern, congratulations to the N3F for the great job, and here's hoping that it will continue. It's nice to know there are some kind souls out there who don't treat neofans as if the life-form is one step up from a cockroach.

#####

Chris Martin I learned a lot from the Jack Chalker interview. It had a particular impact for me since I just returned from Balticon 13 where Chalker was on several of the panels. He is a personable man in the flesh and does not seem afflicted with the towering ego that some SF writers have. I haven't read Chalker (he postdates the onset of a period when I read SF less intensively) but I will certainly get around to him as a result of my encounters.

Can't say much about Greg's review of Piers Anthony. The little I've read of Anthony I didn't like. ((I'm not a big Anthony fan, but I did like A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON.))

Herbert Summerlin's otherworldly landscape on page 13 was particularly good, with nice clean lines. ((That was by Helen Steere. I know I should have included a list of art credits.))

Though there has always been a strong thread of pessimism in Fred Pohl's work, it seems to be more relentless in his recent work, i.e. GATEWAY. Though I suppose that MAN PLUS ends with a note of muted optimism. And I doubt that anyone will ever equal the nastiness of the less recent PLAGUE OF PYTHONS (it's right up there with THE MEN IN THE JUNGLE.).

Anji Valenza's cartoon is superb on page 16.

When I referred to the good guys wear white syndrome, it was in connection with the main characters, i.e. Skywalker, Leia, Darth Vader, Grand Moff Tarkin. Eddie Anderson's casual assumption about what constitutes "real fandom" is just the sort of thing that pisses me off. If the media, the readers, con going and other "poop" are not "real fandom," then what is? It's this sort of elitism that makes the N3F the "toenail" of fandom.

I sympathize a lot more with Arthur D. Hlavaty's comment: "I think we need some place where all the fandoms -- fannish zine, con, Darkover, Trek, etc -- can get together and talk. We

should all learn to be tolerant of other fandoms. Even the media fans." The last sentence seems to carry the unspoken thought, "even if they do lower the property values," but I'll let it pass. Arthur's heart seems to be in the right place (the left side?).

J. Owen Hanner's experience at Boskone sounds interesting, but he couches it in such vague generalizations that I'm not sure exactly what he was talking about. As a calloused journalist, I tend to be skeptical when people start gushing about "the depth of love and caring that can be reached is amazing." Elvis Costello asks "What is so funny about peace, love and understanding?" The funny thing is that people tend to talk about it (I do too, vide my last letter to TIGHTBEAM) but few practice it. Less talk, more practice. Or to paraphrase Joseph Goebbels and Jim Jones, "Whenever I hear someone talking about love and caring, I pull out my Kool-Aid."

Clifton Davis' letter about the Birthday Card Project made me make a mental note to send Elaine Wojciechowski a donation when my IRS refund comes in. Anyone who makes an effort to do something constructive in N3F should be supported.

Ah yes, Fred Jakobcic and Pearl Harbor. I wish somebody would think of some other historical analogies for N3F besides World War II (how about the Hundred Years War -- 40 years and counting...)

Fred wants to know how I came up with the conclusion that the 1978 Directorate was a no-growth faction, I didn't. I never specified the Directorate. However, the battle lines in N3F appear to be drawn along growth/no growth lines. I drew that conclusion by reading the material at hand.

Fred says I have my "facts muddled just a bit." Facts, Fred. I thought I was expressing an opinion. That N3F stands for National Fantasy Fan Federation is a fact. Most of the other that appears in TIGHTBEAM is opinion. I will concede that some opinion is more informed than others...

Incidentally Fred questions the need for growth, then turns around and says it was "never a case of growth vs no growth".

"Why the need for growth?" indeed. "For fear of falling into decadence?" An organization can't fall into decadence when it's been that way for the past twenty years, by accounts.

I can think of several reasons for growth. Saving on operating costs of N3F through greater volume. More money to play around with. ((Once we have 500 or more members, it's actually cheaper to have the zines done offset as an example.)) resulting in better zines. (One hopes) More and better people to staff various activities, with less fiascos like the manuscript criticism mess. More participation. Enhanced presence at cons (you should have been at Balticon. Talk about your small school of fish in a big pond. I ran into/heard about five members in a total con attendance of 2,500). More justice (pub editors and officers should not have to subsidize N3F for the enjoyment of the membership. Sounds too much like parasitism to me.) Increased effectiveness in reaching out to fans who live in rural areas or cities where clubs do not exist. I would like them to share what we enjoy. A national focus for fandom, a nerve center, clearing house, or whatever you want to call it. A place where the different fandoms, clubs and groups can get together, exchange ideas and information, tools and techniques, and avoid wasted effort and duplication.

"...the membership who do not care about 40 years of N3F history." There's a good reason not to care. You can learn from the past, but you can't live in it. The conditions that existed then don't exist now. The past can't provide for members now. The important thing is what's happening now. What is N3F doing for its members now? If the answer until recently has been "not very much," then how can we change this? The present and the future of N3F are what I'm concerned with.

Fred Jakobcic
113 W Ohio, Apt 4
Marquette, MI
49855

There are far more than seven Neffers listening and in agreement with what I said concerning the memagerie of problems and mudlinging that took place last year. How active have the individual members of the Directorate been individually, not as a collective whole? If Judy is in trouble with the Writer's Exchange, how active can she be with the Directorate? From what I've heard she has not been doing much. Right? Wrong? ((Right. In fact Irvin is so annoyed that he want's to fire her which means Donald Franson would be back on the Directorate. She hasn't sent in votes, written letters or anything.))

Now that the election results are in, I hope Irvin won't try to work the election results to similar ends like he did with the Australian ballot. ((I doubt it. We only have 4 working Directors so it's harder to ram things through.

Arthur Hlavaty: What kind of visions of Irvin's are good for the N3F? To be stretched beyond our capabilities? We do not all live in areas accessible to each other like a local club or the LA people. A lot of activities depend on individuals to carry on, even the editing of TB. Though TB is a club publication, individual contributions must come together to make it. How many members want to pay more money for a super slick, pro-like zine? ((I said elsewhere that above 500 copies, it is cheaper to have TB done offset so I would have less work then, not more.))

Susan Shwartz
D206 University Park
Uptown Rd
Ithaca, NY 14850

Thanks for TIGHTBEAM. Yesterday it was actually 60° in Ithaca (all the ice melons melted,) and I was able to sit outside with the zine, Marshak and Culbreath's sequel to PRICE OF THE PHOENIX and the first gin and tonic (s) of the season. What a lovely time!

As a neofan, I feel a bit like I've walked into a party where everyone knows everyone else but me. So much to do, so much to read! I'm never going to catch up, and I thought I knew SF. At least, however, people seem happy to find new fen; if I don't know too many names and no faces at all, at least I know what people are talking about.

I was interested in Greg Hills' defense of Gor. Just because it balances some of the more matriarchal novels doesn't mean it;s justifiable. It's repetitive, sick and BADLY WRITTEN. At least the matriarchal things (FATE OF THE PHOENIX gets into that but, mind you, I'm not saying how I feel about that one yet) have the interest of novelty. Russ, however, can write. But given our semi-sexist society, it's much easier to come up with a typical male-dominated society than a female-dominated one. But I get rather tired of ideological fiction -- and criticism -- which seems to me a lot of time spent on special pleading. The books that set out to create utopias frankly bore me: they're like explicit Sunday schools, sex scenes left in for grownups. A writer needs conflict to advance her story line; without it, there's nothing but a very nice anthropological construct. Useful, impressive, but not much fun for me.

Is anyone at all interested in the caliber of writing? Not only plot and idea but actual word choice, sentence construction, rhythm, and imagery? Or has freshman English turned off everyone but me? I remember running across LeGuin's LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS in 1969 and being stunned by the sheer style of her description of the parade in Ehrenrang. Seems to me that we don't hear enough about that, which is a shame: all the neat cultural, ideological, and narrative stuff gets itself accomplished by one means and that's WORDS.

Diane Potter
435 Lynn St
Richardson, TX
75080

I recieve TB and what I noticed is the artwork you have gotten into your zine. I am very interested in contacting some artists to draw for a zine we are doing here called "Tales from a Texas Cathouse." We will have a running series of stories on an interstellar bordello called the Venus Avatar. As the art editor, I have the problem of finding artists.

NEW MEMBERS (con't from page 4)

Bob Tidewell
6680 Charlotte Ave Apt E-4
Nashville, TN 37209

BD: 7-19-49. State gov worker. Inst : colls, cons, art, movies, videotape making. Has typer, cassette, video taper. Inst SF 24 years.

Joyce Wilkinson
5000 Butte #278
Boulder, CO 80301

BD: 5-22-40. Housewife. Inst: writing, colls. Will write for club pubs, Corres. Has typer, taper. New to fandom. Fav authors: McCaffrey, Anthony, Norton.

Barbara Tennison
1834 1/4 Selby Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90025

No known birthday. Likes MZB and McCaffrey

Duncan Lucas, 12 Beatty's Rd, Pukekohe, South Auckland, New Zealand
David McGirr, 1143 36 Ave No. St Petersburg, FL 33704
Nigel Rowe, 24 Beulah Ave., Rothesay Bay, Auckland 10, New Zealand
Joe Siclari, 2201 N. E. 45th St. Lighthouse Point, FL 33064

Coas---

Judy Gerjuoy, F7 900 Kirkwood hwy, Newark, DE 19711
Nick Grassell, Rte 2, 17G, Tishomingo, MS 38873
Mitchell Hollander, 362 Memorial Dr. Cambridge, MA 02139
Patricia Munson, PSC Box 2527, APO NY 09109

Brief notes---

Linda Frankel Far Rockaway, NY I'm hoping that you can manage to let Neffers know that I want to start a suggestions robin. It will discuss suggestions for the improvement of N3F. I'll send everything to relevant heads. I'd also like to say that Greg Hills is doing a terrific job as Division A head already. He's got any number of brilliant ideas. Let's hear it for Greg!

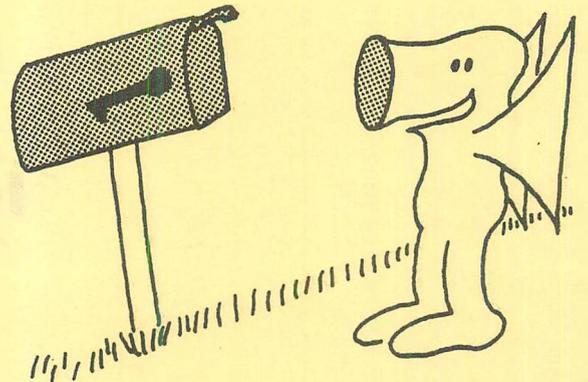
How does Chris Martin manage to offend so many folks at once? ((Talent?)) He's really got a talent and he hasn't been reading Dale Carnegie. No, MZB fans aren't all feminists and he doesn't have to boast about not reading her. It's not exactly something to be proud over. Why doesn't he ask ILLUMINATUS nuts why we carry on the way we do instead of attempting to silence us in our noble struggle against Yog and the forces of vileness? HAIL ERIS!

~~~~~

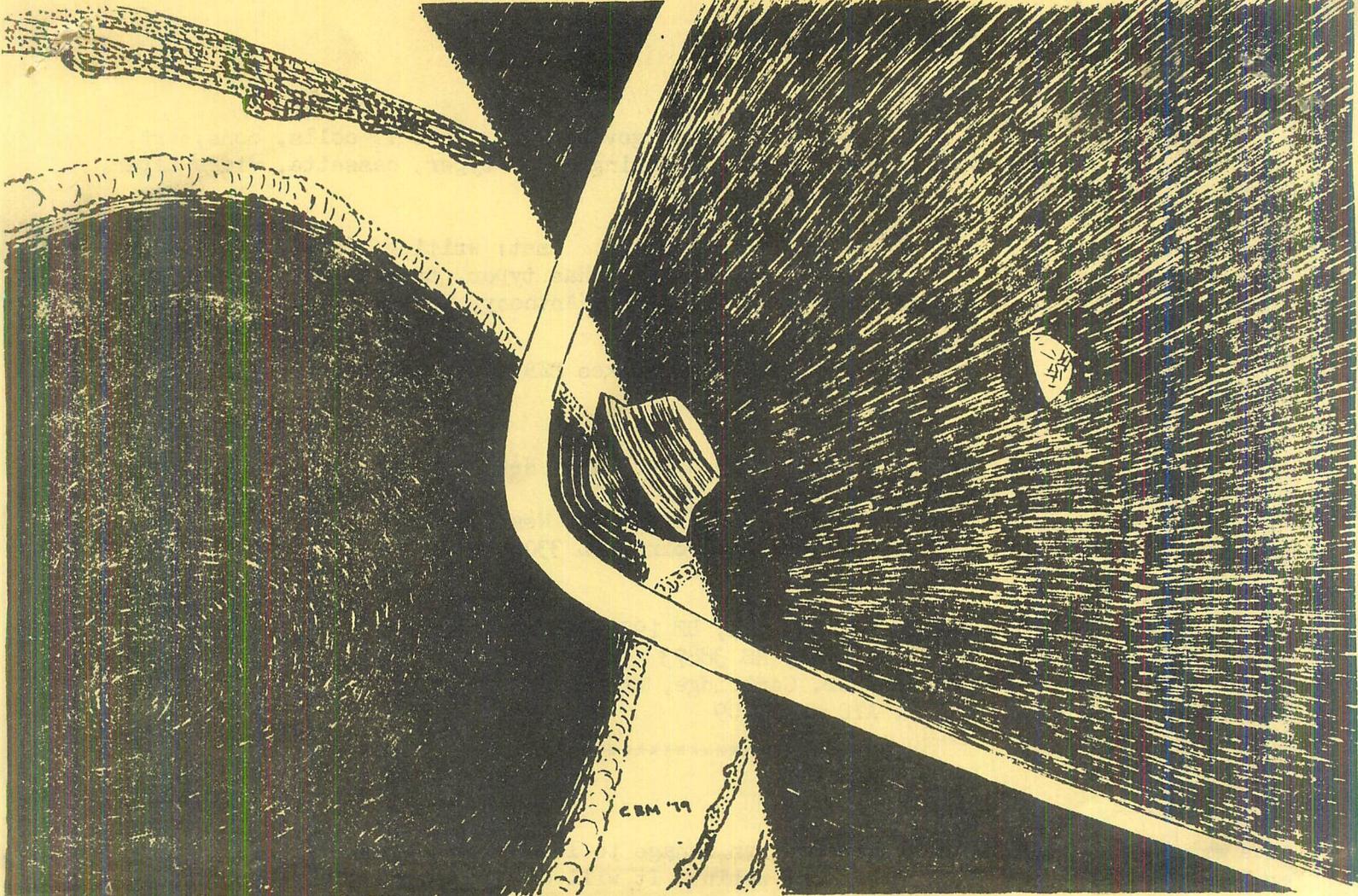
David Thayer Fort Worth, Texas Enclosed is a cartoon which I ~~stole~~ drew myself. I did not sign it because I figure that I have an easily recognizable style. I hope you can use it in your fanzine TUGHTBEAM. ((Yes, there it is → ))

I noticed that in my biographical entry in the latest TIGHTBEAM you had my date of birth as "No known birthday". I clearly remember giving that information on the questionnaire Irvin Koch sent me. The date is April 13, 1949, although some fan editors think it is August 19, 1956. ((I've heard of born again Christians, but fans??))

My main interests are writing and drawing. A story of mine won 2nd place in the 1976 short story contest. Do you accept artwork from non N3F members? ((I accept artwork from anyone.))



The revival of the Birthday Card Project makes me want to be born again.



Tightbeam  
P.O. Box 5,  
Pompton Lakes  
N.J. 07442

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