

# TIGHTBEAM



Michael Godan '78

# TIGHTBEAM

© Lynne Holdom, July 1980

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cover by Michael Roden  
backcover by FMaki Shimbo

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# EDITORIAL

by Lynne Holdom

I wasn't really planning to do the July issue of TIGHTBEAM. July is generally a busy month. A lot of things get displaced or mislaid, including time. And the weather is generally horrendous. This year is no exception. While we have not had the ultra torrid weather that the midsection of the country has, it has been quite hot enough for me, thank you. It was 102°F (39°C) which was the hottest it's been around here in three years.

I did, however, manage to displace something -- the President's Message. I hate to admit this. I was making up the colophon for it, and then couldn't find it. So there is no page 5/6 in this TIGHTBEAM though it is still 30 pages long as usual.

Knowing that Don hates to be paraphrased, I'll risk it anyway. He was surprised to find the May TIGHTBEAM so political. It is true that I have been trying to cut down on politics since so much of it has been very nasty and bitter. Donald maintains that the dues' raise while not illegal was unconstitutional no matter if the 1979 Directorate voted for it unanimously. If you want to see the hard facts with figures, done by regular or Australian ballot, send a SASE to Donald and he'll supply the figures.

We do not agree on the Calendar Year dues. I did get a letter stating that neither Owen nor I had the correct info on Calendar Year dues. Well, if neither of us editors understand them, that's an argument against them in itself. I will say that the present system is easier for both Owen and me. Joanne Burger finds this system better as well.

On to happier matters: I am collecting for the Leukemia Society of America. I had both a cat and a dog that died of this disease. I don't want to be next if I can help it. If anyone would like to help out, just let me know. I'm actually only collecting around my neighborhood.

I will be at Noreascon and am staying in the main hotel. I have a confirmed reservation. I sent in one night's rent just to hold the room if Amtrack or whatever runs late. Paula Crunk is rooming with me.

JUMEAUX #8 will be out at Noreascon. Anyone who wants a copy can pick it up there or send \$3.00 to me before the con to reserve a copy. The price shouldn't go up before the con but... JUMEAUX is longer than TIGHTBEAM and mostly articles rather than letters. Since the last issue came out last year about this time, it's been a long while between zines.

Due to this and a project I'm working on with Joanne Burger, I am ever further behind than usual in answering letters. Please be patient. You should get an answer eventually. I will try to get all my correspondence cleared up before Noreascon.

I need art -- mostly small fillo art. If I don't get it, you will have a TIGHTBEAM without artwork. Most of the art I have on hand is large art, half page or more. I prefer line drawings that can be electrostencilled. Art should also be in black and white without large areas of black. HELP!!!

I also did not get the review (either one) of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK that I was expecting. So I would like someone to send one in. I will use the first one (or maybe two) I get. I am one of the few who hasn't seen this film as yet so can't write the review myself. I hope to have seen it by NOREASCON.

That's it for now. I hope to see a lot of you at NOREASCON. I'll see the rest of you (except the ones you don't renew) in September.

# NEW MEMBERS

Julie Alderson  
Rte 1, Box 424  
Leander, TX 78641

No known birthday. Occ. Clerk. Inst: Writing, colls, corres, re-viewing. New to fandom. Likes C.J. Cherryh, deCamp, Tolkien.

Lola Andrews  
1220 Walnut  
Webster City, IO 50595

No known birthday. Occ. cook. Inst: corres, Round Robins. In fandom one month. Likes MZB, McCaffrey, Dickson.

Michael Bastraw  
70 Webster St  
Laconia, NH 03246

No known birthday. 26 years old. Inst SF 20 years. In fandom two years. Deputy Sheriff. Attended some cons. Will attend Noreascon. Co-editor of NIEKAS (with Ed Meskys).

Dan Bromley  
5517 W. 8th St  
Kennewick, WA 99336

BD: 4-7-67. Student. Inst: colls, books, prozines, fanzines. Never active. Inst in SF four years. Likes Tolkien, Bradbury, McCaffrey.

John Wayne Burt  
615 Albert St West Apt 109  
Sault Ste Marie, Ont P6A 1O7

No known birthday. Inst: writing, coils, books, mags. Has typer taper. Never active. Never seen a fanzine. Inst SF 20 years. Prefers time travel stories. Likes Wells, Haggard, Pohl, Heinlein, Poe.

Ken Duffin  
137 Arthur St N. Apt A  
Guelph, Ont N1E 4V4

BD: 9-19-49. Book store clerk. Inst: Writing, mags, reading. Has typer. Member of Guelph SF Guild. Likes fanzines. Inst SF 15 years. Likes Ellison, Silverberg, LeGuin, Sheckley, Brunner. Attended some cons.

Allan M. Foss  
18826 Melvin  
Livonia, MI 48152

BD: 3-19-60. Student. Inst Writing, books, reading, movies, games. Has typer, taper. Inst SF 9 years. Member Wizard of Oz club. S.T.A.R. Likes time travel stories. Likes Asimov, Baum, Niven, Clarke.

Flint Mitchell  
7331 Terri Robyn  
St Louis, MO 63129

BD: 2-20-59. Student. Inst SF 14 years. Active fandom 4 years. Attended several cons. Likes lurid but philosophical stories. Reads AMAZING, STARLOG, IASFM, WHIZZARD, THRU THE BLACKHOLE.

Lisa Spangenberg  
Poocham Rd  
Westmoreland, NH 03467

No known birthday. Student. Inst: Writing, editing, corres, cons fanxines. Has typer. Active one year. Likes MZB, Asimov, McCaffrey.

Stanley Sutton  
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BD: 2-8-52. Sr Systems Analyst. Inst colls, books, games, computers. Has typer, photo copier. Active in fandom 10 years. Likes REH, Heinlein, Norton, McKillip, Hogan, EF Russell, EE Smith, G.O. Smith.

Lisa Wahl  
192 Lisbon Ave. Upper  
Buffalo, NY 14215

BD: 9-12-58. Computer Programmer. Inst: writing, editing, pubbing, reviewing, taping, corres, fanzines, games, cons, apas. Inst SF 10 years. Prefers short stories. Likes Sheckley, Asimov, Tolkien.

Alan Crabb  
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BD: 3-25-40. Inst: writing. Collects books and fanzines. Never active in fandom. Inst fanzines. Likes Asimov, Howard.

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# BOOK REVIEWS

## Two to Conquer

by Marion Zimmer Bradley

reviewed by Greg Hills

TWO TO CONQUER is set in the final stages of the Ages of Chaos on Darkover when the followers of Hastur and the Compact are still far from the completion of the unification of Darkover in the cause of banishment of the fearsome esper weapons that threaten daily life. Played mainly in the kingdom of Asturias, this book traces the events and people leading up to the final domination of the Compact over all the Seven Domains.

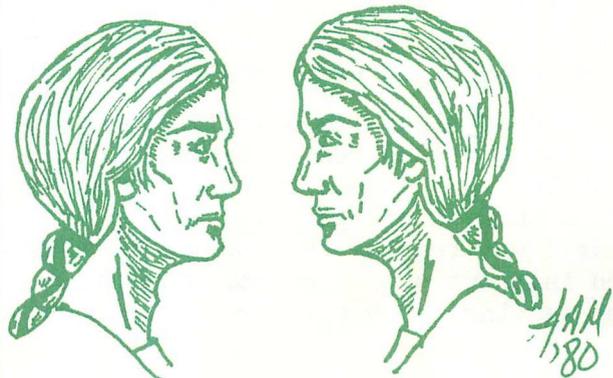
Briefly, at the time Asturuas, one of the Hundred Kingdoms, is ruled by aging King Ardrin and his queen, Ariel. After a brief prologue introducing a Terran named Paul Harrell, the book slides into the engagement of Ardrin and Ariel's daughter Carlina to Bard di Asturien, a promising warrior of the realm. But Carlina is reluctant and Bard over-eager, and from this basis spring most of the more intimate facets of the book.

Bradley plays this area very skillfully, developing the events and characters logically from prior events and interreactions. I felt she laid on Bard's obsession and blindness to reason a little too thickly in places, but I have met such motivations and reactions in enough people to credit them. And as a gauge of the evenness of the character development, I found that I was biased to neither (nor any, in some places) party particularly strongly: both had their admirable and contemptible traits. Yet I found myself in sympathy with both to the extent that their eventual fates mattered considerably to me.

The length of the book, while not quite great enough to encourage boredom with Bradley's preoccupation about the small matters of her characters, gave sufficient canvas so that the historical events could be discussed, weighed, and explained for the reader's benefit. There was no possibility of becoming bewildered by overfast or unsupported twists of plot or theme. The motivations of King Ardrin (and his successor Dom Rafael, father of Bard) are made clear -- rather too obviously in the confrontation between Dom Rafael and a messenger of the Hasturs. Bradley lays out the political and military pressures brought to bear on Dom Rafael in this scene rather too carefully. True, it makes the proud Dom Rafael's reluctant compromise credible, but as diplomacy it strikes a sour note, and left me asking "That is subtlety?"

Any modern diplomat worth their pay on Earth today could have hammered out a better deal (from Dom Rafael's viewpoint) with Varzil, even given the pressuring he was subjected to.

Still, that is a minor quibble. Another, slightly greater one, is stylistic: The introduction of the character Paul Harrell was poorly managed. True, Bradley did warn us in the prologue that a specially imported (via teleport relay) Terran was going to figure in the second (and, historically, greater) half of the book. True, Harrell's presence gave Bradley an additional mirror to show off her characters in. True, it would have been unlikely for one such as Paul to coincidentally have been found on Darkover. Nonetheless the introduction of Harrell should have been more gracefully accomplished. As is, he appears quite suddenly, and I received the (possibly mistaken) impression that the Prologue was merely an afterthought, added to account for Paul's arrival. It is bad form to introduce a major character halfway through a book, and this is not the first time an author has written his/her way out of the bind by adding a Prologue with that character in.



In my opinion, a better handling of the matter would have included interspersions of the book (at major scene changes) with brief vignettes of Paul's early days on Darkover. Not only would this make for a smoother progression of storyline, with Paul already an 'old friend' by the time he becomes important, but it would have provided Bradley with greater flexibility of character development elsewhere: playing off Paul's reactions with those of others in similar circumstances, for instance.

Overall, this book is very readable for people who like details on the intimate side of life on another planet. The pacing is generally good, there is a sufficiency of action, and it makes sense. People who enjoyed STORMQUEEN, THE HERITAGE OF HASTUR, or THE FORBIDDEN TOWER will almost certainly welcome the book to their Darkover collection.

Yet I must add a cautionary note to people who like their books with action and major events beginning immediately. This book possesses a particularly long and character-intensive first section in which the scene is set. The major plot elements do not move significantly for several chapters. They then move rapidly, but you have been warned! Don't skip the early sections of the book -- they are not padding -- but don't be too impatient...

TWO TO CONQUER by Marion Zimmer Bradley

DAW June 1980 \$2.25

## The Fountains of Paradise

by Arthur C. Clarke

reviewed by FMaki Shimbo

Gee, and I thought something GOOD was coming. Y'see, I got this phone call from Lynne saying (Lynne said, not the phone call itself) "People've been complaining that there're no hard SF reviews." (A valid complaint by me!) "Why don't you review Arthur Clarke's latest?"

Well, I wasn't too sure. I never finished Clarke's 2nd to latest (IMPERIAL EARTH) because the only parts of it that were any good would have been even better as an episode of JOURNEY TO ADVENTURE with Gunther Less. The way this one was being touted, I had a feeling I wasn't going to finish this one either.

Gosh, folks, I tried. I really did. I sat down with the book and started reading, and lo and behold, it was so interesting I feel asleep right where I sat.

I always give a book 40 pages, so when I woke up (because the weasel was pulling the cat into the couch and the cat was using me for an anchor), I told myself I'd read up to there. Now, where was I? Oh yes. There was a prince on a mountain in the Orient, in a medieval setting. And there were monks in an abbey on another mountain, in this century (hunh?) and there was a guy who'd built a real huge bridge connecting Spain to Africa, and he wants to build something (an elevator to an orbiting station) on the mountain where the monks are. The monks, of course, think this is a silly idea. I must confess, so do I.

Well, I read my 40 pages, and found a couple of passages that interested me. A passing spaceprobe ripped religion apart, with style, grace and flair. I can appreciate that kind of attitude after twelve years with the School System of Notre Dame. But after that I couldn't go on. Nothing had really happened. And even the descriptions were as dry as Colorado is right now, or Jimmy Carter's humor.

So, I decided, since I had to finish the book in order to write this review, DRASTIC MEASURES were called for. To wit: I took all my magazines out of the bathroom, and put the book in, so it would be the only thing to read in there. It came as quite a shock to notice that at one point, I picked up one of the ferrits and started reading it, thinking I was reading the book. The only way I knew it wasn't the book was that when I stood in front of the mirror with it, the title wasn't reversed. Well, the ferret started wanting to be put down and I took that as an omen and started writing this review.



I remember when I was a kid, reading Clarke's stuff was my greatest pleasure in life, even greater than beating on my three kid brothers or getting out of drying the dishes at night. Even if the stories were bland -- which was rare -- the descriptions more than made up for it. To this day, I can read CHILDHOOD'S END, EARTHLIGHT, RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA, and the short stories, over and over and over... but something happened. Something is gone. Sigh.

Positively everything about this book is thoroughly mediocre -- Hey, Lynne, when do I get a good book to review?

THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE by Arthur C. Clarke Del Rey \$2.25  
\* \* \* \* \*

A brief note from P.W. Duncan.

I too am a Clarke fan. I read IMPERIAL EARTH and, yes, the best parts did read like a travelogue and/or engineering manual. I also read THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE -- the whole book -- though it took me quite a while to get through it. It just is not of the old Clarke quality. While I do not have to have everything explained and all the ideas developed, this book left a lot of plot ideas dangling forgotten somewhere halfway up the space elevator. It should be read only by Clarke completists. I cannot see how it got a Hugo nomination.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Harpist in the Wind

by Patricia McKillip

reviewed by Kathleen Woodbury

The final riddle in my mind is how can I write about this book?

I read it as soon as it came out in hardback, so I have had to skim over it for this review. Once again I find it a powerful, compelling and very troubling story.

The first time I read THE RIDDLE OF STARS, I was moved by the characters and I was frustrated somewhat by the style. I now realize that Patricia McKillip does more "showing" than "telling". I think I would have preferred a little more "telling", but too little is better than too much. By "showing", the author makes me FEEL with and for the characters. I am frustrated by not knowing exactly what is going on and so I can empathize entirely with Morgon as he gropes for answers.

In HARPIST IN THE WIND, the answers are found (there is finally some "telling"); a war is waged, a victory gained, and like all true epics, a price is paid.

The first two books in the trilogy deal with Morgon and Raederle separately. HARPIST IN THE WIND deals with them together, as they travel to Hed, then to Lungold and finally to each land-ruler so that Morgon can learn the Land-laws in an attempt to protect his world from the shape changers.

McKillip uses the riddles very cleverly to impart information and to build suspense. They give an almost mystic quality to the world of Morgon and Raederle.

Until I finished and had the answers, I remember guessing. I don't think I ever stopped believing in Deth and trusting him. He was the most intriguing character in the trilogy and the one with as many riddles around him as Morgon. In a strange, backward way, he was Morgon's mentor. I believed all through HEIR OF SEA AND FIRE that Deth's actions were based on expediency and that although the end could be said to justify the means, I felt for him because of the means he had to use. I believed, for example, that Deth harped all through Morgon's torture at the hands of Ghisteslwohlolm so that Morgon would have a reason to live, even if hate and revenge were the reason.

Perhaps Morgon's story can be looked at as Everyman's, simply because Morgon, like each of us who is religious, began by believing in a child's idea of God. As he grew, he found

that this idea of God did not fit with what the world around him was like. The suffering and loss and confusion did not seem right or fair. The real riddle became: "Is God all-powerful or is He all-good? How can he be both with the world the way it is?"

In the end, Morgon learned that his trials and sufferings had served to make him capable of dealing with the world and its imperfections. As he is told at last, "I found you in Hed, innocent, oblivious of your own destiny. You couldn't even harp. Who in this realm was there to wake you to power?"

Even though he wins the war, he does not bring about Paradise and he does not solve or vanquish all the Earth's ills. He can not even return things to the way they were. It is the nature of the world that this must be so.

A RIDDLE OF STARS, the trilogy, says to me that we suffer because we must grow and growing hurts. I hear it say that even those we look to for help and salvation can only do so much to bring us along the road, that what they may do often does not make sense or seem fair, but it is demanded of us if we are to fulfill our potential.

Morgon fulfilled his by finally trusting his mentor, and he moved to a higher level of being. Perhaps if we look, we can find that sort of promise within ourselves as well.

HARPIST IN THE WIND by Patricia McKillip

DelRey \$2.25

\* \* \* \* \*

## Wyst: Alastor 1716

by Jack Vance

reviewed by Paul Macdonald

Jack Vance (John Holbrook Vance) has been a prolific writer for over a quarter of a century. Many of his works have been parts of series. The Alastor novels: TRULLION; ALASTOR 2262, MARUNE: ALASTOR 933, and WYST: ALASTOR 1716 are set in the Alastor Cluster on our galaxy's rim, "a whorl of 30,000 live stars in an irregular volume twenty to thirty light years in diameter." In the Cluster are 3000 inhabited planets supporting a human population of approximately five trillion persons. The diverse worlds share a common language and are subject to the authority of the Connatic at Lusze on the world Numenes.

WYST: ALASTOR 1716 is concerned with the adventures of Jantiff Ravensroke, a school graduate who has trouble choosing his trade in life. With the help of his artistic skill, he gets to visit Wyst, both for the artistic light and to help him discover his calling. The urban centres of Wyst boast of the only true egalistic society of the Cluster, where people work less than ten hours a week at unspecialized work, or in Wystian vernacular "drudge." Specialization, because it leads to elitism, is reserved for contracted offworlders. The egalistic society subsists on basic foodstuffs; "gruff and deedle, with a bit of wobbly to fill in the chinks," because all egalists should eat alike, a possessions of an "elitist" nature are subject to socially acceptable snergency (theft).

Jantiff's assigned roommate on Wyst and her acquaintances are conspirators against the present chosen-by-lot leaders, the Whispers, and his life becomes endangered when he acquires proof of the plot. He is forced to flee to another spaceport (unfortunately it carries only freight) after being framed for murder, and must manage as best he can as the Connatic's agents are killed soon after he reports his suspicions to them. There is a minor love interest included while Jantiff is in the countryside trying to earn enough money to acquire an illicit passage offworld, and near the end, a deus ex machina (a Connatic agent) saves his life, reminiscent of TRULLION: ALASTOR 2262's climax. The villains are caught and Jantiff lives happily ever after.

Down to some basics: the most engrossing facet of Vance's writing is the planet's cultures, specifically the egalism the urban centres subscribe to. John Shirley's review of the novel (SFR #31) and David Wixon's (JUMEAUX #6) claim that this egalistic society is a satire on a communist culture where no bourgeoisie exist and all are proletariat -- i.e. egalists. But elitism exists as a necessity. The offworlders are in effect the elite: without them the social structure would collapse as the vast mechanization of the century old society broke down and couldn't be repaired.

Though the portrayal of societies on Wyst is very entertaining, the plot and characterization are weak. The plot bogs down after Jantiff's climatic escape from murder and later arrest. The intrigue of the conspiratorial Wystians is relegated to the background while the narrative concentrates on Jantiff's attempts at raising ozols for passage back to Zeck. Vance concentrates on Jantiff almost totally, and the story reflects Jantiff's initial hopes for Wyst, his disillusionment, his flight and subsequent personal concerns. This fails to carry reader concern as well as the addition of chapters showing the conspiracy's progress would have done.

Nicholl's THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA says it well when its article on Vance describes his style as highly mannerized, pedantic, with unusual vocabulary (e.g. WYST: ALASTOR 1716 has words like perfervid, planget, lambent, debouched, not to mention truly alien languages), detached voice, a narrative voice style. WYST: ALASTOR 1716 upholds this tradition. As with the other two books in the Alastor series, the male protagonist is young, starts out naive, and through misfortune learns the ropes of survival on a basically untrustworthy world. The villains are thoroughly villainous and show little remorse when defeated.

Of the three novels, MARUNE: ALASTOR 933 is the most engrossing, and closely related MASKE: THAERY is also recommended. If you enjoy these, visit Wyst next.

WYST: ALASTOR 1716 by Jack Vance

DAW \$1.75

\* \* \* \* \*

## On Wings of Song

by Thomas M. Disch

reviewed by P. W. Duncan

Though I liked this novel and it would have been my second choice for the Hugo had I read it when I filled out the ballot, I am not quite sure just how to approach it. I certainly liked it better than previous acquaintances with Disch's work would have led me to expect. Quite frankly, I read it only because it was a Hugo nominee and Lynne needed a review of it. I also like music and opera though I'm not sure I'd like real 18th century styles in opera (castrati and all) revived. Since we had to contemplate the thought of termites devouring our abode, turning the tables on them did seem only poetic justice but I'd have to be extremely hungry before regarding mashed termite as a protein extender. I also, as a former resident of the Twin Cities, find it hard to except either Minneapolis or St Paul as Sin City though I can believe that Iowa is dull, dull, dull.....

Daniel Weinreb's problem is that he lives in Iowa and wants to fly. This is forbidden and as music often leads to flying, all but the simplest music is banned. (Flying here seems to be the ultimate trip in that one's spirit? actually leaves the body. Certainly something gets caught in the "fairy traps" that the zealous, or those afraid of spectral spying have set up in self protection.) So in preparation for flying -- Daniel will not live in Iowa forever -- he studies music for which he has no great talent.

However Daniel soon learns that money talks even in Iowa and arrangements are made for Daniel and his bride to stop in New York on their honeymoon where flying is perfectly legal. I was amused by Daniel's choice of "I am the Captain of the Pinofore" as the song best designed to send him off on his flight. This didn't work. Daniel has known that some people never can fly but..... Let's just say that his failure and other related matters cause him to drop out of sight and get involved in the world of 18th century opera revivals where castrati are the sexual objects they were in Gluck's and Handel's time and phoneyes (white men who have dyed themselves black -- something else forbidden in Iowa) are common.

The only thing I really didn't like about the novel was the lack of all hope. Things are worse than today and have no chance of ever really becoming better. Man has lost the stars. The state of religion is typified by a best seller THE PRODUCT IS GOD. One of the chapters is called "Wash your own Brain" in which the author states that religion is absurd but

is to be believed in anyway. (Though Tertullian said much the same thing in the second century.) The Know-Nothings are in firm control. This is certainly a possible future, but one that depresses me; though if you like Black Humour....

Despite all this I do think the book is worth reading and would recommend it.

ON WINGS OF SONG by Thomas M. Disch

Bantam August 1980 \$2.25

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## Ariosto

by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro

reviewed by William West

Ludovico Ariosto was a courageous soldier, who, with his marvelous winged horse, Bellimbusto, comes to the aid of Nuova Genova and its Cerocchi allies in its battle against the Fortezza Serpente.

Ludovico Ariosto was the court poet and confidant of the ruler of Firenze, Il Primario, Damiano de' Medici, who struggled vainly to preserve the loose knot Italia Federata.

Actually the historical Ariosto was neither of these identities; they can only be found in Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's ARIOSTO. The subtitle is the key to the puzzle. It reads: "Ariosto Furioso, a Romance for an Alternate Renaissance." And although this book is divided into alternate chapters entitled "La Fantasia" and "La Realtà", both are equally fantastic and whimsical. In short, the "reality" of the book is the alternate Renaissance.

What we are dealing with here is one of the finest uses of the theory of alternate history since Keith Roberts' PAVANE. Briefly, an alternate history considers the course of mankind and points to some major or minor event and says; "What if Catholicism had never been uprooted in England by Henry VIII (PAVANE); What if Richard the Lion-Hearted had not been killed in France but had survived to rule with more wisdom? (The Lord D'Arcy series)" Ms Yarbro has taken this concept and built her own Renaissance Italy.

The historical Ariosto was the author of the grandiose ORLANDO FURIOSO and several other less important works. In Ms Yarbro's universe, he has long since taken up residence as courtier and poet in the city of Firenze (Florence), writing official state poems on important events, such as the visit of the eminent Englishman, Sir Thomas More. He has spent much of his time reworking and polishing his masterwork, but is now composing a new fantasy. It concerns the adventures of his heroic alter ego in the Genovan colony across the ocean. His constant daydreams about the land of the Cerocchi comprise the "Fantasia" chapters of the book. Gradually, however, he finds himself embroiled more and more in the sinister machinations of Renaissance politics. His patron, Damiano de' Medici, is trying to hold together the Federation of Italian city states that his grandfather, Lorenzo the Magnificent founded. Not only must he face the squabbling leaders of the other cities, but he must deal with the plots of the more ambitious members of his own family. It is Damiano's affection for the loyal poet that eventually draws Ariosto into the increasingly complex situation.

The fantasy that is meanwhile taking shape in Ariosto's mind is on the same grandiose scale as his ORLANDO. His chivalrous alter ego is faced with an enemy of supernatural powers whose army consists of seemingly impervious "giants of flint and frost." Even with the aid of Falcone, the Prince of the Cerocchi, the odds are against him. To be frank, while the derring-do of the fantasy Ariosto is appropriately valorous, his ultimate fate is determined by events in "Reality". Some may question which is the more fantastic, the events in the epic, or the inability of Ariosto to grasp the true nature of events unfolding around him. Even his perception of the character of his patron seems too idealistic.

As I read further and further into the book, I found myself becoming more and more annoyed with the fantasy interludes and soon began skipping ahead to the "Reality" chapters. This would seem to be the best way to read the book, since it lends greater continuity to both





# Letters

Jack Patterson  
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Having recovered from a combination of a virus and overwork which flattened me at the end of March, I can now loc March TIGHTBEAM.

Loved the FMaki graphics. (Do me a cover for OVERFLOW?) Somewhere out there, I have a story that N3F was going to publish. I wonder if that's still planned? With the literature on this year's story contest, I am doubtful.

I've had a story out there somewhere for six years that Sam Konkin was purported to want to see -- it was a gag, but Nyrathotep knows where the manuscript went.

Michel B. Smith: What few seem to realize is that the Gor novels are not only anti Earth, but a parallel world in general. The assumption, that mankind is descended from hunters, is largely not true. We are descended from scroungers, who hunted as part of their scrounging. We might be like that if some neolithic catastrophe had left nothing but a few specialized hunting tribes in the world.

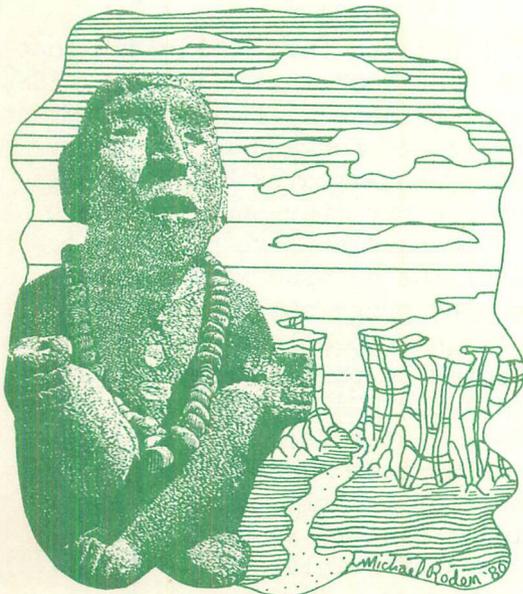
David Palter: When a technical device is used to make a process more efficient, it destroys jobs but it creates profits. The people who get the profits then spend them to buy something else. The trick is for the people who loose jobs to learn to supply something else. While the readjustment may be rougher on older workers, there are enough things around which favor them that I really can't get upset. (Did you know that it is illegal to discriminate against 45-62 year olds, but legal to discriminate for them, a far more common practice?)

Gail Weiss: 98% of a Medievalist club should be serfs. Since the other 2% would include the Church, the trades, and the main force of warriors and their ladies, it would leave an implausibly small governing class, since the knights and lords were only one in 12-20 of the warriors.

Any attempt to recreate the Middle Ages as more than a fairy land is fore-doomed to failure. The institutions varied too much from century to century, and from place to place. It was hard to go 10 miles without finding that the customs of land tenure, politics, etc. had changed.

((The richest and most varied medieval cultures were in areas with a strong merchant class such as the Italian and German city states. France, devastated by the Hundred Years War, lagged behind. England killed off most of its nobility in the Hundred Years War and the Wars of the Roses. The Tudors created nobles wholesale, usually of successful merchants.))

\* \* \* \* \*



Roger Waddington  
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Times have been fraught at the office; we've all had extra work (due mainly to our erst-while manager having been dismissed, and a police prosecution pending), and most nights

I've been happy to come home with my mind a complete blank and so to bed; which hasn't given much opportunity for fanac. I'm looking forward to the day of the jackpot when I can pursue a fannish career, without such time-consuming distractions as work, having to earn my living...

Well, I've always considered science-fiction that's set in the year after next to be slightly cheating; but be that as it may, it's really the depiction of alien societies that means "SF" to me, and I'm quite prepared to sit through any amount of wild and wonderful new languages and mores, if it contributes to a

believable picture of those societies...I was maybe handicapped by reading THE FADED SUN: KESRITH in the magazine version, and so losing the thread from month to month, but I've read the others in the series since on their own, and while they've been considerably sprinkled with alien and other terminologies, I wouldn't say it was excessive, but necessary to the story. What I object to is the sometime publishing practice of including a glossary in such works, either tucked away at the back, or heralding the story ahead, as if we couldn't get through such a complexity without it. If the writer can't make his/her meaning clear within the spread of the narrative, while the story's rolling, and has to explain it all afterwards, it's the sure sign of a second rate writer; and if it's the suggestion of the publisher, it shows a lack of confidence in his product, and probably also an insult to our intelligence. ((The latest fantasy by Juanita Coulson has a glossary at the back. It's published by DelRey books. Hmmm. That's THE DEATH GOD'S CITADEL.))

Add one vote for me against the reviews that reveal too much; it may be alright for the books that consider themselves Great Art, and beg to be considered on their literary merits, but in this universe of slam-bang adventures, these are very few and far between. SF may be a literature of ideas, but more than most, it's also one where the action has to carry those ideas with it. We're entertained and the message slips down easily like the well-sugared pill; and to take that sense of entertainment away, to clarify the ideas set forth, seems to me the most heinous of literary crime.

And a vote of thanks to Greg Hills for crystallising in one article, just what I read Simak for, why he's one of my favourite authors, and why I buy every one of his titles as soon as they're published. Maybe the fact that I live just down the road from Simak country (though having seen my habitat, you might say a long way down the road!) and the fact that people mean a lot more to me than ideas in my reading, as they do around me. It's why I remember Gully Foyle more than jaunting, and why I remember John Amalfi more than the Blac-kett-Dirac equations. And also why I count OLD FOLKS' HOME as the best of the Simak stories, with that note of unquenchable optimism; that's surely the theme that runs through all his works!

The Greeks and the Romans scorning the base mechanical arts? Never. Read THE ANCIENT ENGINEERS by L. Sprague deCamp and prepare to be pleasantly enlightened.

((Perhaps I should have said that Greek thinkers scorned the base mechanical arts. Archimedes apologized for working in them. The Romans got the idea from the Greeks. Most engineering breakthroughs and techniques came from a period before they admired Greek culture.))

\* \* \* \* \*

Victoria Smith  
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While reading the March TB, I noticed that FMaki said that her favorite Heinlein book is THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS. It's my favorite Heinlein book because 1) It has a coherent non-"kiddie" PLOT, which progresses forward as the story unfolds (unlike TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE); 2) it is not hopelessly smothered by Heinlein's insertion of his own philosophical views into what there is of a story (the insertions are there, but they are less noticeable than in the other post 1960 novels (I've not read beyond page 2 of GLORY ROAD)); and 3) as I first became aware of the outside world" during the mid to late 60s, and therefore became a pragmatic protesting progressive, I can identify to some extent with both the plot situation and with Mannie's inner feelings about hotheads and protests. Of course the "characters" are mainly represented by philosophies and stereotypes, but that isn't one of Heinlein's fortes. STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND may have started to become a trifle too philosophical in the middle for FMaki's taste; it;s my second favorite among Heinlein's later works. I fear my opinion of the excerpts from NUMBER OF THE BEAST is unprintable. I wonder if similar opinions forced OMNI to stop printing those excerpts? ((I read a review of NUMBER which made it sound like I wouldn't want to read it. It sounded like it has all of the faults and none of the virtues of Heinlein's later work.))

I am marginally involved with the George Mason Medievalist Guild here at Goerge Mason U. It's an activity to wear my Darkover matrix worker's robe to once a week and I don't think anyone who is deeply involved in both Pern and Darkover (both neofeudal worlds) can be hostile toward medieval activities. Insofar as comments to the effect that the SCA, etc are all trying to permanently escape from reality (I know it's a bit late, but I'd like to put in my three cents -- inimical inflation -- each of us in the GMU group is quite aware of the real world and of the demands that being a Physics/business student with a high GPA and a part time job or two impose upon us. We need our hobbies in order to stay sane, whether it be hiking, discoing, drinking beer, being an SF/F fan (as I presume everyone in the N3F is), and/or running around in funny medievalist costumes at cons. Of course, as with drinking alcohol, there is a difference between mild indulgence and outright escape. Just as there exist a number of drinkers who imbibe until they pass out, or those SF fans that day-and-night daydream about interstellar adventures, there are some medievalists who have difficulty with the real world -- though I must admit they are more visibly out of step with the real world. (Although they may have their reasons with a prime of 20% or more by the time you read this along with other bad news! Back to the days of the goldsmiths. ((And of course the medieval period was not as uniform or as simplistic as most people think. When I was in Scotland, I read an article about this author who was/did have trouble getting his novel published because it gave too realistic a portrayal of the Viking era. It was banned in Sweden as I remember.))

\* \* \* \* \*

William West  
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While we're debating the pros and cons of the computerization of industry, I'd be interested in the opinions of my fellow Neffers in regards to industrial pollution and disposal of both chemical and nuclear waste. Recently a town about ten miles from here discovered improperly disposed of chemical wastes leaking from rusty barrels. They are now performing tests to determine how much of the chemicals have entered the town water supply. A similar case some thirty miles north of here showed extensive contamination of another town's artesian wells. And radioactive radium pellets have been found buried under a recently opneed playground. Now obviously it would be highly unrealistic of me or anyone else to try to impose restrictions on industries that would make it impossible for them to function. But there has to be a better system than this to regulate the disposal of potentially materials. In a country that prides itself on the sophistication of its technology, people are dying because the government and the industrial establishment can't effectively clean up after themselves. For those of you who think this is overreaction on my part, I suggest you look into the Love Canal affair. ((It's also a problem of court overcrowding. Here in NJ, the state government was trying to force a company to clean up illegally dumped materials. While they were still in litigation, the dump site blew up sending clouds of hazardous fumes across Staten Island. At that we got off easy since the prevailing winds (it was a windy day) blew most of the fumes out to sea. In another case, the company went out of business years ago and the State is trying to find out just what IS in those barrels. ))



What is really disturbing me about all this is the negative attitudes that seem to be surfacing among the general public. It used to be that an ecology protest would attract quite a bit of hostility from people who felt that such demonstrations were somehow disloyal. Now it has swung the other way, with business spokespeople becoming easy targets for frightened people. And it could get worse unless the industries themselves come up with an effective solution soon. Public demand could reach such a pitch that the government would have no choice but to step in with their regulations. Then we'd all lose because, based on past performance, the federal bureaucracy will either indulge in overkill or lose control of the problem altogether. ((New Jersey has one of the toughest chemical control and hazardous dumping laws but.... We lack money for effective policing; a company tries every legal manoeuvre possible -- thus delaying the clean up for two years or more -- and the problem remains. Or the company declares bankruptcy and the state is short of money so...))

I agree with Paula Crunk's comments on series. As long as the books are actually going somewhere and the author gives some consideration to changes a character should be going through over an extended period of time, fine. But some authors seem incapable of doing even that. The Gor books got off to an interesting start, but by the fifth book they had settled into the S/M bondage rut with little or no advancement of the overall plotline. (The war between the Priest Kings and the Kurii). And the Dumarest series has reached the point that whole paragraphs, usually dealing with the bad guy Cyclans, have been repeated book after book. At least the Dray Prescott books, while following the old tried and true ERB formula, have come up with some interesting twists on the basic recipe. (Although the last two books were a bit dull: one was the by now fashionable "Chessmen of Mars" analog; the other the more recently fashionable D&D patische.)

David Palter: After reading your comments to me concerning my criticism of A.D. Wallace's style in the January TB, I went back and reread it. While my comments concerning A.D.'s vocabulary were flippant and out of line, I still feel the overall content of that paragraph is valid. While A.D.'s command of the English language is indeed impressive, it also sometimes serves to obscure the points he wants to make. An excellent vocabulary is wasted if it is used to such an extent that it makes it difficult for the readers to grasp the connotation of what you are saying. My original complaint had to do with his use of three words in a sentence, one right after another that are all synonyms for "Language". While this does serve to emphasize a point, it is also highly redundant.

I do feel I owe A.D. an apology for the tone of my criticisms in the last two issues. They were, as I said, somewhat flippant and condescending. Unfortunately they were based on a misconception that has since been corrected. Sorry, A.D.

\* \* \* \* \*

David Palter  
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William West: I urge you not to be discouraged by your impending obsolescence as a cloth spreader. There are in fact plenty of other jobs you can do. I guarentee it.

Since William Neal has objected in such detail to my explanation of unemployment as the result of laziness or lack of skill, I will have to clarify my statement somewhat. As William correctly points out, there are a great many problems, some of which are extremely difficult to solve, which often make it difficult for even those who are neither lazy nor unskilled to get a job. We will have to look at the reason why some people are able to overcome these problems and others are not. The most basic factor in determining such success can be described as responsibility, an understanding that you and only you are completely responsible for your own life and well-being, and that in order for things to work out the way you want them to, you have to make them work out that way and in some manner to solve every problem you encounter which would prevent the accomplishment of your goals. Is this enough? Realistically, it is possible to encounter problems which resist solution regardless of your complete unswerving determination to solve them. For example, while you do want to get a job, you have recently been kidnapped by terrorists who have amputated all your limbs, chained you to the wall of their dungeon by your neck, and are holding you under 24 hour armed guard. Under such circumstances, chances of getting a job in the reasonably near future are extremely slight.



However, in almost all cases the problems one faces are susceptible to solution. In fact, usually the solution is quite obvious. Here are the problems raised by William Neal, along with their obvious solutions:

You are overqualified for everything available. Apply for an available job and don't inform your employer of all your qualifications.

You have no way to get to work, or work is so far away that travel costs are prohibitive. Move to an address closer to where you want to work.

You don't have the money for needed training. Take a less skilled job, work, save your money, and then get the training.

You cannot fit into the school's quota or guidelines. Get a different school. There is no school nearby. Move.

Everybody else is scrambling for training. Scramble harder than they do.

1. JAN '80

You've worked all your life at one job and are now over 40. This suggests that in one particular area of work you must by now be extremely good. It should be possible to exploit your experience and skill and get a job. Or if necessary start over; it's hard but not impossible.

You have family obligations and can't easily change address. Recognize that your problems are also your family's problems. Your spouse can usually help in some way. The family will have to tolerate a certain amount of disruption in their lives if that is necessary for you to get work.

Your emotional and mental stability are not up to the strain. You may have to take some time to repair your emotional and mental stability first. That is also not impossible in most cases. Especially if you're determined to succeed, not just looking for excuses to be unemployed.

I think I can safely say, then, that the only reasons, barring a few very unusual cases or disabilities, for someone to remain unemployed, would be that the person doesn't want to be employed, or has failed to assume responsibility for his/her own condition. Is that OK with you, Mr. Neal?

Tom Cardy: I advise that if you do feel guilty about participating in fannish discussions about the current and future problems of the world while doing nothing to actually alleviate or solve these problems, you should find some way to favorably influence the course of world events, even if your personal influence is extremely tiny (or even if you can't entirely tell if you are actually having any influence.) While it is difficult nearly to the impossible for one individual to alter the major currents of civilization, there are always things that any individual can do to add his own influence, however small, to the cumulative weight of those movements or trends which you think are deserving of support. Elections occur in New Zealand; be an informed voter and vote for the right people (even if this means, as it often does, selecting the lesser of two or more evils.) You may well feel, as I do, that industrialization of space is the most necessary step that humanity must take at this time to ensure its future survival and prosperity (if you suspect that I have been influenced by Jerry Pournelle, you're right) and I am helping to make this advance more likely by my membership in and support of the L-5 Society; you can of course do the same. If the L-5 Society does not suit you, I am sure that whatever ideals you believe in, somewhere there is an organization dedicated to their implementation. Even if your involvement does not extend beyond paying your yearly membership dues, you are still helping. And your organization may not succeed, but at least you tried, and that should



2.

from the movies, you would imagine that the genre of SF suffers from a fantastic paucity of ideas, which consequently must be constantly repeated. Surely you have noticed, as I have, that in written SF there is a vast abundance of original ideas -- this is the genre's strongest feature. So many original ideas exist in SF books and magazines that tens of thousands of ideas could easily be developed from them, without any one of these movies using the same central ideas as any other movie. Of course, the cost of special effects would make it difficult for most of these movies to be made, but in the case of STAR TREK that was not an obstacle -- they were willing to spend a large fortune on special effects to enliven a plot which not only had been used before ("The Changeling") but which was not particularly good even when it was new. Why not spend the money on something original? Of course most SF is *not* written in the STAR TREK format. But it could be adapted. How about having the Enterprise encounter the Ringworld, or Darkover, or Arrakis, or Trantor, or whichever SF creation leads to the most interesting results? Don't you think that if they had gotten Larry Niven, or Frank Herbert, or Robert Heinlein (etc.) to write a screenplay for them, that they could have gotten something brilliantly original? Just because Gene Roddenberry couldn't think of anything he hadn't already done before in the TV series is no reason to conclude that "all the best ideas had been used already."

((I went to a Star Trek con last Feb. and, among other things, read a novel written by a young woman which I thought was better than any of the Trek novels that had been published. Bantam -- the company that publishes Trek novels -- also thought so and wanted to publish it. The project was nixed by Roddenberry and co. The only reason most of us could come up with was that it was too well written, too original and too good. It was not too X rated which is another reason fan novels are not pubbed.))

Your statement that "In THE FACE, Vance appears to be taking on John Norman and Joanna Russ at the same time with Norman getting a bit more sympathy than Russ" would come, I am sure, as a great surprise to Jack Vance. Although both Vance and Norman have written about societies in which it is considered appropriate for men to deal brutally and sadistically with women, there is a big difference; Norman approves of such social values, whereas Vance certainly does not. I suspect that you interpret Joanna Russ as favoring a society in which women have a dominant role and have in effect simply reversed the male chauvinism of current civilization, but this is a gross misinterpretation (if you have made such an interpretation.) Russ is very bitter about current inequities (and with good reason) and so she writes with deadly venom; yet if you understand what she writes, she really wants nothing more than the abolition of artificial and restrictive sexual roles for both sexes. Instead of dividing all human activities into male and female and thus limiting everyone's freedom of choice, she quite reasonably wants to let people make their own choices regardless of sex. There is nothing in the writing of Jack Vance to suggest that he would disagree with Joanna Russ on this point. In THE FACE we are shown a society with some of the most horrible sexual roles ever conceived, as the social norm. Vance is obviously not advocating such roles, indeed if anything he is showing, by exaggeration, the folly of our own prevalent roles thus supporting the central thesis of Joanna Russ. But really he is neither taking on nor sup-

porting anyone; he is merely writing an entertaining novel with colorful and unusual societies, as is his wont. He is neither an ideological writer like Russ nor a pathological writer like Norman. He is an entertaining writer. (The same thing is true of your claim that THE GREY PRINCE is in part a defense of white rule in Rhodesia. I read the novel without even once thinking of Rhodesia, and I don't think that this was due to obtuseness on my part.)

((I hadn't heard that it dealt with Rhodesia but with South Africa, and that before I even read the book. Certainly WYST: ALASTOR 1617 deals with the evils (extremely exaggerated) of egalitarianism.))

I would reply to Greg Hills' criticism of Gordon R. Dickson, but it doesn't really seem necessary as the answers to Greg's complaints can all be found either explicitly or implicitly in the very excellent Dickson interview which you were kind enough to print for us.

\* \* \* \* \*

Frank Lee Linne  
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I was going to make an attempt to rebut John DiPrete's scurilous remark anen Clifford Simak's anti-technological bent, but Greg Hills did the job I might only have dreamed of in vain. May silver stars bloom on his hilltop. (I do wish people would read an author carefully before denouncing him though!) ((At least he had read Simak. The person who denounced Bradley hadn't even read her works.))

Dennis Jarog's review of THE ROAD TO CORLAY was really quite good, but maybe because the book was. Howsomever, I found his singling out of the archbishop's sneer for his own sneer rather curious. One gets the impression from his tone that he feels that he would the Second Coming, even were it to happen far from him. A theologian would say that this is a dangerous illusion. Also, I think the novel attempted to make the point that after all that has gone before, no one might say in what form the Second Coming will descend upon a fearful world.

Sally Ann Syrjala's review of WALL OF SERPENTS was truly enjoyable. She is perhaps, forged of dreams and valour herself.

About Michel Smith's comment on the right of Gorean publishing and your rejoinder to same: I tend to be middle-of-the-road on this subject, but I think they should be suppressed along with the putridity churned out by the Nazis and Communists for these groups are all against free expression. John Norman is, no doubt, capable of better things, and if necessary, he should be subsidized so that he might address himself to those better things.

Gail Weiss: a chivalrous fairyland is an impossibility. I for one, enjoy living too much to even contemplate non being. For chivalry to be practiced, you must have villains, and the existence of both negates the chivalrous concept. No one can be kind if cruelty exists. Your wish was to live in a dutiful fairyland, SHAI DORSAI! ((????))

Brian Earl Brown: what is this fixation on clothes? (Dirty-mindedness?)

I should at least reply to David Bimler (his holiness Pope John XX). I fear that he has hit the nail squarely on the head, it is indeed lack of communication that we have here. I have eagerly read all those books that purported to describe a fully alien being, and invariably I have been disappointed. . . .they were always humans in disguise. It is true maybe only in this especial bubble of spacetime that surrounds us, that there is only one way of looking/ reacting to realtiy, dress it as you will.

\* \* \* \* \*

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Speaking of computers... Today I was shocked to receive in the mail a professional appearing ad offering to supply sucker lists of Disney collectors, Star Trek fans, Marvel dealers etc. Apparently some enterprizing jerk with access to an air force computer is out to set himself (or herself -- let's not be "male chauvinist pig" about this!) up as the Vigury of the fan-dom sets. (For the benefit of any of you lucky enough not to be on any political sucker lists for various candidates, let me say that Vigury heads one of the most vicious trash-

mail operations in the US, focussing largely on political mailing lists.)

Of course, there have been, from time to time, efforts to compile directories of fans of, for and by other fans, for the purpose of easier communication with the rest of fandom. But this is the first, to my knowledge, at any rate, attempt to horn in on the highly lucrative Direct Mail Advertizing business aimed at Science-Fiction and Star Trek fandoms. Just goes to show that sooner or later there's always somebody who is out to make a fast buck out of somebody else's innocent fun...

& & & & & & & & &

David Heath TB#24 looked pretty good. The layout and printing is very good, with-  
HHC 437, Armor WS out peer, I think. ((But now I'm back using my old typer.))  
Fort Knox, KY 40121

This thing with Donald Franson is disturbing since I don't know much about the make-up of the governing body of the N3F. I didn't pay much attention to Don's letter when I got it. It seemed obvious why dues were raised. All this talk about calendar years and such only exerbates the situation. All I'm interested in is when my membership is up ((next February)) and how much I have to pay to renew it.

I enjoyed Owen Laurion's guest editorial. At least he attempted to simplify what Don Franson was trying to do.

Of the new members, I'm glad to see Fred Singer in there. I don't know him, but I was stationed in Baumholder, Germany for three years and it's a real bummer being a SF fan over there. In 78 when STAR WARS came out over there, I didn't go see it because it was dubbed in German. I finally had to drive my bike to Paris in January 79 to see it with French subtitles. But at least it was in English! People should write to him. I am.

How can we get the address of the clubhouse in Los Angeles. I'd like to go there when I go home this summer. ((Write Harry Andruschak for it.))

I enjoyed the Dickson articles and my favorite was Jarog's "Grunts and Groans" exploring the political aspect of both books. This was of interest to me because I've been having some pretty healthy discussions lately about both books (NS and ST) with people who have yet to get beyond the adventure aspect of the stories.

I was amazed by the STAR TREK: TM criticisms in the letter column. It may become a new cult (criticizing SF movies that is). I myself liked the movie. Sure it was flawed, but it was better than nothing which is what I was getting beforehand.

# # # # # # # # # #

Philip Army I recently recieved your interesting zine. Since a kindly friend  
5401 Whitcomb Dr of mine signed me up, you had no info on me -- so here it is, for  
Madison, WI 53711 what it's worth.

I, Philip Army, am a full time college student and part time human being, and a science-fiction fan in my spare time. (WHAT spare time?) (sorry -- it's close to finals). I am, when I have the chance, an avid reader of science-fiction, science-fantasy, fantasy, and anything else that catches my eye. I love Dragons in any and all literary incarnations, adore robots and small friendly furry folk, and am planning to build my own space ship as soon as I invent anti-gravity. (which may be a goodly while). Lately my favorite authors have been Niven, Heinlein, McCaffrey, C.S. Lewis, and Donaldson (as in Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever). Cons, while somewhat rare for me, are a bit of a passion -- it's a nice change to stay up all night for FUN!

Thanks much to the people who wrote me on my new membership -- I do appreciate mail. Apologies for not returning the favor. Letter writing hasn't been on my schedule lately. I'll try to drop you folks a note this summer.

I saw someplace in TIGHTBEAM about "want ads" ((TNFF)). Well, I'm looking for the sound-track record, (or a cassette recording of such), of the animated film, FANTASTIC PLANET. (The record was an import from France, I believe). If anyone knows a source for this record, or knows someone who has one, I'd be interested in the information. Thanks!

Arthur D. Hlavaty  
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Here is another excellent issue of TIGHTBEAM. Your zine is certainly one of the good things about N3F, ~~and if you give me enough time I may even think of the other one.~~

Your "consciously thematic" arrangement of this issue around the works of Gordon R. Dickson is quite successful. As a recent convert to the pleasures of the Dorsai books (though I still have read little else of his work), I was fascinated and urge you to print the rest of Jack Herman's interview with him. ((The best non Dorsai books, in my opinion are THE ALIEN WAY and NONE BUT MAN.))

Greg Hills' critique of Dickson's books in terms of their formulaic structure (competent male protagonist who Knows Secrets triumphing over conspiratorial THEM) may be true, but it seems like a description of the vast majority of SF books in general. Indeed I find that approach boring, unless it's done very cleverly (as by Eric Frank Russell at his best) or else there are other aspects (such as the strategic complexities of the Dorsai books). As Dickson himself mentions, he now has written a novella ("Amanda Morgan") with a female protagonist, and I for one think he has made her quite credible, a view shared by at least two female reviewers -- Sandra Miesel and Margaret Middleton. ((I thought she was quite credible as well.))

On to the lettercol: Barbara Tennison: One of the things that bothers me about STAR TREK: THE LONG EXPENSIVE EPISODE is that they could have explained some things (like Ilia's oath of celibacy and Kirk's giving the wrong order) and just didn't bother to. Other stuff was not explainable. Vger should have brought Ilia back either naked (on the grounds that it was reconstituting her, not irrelevant stuff) or in her original uniform (on the grounds that it couldn't/wouldn't make the trivial distinction between a carbon-based unit and its carbon-based detachable integument). Bringing her back in the gown implies that while Vger understood little about the carbon units and in many ways cared less, it recognized and respected their modesty taboos. Yeah, sure.

On series: I tend to prefer one good big book (like STAND ON ZANZIBAR) to the kind of interminable series that Farmer and Moorcock often do. The "series" I like best are the ones like the Darkover and Hainish books which keep introducing new characters.

A.D. Wallace: No, not everyone wants a slave economy without slaves, though I certainly do. There is a kind of neopuritan "environmentalist" who tends to think that comfort and convenience and freedom from the nastier demands of the real world are Bad Things which should be avoided even if we could get them without hurting anyone. Sometimes I think the next best thing to a slave economy without slaves would be a set-up where everyone who thinks like I do gets to own a couple of environmentalists.....

What is wrong with Earth (which I personify as neuter so as not to contaminate my feelings about women) is that it's too bloody crowded and everybody can affect everybody else. And that there is a lot of useful stuff out in space that could make everyone's lives better.

Kathleen Woodbury: Orson Scott Card, who is also a Mormon, pointed out the Mormon influences on CATTLECAR EXLAXICA in SFR a while back. He found it somewhere between pointless and blasphemous.

Robert McClain's explanation of "what people read SF/fantasy for" inspires me to quote the immortal words of Tonto: "What do you mean we, kimosabe?" (According to Nigel Sellera, "Kimosabe" is an ancient Sioux phrase roughly translatable as "Eat my loincloth, honky.") I don't read to escape from my dreary existence by vicariously plundering and slaughtering. If I did want to BE the hero of the story I'm reading, I'd stick to porn because the heroes in that do things I find to be a whole lot more fun than violence. I'm tempted to say he'd be right if he left "SF" out of his definition and just talked about fantasy readers, but LORD OF THE RINGS has more to it than that.



((I don't imagine myself the hero when I read SF either. What's more I am working on a novel and I do not imagine myself as any of the major characters. I do identify with them, sympathize with most of them, even the villain. This difference between imagining oneself the hero and identifying with the hero may seem minor, but it is very real. On the other hand, I have to know what motivates my characters; if they have character flaws, I have to know why they have this flaw even if the reason is not gone into in the story.

However, Ben Bova, when I was in a Writers' Workshop he directed, said that readers like to imagine themselves as the hero of the story so.... Of course he also said that women could not write successful male protagonists because they have never been male. I'm sure this would come as a surprise to a lot of writers. I began to see why I would never sell to ANALOG while he was editing it.

On the other hand Marion Zimmer Bradley said you should write what you like to read. So if Robert McClain likes Conan-type novels, he should write those. Certainly he should never try writing New Wave considering what he thinks of it.))

\* \* \* \* \*

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I really enjoyed the interview with Gordon Dickson. I would love to see the part that wasn't published in this issue. ((Okay, maybe in September.)) However, I think he gave away a surprise ending when he said that Paul Formain in NECROMANCER was really Donal Graeme of DORSAI! I, at least, didn't catch on until the last pages when he was talking about a tree in a garden using the exact same words as Donal. My memory asked "Hey, where have I heard that before?" You may think I was obtuse, but you have to take into consideration the years between when DORSAI came out in a book called THE GENETIC GENERAL and NECROMANCER when it was NO ROOM FOR MAN. I know THE GENETIC GENERAL is an abridged version of DORSAI! but when I got the new book to see what I had missed all these years, you can take my word for it, there was very little left out and absolutely nothing of importance.

((The first Dorsai novel I read was SOLDIER, ASK NOT and I was quite confused by it. Then I read DORSAI! -- also as THE GENETIC GENERAL -- then NO ROOM FOR MAN. The ending surprised me also. However I think Dickson was assuming that the reader had read all the Dorsai novels and so knew Paul Formain's identity.))

I envy readers who are just starting to enjoy SF. They can read a series like the Childe Cycle in the order they are supposed to be read instead of just when they were written. The thing to remember when reading a book that seems old fashioned is that maybe it's a reprint. All you have to do is look at the copyright date to know.

The advantage of having been a SF reader for the last fifteen years is that nothing seems old-fashioned. I enjoy the hard SF as much as the new fantasy. Maybe that's why I enjoy Dickson's books so much. He is an old favorite who is still busy writing new books. When you think about it, there aren't many authors who wrote for John Campbell who are still writing.

Speaking of authors who disappear, what happened to Christopher Anvil? I used to enjoy his short stories in ANALOG and I loved PANDORA'S PLANET. I haven't seen anything of his for some time. Has something happened to him?

I also enjoyed the book review. It was THE KEEPER'S PRICE that brought me to active fandom. The fan written stories were so good that I had to have more. I kept thinking, "I wonder what the other stories were like that didn't get published?" The only way to find out was to write to the Friends of Darkover and order their back issues of STARSTONE. ((Another person corrupted. Heh, heh. There is also another Darkover short story contest with a Sept 30 deadline so if you've ever had an idea for a Darkover story....))

@ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @

Greg Hills  
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Got the ~~type~~ May TB.

I like the new typer (IBM Executive or somesuch, n'est pas? ((Yes, but it is only a borrowed typer.)) A typeset feel adds a gloss of professionalism to any zine. If you go offset, I strongly recommend photoreduction. You have the typeset for it now, and no mistake!

I support a dues raise to \$8.00 p.a.; in fact I am willing to pay said sum later this year, although my membership doesn't run out until '82 or somesuch.

Alex Wallace mentioned something about few of us being around in a millenium or so to see how Asimov/Heinlein last. Too right. I don't suppose too many of you reading this were around when 'Homer' was writing the ILIAD and the ODYSSEY. But I do wish people would not misquote (or pseudo-quote) me. I presume, Alex, you are referencing page 20 of TB #22. Go away and reread what I said there, please. Then come back and we'll debate it. Maybe. But "survival is the true touchstone of goodness and greatness" is not what I was arguing!!!! \*\*clue...\*\*

Brod Klinger: I presume you are referring to vol 1, #5 of DESTINIES? I am not familiar with the story you mention, but that zine is about the only one I can think of that you might be referring to. I agree, though, Hogan is a fine writer. In fact, my reading of Hogan has been one of uninterrupted enjoyment, right through from INHERIT THE STARS and THE GENTLE GIANTS OF GANYMEDE to THE TWO FACES OF TOMORROW and THRICE UPON A TIME. I am searching feverishly for THE GENESIS MACHINE, and I hear there is a new one out, too but I can't recall the title. ((THRICE UPON A TIME is the latest one out.))

Hear, hear on the unemployed matter (discussion as continued from last TB by William Neal). I fall between the lines two ways: first of all, I am overqualified for most manual or labouring jobs. But I am under qualified for many of the jobs I really want. Second, I am too young for many responsible positions; yet I am handicapped by being too old to get other jobs where I could pick up experience to qualify for the responsible positions.

So I end up taking an endless train of makeshift jobs, hoping for The Big Break. I stay poor because the people I want to give me jobs do "the kind thing" and "leave me free" to find a position that will really suit me. I missed one job I applied for very recently for the single reason that, as they candidly admitted, while I was the best person for the job in most ways, and they would have liked to take me on, my age was awkward and would not fit into their seniority ladder of wages. They accepted a school-leaver who almost knows which side of a page to read. There was thus no anomalous age in their organization. Obviously the same thing will happen elsewhere (and does). The only place I have a hope of finding a career with now is either (a) one that pays for work done; or (b) one where they are looking for someone exactly my age. This narrows my options.

So, David Palter, am I lazy or unskilled? My various employers haven't thought me lazy. And I am hardly unskilled regarding most of the jobs I apply for. You know, I would have done better (jobwise) not to have bothered with University. I could have gone from school into a safe, dreary little desk job.

But then I'd never know whether there was a better job for me Out There. I'd have been miserable, uncertain. So now I'm certain -- and I can't break in! (And yet -- I'm reasonably happy despite this. Because I know what's over the horizon I can see from a desk. If I get a permanent job now, finally, I will be happy to keep it for a long, long time.)

I have a piece of advice for Robert Teague: don't wait till you know what's going on; you'll be waiting forever. Just pick out one of the zillion careless statements that drift loose in every TB, and start picking. After a while you'll find you don't need to know what's going on because no one else knows anyway leaving us all in the same pan.

\* \* \* \* \*

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William Goodson: Absolutely. Bones McCoy had several lazy, happy years as ship's surgeon on the Love Boat; how could his fans have missed it? That's why Kirk and Spock were so ruthless about drafting him; they probably

laughed all the way to the draft board. (In Spock's case, all the way to his duty station.)

Robert McClain: I think your complaint is a specifically and uniquely male one and possibly age-group specific as well. I have never heard a woman fan complain about too much

SEEN GREG HILLS  
RECENTLY?



psychological depth unless the story was at a standstill or incomprehensible; they have complained about cardboard characters pointlessly whacking each other over the head. The more thoughtful male readers have the same complaint. Gordy Dickson writes in the May TIGHTBEAM that it took him years to outgrow writing that sort of thing.

Computers, especially the baby computers sold for the hobby market, are a lot of fun. My only problem with them is the same one I have with ham radio: neither the time to study, the knowledge to play games with them without extensive studying, nor the money to indulge in any of this beautiful hardware. Nor (curses) are either of my children interested.

Kathleen Woodbury: Considering the debate about unemployment raging elsewhere in this magazine, have you been able to use your M.M.E.? My B.S. is in math and is totally unsaleable without a masters' degree, a programming skill, or an accounting skill; see William Neal's comments on being overqualified and over forty, for the worth of the latter.

I knew Galactica was a Mormon joke; for my many sins I am an acquaintance of Owen Laurion. He's an ex-employee of my ex-employer. (The recession got me. The University of New Mexico got Owen.)

Loved STAR WARS except for that interminable dogfight in space. Later I discovered I was supposed to imagine myself in Luke Skywalker's seat shooting down bad guys. That had never occurred to me; no Walter Mitty streak in me, I guess. ((I had exactly the same reaction to the interminable dogfight. Was that my problem?))

STAR TREK -- THE MOTION PICTURE was great, but didn't Roddenberry used to do this sort of thing routinely in 50 minutes once a week? I dearly loved the in-space shots: this was the sort of thing Heinlein was trying to make us see twenty-five years ago. They could have been visuals for the anthology GREEN HILLS OF EARTH. I nearly cried. I also (and have been branded as a weird-o for it) cried for that poor little space probe trying to do what it was supposed to do and make its way home, and home was no longer recognizable -- nor recognized him. Just think about that one under the assumption that Vejur was sentient and a feeling being for a while.

William Neal: What boring job have you been steadily employed at for 10 years and is it one a college-educated applicant with a topping of trade school accounting could aspire to? Who is also female and over forty? Because for all my ambition and trying, I have spent the greatest bulk of my working life as a part-time temporary clerk, and I have never in my life seen any non-minority male (or minority male under fifty) holding a position such as mine. I don't know you fed you that comment about the lazy unemployed, ((David Palter)) but I can guarentee you after a quarter of a century of this, being a lazy bum begins to look very good indeed. Have I taken such jobs by choice? Certainly! It sure beats not working!

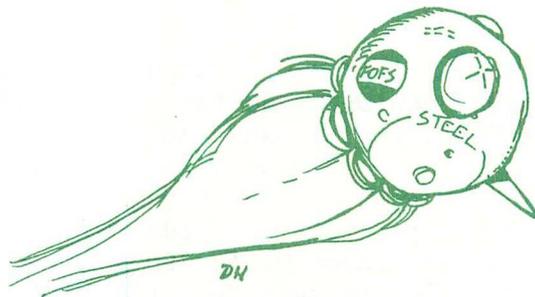
Don Fitch: There is a running argumant over sex-neutral/masculine words. Marion Zimmer Bradley loathes terms like "authoress" and "actress" and one supposes "Chairwoman." (The one place where the terms would be in order is the Women's Political Caucus, which carefully avoids the usage.) On the other hand, she thinks masculine terms are also the all-inclusive terms, and I can only disagree in many cases. In all too many of them "actor" and "chairman" conjure up a male image. I'm all for "author" or "writer" though.

Brod Klinger: I liked your statistics on unemployment. I live in the Southwest and decidedly do NOT feel that Mexican immigrants are putting me out of work. I am being displaced at one end of the spectrum by young girls fresh from training as bookkeepers AND SECRETARIES, possibly used in conjunction with computers; at the other end by bright young men with degrees in accounting. Am I paranoid about young? It's hard not to be. I see all these middle-aged ladies in their polyeaster pantssuits and tote-all purses and anxious empressions waiting in the same lines as I am and there is not too much hope on their faces, poor things.

Barbara Tennison: I liked DREAMSNAKE and found it a good read. Not the world's greatest novel, but a nicely realized world and people. Its greatest fault was that it was too episodic, a string of incidents around a thready plot.

I couldn't find the "unrelieved virtue" everyone was talking about; it just seemed to me that Snake was doing her job more conscientiously than a more experienced Healer would have; she was young and earnest. What she did have was unrelenting purpose. Not something we're

used to in heroines, but damn the gender, Snake was the hero. Even had an affair with a beautiful blond! If you want unrelieved virtue, sensitivity, etc, try Damon Ridenow in FORBIDDEN TOWER. If Snake bothered you, he'll set your teeth on edge.



GORDON DICKSON: Where in any of your books can the casual reader find the scene of For-main/Donal splitting the racial psyche into its conservative and creative halves? I reread NECROMANCER and only found that Paul was struck down by something after doing psychic battle with an illusion. Himself? Later he is told he created the something; he accepts that, so the reader must. Still later he remarks "It was all in the way of evil that Super-Complex had said." A strong statement about humankind's conservative half, even from a creative man, if true. But where do we see him creating it? Let alone splitting a pre-existing something into two halves and walling one off? Either I'm blind as a bat, or this simply is not in the books but only in the commentaries.

My old writing mentor used to bawl me out for that. "Put it in the story, not the letter," she would say.

I agree with you about the pulp tradition of characterization, but disagree that an editor would have bounced a believable human character, male or female, if the bodies continued to hit the floor with regularity. There is plenty of action in "Amanda Morgan", after all. I disagree because Leigh Brackett's stories never stooped to "A, B, C, D, or on rare occasions E"; neither did C. L. Moore's. (I bother to mention this because neos already believe that editors are the enemies of good writing. Let's not encourage that sort of nonsense.)

When Sally Kellerman took over the part of Margaret in MASH, the script was written in the pulp tradition. Kellerman, a conscientious actress (actor, for those who prefer it,) set out to understand why a person would act as Margaret did, came up with a plausible answer, and deepened the characterization -- humanized Margaret without watering her down -- within the confines of TV, today's pulp. She simply did it by asking what Margaret's reasons might be. (That she was Regular Army from the cradle and on the defensive among the draftee-doctors was the answer, I believe.) The "pulp" was the better for it.

(Amanda seems to have been created by drawing on a pre-existing American archetype, the pioneer mother with a rifle. It worked.)

# # # # #

R Laurraine Tutihasi      I commend your good taste in publishing my LoC. \*HHOK\* By the way,  
1217 Majestic Way      I still have not received a replacement copy from Nick Grassell. My  
Webster, NY 14580      respect for him has slipped a few notches.

I find it infuriating that William West says "MZB has an interesting theory as to why many of our best new SF/fantasy writers are women," and then goes no further. This is tantalising torture. So tell, already!

Paula Crunk talks about the evolution of marriage in Walton's MABINOGEON. She may be interested in Müller-Lyer's THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN MARRIAGE. It is a socioeconomic analysis of the marriage state through history. It was written in 1913 in German and translated into English in 1930. Despite its age, it seems as valid today as then. It was reprinted in 1974, so I surmise that nothing new has been done in this area. I find it fascinating and have ordered a copy. The one I have now is a Xerox facsimile library copy made in 1970. It is such a great little book that I will go to any lengths to get my own. I wouldn't be surprised if Walton had read it too.

If the trailer I saw is any indication, THE SHINING will definately not be a movie for the squeamish. The trailer showed a hallway with two elevators at the end. At first, nothing seems to be happening. Then this liquid starts flowing in from the sides. It's (fake movie) blood! It just keeps flowing in until the furniture is afloat in it. Yecch!

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To respond to just one of Owen K. Laurion's points -- even if N3F wanted to bid for worldcon, a move I'm not sure I'd want to endorse, what zone would we place ourselves in? ((The zone of whatever city we were to hold the con in was in.)) And what would be the real benefit of doing something like that? I think I'd rather stick to N3F throwing parties at worldcon and large regionals. And that brings a reminder: according to Noreascon Two's "Progress Report Four," N3F has a meeting scheduled at worldcon for Friday, August 29th from 10-11 AM. I'm not real happy about this time because I probably won't be able to leave for Boston until Friday, and don't know what time I'll be arriving; but I urge all N3F members who can make the meeting to do so.

Help! Help! Please clarify. The coa listed for Joe Siclari is what I have down as his old address. Did he move back? ((I don't know. Joe?))

I luff the "Fannish Weapons of the Galaxy" series. I hope it continues. ((Fa??))

Not having read much by Gordon R. Dickson myself, I was itching after Greg Hills' article for a response from someone who is familiar with Dickson's work. Jack Herman's interview certainly helped (and yes, I would read the rest of it if you ran it), but I guess I would still like to hear something from Dickson's audience.

It was good to see some new and not so familiar names in the lettercol. More interaction -- huzzah!

I think "Silver Shoes for a Princess" (Brod Klinger's letter) was in DESTINIES. I haven't read it so can't comment on it, but I have read THRICE UPON A TIME and just finished THE GENESIS MACHINE so I do have a few comments on James P. Hogan. First, I like his writing sufficiently that I want to sample more. Second, his writing is flawed and I agree with Brad partially that the problem lies in characterization. It is not so much that Hogan fails to create believable characters as that he tends to set them aside, so to speak, while concentrating on another aspect of the story, usually the science (and his ideas in that area are admittedly dazzling), I was aware of a braiding effect of the various story elements, especially in GENESIS. Since THRICE is his most recent book and improvement was evident, we can look forward to when Hogan blends everything together without the seams showing quite so much. Then he will be a very, very good writer indeed.

Kathleen Woodbury mentioned Mormon elements in ~~BATTLESTAR~~ BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. Orson Scott Card pointed this out and, if I remember rightly, he felt that the Mormon elements weren't used very well. (Sort of the appearance of an idea rather than the substance type of thing.) ((You could say that about all of Larsen's borrowings.))

Thanks to William Goodson for the day's best laugh.

Will there be more M.A.R.S.S. strips? That's a new approach to locking. I liked it.

Lynne's already gone a good way toward covering my response to Robert McClain's comments on current SF. Different people like to read different things. Buy and read what you like. It's patently foolish to struggle with books and/or authors you don't enjoy. However I would like to go a step or two further. It's one thing to dislike New Wave authors. It's quite another to cast aspersions on them because you dislike their style or subject matter or whatever. I mean things like putting authors in quotations as if these writers were imposters tricked out in their betters' clothing. Writers write. Whether what they write meets with your approval is not really germane to their status as writers (although it might have a great deal to do with the state of their bank account.)

If I had a mind to, I could say that Robert E. Howard was a hack who managed to create one, maybe two, memorable characters by bludgeoning the reader with words. Happens I don't believe that, but I could probably make as much of a case for that point of view as you can for the "boringness" of New Wave.

I guess what I'm trying to say here is that there is no one right way to write stories. I'm all for rousing adventure (so keep on writing your stories; maybe I'll get to read one some day). I also like psychological insights. I don't mind looking up a word or three in the dictionary; it's how I expand my vocabulary. I enjoy pondering sometimes. I like variety.

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I really enjoyed William West's article on THE KEEPER'S PRICE. I agree with his complaint about the cover of the book (and so does Marion -- she says that the only Darkover novel that did manage to carry cover art that fitted with her visualization of Darkover was TWO TO CONQUER). It's an interesting piece of art, but Darkover it ain't. THE KEEPER'S PRICE was what got me into fandom in the first place. I never imagined that any author would encourage the fans to write in her world, and the fact that some of these fan-stories were published professionally amazed me. Needless to say, I joined the Friends of Darkover and feel right at home.

Tell me, just what is all the fuss over the dues about? \$6.00 does not seem to be too much for one year's membership in an organization that provides two zines/newsletters. I am inclined to agree with Harry Andruschak -- they should be higher, if only to pay the costs of printing and postage.

While I agree with Kathleen Woodbury about Science-Fiction helping people to reach up and out, wanting to learn, to know, it is SF's fandom that seems to encourage people to reach out to other people, to share, to grow, and this to me adds more than the frosting on the proverbial cake. I have been reading F/SF for 18 years, but I think that I may have grown more in the last six months than in all of the time that went before. I have found that the discussions, arguments, and questions brought up in the zines/newsletters (not to mention the people that I have come into contact with through the Sime/Gen Welcommittee) have made me aware of ideas/attitudes that I had been blind to in my everyday life.

((I had the same experience when I first joined fandom. I also found that while I'm "way out" as far as the neighbors are concerned, I'm rather on the conservative side within fandom.))

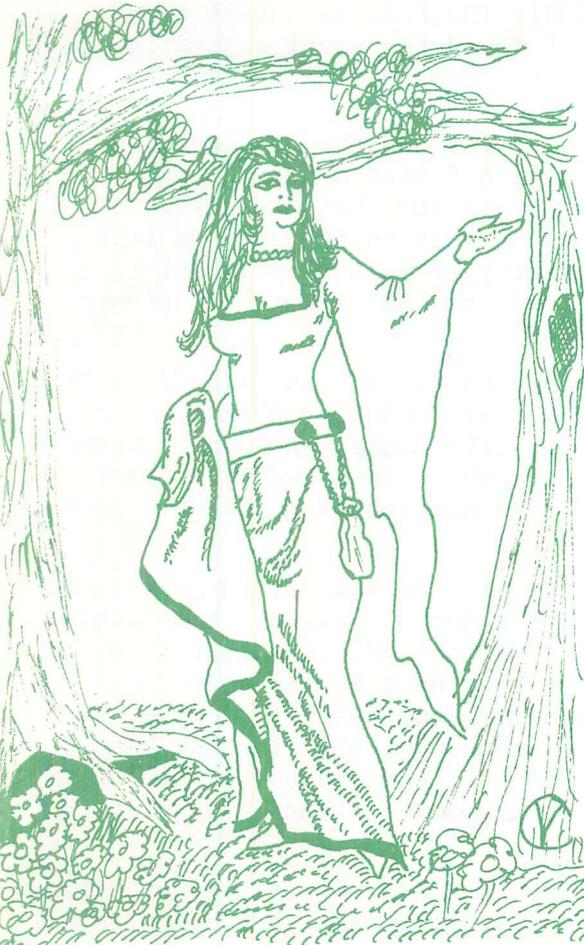
\* \* \* \* \*

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Visually, TB has beautiful layouts, re-pro and balance of content. #22 was predominantly a lettered zine with lots of familiar names to a zine consumer like me. #24 contains a lot of N3F business and politicking that makes my coyote-like ears stick up. I'm becoming more of a mailbox fan since gas prices are curtailing my club attendance here in ABC country, and marvel at the amount of co-ordination involved in running something of this scope. My hats off to those who share my evangelical spirit in spreading the Good Word of Fandom and bringing others into the Fold.

The reviews are above par in #24. I enjoy the Darkover books, but there is a weird block in me that keeps me from getting too ansorbed into any one author or series. I differ from Bill West's impression of Maitz' cover to THE KEEPER'S PRICE, though. Maitz has good composition, vibrant color, and an intriguing sense of drama that pleases me. Plus (!), he doesn't imitate Frazetta. Four marks in his favor.

The Dickson features were fascinating on a number of levels. I like Gordy in person, but don't like his fiction. Greg Hills' exploration of Dickson's style put a lot of my ambiguous feelings into form; but I can never find the proverbial "right moment" to sink into one of his books. "Grunts and Groans" was an interesting look at the parallels between one of my favorite Heinlein books and the quintessential DORSAI book; I kept thinking of a third novel, Haldeman's FOREVER WAR, which dealt with many of the same concepts. The Dickson



Galadriel

interview pulled me in, and I'll reiterate that, in person, he's a helluva mind to talk to. The look at the historical background to his future was the highpoint.

MORE TIDBITS: The reason STAR WARS, SUPERMAN, and STAR TREK (and JAWS...and THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK) all sound alike is because they were written by John Williams (now conductor of the Boston Pops). He drew his SW themes from a work by Gustav Holst, called THE PLANETS, ((I recognized that when I saw the film)) and also from the spirit of the adventure scores of Max Steiner, Bernard Herrmann, John Barry, and others. Since 2001, lush music of a classical nature has been associated with big scale SF pictures. Before that time, "futuristic" electronic music was more the norm. One of my favorite bizarre SF scores was always Jerry Goldsmith's "Planet of the Apes" eerie soundtrack.

Good to see Don Fitch's loc. I like the man's style and admire his direct sincerity and tact. Otherwise the locs are varied and offer some good reading (well... I will be prejudiced this one time). You offer contrasting opinions in a way that I agree with; as a loccist, I get peeved when my words are edited mercilessly for the sake of an editor's rebuttal. ((That annoys me too.))

Also liked Bob Teague's M.A.R.S.S. man, familiar from the assorted zines he has sent my way over the years. It's a refreshing way to make an intro.

David Heath Jr.'s illos on the Dickson theme were superb. I like his busy linework. Otherwise, I've fallen in love with the illo on page 9, and showed it to a fannish friend of mine who had a phone installed in his BATHROOM. I read in ATARANTES that Fred Jackson has been cured of semi-gafia and will be in zinedom for a long time, hopefully with a lot more FREJAC funnies. ((I hope so too.))

# # # # # # # ## #

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Quoting Dennis Jarog: "STARSHIP TROOPERS by Robert A. Heinlein does not succeed." I found the novel enjoyable and entertaining, though rather on the juvenile side. ((It was written as a juvenile but Scribners refused to publish it.)) Given the state of the art then, the prose was satisfactory and the dialogue and characterization were more than adequate. As a piece of fiction I take no exception to RAH's setting and social and political milieu. Jarog seems to assume that the novel is an intended social and political document, and appears to condemn it on the grounds that it is the wrong sort of philosophy, not his. I take the liberty of venturing an opinion: Not all novels need to be set in Jarog's favorite political and social milieu. Or perhaps he should redefine "succeed."

HELP! Will some kind expert succinctly define and explicate "consciously thematic"? Jack Herman's suggested meaning is too facile to carry the weight that Gordon R. Dickson attributes to the phrase. It vaguely reminds one of the Wagnerian leit motif, and perhaps this is the case. ((Wagner??? Where's Pat when I need him. I thought a consciously thematic novel was one in which the author intended a message but didn't hit you over the head with it. When he does so, then it's propaganda.))

In a long piece Christopher Priest whacks and thwacks at a variety of things, largely American. (Bruce Gillespie's SF COMMENTARY #59). I found it most entertaining, and some assertions quite astonishing. Thus Lem is the most published author in SF&F, ((maybe but not in the English-speaking world)), and Britain has per capita, more authors in the genre than the USA. Much at Seacon -- so sayeth Priest -- was greeted with resentment by many rank-and-file British fans. (Does Britain include Scotland, Ulster and Wales?) The heaviest blows fell on SFWA and some (unnamed) American authors. I enjoy these fracas, (Is fracas also plural?) ((Yes. It sounds like SF Commentary hasn't changed from when I was reading it. It is interesting if you like controversy.))

We also heard from: Scotty Matthews, Barbara Tennison, Robert McClain -- next issue. Also Nick Grassell who says anyone who believes in \$10 dues can always pay same when s/he renews.

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At last a letter has pulled me out of my cocoon. I'm mostly answering the TB letter from Owen Laurion. Owen seems to have a misconception of dues paid by Calendar Year, so, I thought if he has this idea, then many more somewhat new members probably

have the same idea so.....

No one, no member ever had to wait until January to become a member when he joined. The dues were worked out on a quarterly basis. When someone joined in June (using \$2.00 dues as the base) after July 1st, he paid \$2.00 plus an extra dollar for that year and all of the next year. If you only sent \$2.00, then your membership expired at the end of that year. After Oct 1st, you paid \$2.50 for the rest of the current year plus the entire next year. Any member joining after July was sent a notice explaining this and how much it would cost them for the next year. It was a relatively cheaper plan than the current rate.

As to the trouble the present way of dues causes the Secretary, it's no more trouble when someone doesn't write and ask if so-and-so renewed his dues. I make a file card for each member when they first join and the expiration date is on that card. Under the Calendar Year, you pulled the non-renewed cards at the first of each year; now, if I am to keep up to date, I pull cards every month. After January these cards go in the inactive file. Of course when someone asks the status of a member, I can find this by checking the file.

The trouble, the main trouble, is that it makes a twice yearly membership roster obsolete. Compiling a roster is a lot of trouble at best; under the system we now have, it's useless to do all that and before the roster is run off, some memberships have elapsed. So I doubt you'll see many rosters.

As for whether or not I can do the work by the system we now use, I've done a lot more complicated work than this. I'm not as incompetent as you may imagine. Keeping a membership file is little trouble. The volunteer job I now hold, requires me to keep lists by counties, districts and dates, so N3F is not much trouble. This job demands a monthly list of meetings, of fund raisers etc. so you can see that N3F is not that complicated.

One thing I'd like to emphasize is that no membership is put in limbo, nor has ever been, because of when they join. I send a monthly report to the Welcommittee, the Editors and the President. Sometimes I send the names of new members and renewals oftener than once a month. Membership starts on the month the members are eligible for a club zine. That was the plan worked out when we changed dues systems. When I first joined N3F, the club dues were \$1.00 a year. Can you imagine \$1.00 dues? But then fandom was new, a new toy discovered by a few and how they enjoyed playing with it. We had more benefits then, put out free by members. This has gone with \$1.00 dues.

Yes, I know pubbing costs are higher now than then but so are salaries. I'm retired now and get more money than I did when working. It's just that once a fight is won, the interest lags. Most fans now enter an already well organized

fandom; everything is there. They do not have to work to build an interest in SF. They do not have to borrow/lend books and magazines, often duplicating whole books so they could keep it. We'll probably never go back to having free benefits in N3F. So just keep smiling.

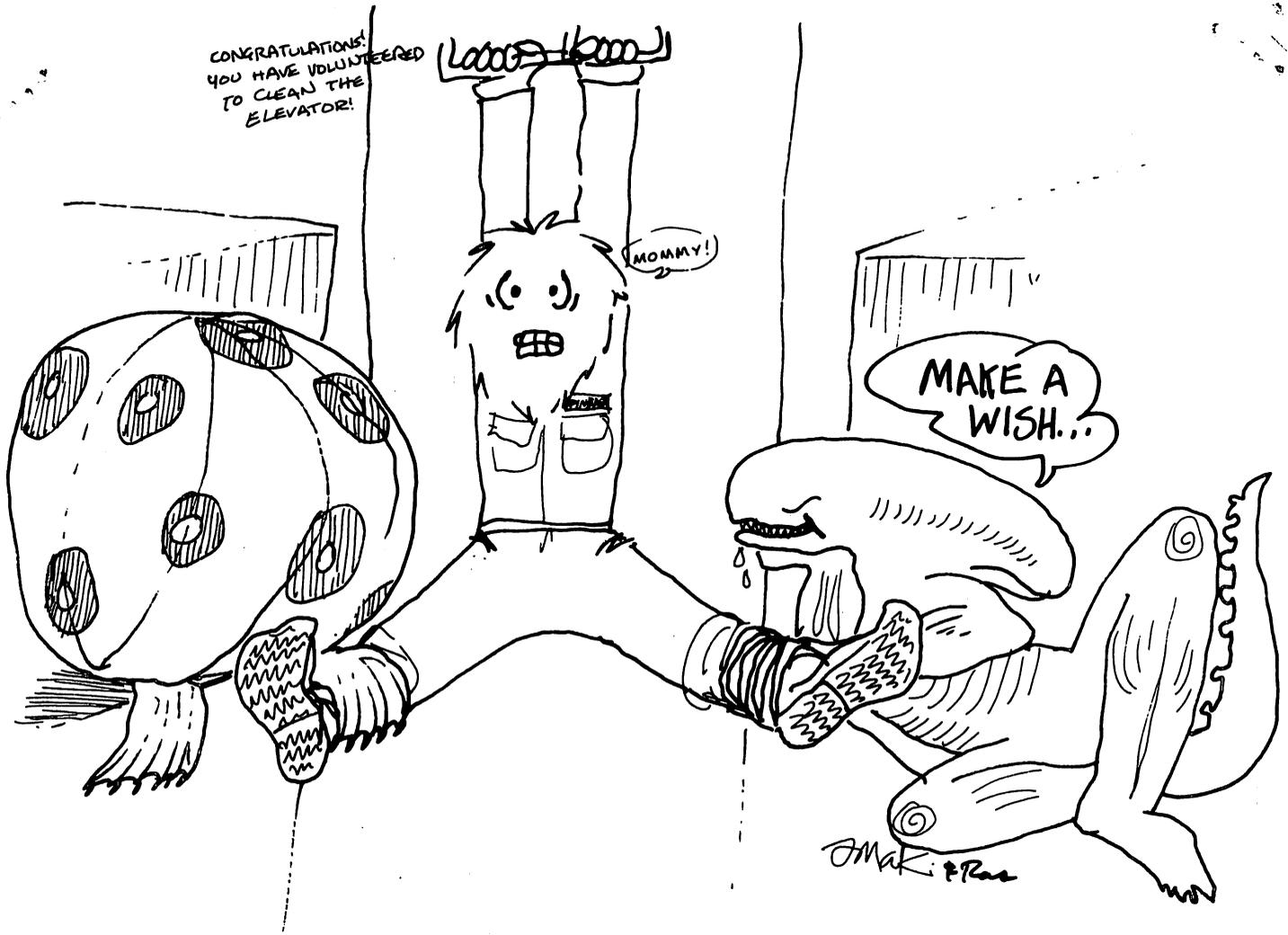
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((It was my understanding that Calendar Year dues were quarterly. I just think the present system is better in that it's easier where Bulk Permits are concerned.))

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