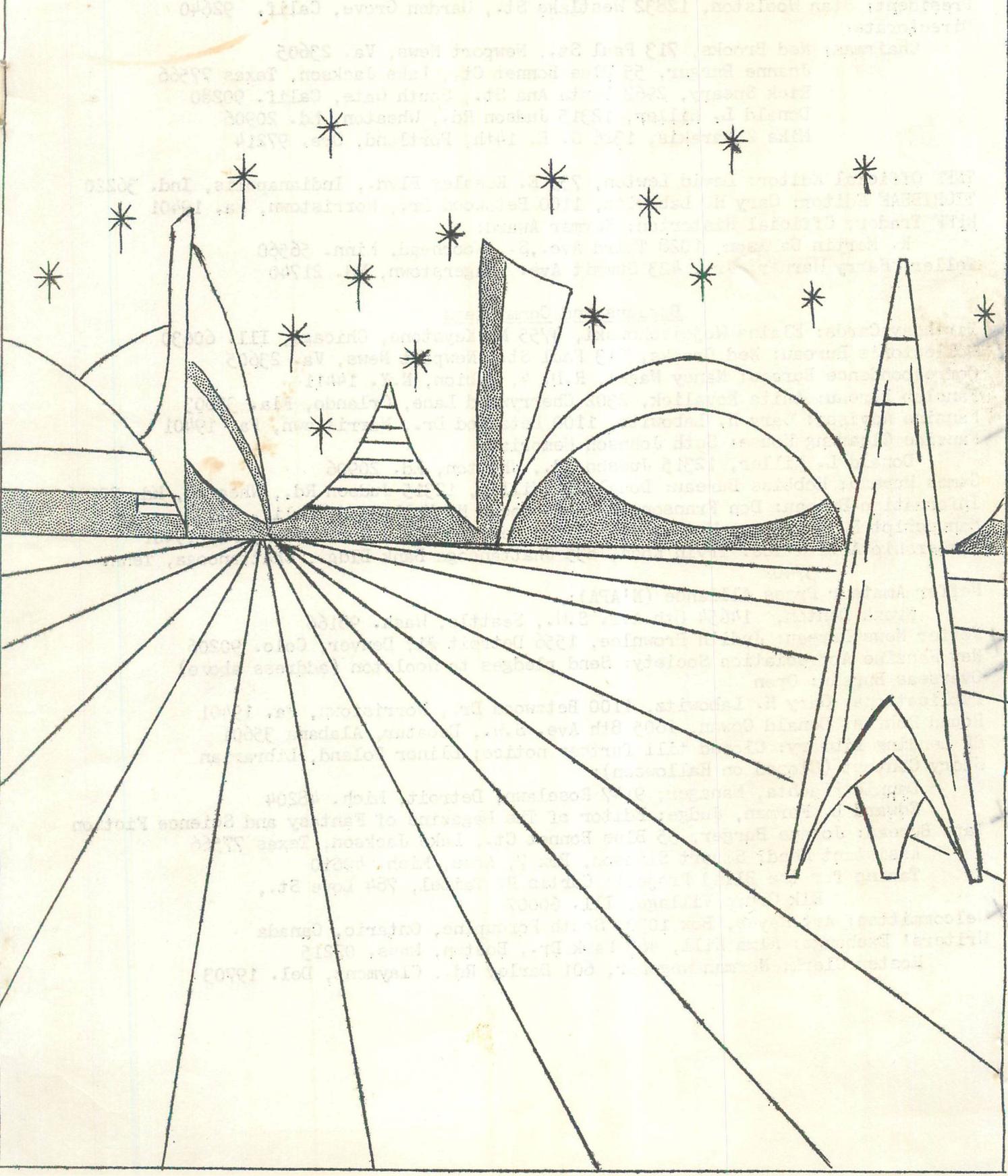


11/70

TIGHT BEAM 64



THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN FEDERATION OFFICERS
1970

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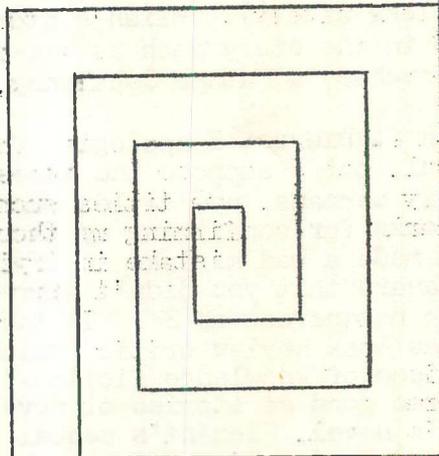
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TIGHTBEAM

This is Tightbeam, Nov.-Dec., 1970, #64, the letter column of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Tightbeam is published for the NFF by Gary H. Labowitz, 1100 Betzwood Drive, Norristown, Pa. 19401 to whom letters may be sent for forwarding to the next editor. Tightbeam is published more-or-less bi-monthly and is distributed free to members of the NFF and for trade of other science fiction fanzines. Persons mentioned in passing are invited to comment, regardless of membership status, if so inclined.

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Well, it's been a long and interesting editorship of Tightbeam. I must admit it is much too much work, but that probably stems from my general state of confusion. Looking back over the last issues (I dug them out back all the way to 1954) I feel that I've managed an even level of production, even though I can't claim the best of the lot. On the other hand I don't feel the issues I've handled were the worst of the lot, either. So, in one sense, I'm getting out even.

This is the proper place to thank everyone who helped, mostly in little ways -- not the least of which was encouragement -- and to the many letter writers who have really made it possible to publish Tightbeam. I can only add the best of luck to whoever takes Tightbeam over. I'm sure he will make as many friends as I have.

It's also that time of year to feel more peaceful than otherwise (though why I don't know) so if you dig that sort of thing I'll wish you much good fanac in the coming year and hope you have a pleasant winter season.

All letters sent to me will be forwarded to whomever the new editor turns out to be, so feel free to send them here for an issue or two, until you get the new address. I will continue to publish the roster and fanzine market listing, you please keep me advised of your address changes.

Keep smiling,

Gary

ED
KRIEG

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I must have made myself unclear in the last TB. I suppose I am guilty of reading too many Henry James stories and too many English new Wavists. Let's drop the entire subject. On a serious side: I recommend R.A. Lafferty's book of short stories 900 Grandmothers. I wasn't much of a Lafferty fan before, but after reading the book (yes, Gary, I read enough to evaluate the book) I'm converted.

Has anyone picked up a copy of the Sept.-Oct. Galaxy? It has James Blish's sequel to Black Easter in addition to Heinlein's serial (which is coming along nicely). Blish's story is fun to read. It's got a few in-jokes included in the story such as the priest by the name of Fr. Atheling, a Father Boucher, a Father Sehaleny, etc. The ending is a hell of an ending.

John J. Pierce: I apologize for using the term Herr. I meant it to be respectful, but I suppose the tones of the letter belied the word. Europeans, especially Germans, use titles such as Herr as a means of respect. Seriously, John, thanks for confirming my thoughts concerning Ballard and Aldiss. I think Moorcock made a bad mistake in trying to call them a movement. In addition, I was unaware that you didn't appreciate A Strain that much. A Strain is crap trying to masquerade as SF. In fact, many critics called it "good SF." New York Times Book Review critic (which I'm sure you've seen) called the book a "masterpiece of knowledge fiction." I notice that there are going to be at least three good sf stories or novels available for the Nebula next year. Heinlein's novel, Clement's sequel to Mission of Gravity, that has concluded in Analog, and Gordon Dickson's novel coming up in Analog. I'm prejudging Dickson's novel because he always (like Clement) does a workmanlike job in writing.

Vardeman: Bob, I think you've caught me. I won't try and restate my position the way I had it in the past TB. Instead I'll modify my thoughts by saying that I object to the way people attempt to force favorites to a vote by using vote buying tactics. I, like Gary, object to the idea of anyone voting to give a Hugo to Joe Schultz because he's won before or because he hasn't won despite his being on the ballot constantly.

I suggest that the SheepDip award be reinstated again this year. I suggest that there should be multi-recipients of said award. The two main recipients should be N**Man SP**r*d for B** J**K Barren. and V.B*De for his SMUT spot in G*&axy a few months back. In the case of the latter, I do not mind a bit of bawdiness and sex, but I do object to it being openly flaunted in a SF zine. IF Bode wants to do stuff like that, O.K. that's his privilege. But I think he ought to sell stuff like that to a mans' magazine. Spinrad deserves an award for his cutting-down of SF fandom in a girlie mag. I suggest that Master Spinrad grow up a little and stop berating fans. HE doesn't have to sink to a level of the 2nd F***Dation***s and individuals such as DELAP who seem to have a dislike for talent such as Harlan Ellison, Piers Anthony and the like.

//On the other hand, I found Bode's work highly enjoyable. I simply cannot fault it. The Spinrad book batted .500 with me. I felt that Spinrad's analysis of the meaning of power and its use by Jack Barron in the media (psychological pressure backed by the mob-action masses) was right and to the point. However, the reactions of his characters seemed out of line with the reality of their world. Even the hard boiled Jack Barron, who is nobody's fool and no innocent school child, reacts like a small child when he considers the frightening possibility that murder might be used to implement a personal activity. Gosh! Gee! Murder! I submit that in the society projected by Spinrad would have treated murder as a commonplace -- just as we do today.

ROBERT
GEORGE

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Enjoyed Tightbeam 60 & 61. They seem to be getting shorter, but the comments are more thought out and not just trite gibberish.

//TB only prints vivid, novel, well-thought out gibberish. ghl//

The decline and fall of Amazing and Fantastic is a catastrophic event occurring right before our own eyes. If one follows Ted White's editorials, the end appears to be approaching rapidly.

Ted White's assuming command was cheered by all and there is no question that his editorship has spurred much new life into a very sick pub. The features have really come alive and are not just filler. The stories are good and worth the money. The magazines are definitely fan oriented and provide many hours of solid enjoyment. However, some of the tactics used to delay the seemingly inevitable are questionable and not worthy of the Gernsback heritage. Witness the article on fans smoking marijuana; the Fantasy Illustrated feature (which finally appeared); the continual crying on the readers' shoulders in the editorials; cheap import covers (now remedied); and the merger of Fantastic into a more straight Science Fiction realm.

Just as Rome, England, the Saturday Evening Post, Weird Tales, and Penn Central have bit the dust, so it seems must one of the science fiction legends. Amazing was a first -- it is an institution. It has been plowing for a long time and as it goes out in the field for the last time, please Ted White, let Amazing (and Fantastic) go out with their heads held high and with honor -- that is all one can ask.

//Negative! One could ask for more of the same. Expanded features. More fiction per issue. Better covers. Though you may be right about the magazines (every science fiction magazine is getting into a bind for one reason or another) I can't see why one must cry doom so soon. Or why this damned typer won't feed the stencil straight. ghl//

I saw where a Frenchman is concerned about the Eiffel tower rusting away. Living in Charleston which is full of beautiful, old historic homes and buildings, I have often wondered what will be the role of the historic preservationist in the global cities of tomorrow. Will the buildings be simply destroyed, or put in a museum out of their environment? I haven't come across the answer in SF writings, perhaps somebody else has?

//Well, in a sense Gladiator-at-Law deals with the housing problem and shows what sort of cities would develop given certain economic and technological events. New York City has a whole district (the "Iron District" I believe it's called) which was built in the 1800's and is now in danger of being torn down. It's difficult to see what contained cities (i.e. surrounded by other established municipalities, as are New York, St. Louis, etc.) can do other than document the glory that was in film and tear it all down to build newer glories. As for the Eiffel tower: they can always keep it from rust by boiling it in wine. ghl//

ED

BRYANT

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J.J.Pierce: No memorable characters in new wave fiction? Not entirely true. How about Jack Barron himself? I'll also remember Jerry Cornelius and Miss Brunner. And not to forget Blood in "A Boy and His Dog."

Mike O'Brien: I agree, it's good that SFWA should be hospitable to the inbetween, semi-pro writers. But only up to a point. The organization was established by and for working writers, the hundred or so members whose entire income (or large part thereof) comes from free-lance writing. The internal movement is SFWA which would like to see stricter membership requirements is only trying to streamline and tighten the group to the point where prospective negotiations with publishers over such issues as the Minimum Basic Agreement would be facilitated. And besides, the membership reformers don't want to make it more difficult for novices to join -- rather, they feel that the present policy of granting any new member three years of active membership on the basis of a single short story in If (or -- and this was for real -- a single brief poem in Galaxy) is a bit extravagant. After all, could not someone who was sufficiently interested in writing that he wished to join a writers' organization turn out a saleable piece at least once a year? (And I don't think my viewpoint is particularly prejudiced. My own modest track record of 23 sales puts me squarely between the novice and the more ambitious pro.)

//That brings up an interesting question -- why on earth would a person who has sold a short poem and doesn't intend to work at writing want to join SFWA? Big thrill? Prestige? To get into SFWA parties? Why? I am interested in writing (after a fashion) and am going about learning the basics and practice writing; in the course of a year I have chatted with a good number of pro's, both writers and editors, and have never found anyone anything but helpful. When it comes right down to it I suppose I would join SFWA if I qualified (solidarity, and all that) but I suspect the organization wouldn't do anything for me. Which reminds me: is that any way to select the guests at a party -- membership in an organization? It's a way, but it strikes me a poor one. Better to invite people you like.

Side gripe: I do wish people who have closed parties (i.e. parties at which you are not welcome unless invited) would advertise the fact that they are closed rather than "hide" the party. (Big conspiracy: "Where's the party?" "It's a secret!") Or is it exciting? ghl//

Also, another slight gritch in your letter. You charged Harlan and Dangerous Visions with altering the face of science fiction by exclusion. Not so. Harlan's purpose with the DV series (stated innumerable times) was to change, yes, but by opening new doors rather than closing them.

Bob Vardeman: Sol Cohen's dubious practices with his reprint magazines have only one redeeming virtue -- they keep Amazing and Fantastic, both extremely marginal operations, afloat. The reprints have virtually no overhead, so anything that comes in is gravy. Much of that profit gets funneled back to Ted White to keep the non-reprint magazines going. So kill the reprints and all the sf at Ultimate would die. Interesting moral dilemma.

Bob Sabella: perhaps the only new category that should be added to the Hugo list is an unlabeled catch-all, a special Hugo that might go one year to a particularly noteworthy editor, the next yest to an entire anthology, etc. The versatility would be a good thing.

Darrell Schweitzer: About New Worlds: Yes, as usual, NW was saved from extinction at the last possible moment. The magazine will be published as a paperback quarterly by Sphere Books in Britain. It may also appear in the same format in an American edition from a publisher yet to be signed. Mike Moorcock has indicated that NW will be pursuing a more traditional sf bent and will be paying competitive rates to contributors.

Incidentally, be watching for Chip Delany's quarterly Quark from Paperback Library. The first issue should be out about November 1. After seeing the galleys for the first issue and talking with Chip about future plans, I get a strong impression that Quark is going to be the NW that everyone wanted to happen, but which never did. The first four issues have already been packaged, and it seems likely that Paperback Library will renew the series in November for at least a second year.

D O N
F R A N S O N

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Keith Krieger in TB #62 recalls the rotating-editor system for Tightbeam, and wonders why it was dropped. I am the one who is to blame for this. As President in 1968, I decided we just weren't getting enough volunteers, and so I appointed the current "rotating" editor (who had already repeated several times due to lack of other volunteers) as a permanent editor, going back to the old system of a regular editor of the letterzine (once named Postwarp).

This took some load off the President, who has enough to do and worry about, without having to find and appoint new editors every two months, (and three or four months in advance -- the lead-time is surprising, when you figure it out); and then follow up on them to make sure they do the job -- most of them try, but have problems that might make TB late or non-existent.

The big problem is that Tightbeam needs not only an editor but a publisher, which is a much bigger job, requiring equipment and some experience. This is not to say that the newer members couldn't do it, or that the officers shouldn't take a chance on them. An amateurish TB is certainly better than none, and sometimes is fun (for the editor, too). One of the original purposes of the rotating system was to give the hitherto inactive members a chance to get some publishing experience, to help the club, and to have some fun too (at the club's expense, if desired).

If enough members want a return to rotating editors of Tightbeam, it can be arranged. (I almost said "easily.") The President need only make the move, since the Directorate at the time voted to leave the decision up to the President.

I would not advise it unless the President had a backlog of at least six volunteers, enough for a year's issues (or more: two of these are sure to drop out or gaffiate). The tough part for the President is to find new editors. Then he must find more, later, to replace those who decide they won't be able to do next issue.... It is too late to find someone for this month's issue, so he has to call on some old reliable, like Art Hayes, to put out an "emergency" issue -- or just skip an issue. A reliable permanent editor is so much more relaxing.

The situation in the 60's was not the same as now. We usually had a permanent TNFF editor, and could afford to experiment with an erratic TB. Now the situation is reversed, and we have a rotating editor of TNFF, willy-nilly. The list of bureau heads in TB (very useful -- don't discontinue it) is sometimes the first thing new members see, and they wonder what the bureaus are about. TNFF (sometimes) explains them, and should be more steady.

If I were President now, I would switch you, Gary, to TNFF, and try the rotating plan for TB once again. Another use for rotating editors of TB is breaking in new TNFF editors, who are even harder to find. In the past, several people have first tried their luck at TB, and later became editor/

publisher of TNFF. While it is hard for the President to find rotating editors of TB, it is even harder to find a permanent editor of either publication. A continuing editorship (and publishership) of anything is almost too much to expect of any fan. But anyone can stand it for one issue.

One drawback to a rotating system, for the members, is lateness. This is inevitable. I went to the extreme of giving the new editor a supply of progress-report postcards, to send to me as the deadline neared. This didn't always help get Tightbeam out on time, but at least the officers knew why it wasn't coming out.

Regardless of the wishes of the members, unless they are so overwhelming they are convincing, the decision is really up to the people who will have to do the work: the President, who will have the problem of getting and supervising and bugging editors; the Secretary-Treasurer, who has to coordinate mailing lists; the Directorate, who will have to worry about deadlines and whether to pay or not; and lastly but not leastly, the current editors (if any), who should have some say in the matter.

I don't want to influence the decision too much, but I did want to explain how the change came about, and present some facts. Rotating editorship of TB was successful, as long as there were volunteers. When the volunteers didn't volunteer -- well, actually it was always a cliffhanger, and the President had to do a lot of recruiting and arm-twisting. On the other hand, the permanent editorship is successful and has been for over two years. Do you want to change?

//Let me put some cards on the table. When Art Hayes took TNFF this year on an emergency basis (is there any other?) I volunteered to take it. Before that (if I get my time sequences right) I volunteered to take it and TB this year. In both instances I was turned down and someone else was given TNFF. In both cases (as it has turned out) neither person did the job. Worse, one person actually gaffiated to the point where noone could get any information from him as to what was going on.

At the same time I have been publishing TB; put your Intro to N3F, the Constitution, the Bylaws, and all back issues of TB back into print; put out rosters and kept them updated; and did most of this at my own expense. In my first month as head of the Manuscript Bureau I have surveyed over 100 editors and published the first in a Needs-list of Fanzines and placed two items (out of seven on hand). Since then I have received a bundle of material which was all jumbled together. It is just getting straightened out. I have put out two issues of my own fanzine and attended almost every con within driving and/or train distance from here in the past year and a half.

I have very mixed feelings about all this. While I enjoy fanac, and I firmly believe in the services N3F can render to neos and fandom in general, I still cannot allow myself to take on all the jobs. In addition I feel it would be a bad thing for the club to be run by a small group. There should be a broad base of workers in this club. But, obviously, you simply cannot turn over bureaus to new, eager, inexperienced people who don't know what it is they are supposed to be doing nor how to go about it.

Look at the results when a person is seriously interested in some aspect of fandom and approaches it sensibly: Art Hayes organized the Welcommittee and it functions well. Joanne Burger got the Tape Bureau into shape and it runs

quite well. Alma Hill has had the Writers' Exchange running so smoothly you scarcely ever hear from it -- just to give it a plug once in a while. Irvin Koch has made a good (and ambitious) start on an Activity Roster which once established can be maintained with a minimum of effort. The Publications Bureau has the major items it is supposed to stock in stock and sends copies out to each new member. TB has been getting its six scheduled issues a year, though not necessarily on time. WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH TNFF?? Is it the nature of the thing that it cannot, under any circumstances, be published? Obviously not.

Could it be that this club has outgrown TNFF and no longer needs an OO? (Dat's Official Organ for all the latecomers.)

Think about that for a while. Sometimes an entirely new approach is needed to problems. Sometimes there really is no problem. Do you, as members, need reports from each of the bureaus or are you content to participate in those bureaus that interest you and get news of other bureaus through letters in TB? Should Kaymar's history be switched to TB? Should TB run ads? Should we change the name of TB to TNFF?

As you can see from the trend of the above comments I am just free-wheeling here, but brain-storming has its uses. I'll expect a few comments on this matter. Will I get any? ghl//

G E O R G E

W I L L I C K

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Issue #6? kinda spotty ... where'd you dig up some of those letters? A couple seem to be several issues old. Anyway, I have a few more or less random and disjointed comments to make .. so I'll use the name-reference style of reply. I attribute this to Walter Breen but there may have been someone who used it earlier? Anybody know for sure?

//Well, you see, George, I just publish the letters I have on hand. If I'm late with an issue the letters are older than they would otherwise be. ghl//

Alma Hill: After wading through my own crud, I couldn't even begin to read someone else's. As a matter of fact, I can't even read someone else's professional work. I attribute this to an inbuilt instinct to edit rather than write ... and never the twain shall meet. The effect on me would be one of 'phooey' to a piece of crud rather than being able to make a helpful suggestion. I recall such stories used to bring letters of profanity from H. L. Gold when he edited Galaxy. I think you and your helpers, be they feast or famine, have done yeomen service over the years and I hope the effort has been rewarding to you. Why else bother? And you are absolutely correct about those who write ... garbage or poetry ... as opposed to those who maybe are going to write someday. Those who are going to write someday simply haven't the guts to say, "I can't write and won't admit it because it makes me feel inferior." Pish. I can't drive hydroplanes, eat liver or read braille ... so what? (I rank the three things in equal degrees of difficulty ... al you anti-liver fans will understand.)

Bob Sabella: Agree with you and not with Gary. TNFF is poorly done when existent, if at all. I've yet to see it published or mailed or whatever (there being cases of missing copies) to an extent where I could tell what it was and how often it was likely to arrive and from whom, for what purpose. Tightbeam is much better. Tis, I think, the separate natures of the beasts that make this so. Letters are easier to accumulate and edit ... than would be the case

where ads, columns, news, constitutional amendments, platforms, elections, candidates, etc. must be reckoned with.

Something should be done. The N3F will go on forever and I must say there is no truth to the rumor that 'God is dead and buried in the N3F.'

Ed Krieg: Has excellent tastes in prozines. The back-forth exchange occurring around you misses me somehow. I'm for sex and power and voting for personal preferences. It's Mom and Apple Pie that has gotten us where we are today.

No Award should be voted where any category has so limited a selection as to repeatedly award the same man a Hugo. Stupid. Base stupid. What the hell, Gary, what happens in year 1980 when 73 staff artists compete and one wins three years in a row for excellence and someone says, "Yeh, but Gaughan won 5." Not the same thing. The latter awards mean more than the former handouts for something-better-to-do. (This is not to say Gaughan couldn't compete with 73 staff artists, either.)

//I'm not sure what you're talking about. I intended to convey my objection to voting for someone on the basis that he hadn't yet won an award. Period. I couldn't care less if someone did marvelous work and won an award 20 times in a row. If he did the work -- the best in its field -- for each of those 20 years he should get 20 awards. When nobody does any particularly good work in some field, then the "no award" should be voted. Thus, the award is not the recognition of the "best" of those nominated; it is the recognition of the best of "good" work done that year. What would you do if there was only one (1) really outstanding novel published one year? Have a ballot with one name on it? Pad the ballot with junk so there would be a "real" contest? Have no award? ghl//

Dave Lewton: You can add me to the list that would like to have seen Ray Nelson's letter ... and counting Ray's objections, that makes three. Hell, I want to see what everyone has to say about anything. Let me decide to read it or not, if it's pertinent or not, if I'm interested or not. Editing and deleting are two different things. True, the letter did arrive at a time when Tightbeam was busy and pressed for space ... but now would be a good time to include the letter, dead issue though it may be ... I'm more interested in Nelson's thought processes than in Star Trek anyway.

//Xeroxed copies of Ray's letter on the way to you and Lewton. Anybody else? ghl//

Mike O'Brien: I like the idea of a central fanzine subscription Bureau also. It would be a pain to administer but would serve several useful purposes. Keeping current seems to be a tricky matter these days. A novice would be brought in rather quickly, in all phases, by such a bureau. Trouble is ... you couldn't pay for it with the current dues. Tis a fact of life, you get what you pay for ... sometimes less.

Quoting a quote by Lester del Rey is one of those things similar to walking a chalk mark over Grand Canyon at midnight in a 40 mile wind at 54 degrees below zero, naked. You will learn, in time and experience, that no matter what your source, Lester's is more recent ... and Lester will always have a source, somewhere, somehow. I say hooray for whatever it is that Lester has accomplished but one thing he hasn't accomplished is a record of winning discussions fair and square.

J. J. Pierce: who are you?

Bob Vardeman: No, no, I am the least read individual alive. I haven't read Man in a Maze or heard of Plistocleclisisthogne, either. I don't even read Tightbeam. I merely sit on it and absorb by reverse osmosis.

Ah, but you bring up a point that has lurked, hidden, inside my skull many moons and here is where it comes forth. WHAT'S WRONG WITH SELLING VOTES? Let's take it step by step. Who would sell a vote? It would be someone needing money, it would be someone unlikely to vote otherwise, it would be someone in the lower echelons of success and intelligence. Ergo, this could not become wholesale unless a revolution was pending and that would then be the problem. Let's assume that both sides buy votes? Why not? Will one side buy more than another? Probably, but not much. Those in power would have more available cash. (This is the reason they are buying votes, you see, to keep that supply of cash ... conviction, never ... men with conviction are of two types; 1, too damn poor to buy anything and 2, rich enough to know the system pays off ... i.e. advertising, kissing babies ... better than buying a vote or two.) Now the buyers must be lower echelon folk, grafters, featherbedders, etc. who circulate in the lower elements enough to know the winos and what a bottle will buy or a fiver or a promise. Ergo their limited horizons can hurt the outcome very little. Conversely, a good purpose is served. The money used to buy that vote is taken from the grafter and given to one of those stolen from, indirectly. This is good. Take from the poor, give back to the poor. Also, I have a sneaking suspicion that most people sell a vote already decided upon. The law against selling votes is a stupid one as is the propagandized feeling anti such a terrible, terrible thing.

A SOLID VOTE IS BETTER THAN NO VOTE AT ALL.

//But there is nothing wrong with selling a vote. It's buying them that is illegal! gh//

ALEX

KRISLOV

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So the controversy over Bug Jack Barron will continue forever, I see. I still don't care for the book. It's too pulpy for me, and what stylism there is seems to be phony or noneffective. Bob Sabella, for instance, talks about Spinrad's stream-of-consciousness as though Spinrad invented it; he didn't. And he didn't handle it very well either. This business of no punctuation merely made it hard to find which mental impression was which and gave no feeling of continuity. Spinny ought to read Ulysses. Then Darrell Schweitzer says, in effect, "Granted there are thousands of bad things about BJB, but it's a good book anyway." Ignore the sex? Well, that's easy enough. The language? Okay, that too. The pseudo-experimental prose? The general pretentiousness of the book? (And the rotten characterization, though Darrell doesn't agree with me on that point.) Don't be silly. The book is not just a sociological story about immortality, it's an unsuccessful experiment, and should be rated as such. If the author choses to bury a good story under tons of crud he shouldn't get praise for the story; rather, he should be damned for burying it.

Darrell also had some interesting words about A Cure for Cancer and the current Hugo system, with which I'm inclined to agree (barring the remark that Cure wasn't as good as some other books mentioned, but that, of course, is merely a matter of taste). Perhaps the new paperback form mentioned in Locus will give better circulation to New Worlds, but the problems still remain for Vision of Tomorrow.

Oh, by the way, I don't know whether Cure is being bought by Avon as Moorcock tells me that it has already been scheduled for Fall publication by Holt and Reinhardt.

The whole business over the Hugo awards seems pointless now, for as I write this I am very aware of the fact that the voting is over and we'll all know the winners as of this Sunday (August 23rd). Yet, I still have to say something on the subject. Why didn't anybody ever mention Ada? I wonder if anyone read it. The book is marvelous, it was certainly well-distributed, and I have yet to see it mentioned in the fan press. And it was science fiction. You would think that when an author like Nabokov ventures into our field and writes a good book we'd notice; you'd probably be wrong. Fandom is often complaining about the general reading public's snobishness toward sf. Maybe we're just as bad.

Perhaps I'm premature, but I've got to get my own two cents worth in on I Will Fear No Evil. I've read a lot of Heinlein. He has amused me, excited me, disgusted me, made me think and always kept me reading, but he has never before this bored me. As I forced my way through the second part of the serial, I kept on muttering, "It's the editing, it's got to be the editing!" But if Ejler Jakobson is to be believed, there isn't any editing. I hope it will pick up, but I have to admit I'm very disappointed with Heinlein. Maybe it's me, though. But I doubt it.

I notice that Andromeda Strain is being talked about. I can't really see why. The book has no characterization, bad plotting, a few cute scientific gimmicks to renew lost reader interest, sloppy writing and an unsuspensful melodramatic ending. I have said it before and I'll say it again: Andromeda Strain is the worst book I've ever read, bar none. I even preferred the godawful Valley of the Dolls.

ED

FINKELSTEIN

10645 Debra Ave.
Granada Hills, Calif. 91344

My own statement in TB 62 about TB being a miniapa set me thinking. If there was just one club organ, could it be run apa fashion? Person A is responsible for letters, B takes care of Directorate reports, C does Bureau reports, D does news, etc. All communications would be sent to the respective department heads, who publish their sections and send them to the Editor before a predetermined date (the first of every other month? every third month?). The Editor does a Table of Contents and sends out the bundles to members and contributors. Voila! an "apa" for an organ. Even if one person gafiates (heaven forbid) the rest of the "apa" is still sent out. The Editor severly fustigates the missing member, as does the membership when they are told. As a concrete example; you, as Editor of Tightbeam, would be person A above. Insteedd of sending TB directly to members, they would be sent to the Editor, who would include them with the rest of the mailing. Letters would still be sent to you, even those about other sections. The idea is still rough but it may show some promise.

The argument about Hugos for excellence rather than pity comes up yearly, and just as yearly dies down, while fans still vote for the author that never got a Hugo. It's human nature, I suppose.

BOB

WEINBERG

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Hillside, N. J. 07205

I agree with Bob Sabella, not in accusation, but in his idea that more should be done with TNFF. I remember getting the last issue but it is somewhere where I can't find it, as I am in the process of moving to Chicago. However, I do remember that it consisted mainly of various Bureau Heads reports and little else of interest. I do feel that this should be changed, and it could be without much effort. In no way do I feel that you are to be blamed for the dullness of TNFF. You are doing more than your share just publishing it. You cannot be held responsible if the contents are not awe inspiring. That is the members', including myself, fault. I think that this ought to be changed.

//This is very strange. I haven't published TNFF for some time. Are you directing your statements at Art Hayes, Bob? ghl//

I feel that the way this could be done is through the initiation of a number of columns, not directly about the NFFF. There could be book reviews, fanzine reviews, as in other fanzines, or just columns on a variety of topics. What I am proposing in brief is that TNFF become a general interest fanzine as well as the official publication of the NSF. Make it interesting enough so that all the members receiving it will enjoy reading it, and maybe even feel like contributing. As Sabella states, there is plenty of talent in the fold to contribute to the fanzine, and I'm sure who would do so if any sort of call is sent out. I know that I would, as soon as I settle in Chicago, and get another typewriter (which should be within a week or two). How about some comments from other fans on this.

Gary: You can usually tell if something is worth reading after going through a quarter of the book. Or, after getting a good idea of the plot from a summary of sorts, and then reading part of the book. I didn't say I stopped reading books that I thought were not worth reading. I have stopped finishing them, after reading the first 100 pages or so.

Bob Vardeman: I've changed my views on Sol Cohen, but not because of his reprint mag "Astounding Stories." I know of no one who buys a mag just because it is titled Astounding SF. Especially after seeing who some of the featured authors are. I give the reading public some credit for intelligence. Remember back in 1952 (figuratively, as I was 6 years old at the time) when ASF suddenly began using covers exactly like those appearing on Galaxy, when Galaxy was starting to dent ASF's readership? SF fans seem to expect the world of business to be up-and-up and all that. Much as I hate to disagree, most publishers are out to make money, and none are above a little chicanery to do it. See the latest SF Book Club offer talking about Stranger and the Martian love cult; or Dangerous Visions featuring stories too hot to be printed in regular magazines. Honest? Truthful? Just barely.

If Ed Krieg meant that the Andromeda Strain was just a dull book, in the Analog mold, I agree wholeheartedly. Boring, silly, and written with the skill of a twelve year old. It should make an entertaining movie though, even though it could have been done twenty years ago if they had wanted to use a SF story. But, SF is junk, and, after all, The Andromeda Strain isn't SF. It's just a story in the future about what can happen. I would hate to be a girl interested in SF: Talk about the double standard!

]]

//I apologize in advance: this next bit of foolishness is too much to be borne. The following letter is published exactly as it was received. I will let you judge the writer for yourself. Obviously the chap has a complaint. I hope he is not referring to me when he mentions the Manuscript Bureau; I've tried to answer all personal letters I receive, even though sometimes it is longer than a response, say, from a candidate for Congress. Nevertheless be warned: if you get a letter from John Shirley drop EVERYTHING you are doing and answer immediately! It is your duty! ghl//

Sirs:

I have come to the conclusion that Harlan Ellison is right about so-called 'organized' fandom. It appears to be made up of snobbish, egotistical incompetents. Like presidents who won't respond to letters from a leftist simply because ~~he/she~~ they are radical. Or the heads of Manuscript, Writer's Exchange, and New Fanzine Approximation bureaus who don't respond though I've written each one half a dozen letters. N.F.F.F. does not function efficiently or anything approaching organized activity. Bureaus are juggled around so much that they are continually slow.

An organization that exists so nebulously and with such questionable benefits is not worth \$3.00. I urge you to disband the farce that is N3F and build something with cohesiveness...something that does not rely on the U.S. Mail Service for its existence.

This is the reason Raki resigned from the directorship--he ~~#####~~ saw N3F for the ridiculous timewaster that it is.

John Shirley
720 Dietz
Salem, Ore.

97303

//Now comes the Jackpot question: Labowitz, you fool, why bother publishing this letter; indeed, if you must, why not edit it? I have reasons, I do.

First, there are several accusations and insinuations in the letter which I hold are either untrue and/or unfounded. Secondly, John poses to speak for Raki; I think Raki can speak for himself. Thirdly, John is obviously a very upset, angry person whose need appears very clear. I hope some of you out there will reply to him, with particular attention directly to his urging us to disband and replace the club with something "nebulous" that he suggests.

I could in no way edit this letter and still get the feeling behind it across to the membership. It strikes me not so much as just bad typing as a vicious, angry outpouring. Unless, dare I suggest it, he was put up to it: are you, John Shirley, a HOAX?

The implication that fans are snobbish is laughable; almost every fan I have met (over a long period of years) has been friendly, outgoing and helpful. Though a large group of them couldn't do much, as a group fans are more competent than a similar group with mundane interests. And, frankly, each person's politics has had very little to do with his activity in fandom. (There have been exceptions; for the most part they were rejected from fandom.) Fans are the most liberal group I've ever run across. And lastly, your use of the word "fandom" applied to the N3F is WRONG. N3F is a very small part of fandom -- the whole and parts of which I will defend wholeheartedly. ghl//

NOTICE

There are still copies of the Bok Portfolio for sale, specially priced to members of N3F at \$2.00 each. Order from:

Ed and Nan Meskys
Box 233
Center Harbor, N. H. 03226

ART
HAYES

Box 1030
South Porcupine, Ont.
Canada

Redd Boggs: I think it is more or less an unwritten law that Tightbeam is primarily intended for use of Neffers, but note I said 'primarily,' not exclusively. The use of non-neffer letters has to be used with special care, specially if it might prevent neffers from being read in TB. If the non-neffer has something special to contribute, then I, as I was in the past when this was done, am in favor.

Fans are too mobile and too independent to be classified into an accurate directory. Heck, it is enough trouble just trying to keep an accurate N3F roster. Gary Mattingly doesn't know what he would be involving himself with, specially when he wants to even include the readers.

Last issue, it was Ann Wilson (then Irvin Koch) who prompted me to ask how to welcome a club. Now, Warner, in a letter, mentions that the N3F has the basic requirement to be of assistance and value to the older (in experience, not necessarily in age) fan and wonders somewhat why it isn't. This too is something worthy of consideration. Basically, I believe that most of the active fans in the N3F are too busy catering to the definite needs of the neofan. It would be a good idea, it would seem to me, for some experienced group of fans, to exclusively restrict themselves to the requirements of the older fan, working separately but still within the N3F, in this field. I certainly don't qualify, but do believe that there should be someone who is capable of undertaking the organization that such would require. I am advancing this idea for consideration. It might be worthy of a club to handle too.

The Welcommittee is still open to those who are interested in correspondence and who are willing to assist newcomers to the N3F in their attempt to get oriented in the N3F. Some will require orientation to even Fandom, not having any idea of what fans, Fandom and their activities involve. There's room for more. Any interested?

FRANK
HILLER

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Rochester, N. Y. 14609

In my opinion the New-Wave vs. Old-Wave thing is a tempest in a tea-pot which will blow over changing nothing. Any changes in sf, or any other writing, will be the result of the natural evolutionary processes that have always controlled the growth and change in writing or anything else for that matter, over the years. Asimov said it best in his simile of the sea shore. Mike O'Brien (how's it feel to be in such illustrious company, Mike?) also had some cogent comments on the subject that I feel should end all argument --

but won't. He did make one statement though that boggles me and that is that Ellison is demanding New Wave exclusively! Maybe I'm just not current or widely read but I have yet to read any comment by Ellison to this effect. Speaking of Again Dangerous Visions, where is it? I haven't seen it around town yet. Oh, well, it'll be out soon enough in the Doubleday book club edition I hope.

Beneath the Planet of the Apes has been released. There seemed to be some doubt about it expressed in this issue. It's already run in one Rochester theater and is about to run in another. I didn't go to see it myself but if it isn't running then someone is spending an awful lot of advertising money for nothing.

J. J. Pierce stated, "Of course some stuff popular with the mainstream is bad SF -- like Vonnegut and Barth." Eh???? Vonnegut popular with the mainstream? Mike O'Brien stated that, "...no one has ever given 'Science Fiction' a good definition either,..." I guess the definition of "mainstream" is just as nebulous. Although one of Vonnegut's things made the Book-of-the-Club list I'd hardly call him "popular with the mainstream." At least not the same "mainstream" that buys Jacqueline Susann's crud. Or the stuff on the New York Times best seller list. Someone will now come back and tell me that Vonnegut made the New York Times best seller list. Anyway it is my feeling that Vonnegut is out of character as a popular writer for the local banker or the real estate agent up the block -- figures in my conception of what constitutes the "mainstream" readership.

And Barth, Barth an SF writer???? On the basis of what? Giles Goatboy I suppose is what you mean. Well, I suppose way out on the fringes of that highly nebulous definition of SF I suppose you could find a place for Giles Goatboy. Barth teaches creative writing at the State University at Buffalo, New York by the way, just in case Pierce wishes to descend on his head. I will not attempt to judge the merits of Giles Goatboy, it took me two years to wade through it, but I wish Pierce would explain just how he includes this in the SF list. Or Barth as an SF writer on the basis of a single book. None of his other work could even remotely be classed as SF not even under the most ethereal definition.

Bob Vardeman: If you want, you probably don't, to find out about those characters named Philoctetes that Pierce is trying to one-up you with get a copy of William Rose Benet's The Reader's Encyclopedia. It's rather expensive, about \$15 I think, but the Book-of-the-Month Club is selling it as a book dividend for about \$5. If you know someone who is a member of the Both have them get a copy for you. Or better yet get it at your local public library. Publisher is Thomas Y. Crowell Company. It was first published in 1948 with a second edition in 1955 and updated and revised in 1965. It is a veritable mine of information not only on Philoctetes but also on Everything from Hindu philosophy to the penny dreadful writer Ned Buntline and even Xanadu and Zwingli, Ulrich. There's almost four pages of Y's too.

BOB
VARDEMAN

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I'm rather disturbed by a couple of Ed Krieg's comments. Such as wanting Freas to win (a most nice thing since I voted Freas #1 this year and in past

years) but Ed wanted him to win because Gaughan has won too many times. Freas racked up #5 Hugo at Heicon. Gaughan has 3, I believe. Ed Emswiller, Kelly Freas, Heinlein and Harlan are the all time winners (include JWC if you consider Analog/Astounding to be the product of one man). But what should really count is not whether a pro has "too many" but rather if his output was worthy of a Hugo. Freas' work is, in my mind, mindcroggling. Year after year he turns out fantastically good work. Gaughan has done some really fine work -- but only the first two years he received his Hugos. The third year was marginal, and this year I seriously question his making the ballot at all. JG's work for the Galaxy zines has been nothing more than scribbling compared to his earlier work. Almost like doodlings sent to appease a deadline obsessed editor.

Another point is this bit about "knowing the Germans, I betcha that Analog will win." Why? I'm afraid I don't know the Germans. I've met and talked with scores of them, but they seemed more eager to talk with Dr. Franke than Campbell. Which figures, in my obviously distorted sense of values. Perhaps Ed can explain why Campbell proved less a drawing attraction for the German fans than, say, Francke, Scheer, Ernsting, Darlton and (I think) Kneifel?

Also, Ed, since you're more acquainted with German fandom than I, perhaps you'd care to translate the sentence at the bottom of the nomination ballot sent out in Germany for the benefit of TB's readers. I frankly think it was disgusting to disqualify any sf not originally published in English but this was what was done. Comments?

Now, Garv, let me say this about your views on democracy vs. quality in the Hugo. Certainly it shouldn't be awarded to mediocrity (and might but there was a gaggle of mediocrity nominated this year in both fan writer and fanzine categories) but if someone like Rotsler has been in fandom for years doing cartoons of high quality (i.e., funny cartoons - his style isn't to my liking but his ideas certainly are), wouldn't you rather see him win than another artist who'd previously won but was still doing worthwhile fanart? This is hypothetical since Barr was the only previous winner nominated, but if it came down to (again, as an example) Barr and Rotsler with the rest being mediocre, wouldn't you be tempted to give it to Rotsler? I would, yet I think Barr is the greatest fan artist in the field. But he's won -- and in my opinion should win in any year he's nominated if you look solely at style. But I think there are other considerations, at least in the fan categories.

This year I couldn't knock any of the nomination in fan artist category. In fact, I just wish a five-way tie had been possible. Alicia Austin was my choice, Tim Kirk was second. But I'm just as glad Tim won as if Alicia had. It was a difficult decision and finally broke down to putting Barr last since he'd won and the others deserved recognition, too.

Of course, I'm making an important distinction between the pro and fan categories. I award the pro Hugos solely on the basis of work done the preceding year. The fan awards, however, I try to balance off over a longer period of time. Pros are more prolific since this is bread and butter to them -- and being such, deserve recognition solely for outstanding stories/whatever.

Fans, on the other hand, don't live by their fannish output. So it isn't money out of their pocket if the award is spread around. Perhaps it won't go

to the best in any year, but if it goes to a worthy recipient and the best already has a Hugo, what harm is done? None as far as I can see and we get the added bonus of nurturing fandom by spreading around the egoboo.

Bob Sabella: I chuckle over your volunteering Roytac as a regular columnist in TNFF. The Albuquerque SF Society recently volunteered him to act as convention chairman (New Mexican 3) -- and it was done while he was out of town and couldn't defend himself.

The Left Hand of Darkness is all about sex? Geewhiz, I must have missed something in it. All about sex? Certainly this was a major thread running throughout the book, but it didn't make up the entire tapestry that was Winter. "Interminably dull?" Hardly. LHoD wasn't my #1 pick for best novel in the nominating (To Live Again was) but it was my #1 pick on the final ballot. Up the Line was #2, solely by virtue of having a slightly less detailed world-culture. Not much, but enough that LHoD could nose into the primary spot.

I guess I'm just out of it -- even Tackett didn't like LHoD. It looks more and more like I'm going to be one of the very few who'll admit voting for it -- and more important, thinking it to be a good book.

DARRELL

SCHWEITZER

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Alma Hill says that most of the writers in the field are part-timers and don't appear very often. Funny, the prozines these days seem to be loaded with big names. A few examples: The October Fantastic contains Dean Koontz, David Bunch, Barry Maltzberg, and Greg Benford, all of whom have sold many times. The reprint is by David O'Brien who was a house name. The September Amazing has Philip Jose Farmer, Chris Anvil, and Miles Breuer. All experienced writers. The August Analog has Hal Clement, Ben Bova, Harlan Ellison, Howard Myers ("Vernor Vinge"), W. McFarlane (who sold one in 1938) and Robert Chilson. No new writers there. August-September Galaxy has Heinlein, Blish, Lafferty, Platcha, and Ernest Taves (one new writer there). The July-August If has Ernest Taves again, plus Dave Gerrold, Larry Niven, Larry Eisenberg, Joe Haldeman, Piers Anthony, Lee Harding, Ron Goulart, Neal Barrett Jr., George Zebrowski, and Jack Dann. The last two are the only ones I am unfamiliar with. August Venture has Dean Koontz, J. W. Schutz, Larry Eisenberg, Joseph Renard, and Basil Wells. Two unknowns there. September F&SF has Thomas Burnett Swann, Albert Teichner, Leo Kelley, Wm. Walling, Pamela Sargent, and David Bunch. Two unknowns again. So take a look at this list. Most of these guys aren't big names but they have been selling for many years. I saw a Basil Wells story in a 1947 zine, Neal Barrett in the fifties, etc. Of the forty-five authors listed, only six are completely unknown to me. Most are regulars. Hardly looks like a field run by semi-pros, does it?

//Little informed as I am I think I get what Alma means: Ben Bova works at Avco, Hal Clement teaches school, Joe Haldeman is a ... what is he? ... a guitar teacher (?), Leo Kelley is in public relations (like Tom Purdom), etc. Of the group above I know definitely that Ellison and Koontz are full time writers. Ups, also Piers Anthony. As for the rest it more likely that the bulk of them write sf in their spare time and work regularly at another job. ghl//

Bob Sabella: Right now a lot of people do write regular "columns" for TB, but don't you think it better to leave it a lettercol. Easier for new people to get in. Besides, all our "columns" are almost totally concerned with other people's "columns" in previous issues.

I found The Left Hand of Darkness to be an incredibly moving and beautiful experience. I think its greatest asset is its utter lack of sensationalism. Could you imagine what would have happened if P.J. Farmer had written it for Essex House? Ghod! But dull? Phillistine!

J. J. Pierce: I think you're jumping to conclusions with Ed Krieg's addressing Matt Hickman as "Herr Hickman." There's German all over Bob Vardeman's Sandworm and it's hardly a neo-fascist publication or anything. I think in all the controversy and feuding over the New Wave, a few of us are getting a little paranoid ... (And I'll continue to lock myself in my room until the Milford Mafia stops besieging the house!)

//Question of the week: What does Darrell Schweitzer do up in his room all alone? ghl//

After Sol Cohen got done frauding fandom with Astounding Stories, he's hit a new low. Now he has something called Weird Mysteries which has its lettering cleverly designed to resemble the digest sized issues of a certain fantasy mag that Dorothy McIllwraith used to edit. I must admit that both tricks did cause me to look twice before deciding not to buy. I think we should suggest a few more titles to the illustrious Mr. Cohen, that would reflect the quality of the stuff he's printing. Like Insipid Stories, Incredibile Tales, Wretched Science Fiction. There's infinite possibilities.

And from the look of things, there'll be an infinite number of these rags. Things have changed since I wrote my last TB letter and made those comments on magazine distribution. The Cohen crud has completely wiped out the quality zines (this includes Amazing and Fantastic). I find that the nearest place I can even get Analog is a good twenty minute drive. I've been getting If, Galaxy, Worlds of Fantasy, and Worlds of Tomorrow at the Jersey shore. F&SF is quite scarce, not available in the Philadelphia area at all and the Lowndes mags (Mag of Horror, Start Myst, Biz Fantasy, Weird Terror, etc.) are not available anywhere.

//They can be had in Philly at various book stores. ghl//

If this situation prevails in other parts of the country, Mr. Cohen is single-handedly wiping out the entire SF magazine field. His trick is to issue "yearbooks" every month and if it takes a whole year to sell five copies of a given title, they'll sit around that long. (And it does, if they sell at all.) In the meantime, all other mags are crowded right off the stands. Right now I do a lot of travelling and can find most anything (except the Lowndes zines, which I get through the mail) but after school starts again I'll have to subscribe to everything or not get them. Of course this means I won't see some zines.

And I haven't bought an Ultimate reprint rag in years.

ROBERT GEORGE

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Charleston, S. C. 29407

A new fantasy prozine has appeared on one of the local newstands: Forgotten Fantasy. Doug Menville, the editor, states in his editorial that FF "has been created in an attempt to bring to today's fantasy fans some of the many novels and short stories of imaginative literature still forgotten in the mists of time, mouldering away in dusty libraries, some for nearly a century." The first issue contains part one of William Bradshaw's The Goddess of Atvatabar, along with a couple of "classic" tales. With the retrograde movement by Fantastic in this field, it is a welcome sight to see another zine try to take up the slack.

Speaking of Fantasy fandom, Michael Juergens in the Fantasy Fandom column of Fantastic (Oct. 1970) suggested that a Hugo-like award be established -- and called the Valkyrie. This sounds like a good idea to me, although it might get some static as to lack of quantity and quality of annual competition. Perhaps though, it might stimulate more fantasy stories.

Some fans might enjoy reading somewhat of a more serious look into the future: Future Shock by Alvin Toffler (published by Random House). Toffler feels that man has experienced "too much change in too little time." Technical forecasts, as well as psychological changes in store for future inhabitants are discussed.

The other day I was thumbing through some old prozines and came across a portfolio by Gyula Zilzer in Fantastic (Nov.-Dec., 1953). His work is intriguing, but naturally not enough pictures were published. The blurb from inside the cover stated that Zilzer "gives stark testimony of this sensitive artist's grim experiences under the Hitler tyranny. ... Zilzer escaped after a month-long trip in a freight wagon loaded with furniture where he hid in a roll-top desk and almost starved to death. His interpretations have been compared with those of Heinrich Kley, Daumier, and the peerless Gustave Dore." Is he alive today, are any of his other works available?

PHIL MULDOWNEY

7, The Elms, Stoke
Plymouth, Devon, England

Well, that was the Heicon that was. And all your American fears of the Hugo awards being swamped by us Europeans has proved false. It was a great pity really, but from what I could gather at the Heicon, the con committee was under the impression that the Hugo awards were English language awards only, thus instructing the German members of the Heicon not to nominate for the Hugo. Thus there were not even nominations from Europe on the final voting form. Which was a pity, because I would have thought that a fanzine like MRU would have stood a very good chance.

All in all Heicon was great fun. There were of course a few grumbles, the Stadhalle in which it was held has absolutely atrocious acoustics, and most of the program started at unearthly hours of 9 and 10 o'clock in the morning. But when one considers that the committee consisted of only four people, and the work that they got through and the patience that they showed, I think most of the Heicon attendees would join me in a vote of thanks to all of them.

//As a supporting member, I received NOTHING from Heicon. NOTHING. gh1//

//Let me amplify on that a bit. I received NO progress reports, voting forms, program book, NOTHING. Is this usual for Worldcons? I have been receiving all kinds of progress reports from Boscon. Could it be that we Americans really do know how to put on better cons? ghl//

There were about 600 people attending, which while it does not compare with the massive American Worldcons, was a nice pleasant number. There were sizeable delegations from France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Britain and Sweden, and it was in truth a truly International convention. Well, when you can play a game of Diplomacy with people from four countries it does make it interesting!

It was pleasant to see so many American authors and fans around. Got to talk to or glance at Poul Anderson, Jack Vance, James Blish, Robert Silverberg, Daniel Galouye, Jack Williamson, Larry Niven, as well as American fans who seemed to dominate the proceedings! Bruce Pelz, Elliot Shorter, Jack Chalker, Wally Gonser, Bob Vardeman, Forrest Ackerman ... names, names, names!

There will be probably a bi-annual European convention, with a vague scheme for a European sf award to be given bi-annually. The first con will be in Trieste -- to coincide with the film festival -- in 1972. So maybe see some of you there?

Vision of Tomorrow, the only British prozine, has folded with the September issue. A prospect that I for one had been wondering at for some time. Main reason given was circulation trouble, also the publisher has had a heart attack. But I was amazed that it ever sold at all, the standard of the contents was so bad. If you can imagine a magazine with original stories the standard of the magazine reprints from Amazing, in a style of British hack-writers of the early fifties, there you had Vision of Tomorrow. A pity though, cause with its demise goes any plans for Sword & Sorcery, which was planned as a companion magazine to be edited by Ken Bulmer, and which promised interesting things.

The Hugos seem to have cropped up again in TB. Leaving aside the messup of this year, I really wonder how representative any but the Best novel award is. It would be interesting to know how many fans had actually read all the stories in the shorter categories. I would suspect very few. After all, who reads all the prozines? More important perhaps, is the publicity and availability of various stories. Did Dangerous Visions and Orbit series dominate the Hugo nominations 'cause they were intrinsically the best stories, or because they had the most publicity?

The comraderie and smallness of the sf field are both a curse and a blessing. Take Bug Jack Barron, if it had been published anywhere else but in sf, then it would have been dismissed as another hip-type not too hot porno book. But because it was hailed by New Worlds, castigated by Wollheim, it became a cause celebre within the sf world and got a Hugo nomination.

J. J. Fierce never ceases to amaze me. Wherever I turn, there is a letter from J.J. Fierce. The sheer bulk of his propaganda is staggering, punch drunk. He seems to put forward the general idea that if he likes it, it is good old style; if he does not, it is bad 'new wave.'

While I like Gary Labowitz's editorship, I do wish that he could keep his comments to the end of a letter. It does interrupt the flow of a letter to have

a great long paragraph of editorial opinion shoved in. If they were LOC's fair enough, but I thought that TB was more of an open forum.

//It is! I have always tried to insert my comments between breaks in topic in the original letter. I have always preferred this to waiting til the end of the letter and repeating what was said and then commenting. ghl//

Bob Vardeman: While the ethics of Cohen's Astounding Stories gambit are no doubt shaky, it is a hard world out there in the real world, and if Astounding Stories was in the public domain then Cohen did have the legal right to use it. I was interested to read Ted White's article in Science Fiction Review on the general opprobrium that Cohen has received. While I could not care less for Cohen, one cannot help but feel that sf authors are being a little naive in the reality of the world. If they have signed away reprint rights -- as seems to be the case from White's article -- then it is their own fault. Oh sure they can squeal hard deal and unfair practice, but they should have read their contract! The ethics are not nice, but I get rather tired of hearing that the sf field is like some sort of fairyland where everything should be done just right. The real world of legal in-fighting is not a nice one, but sf is part of it.

Now it is rather funny about Left Hand of Darkness, everywhere it has received rave reviews for the intricate society, the new concepts, etc. But I tend to agree with Bob Sabella, I found it excruciatingly dull. Still, that is me I suppose. But from a book that has won so much praise, I expect something more, something that will grip me and give one a further insight into humanity--or even alienity, if there is such a word.

MIKE
O'BRIEN

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Australia 7000

That was a good cover on TB 63. However, except for the insignia, I wouldn't be sure if it was a TV camera or a laser cannon.

Doug Robillard may be interested to know that the British magazine/paperback New Writings in SF is now in its 17th or 18th issue, and is having the first three numbers actually reissued with new covers. That doesn't happen with prozines.

John Andrews: I hate to argue with the man on the spot, but the Summer 1970 issue of the British magazine Sight & Sound had a spread on THX 1138 and it said it was made not by UCLA but by Zoetrope, a small studio backed by Warner Brothers.

A pity Alma Hill couldn't have dragged those points out of John Campbell a couple of years ago when I let myself be talked into signing up for a writers' course. I'm still paying the thing off.

Wow, it's confusing having two Michael O'Brien people in fandom ... but in the same issue of Tightbeam!?!?

I have been thinking about joining the American SF Book Club (I'm already in the British one), after having been nagged by magazine back covers for years.

The only trouble is that I'd need an accomodation address in the USA, to lapse into spy lingo; somebody to receive books and post them on to me by boat mail, while sending me other information by airmail. Any volunteers for this thankless task?

ROGER
BRYANT

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Akron, Ohio 44306

Well, now I've been in NFFF for a year. And I guess that's long enough to consider myself overdue in getting my three cent's worth (inflation, you know) in Tightbeam.

The cover on TB 63 is lovely. It reminds me of being out at the Firestone country club here watching the taping of the CBS golf classic. Those jokers on the camera rigs do (with the exception of costume) look just about like that. There's something amusing, though, about a man surrounded by a couple hundred thousand dollars' worth of equipment, perched up there atop a crane fighting off birds and trying to keep the gawkers out of his field of view. And I was surprised that they used no less than nine separate rigs on eighteen holes for this type of tournament, what consists of just one four-some playing around. Looks like you didn't give the artist's name again, shame.

//Didn't I? It's Grant Canfield. GRANT CANFIELD!! G*R*A*N*T C*A*N*F*I*E*L*D*! ghl//

The gimmicks in Slaughterhouse-Five don't really make it sf any more than, say, the presence of a little facile magic in TV's Bewitched. make it fantasy. At least, nothing most fans would care to claim. Vonnegut's Dei ex Machina are just irrelevancies, which, to me, don't do much for his story. If by some strict definition it must be called sf, all right; but I wouldn't publicize it. SF gets enough bad press from John Agar movies and super-hero comics without this.

Orbit clothbounds come out twice yearly. The paperbacks have been lagging somewhat behind, I think.

A copy of New Worlds 200, a very thin and disappointing one, turned up here about two months ago. I'm almost sure that was the last one. And by now most of us no doubt know that Moorcock is trying to get it going in the US as a paperbound magazine. Pity the poor people who used that SFR ad, though, they have probably lost their money. There are as of now six Best of NW's in cloth, and number four is coming from Berkley soon.

A couple of changes of address: correct your files NOW before you forget

- 67. Charles Cushing, 903-8315-105 St., Edmonton, 60, Alta., Canada
- 101. David M. Gorman, 3515 Lauriston Dr., New Castle, Ind. 47362
- 122. John R. Isaac, 6344 W. Rowland Ave., Littleton, Colo. 80123
- 142. Alex Krislov, 2322 Lincoln Tower, 1800 Cannon Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43210

Please send all changes and corrections to Janie Lamb and Gary H. Labowitz

