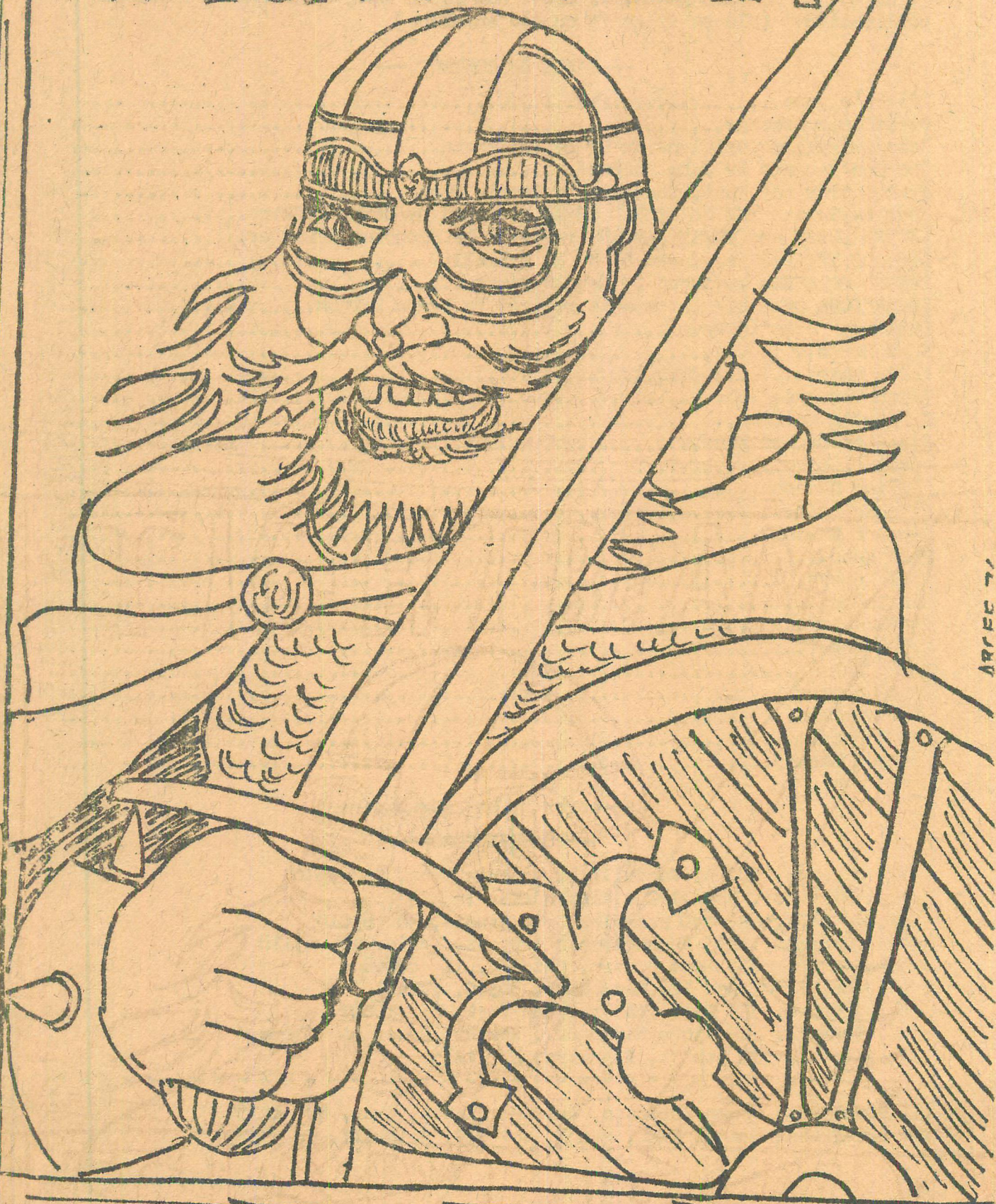


TIGHT BEAM



ARCE 71

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---cover by Rob Gersman---

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EDITOR'S PAGE

by Lynne Holdom

Well I'm now in the midst of assembling TIGHTBEAM. I did have a few problems but nothing like I did with the first issue. My major one this issue is that Ralph (pronounced the British way as he gives himself airs) doesn't like A.B. Dick electrostencils---he doesn't realize that he's an A.B. Dick mimeo. However he is printing them up rather than shredding paper all over---we could have sold confetti---like he did last issue. I also learned that it pays to keep the ink in the fridge as Ralph doesn't like his ink at room temperature. It gives him colic which results in uneven printing.

I also realized what it means when the postage rates go up for third and fourth class mail---twice since last December. It now costs 7¢ more per TIGHTBEAM to send it fourth class mail and about the same for third class mail. Now the PO is talking darkly of raising rates yet again. And they give such rotten service too. Since most folk don't use the third and fourth class rates much, there isn't the large outcry when these are raised. I have found that fourth class gives better service than third---the bulk isn't as large there but it doesn't pay unless TIGHTBEAM is at least 20 pages long when it becomes cheaper than third class. Joanne sends TNFF fourth class unually. Maybe we should all write our congressman about this. In an election year, maybe they'd listen but don't bet on it.

For a while I thought that the PO lost all the TIGHTBEAMS sent to the Midwest. Now I know that a couple got there but that Midwesterners don't like to write or something which only adds to an effete Easterner's worst suspicions about the region. Surely someone out there must have something to say besides Winston Dawson? Also do any femme fen know how to write? I never hear from them. Gee I get the feeling that I'm the only female in the N3F---well I know there's Cathy McGuire, Sharon Ponzer, Joanna Burger and Janie Lamb. But you get the idea. Oh yes, I forgot Anji Valenza; yup Anji is female which I didn't know earlier and well.....Sorry about that Anji.

Anyone who is in doubt about his/her membership status, should write to Janie Lamb. If you ask me, I just have to contact Janie. Her address is on the inside front cover.

Then I want to talk about the DIRTY DOZEN. These are Neffers who are notorious for being mere names on my mailing list and who only exist in the PO's imagination or have disappeared long ago taking their typewriters with them. I can read handwritten letters, honest. These fen should drop me a line if only to prove they exist. Personally I'm inclined to believe that these are fictitious characters made up by John Robinson and an obscure conspiracy to increase the membership roles. The only way to prove you exist is to send a loc. To be truthful, I could list far more than a dozen but feel that's enough for any one issue

XX			
X			X
X	Martha Beck	Gary Phillips	X
X	Jean Bogert	Richard Smith	X
X	Donald Franson	Caryl Anne Thompson	X
X	Kenneth Huff	Doug Wilchoway	X
X	Thomas Longo	Lynne A. Witten	X
X	Donald Miller	Leah Zeldes	X
X			X
XX			

Yes, I know Leah is a member of the Direstorate but is she real? Well, Leah?

Those of you who are wondering why there is an X on your mailing bag; well it shows that you are eligible for the DIRTY DOZEN and could be on it next time unless you send a loc. One exception is Jackson Lackey whom I heard from after I exed the bags. Another is H. Andruschak.

The cover this issue was supposed to be by Anji Valenza. Anji did send in a very nice cover too but Ralph didn't like it. He doesn't like large areas of grey in drawing---just black and white and avoid large blacked in areas. If I can get Ralph to accept the cover, I may use it next September. Since it says September on it, that limits my options somewhat. Anyway Anji did some of the interior art, as did Sheryl Birkhead and Hank Heath (page 8). Next issue will have art by John Fitzsimmons and Alan Iankin. The cover is by Gil Gaier.

William Goodson, No 11, Julian 2/12, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia, would like to hear from you. As to how he got there, that will be explained next issue. But he would appreciate postcards of US and Canadian scenes as his Malay friends love them. Also any hopeful SF writer who wants to know what a primitive society is really like---not just a Rousseauian pipe dream, should write also. Postage is 31¢ air mail to Malaysia but 22¢ by air letter; these latter do not permit any enclosures.

A bit of news William Goodson won't like. I recently got the results of a survey filled out by the members in our congressional district and the only thing less popular here than spending money on space exploration was spending it on foreign aid. They rather send it to Mars than Malaysia. Just above space exploration in popularity was spending for welfare---unless those on welfare are senior citizens.

Sharon Ponzer, Lecom Star Rte., Rolla, MO 65401 is looking for copies of THE HERITAGE OF HASTUR, THE WINDS OF DARKOVER and THE WORLD WRECKERS all by Marion Zimmer Bradley---also THE FALCONS OF NARABEDLA and THE DOOR THROUGH SPACE. She would also like DREAD COMPANION, GALACTIC DERELICT, KEY OUT OF TIME, ICE CROWN, THE TIME TRADERS and THE DEFIANT AGENTS all by Andre Norton.

Ritchie Dean is looking for folks to join the Welcommittee. (R. Dean, Sand Gap, Ky. 40481. You all know what it means to a new member to hear from other Neffers and the gap between joining and getting listed in TNFF can be long. No new members will be listed till Dec. I have names and addresses of some thirty new members since last time. I just decided to list a few at random. One new member is Rich Hubbard who has a letter here. So neos if you want to get known write here.

Jay Miller
6 Scenic Dr.
Suffern NY 10901

Jay is a student, has wide interests but was never active before. He likes all SF authors (all?) and is interested in correspondence, art, fanzines, writing.

Steven Bond
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Steve is a member of the Nashville SF Club, has access to a radio station production room. He's interested in coll writing (so loc this Steve), photography---see Rich Hubbard

This next bunch I just have names and addresses for---nothing else.

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John Robinson
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Should fans bring pressure to bear on Los Angeles fandom in order to stop their ceaseless Worldcon bids? Should there perhaps be an amendment to the WSFS constitution forbidding a site bidding more than once every six years? Has the persistence of LA fans alienated enough fans in other parts of the country to boycott any future LA Worldcon bids (But not this year's)?

An Albany area fan who is not a member of the N3F told me that he absolutely will not vote for Los Angeles until they skip at least one turn, and that he will refuse to vote for Los Angeles whenever they put in bids less than six years apart. While my feelings are not as extreme as his, I do believe that LA fans have overdone it. What I'd like to find out is what Neffers think about this situation.

Should fans boycott any site which bids every chance it gets?
Should fans try to propose a six year rule on bidding?
Should LA fans be censured if they bid for 1981?

I'd really like to know.

((Okay, John a few remarks from the editor: Yes I think a bid once in six years by any one city is plenty. It would seem there is a five year rule now. After all the West does have Seattle, Portland, San Diego, San Francisco, Phoenix, Denver etc. I doubt that a boycott would work however. It would just produce a delightfully uncrowded Con for those who did attend. Would Hugos be suspect? Fen should just not vote to give the con to such a site---only fen can cure the situation. Dennis Jarog told me recently that there is a prejudice against LA fen in the Midwest; this may be a reason. LA fen should think about this.))



SOME OUTRAGOUS OPINIONS CONCERNING SCIENCE FICTION

By Phil Kohn

I am a Foundation fan but have little liking for THE CAVES OF STEEL although it is part of the Asimov history leading up to the Foundation. Yet FOUNDATION is illogical. The science of psycho history presupposed the absence of major invention. Yet the impact of invention depends so much on such technological details like where is the oil and how much oil is there. It also presupposes that mankind which can travel galactic distances in weeks never would colonize new planets nor interacting with any outsiders or offworlders. Like everything else this was too pat.

Also, since managing is a psychological science, the Second Foundationers can overtake the First any time they want to so what is the whole rignmarole good for? Sometimes I ask myself if there isn't a real Foundation, founded by Asimov, just after WW2. Just reread Hari Seldon's explanations and see if they don't fit the situation.

Remember Heinlein's TUNNEL IN THE SKY? Big sister, Helen, the Space Marine Captain tells Rod not to take a gun as it will make him over confident. His job is to blend with the environment so he won't be eaten by something bigger. Now that is the most stupid thing I've seen for a long time (Israeli politics excepted). Imagine an untutored bushman trying to survive in the friendly atmosphere of Copenhagen. The ONE thing he can't possibly do is blend into the environment! Neither can any extraplanetary!



...phooey...

I undertake to outlast all the armed and unarmed space cadets. I would take along skunk oil, bright red crew overclothing and various noise makers. There would still be a risk but the locals will have learned that "advertisers" mostly do not make pleasant eating and will not be inclined to take a risk. But Heinlein is still the best writer around.

I remember the DEATHWORLD trilogy from Analog. It would be interesting to have these 2 gee herce confronted with the Dorsai or the 900 gee aliens from MISSION OF GRAVITY.

Mack Reynolds is good even if I can't accept his ideas. Neither the Church or the Military provide social ladders except in special circumstances; the army does during revolutions while the Catholic Church by requiring celibacy never threatened established families (and of course would seem the most ladder.) Category: Entertainment

an inside track for them as they staffed the higher orders.) Category: Entertainment

I don't have much use for Gordon Dickson and his pro militarists. THE TACTICS OF MISTAKE assumes that an enemy unable to plan his own movements competently can be predicted by another which is nonsense.

I like Schmitz---particularly his Telzey Amberdon stories. Don't you think that an author ALL of whose heroes are telepathic fighting HEROINES deserves some recognition from the feminist movement? THE WITCHES OF KARRIS---Telzey---Zabadan---and that anthropologist whose name I forget ((Nile Ftlund)). Why doesn't someone take it upon himself or herself to get the author his deserved feminist medal?

A REPORT ON WESTERCON 29 AND SF SEMINAR 1

By John Andrews

I arrived at Westercon late Friday morning. Not too many people were in the mezzanine of the Hyatt House. The hotel, very near LA Airport, is familiar from other Cons.

Since there was no Huckster Room, nor Art Show, nor event until 6 PM, one took the opportunity to converse. I was fortunate that I had a brief talk with Bertram Chandler. He's touring the US, visited Grand Canyon this year, South Rim. Chandler remarked that he's greatly interested in Cordwainer Smith, and that only a knowledge of South Sea realms allows one insight into much of Smith's work. Chandler certainly has the piercing eyes of a career seaman. Later in the Con I talked a little with Robin Johnson, also from Australia. Some of the fen I met were busied with young kids, who enjoy a con at reduced rates, but have a way of disappearing, showing up in odd situations. As usual the Con formed the veriest melting pot.

The Con was lightly programmed. Friday I spent much time at the Welcome Reception, actually an Author's Cocktail too. Jack Williamson told me some of his books are being retranslated into Italian. I said they could only be an improvement and that retranslations figure in the news from the first issue of ROBOT, publ. in Milan, Italy.

I also met Tom Locke, formerly a programmer with the Space Ship Shuttle at Rockwell, but he's not there now. Apparently, he's had trouble with smog and developed too many colds. The Con weather was good; cold breezes blew away the smog. Although when not in breeze, the sultriness came on strong.

Besides being lightly programmed, the Con seemed a little flat. Ellison was not present---a possible factor? Attendance down from last year. But events were still hard to squeeze in amongst conversations, meals and sleep. Busy hours sped by. Notable at this Con were the increase in women members, women pros; a relaxed atmosphere, the near win of bid by Phoenix, the excellent Masquerade (quality high, not huge), and the continued maneuvers by hotel (now they give out "passports" to guests). The dramatic slide-show "The Capture" surpassed my expectations; it deserves a high vote if not a first for Hugos. "The Capture" embodies the old ASTOUNDING "light" touch, humor.

Early Monday morning, a crowd from one bidding party was kicked out by the police (apparently part of a suite was being used, although officially closed for repairs). They barged into the Phoenix party, which before had been distinguished by restraint and quiet enjoyment. A huckster found someone had spirited his receipts away, leaving too little for the return trip. Security seemed careful this time, but the theft marred a peaceful holiday anyway.

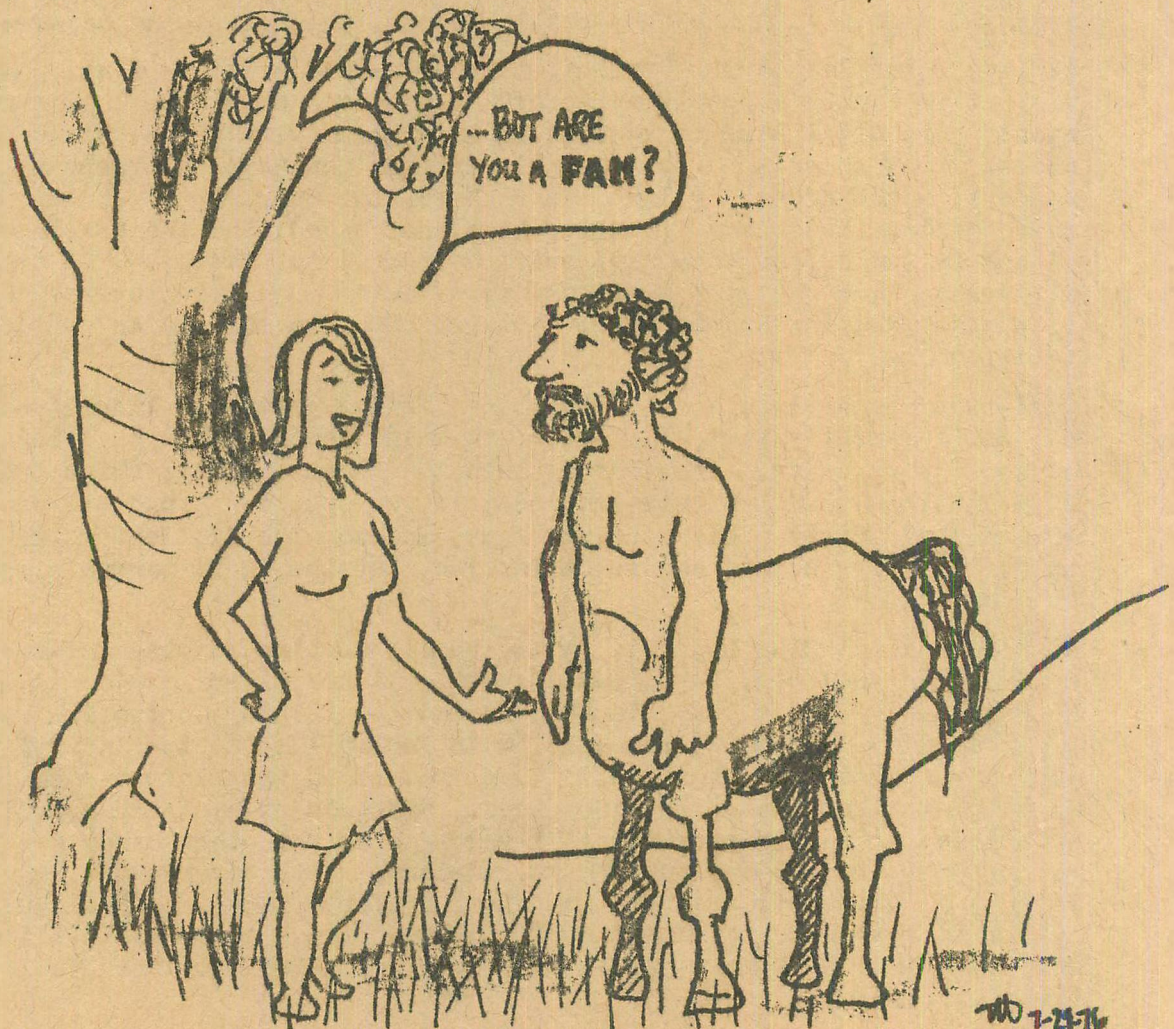
Highlights: BARBARELLA, Fri, mostly uncut; meeting several Neffers, Gil Gaier, Stan Woolston, Frank Denton; Australians; Silverberg's wit at Awards post-banquet (NFFF members win FAAN award); my talking to two fen who'd criticized my "Sisyphus" translation in FANTASTIC; the two interviews publicly presented with Sturgeon, Silverberg. Both pros interviewed gave much detail, despite penetrating questions. Sturgeon emphasized an artist's relationships to his creations; Silverberg, on the other hand, a SF author's relationship to fandom, publishers, readers; both covered the negative aspects of thier careers. At the first Writer's Panel, Michael Kurland came out against loose, plotless "arty" stories, though no specific titles. Late Monday afternoon, I heard M. Z. Bradley sing. Also met a few fen from old times.....

I reached the SF Seminar I at Books Unlimited in Berkeley just before the first Panel Saturday. (Met at Open House Fri. eve). The first Panel gave several people a chance to rehash the three main editors who have given us a Legacy: Campbell, Boucher, Gold. Much of the material has appeared elsewhere, so one value lay in the emphases put on different phases. The three editors emerge as very human, flawed individuals who nonetheless achieved the unlooked for, and created first a Golden Age, and then a benchmarks age that we look to today.

The SF Seminar overall marks the "miscellaneous" fannish gatherings, not Clubs not Cons, Workshops. Put on by a bookstore, it lacked crowds, huge entertainments, hotel facilities, and art show, and films. It thus harked back to the ancient Cons. However most attendees are seriously interested in the literature, either as zine editors, collectors, or budding new authors. Thus it may look forward to a new dawn of SF, stirring in the grass roots.

Although planned by Alva Rogers, Bob Yamada (of the Bookstore, a neo in SF, but adroit in putting this on) and a distinguished Committee, the theme—the craft of SF & Fantasy—appeared as slippery as usual. No one looked for a "definitive" treatment of the genres, however, the conversations covered the craft more by implication and reference than directly. The subjects at the four Panels and and during long, informal sessions afterwards wandered all over the map—and of this world. The heavy turnout of Pros (there must have been at least twenty five, although many for only one day) made the Seminar count more than the 150 attendance would suggest.

Highlights of the Panels: Robert Anton Wilson displayed his enigmatic persona. He and R. F. Nelson sat as "new" authors; both have been publishing and writing many years, but they are relatively "fresh" to SF—a new phase. R. A. Wilson,



co-author of the ILLUMINATUS trilogy, bluntly asserted that one succeeds as an author by: a) becoming an internationally known crook, like S. Agnew. b) becoming an internationally known crank, like G. B. Shaw. Mr Wilson pushes the L4 and L5 space stations as mankind's last hope to avoid a Dark Age (as in Club of Rome forecasts); he decries the doom mongers of today---critics of the space program and attempts to delay, and population problems. At the same time, he sponsors group sessions that recall dianetics, est, encounter groups and other attempts at quick "group consciousness-raising" of the last twenty years.

Ray Nelson expounded a four-stage history of SF. According to this, only in our current, last stage do authors begin the depiction of individuals. Before only the stage, gadgets, background concepts were emphasized.. Tom Whitmore stoutly objects to this theory.

The audience asked few, but pointed, questions and each panel had sharp audience interaction on really substantive issues. I was especially interested in the New Author's Panel, with R. F. Nelson, R. A. Wilson, Marta Randall, Eric Vinicoff, Mal Warwick and Gary K. Wolf. The Seminar's cheerful consensus: they still look at SF out of slush piles.

Marta Randall says she sends novels as one chapter, plus outline, first class, and seals with hard science only for plausability. Vinicoff tells of woeful ruin of 4th class packages in Bulk Mail Center. He is really half a team: Marcia Martin does technical background, "hard" aspects for him. Mel Gilden espouses ethnic SF. He also honestly admits that he must hold a mundane job and that it's impossible to keep up with new SF, let alone science background. Gary K. Wolf emphasizes the role of advertizing in any fiction market; his KILLERBOWL contract grants money for promotion (he wore a Killerbowl T-shirt). Dorothy Bryant autographed her self-published story and told of the problems plaguing a new author that led to putting it out herself. Cover designed by her husband.

The book has been taken up by a major firm and are reprinting it with a new title THE KIN OF ATA ARE WAITING. Mal Warwick did not give a talk.

The Seminar displayed many female pros, some obscure, such as the SF poetess, Rona Spalten. In the last Panel, Women in SF, Dorothy Bryant, Carol Carr and Dena Brown questioned the meaning of "feminism" and pondered reevaluations. Sydney J. Van Scyoc and Wilmar H. Shiras told of early trials and stereotypes for women, the questions of "hiding" sex behind initials. Marta Randall and Susan Wood took the very hard "women's liberation" line. In the question session, Michael Kurland declared himself a "visitor from Mars" and asked if the problem were not really women as the oppressed group, but SF as oppressed literary minority. A very piquant session. Several in the audience raised questions of alleged "overkill" in the last several years by women activists, and the possibility that this may have hampered women's efforts to better themselves.

The Banquet was at a Chinese Restaurant just around the corner. The food was a success for once! Don Simpson disagrees. The presence of Wilmar Shiras She recounted briefly her epochal breakthrough: the publication in ASTOUNDING of the of the series that became the classic, IN HIDING. (CHILDREN OF WONDER) I had the pleasure of talking with Mrs Shiras and her husband at length before the banquet. Dr. George R. Stewart (EARTH ABIDES) made a few remarks, expressed doubts of his SF status. Fritz Leiber reassured him in his fine speech. Leiber retold incidents of his career, the "Grey Mouser" series and again has announced his new novel, hardcover in Feb.. I deplore the trend to changing a title on second publication. The F&SF version apparently shall have a different title.

FLAT SWORDS AND RUSTY KNOCKERS

By Dennis Jarog

The loud laughing seemed to come from the other end of the inn; as I drew closer, there was no mistake, I knew it was my old friend---the trusted swordsman, Trojan.

"What have you been up to, sluggard?"

"The usual---a little swordplay, a little gambling and a lot of wenching." He then grabbed a nearby serving woman, gave her an appreciative slap on the rump and called for more ale. "I came at your summons, my friend, for you would never call save in great need."

I sat down at the table where he was and, after lifting the mug to my lips, I turned to him. "Yes, my friend, these are evil times here in Klapp. You must have heard of the death of the king even in your remote holdings."

He nodded and I continued, "There are those who believe that the king was murdered and that his young daughter who is now queen has fallen under some evil influence." His eyes narrowed and I went on, "Some months ago the king summoned the evil sorcerer, Climax, to him and asked his aid against the barbarians in the west. Climax agreed and after the victory, grew ever more powerful so that men now say sorcery rules the kingdom."

But even as we talked we were being watched for high in the castle tower Climax.....

* * * * *

Sword and sorcery, the name which encompasses various works from Conan to thousands of terrible imitations, is a curious branch of literature. Through illustrations drawn from the above, I will take a look at it---making a few comments thereon. However first I would like to make a distinction between Heroic or Adult Fantasy as typified by THE LORD OF THE RINGS or THE WELL OF THE UNICORN and what is commonly called Sword and Sorcery and is typified by the Conan series, the Callisto series, the Gor series ad nauseam. Such a distinction is necessary because, even though these are superficially similar; they are in fact quite different being built on dissimilar premises and usually placing emphasis on differing aspects. In S&S swordplay predominates to the exclusion of most else while in Heroic Fantasy, the theme is usually an idea or a quest.

The reason that I believe S&S to be a lesser and in some ways deficient, form is the technique of this sort of story. This is not to say that there are not some good (or at least readable) stories of this mode but they all have a major inward fault---characterization or the lack of it. The characters of the above mirror the primary problem of S&S; they are very stock and always cardboard.

Let us look at the swordsman, Trojan. He is known as a brawling sort---quick with a sword or in hand to hand combat. He owes allegiance to no one but a few fast friends. Often in times of trouble, he will sign on with some king or warlord who strikes his fancy---most often because he has found the chieftain to be his match in bed or with the sword. He the swordsman has various superman attributes: he is always victorious in battle. If he is wounded, it is due to treachery. He is reputed to be the best in skill with women. He treats them crudely but still expects them to give him a good time in bed. He is a drinker; he is a gambler but has precious little mental ability. In short, he is a bore.

The master swordsman is a bore because his mold changes very slightly from story to story. Oh, occasionally some of the externals may change. For example the swordsman may be the lost heir to the council of tribes but, by and large, if you have met one hairy swordsman, you have met them all.

The next group of characters present in the story above and in most S&S stories are the women---or what passes for the same. They are rarely treated kindly here; except in the case of high-born women where they are protected until they can be off in marriage to another princeling. In most cases they are whores and little better. As far as the story teller is concerned, they don't even have names. They are useful for wenching, waiting on tables and the like. Little more can be said, they are not points of interest and are not intended to be. After all aside from swordplay, rape is the chief amusement in these societies. Our hero is usually a most willing participant especially after he has shocked a few people into various states of dismemberment. Certainly not the sort of situations which inspire interest unless you are a closet sadist or have other hangups.

The next regular feature of S&S is the evil necromancer. Besides being evil and opposing all the aims and goals of our hero; he is leering, physically ugly, old, craves personal power and believes himself much better than the common nerd---most especially, our hero. He wears black, lives in a tower and performs all sorts of nefarious experiments often with various netherworld creatures to assist. He worships and communicates with Ghods not in accordance with the wishes of the local community.

He is rarely seen often enough to reveal what little character he has. Generally he is stopped when he is about to launch the crowning achievement of his evil plan. He is shown mixing various potions together in order to do away with our noble hero. Also present is a hunchbacked assistant---not the kind of humanist you would want to snuggle up in bed with. Nevertheless he is deadly familiar to those who enjoy this. On second thought perhaps the popularity of S&S is the result of the necromancers' union bewitching the public into buying this pap.

In addition there are usually an assortment of minor characters who pop up here and there---the faithful companion of the master swordsman who always strived for but could never match, the bravado of our hero. Then there is the doddering king or chieftain; he usually takes his final bow early in the first act. The fawning princess who is left behind to rule usually fails miserably. For some reason kings in these stories seem unable to father sons; perhaps the Ghods could help. Artificial insemination would be a great blessing here.

To sum up: my first major complaint about the S&S novel is that it has all the carefully developed characterization of the department store manikin. The stock characters appear in such devastating regularity that to read one S&S story is to read them all. Perhaps an S&S kit by the number could be developed: take one master swordsman mix with two evil magicians.....then blend into a stock plot.

The second major flaw lies in the plotting. In reality there is only one plot in this sort of novel. Something has gone sour in the society: either the evil magician lusts for power or some group of barbarians threatens to invade. It's a sort of "I am not going to let some foreigner rape my women, I will do it myself" sort of plot. In certain cases---such as Moorcock's Eternals Champion series---the focus is such that it raises the books above the general garbage level but this is rare.

The basic flow of the story runs from the initial glimmerings of evil abroad in the land---change from the normal. This is sometimes manifested by oppression of the peasantry. It usually takes a while for our hero to recognize the change; he is after all rather dull mentally. The faithful companion usually brings the problem to the hero's attention. Then our hero, after a particularly successful night in bed, leads the charge against the evildoer. Depending on the story he either sneaks into the stronghold of the evildoer or leads the charge of knights and swordsmen. After the spilling of considerable blood and numerous escapes from the jaws of defeat; our hero manages to turn some agent of the evil against itself---thus thwarting its desire. The last scene usually takes place back in the tavern

Reflecting for a moment---the plot is inevitably the same because of the nature of the characters. Our hero would be of little use elsewhere because his talents such as they are, are one dimensional. Thus we come again to the problem of character.

Looking back to the article last issue: the search for the hero. We have heroes here; ghod, we have more heroes than one would know what to do with. Still from this vantage point, they are no more viable than the heroes in those books I looked at earlier. I don't care much for cardboard. Nothing ever happens to them. They are never wounded except by treachery. In a drawn fight they are invincible. They don't get ulcers, hangovers or social diseases. They are never tired, never have body odor despite long hours in battle. They never have a second thought---often not even a first one. They are, in short, unbelievable in their own worlds. That is critical. Even in their own sphere they are unreal. They violate Tolkien's rule of fantasy worlds because they deny the reality of their own worlds.

Do you remember the little story at the beginning of this story? Probably not; not just because it is a poor imitation of the S&S story which it is; but also because it illustrative of the genre as a whole. One master barbarian is just the same as the next. How many leering necromancers can you take before falling asleep? How many mental dimwits, fawning princesses etc. can you take? One minor point not touched on before might also be mentioned. S&S is heavy with phallic symbols. The sword is obvious and need not be mentioned except for the fact that it too becomes boring. Not wishing to get into the sexual hangups of people who read or write S&S, still the fact of the sword as phallus is there. Similarly with the opposite of the sword in the story; the magician is a phallic symbol too.

It seems to me that S&S as opposed to Heroic Fantasy is a deficient form of literature. It is this way primarily because of the limits imposed by the characters therein. The swordsman, the magician and all the rest are stereotyped so much that the characters are no longer real in their own worlds. They are cardboard. They impose further limits on the plot which handicaps the plot still further. All of these combine to make the story boring and unreadable due to the sameness from one story to the next. As for the search for a hero, we can chalk up yet another failure on the board.

((Next issue Dennis will talk about something he actually liked.))

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SOME BRIEF FANZINE REVIEWS by the editor

MAYA 11 ed. Robert Jackson, 21 Lyndhurst Rd., Benton, Newcastle-on-Tyne NE12 9NT
Some interesting articles about how Peter Weston discovered fandom, a ship powered by beer drinkers---a suggestion of Bob Shaw; Walt Wallis' return to fanac and finally a suggestion on how to get more respect for SF---Field Marshall Moskowitz---somehow I don't think it'll work, Tom. Also lots of letters including Jessica Amanda Salmonson on THE SHATTERED CHAIN. I hate to think where that one could end up. \$1.00 each or 4/\$3.00 payable to Sam Long, P.O. Box 4946, Patrick AFB, FL 32925.

WYKNOT #4 ed. Ken Josenhans, 7602 Vicar Pl. New Carrollton, MD 20784
A discussion of Soleri, some comments on how Ken's views of Jimmy Carter changed along with TIME's---something rather frightening, some fiction, a review of HOUSE OF ZEOR, some comments on Clint Eastwood films, Jessica Salmonson on oppression of gays in Seattle plus letters and more letters. Available for the usual of three 13¢ stamps.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE SHATTERED CHAIN by Marion Zimmer Bradley

reviewed by Cathy McGuire

Can you guess this theme: a group of Free Amazon women come, as traders, into a town where the women wear chains on their wrists. They are called bitches by the townsfolk, along with every other name imaginable, all because they chose to act as they please, and not be chained by the men. Have you guessed? All those who said "women's lib" credit yourself with normal intelligence. Although I thought this was a very good book, the theme was so obvious from the first page that I strongly suspected that it was the only reason the book was written. Of course, I haven't read any other Darkover books, so I don't have the familiar characters to feel secure with. These characters are strangers to me, and they remain strangers throughout the book because the theme is so strong it treats the characters like puppets at times, bending them to fit

From the very beginning, the theme hit me like a baseball bat in the face. I am a woman for equality, so any novel that starts out with women being chained by their husbands---and liking it--- already has me half out of my chair in anger. And if these women are placed at odds with women who declare their own right to be free, I immediately and emotionally place myself on the side of the free women. That's reader identification. To keep me reading the book, all that's necessary is to keep people fighting with the free women and have the women come out winners most of the time. That's the happy ending. Now comes the part where I get demanding. I also want the characters to be very real; to work through their problems in a way that I can imagine doing. That, I think, is wish fulfillment. Ms. Bradley succeeds only partially here. Her people are individuals with firm beliefs and real faults, but time and again they change their feelings at a convenient time in the plot. To give an example without giving away the whole story: a young girl from the town where they chain their women is taken by the Amazons. At first she doesn't understand them, and she is still of the mentality of the chained women. By the end of the journey she has completely turned around, eloquently defending the Amazons. While reading it, I approved of her change of mind but was puzzled as to how it came about. There was no warning; it was just there. This type of sudden change at a crucial point in the plot comes too often to just ignore it. It is the one serious flaw in an otherwise readable book.

At the risk of belaboring it, let me approach this from another side. Ms. Bradley has some very fine scenes where a woman of one viewpoint discusses with a woman of another viewpoint and gives equal time to each. I applaud the fairness of this but have to argue with the following scenes. Either one woman has convinced the other or both are still firm in their own beliefs, but both result come about behind the scenes somehow. One particular scene leaves two women puzzled both at themselves and with each other but, in the morning, lo and behold one of the women has solved everything that worried her and is no longer puzzled. It's nice for her but where does it leave the reader? He/she has not shared in those thoughts that solved everything and so is left in the cold. (For those who read the book and are wondering, the scene I am referring to is between Jaelle and Lady Rohana at the very end of the book.) It may be a minor point but I still feel like I'm being led to my conclusions (which agree with the book mostly). I guess my complaint boils down to, "It's too smooth; too easy". If even one of the heroines had messed up and come to a bad end, it might have seemed more real.

But in closing, let me say I recommend this book as good reading. The point that I make such a fuss over doesn't spoil the plot or the characters enough to make it a bad book. It is a very good one; if only the women's lib theme had been softened a little.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE SHATTERED CHAIN by Hank Heath

Frankly I found the concept of the Free Amazons refreshing---not at all upsetting. It was not something I'd expected to encounter, though. I am a sexist. That is, I believe there are at least two sexes, and I'm very happy with that type of situation. As to the place of those sexes, well that's a problem.

A problem that is faced by the Free Amazons and the heroines" of the book. (Question: can a novel which questions sexism truly have a "heroine"?) The Free Amazons provide a type of sub-society that permits a woman to achieve status and power or economic independence or whatever in a sexist society. That I like, if they like it---which apparently they do. What I like more is the fact that they don't try to force the "liberation" message down the throats of the sexist-bound "non liberated" women. And their men.

So the message comes out: if I am a woman and I want to compete equally for an equal job with equal pay, I should be allowed the right. Eh? Nice message that. Too bad most of our group of local libbers can't get it like that. They think that because half the population is female, half the jobs should be. Which is entirely another set of circumstances. But the I said I was sexist didn't I.....

THE SHATTERED CHAIN by Marion Zimmer Bradley DAW April '76 \$1.50

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LITTLE FUZZY and FUZZY SAPIENS by H. Beam Piper

reviewed by Nicholas DeLarber

These books, re-issued by Ace after too long an absence, are two fine examples of the first contact theme as well as being two of the most entertaining novels I've read in recent times.

The setting of both books is the planet Zara thrustra, colony of Earth and dominated by the Chartered Zarathrustra Company (CZC) which owns the right to all resources of the planet as long as there are no signs of sapient native life. In such cases the resources' ownership reverts to the natives. Unfortunately for the CZC, Jack Holloway (occupation: prospector) surfaces with a native he has named "Little Fuzzy". Little Fuzzy and his kin who look somewhat like large marmosets, exhibit a high degree of adaptability, imagination and intelligence; i. e., sapient qualities. If they prove to be sapient, the CZC would lose its charter. The struggle to answer the question of the Fuzzies' sentience is the basis of the first novel, LITTLE FUZZY.

The CZC sends its own scientists to discredit Holloway and his zoologist friend by "proving" that the Fuzzies are nothing but well-trained animals. In the midst of their confrontation, both a Fuzzy and a company man are killed. Holloway, brought to trial for the murder of the CZC man, pleads that he acted in order to prevent the killing of an intelligent being. In that manner, the question of sapience of the Fuzzies is placed before the court. The ending of the novel is a happy one for Holloway and the Fuzzies, albeit a deus ex machina ending.

Approximately a week after the close of LITTLE FUZZY, FUZZY SAPIENS begins. This sequel is more concerned with the fate of the Fuzzies, after their sapience has been proven. With the loss of the CZC's charter; other groups, including a shady lawyer, attempt to fill the power vacuum on Zarathrustra. Others attempt to exploit the Fuzzies for criminal activities or "black market Fuzzy adoption rings."

Another problem facing the Fuzzies involves their rate of reproduction. Of every ten Fuzzy babies conceived, nine are either stillborn or have major birth defects and die soon after birth. Why this occurs is not known and it must be discovered lest the Fuzzies face extinction.

The Fuzzies are aided by Jack Holloway and friends, but they are also aided by another: Victor Grego, manager-in-chief of the CZC, who is also the chief human character of FUZZY SAPIENS. As in LITTLE FUZZY Grego does not hate the Fuzzies, and, in fact when one is discovered in his penthouse, Grego adopts the Fuzzy. This Fuzzy, as is revealed, helps to provide the answer to the Fuzzies' problems. The ending of this novel is also a hopeful one but still a bit weak.

Both novels have memorable characters among the humans but they are a bit flat. The true stars of both novels are the Fuzzies themselves. These very short, tailless humanoid with golden or silver fur behave much like well-mannered eight year olds. They exist to enjoy life and play, yet they hold no malevolence. They do manage to capture the interest of the reader.

Neither novel can be called heavy philosophy but they are entertaining adventures, filled with humor, action of both the physical and mental varieties, and elements of pathos, intrigue and scientific romance. They are well constructed and move at a smooth pace. Both LITTLE FUZZY and FUZZY SAPIENS deserve their accolades as classics of SF. They can provide the reader with a few hours of reading enjoyment and are a welcome pair of returnees to the world of science-fiction.

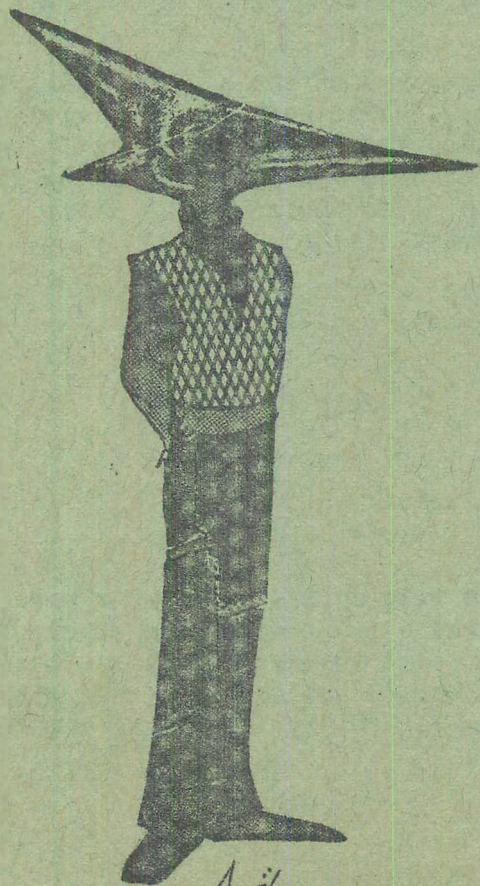
LITTLE FUZZY and FUZZY SAPIENS by H. Beam Piper

Ace \$1.50

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LADY OF THE BEES by Thomas Burnett Swann

reviewed by M. E. Tyrrell



LADY OF THE BEES is a novel that evolved from Swann's shorter work "Where is the Bird of Fire?" In a way it is also a sequel to GREEN PHOENIX (DAW, 1972). The heroine in both novels is Mellonia, a dryad. In BEES she is over 450 years old yet curiously untouched by age. She represents the virtues Swann considered important: gentleness, courage, love of beauty, consideration of others. It is not surprising, since Swann was fascinated by mythical times, that Mellonia should become involved with legendary heroes. GREEN PHOENIX dealt with Mellonia, Aeneas, and Ascanius. In this book, the dryad becomes an important part of the life of Romulus and Remus.

Swann makes a sharp contrast between the twin brothers. Romulus is the wolf, the warrior. He wishes to build a city that is a fortress. Remus is the woodpecker, the bird of fire. He dreams of a city that is a true community, with a place for the arts as well the practical necessities. Still both are heroes. Romulus isn't evil, merely rash and a bit too ambitious. Remus, for all his gentleness, can be adamant when it comes to questions of right and wrong. Swann has quite redeemed the Romulus and Remus legend for me. I

always liked the bit about the wolf suckling the twins (Swann includes her and names her Luperca) but thought things got rather ridiculous when one brother killed the other in an argument over a hill. Swann follows the legend faithfully, yet he has detailed it with such skill that everything falls into place beautifully.

There is more that I could say. I've not mentioned the charming faun Sylvan or the Valley of Blue Monkeys, but I leave it to you to read this book and discover them for yourself.

LADY OF THE BEES by Thomas Burnett Swann Ace May 76 \$1.50

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BRIDGE OF ASHES by Roger Zelazny

reviewed by Dennis Jarog

BRIDGE OF ASHES is the newest book by Roger Zelazny and in my opinion is one of his best. It is the saga of a man who has walked the earth since the dawn of man and who in the end hopes to save this hapless planet from the whims of its own idiocy.

In the first part of the book we have the story of someone who has no mind at all. Due to an imbalance caused by his telepathic sensitivity he (Dennis Guise) has been unable to develop a personality of his own. Later he manifests the personalities of others, first an environmental terrorist, then Leonardo DaVinci and others. These are marked by a mental development without as yet the emergence of a personality.

Later as he becomes a mental whole, the real story is revealed. The various personalities revealed in the novel are in fact memories of one man who has, at various times, emerged through the various eras of man. All this has a purpose. It seems that a superior? civilisation has seeded this earth in order to provide a proper habitat for themselves---and through man this is being developed. Throughout history they have intruded in order to guide this process. Guise is one of them who has rejected their plans and seeks to thwart them. The existence of man hangs in the balance.

Zelazny has created a very moving in his portrayal of the kid who seeks to find himself. In spite of the lack of personality, he is real and very moving. The other characterizations are effective as well. The themes, while not uncommon are used in an interesting and unusual way. Telepathy, a side issue in the story, is explored well and the main theme---that of the alien who rebels in favor of humanity---holds the story together and the interest of the reader as well.

In BRIDGE OF ASHES, Roger Zelazny has created a moving story of the search for a personality and the battle of one against many, but also that of a man against himself. It is recommended.

BRIDGE OF ASHES by Roger Zelazny Signet July 76 \$1.50

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INHERITORS OF EARTH by Gordon Eklund and Poul Anderson

a quick review by Lynne Holdom

Alex Raymond is a superior---one destined to rule Earth. But unknown to him and others of his kind, there is another mutant human type---a really superior one. Who will ultimately inherit Earth? As this brief plot summary suggests, the novel is cliched and, even worse, badly written. Both Eklund and Anderson can write much better than this and should stick to writing separately if this is what collaboration does to their work. Skip it.

P.O. Box 5

Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442

John W. Andrews
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Mr Wayne MacDonald: Certain points in your recent TB letter strike me as so curious, that possibly you intend some other intelligence by them. The NATURE of the material is pivotal to the question of submission to fanzines; the want of definition for this nature clouds the question. Whether long or short? Whether meticulously prepared or requiring editorial condensation, or proofreading? Graphic vs. written? Sercon or light news? Humorous?? Controversial? Dated or not needing speedy display?I would question how efficiently any, let alone amateurs, could "market" such a range. Also, I naturally extend the courtesy to Mr. MacDonald of supposing that market here means only a metaphor, a facons de parler. If you would, I should appreciate (probably others also) further elaboration of how you find it "easy to solve" the submission of material to zines.

Three practical bars to carbons. One doesn't want to retype carbons or submit carbons very often. One doesn't know if if material accepted, (how long) in all cases. One has to work to send new envelope again and again. (With one or two pressuring.) Over the years, I've had ups and downs. But not with all my material---only about three-fifths of it.

Mr. MacDonald appears to counsel dealing with pubs that are NOT new or sporadically published. . . ." Hmmm. Not only experience, but the more and more frequent fannish histories and reminiscences, have taught me about the prevailing nature of fanzines. Some do appear regularly; they do so as a phenomenon, not as a matter of course. I trust that the history of N3F has been faithfully recorded. Accordingly, the N3F zines have been very, very, regular---taken over the long haul. Other fanzines have been "regular" for four well-produced, alas, only four issues.

Although an obvious reply, I hope to be helpful on another point. Namely, outside of the business world, outside IRS, beyond crass considerations, in metaphysical activities, many people engage in communication for its own sake. That is, the very act provides the motive, the substance, the end in view. Humans act as nodes in a network. As long as the nodes can interact: that's an end in itself.

Undoubtedly, these messages, over time, weigh in the scales of Fate. But I don't think we need go into "Pen is mightier than the Sword" considerations. Arts and many hobbies can be thought of as "pure" communication. Sending and receiving for its own sake.

The word "improve" may be ambiguous for this discussion.

I'm puzzled. For the NFFF appears on the face of it to facilitate communication. Enhance it. Regularize. Smoothe it. Activate or stimulate dormant nodes. Provide reservoirs for future messages, etc.

Now mailing lists in themselves have curious defects. What I can't have (before the fact) would be a list of the twelve most vital names and addresses I shall write to before January. The secret structures under-

lying "lists" can only be fathomed gradually. I like to think the Club compensates for the inscrutability of bare lists. However, argument on this, and improvements may help much. I've got some huge "lists." I have a list of 25,000 members of a technical society. But I don't know if entries still apply, let alone who on list wants, can appreciate letters in that field.

If I'm not mistaken, you may want a Project to make a new list. Like painting the Golden Gate (Brooklyn) Bridge, such projects always are seasonal, never ending. Possibly the time has come for the NJF again but your remarks blur the issue.

Concerning Will Norris' two proposals, his Amendment appears straightforward; will someone please enlighten me if there is a catch; while the other ideas about changing to a tight, formal organization obviously demand debate.

The NJF cherishes its "informal" organization. Possibly one reason the NJF can be so many things to so many, and spread such a wide umbrella, lies in just the lack of "massive" efforts. Usually institutions that undertake the difficult, limit themselves along compensating lines: restrict membership, narrow goals, rigidify subgroups and so forth. The SFNA exists by grace of a few dedicated souls who sacrifice time above and beyond the call of duty. I don't know if we even want to call upon our officers (presumably next year) to make such efforts. With regard to new members, new projects, fine and dandy. Yet I hold that this one policy should continue: not expanding beyond the immediate, available, apparent manpower and commitments of time. If it grows gradually fine. Otherwise, no grand moves---not without at least Constitutional changes. There's a law of diminishing returns and also an iron law of compensation (Emerson).

##

Hank Heath
250 Dale Dr.
Cassadaga, NY 14718

In case Donn doesn't have the time to defend the ManuBu, I'd like to put in my 3½¢. Taral Wayne claims that marketing of material by a neo can be done better on his own than through the bureau. Goosh! Is that why we're losing more members than gaining? What an attitude. If a neo can't fend for himself, he* shouldn't be in our hallowed company? Thank whatever that I ran into Robinson and Brazier instead of a MacDonald in the first weeks of my fanhood.

It is just damn logical that Donn or any head of the bureau is gonna have more contacts than a copper-bright neo. I've been into fandom for almost a year now, and I haven't yet seen half of the zines I'm interested in. Let alone do I have the "competence" to guess what a certain zine wants after reading it once---or twice, let alone again not knowing the editor. The thing is that a neo isn't competent, so let's give him* half a break in breaking into the circle. Not just exclude him* 'cause he* don't know the passwords yet.

And who the hell determines when someone is no longer a neo, eh? Call me lazy but I like the label. Fanish attitude toward neos has allowed me a lot of friendly latitude for my foolishness. Thank Ghu, or I might have been very discouraged about the whole thing.

The only objection I have to the bureau is its inability to handle artwork, and I understand that Donn is currently making arrangements to allow for that. So, let's not do anything to a bureau that shows results at least.

*language caught up with me. I meant to allow for the feminine gender, but got carried away with my rhetoric.

David Shank
30 East Laurel St.
Lawrence, Mass
01842

Lately TIGHTBEAM has been a regular hornet's nest of controversy--some of it on the verge of lunacy; other times it has been thought provoking.

I have to say that TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD may not sound appealing in his ideas at times but we need more members like him. I suspect that John Robinson is a bit short-sighted in writing off MACDONALD'S thoughts. Controversy is the spice of life! Also JOHN ROBINSON has added spice..... and thank God KINGSTON GERALD KANE was writing on behalf of Star Trek. ST fandom, though a bit too juvenile, is a reflection of how we were thirty years ago. Shrug them off, and we come off as hypocrites to all things we stood for and still do!

Lately I've been reading and writing trying to catch up. SunCon's hotel will not be in tax jeopardy until November 1977 it seems. According to LOCUS, the earlier date was released by dissenting labor forces. Also SFExpo (Disappearance), the Hugu nominee for best hoax convention, did not appear because the New York Hilton cancelled the contract with Science-Fiction Services since they had had experience with Star Trek conventions, they didn't want ten-thousand people converging on them and around the hotel. It's too bad. SFServices is looking into the New York Coliseum which is a better site since attendees will have a choice of accommodations from a Holiday Inn to the New York Sheraton. ((My major complaint here is that attendees were not notified until the last minute of the Con's cancellation so had already arranged for time off, transportation etc. You generally don't get a full refund unless you cancell such quite a bit ahead. I heard that a couple of authors got to NYC before finding out about the cancellation. There is no excuse for this and SFServices will find it harder to get speakers and attendees next time around.))

MidAmeriCon looks like it will be the most successful convention of the others. It has to be because the hotels are relatively small. The Phoenix people will have two hotels and a convention center at their disposal. Seacon 79 will have a set up similar to Heicon 70, and the two bids for 1980---Boston and Baltimore, plan to use large auditoriums. Baltimore is building a convention hall presently and from what STEVE MILLER tells me, the mayor of the city is backing the convention. Boston will have their convention (if elected) at the same hotel they hold Boskone....with an addition. The Hynes Civic Auditorium will be annexed to the hotel as part of the convention facilities. The hotel (Sheraton-Boston) has added some new rooms and facilities.

I would like to retract the advertisement I made for room mates at SunCon. I won't be attending for health reasons. I have to limit my convention travel to a 500 mile radius of Boston.

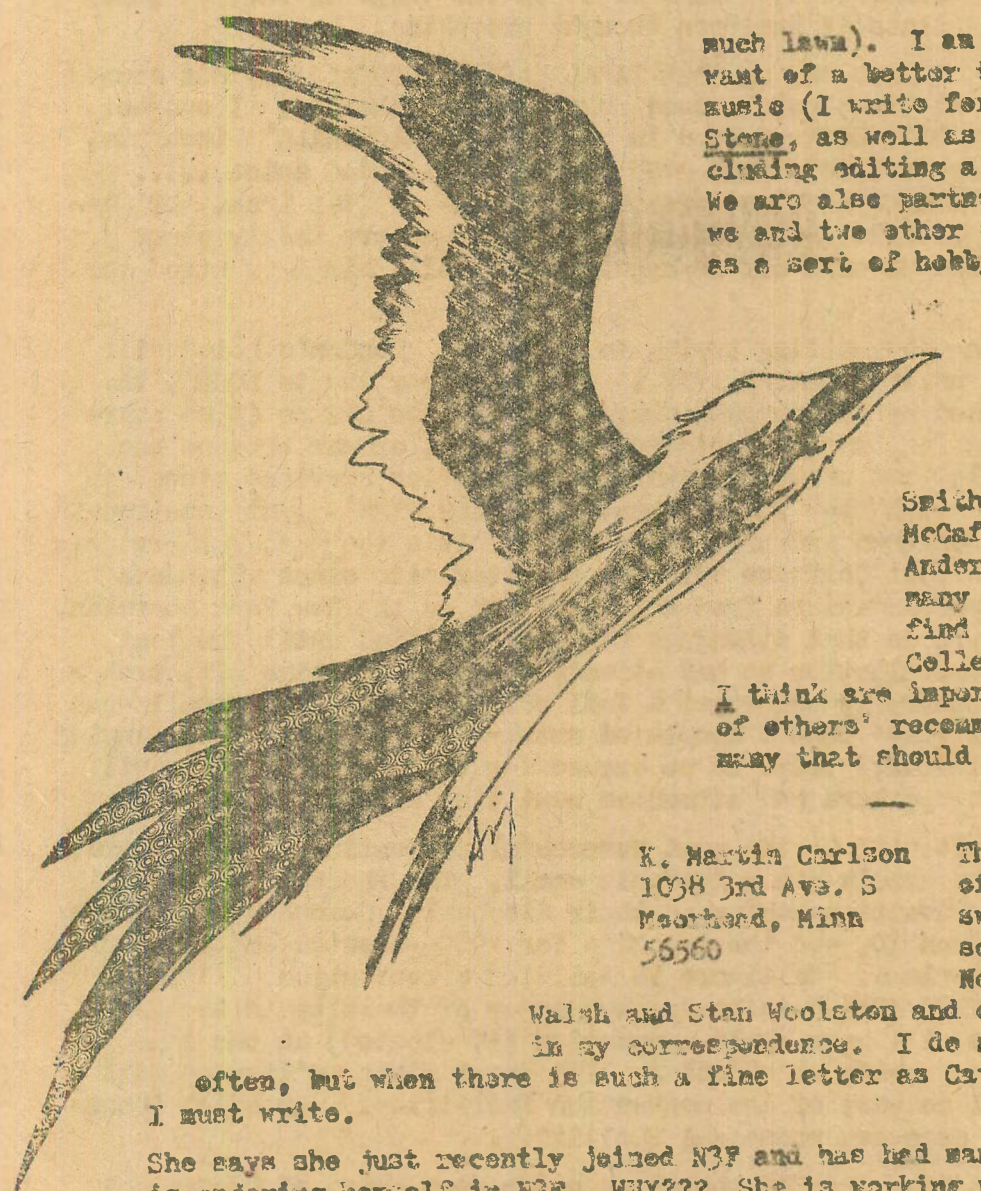
Anyone who would like to accompany me at Boskone 14 (say there Jim Lang and Dennis Jarog), please notify me before December 25, 1976.

If anyone wants to accompany me to Balticon 11 (Which I'm going to try to attend) notify me before March 1, 1977. If you want to ride to a con with me (I take Amtrack), meet me at South Station in Boston at least a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour before the train departure. This is how I'll attend Balticon 11.

Brian Thurogood
Wilma Road, Ostend
Waiheke Islands,
Hauraki Gulf
New Zealand

Thanks for your letter. Deb and I have just returned from a trip to the great BiCentennial Celebrator and so things have been rather hectic. We returned to about 4 cubic yards of mail and are still working thru it.

We live rather well on our island hideaway, living in a very fine house on 1 acre of land (huge vegetable garden, about 60 assorted fruit and nut trees, too



much lawn). I am a freelance journalist (for want of a better term), mainly writing on music (I write for the NZ equivalent of Rolling Stone, as well as a couple of other mags—including editing a record club monthly magazine. We are also partners in a book/craft shop that we and two other couples started on the island as a sort of hobby. And just recently we have been putting out NOUMENON the NZ SF Magazine.

I definitely tend towards sociological/philosophical/psychological stories the —DUNE; LeGuin; Delany; C

Smith; Sturgeon.....but also liked McCaffrey's "Dragonriders", Poul Anderson, Lloyd Biggle Jr., and many more. In NOUMENON 3 you'll find "Notes Towards A Basic SF Collection" wherein I list books

I think are important though I've taken notice of others' recommendations and there are sure many that should (or shouldn't) be included.

K. Martin Carlson
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Minnetonka, Minn
55560

Thanks for a very fine issue of TIGHTBEAM! It was a pleasure to read it. There were some nice letters from Will Morris, David Shank, Tom

Walsh and Stan Woolsten and others who I have not met in my correspondence. I do not write to TIGHTBEAM very

often, but when there is such a fine letter as Cathy McGuire's to respond to, I must write.

She says she just recently joined N3F and has had many letters from members. She is enjoying herself in N3F. WHY??? She is working with all the others who enjoy N3F. That is the secret, get involved in work for N3F and you will be busier than you think.

N3F is now 35 years old. Why have the fans kept on joining our club? It could have died years ago, IF it hadn't been for the true fans who were getting something out of it.

I joined in 1945—July, I think, and have been a member ever since. Have made many, many, many friends in N3F and fandom. Just to let you know how involved in N3F work I have been: I have been President, Sec'y-Treasurer, Director, and many projects worker in my time.

So don't be too critical of N3F; it is filling a void in many a fan's life, or the fan would not stay very long.

True, many fans leave N3F for other fields, BUT if you are a member of a lodge, club or any organization, many of their members come and go also. Even a church group will lose members.

Basically: Get involved in some phase of N3F and even start a project to be manager of. Write to our President and he will find work for you.

Kingston Gerald Kane
4307 Tranquility Drive
Highland Beach, Fla.
33431

My name is Kingston Kane and I'm running for president this year. So much for the political overtures.

I wish to congratulate Lynne Holdom on an excellent issue of TIGHTBEAM. My compliments. ((For that I won't mangle your stencils. Thanks.))

I am, as you know, seeking high office this year. I recently threw my hat into the ring in the presidential race and said to myself, "Now who will be my running mate?" Well imagine my surprise and shock when I found out that the N3F has no office of Vice President. Horrors! I mean every organization in the world has a Vice President but us.

This is a sad state of affairs. It must be rectified! and it shall be!

Consider: what would happen if the President of the N3F fell seriously ill or was incapacitated or dropped dead? Let me quote from the constitution: "If, for any reason, the office of president becomes vacant, the Directorate appoints a president to complete the unexpired term." Unquote. Gads, I can see it now; five Directors stumbling frantically around looking for someone, anyone to be president. Do you see my point? If we had a vice president, we wouldn't have this problem because the vice president would already be there and would simply step into the president's shoes and take over.

An organization this size can run effectively with one or two Directors out of commission---but it would be disastrous to be without a president.

What say you? Do you think we need a vice president? Of course we do; a vice president is essential. He can also lighten the president's load considerably. Think about it.

((Okay, Lynne here. You make some good points; the problem of succession is a thorny one. But just what would a vice president do besides hope that the president fell out of commission? It might be worthwhile to have the vice president act as chairman of the Directorate or have the chairman of the Directorate automatically assume the presidency in case of illness etc. What does the membership think?))

% % % % % % % %

Donald Lundry
18 Karen Drive,
Cherry Hill, NJ
08003

From the looks of the latest TIGHTBEAM, you're going to be doing an outstanding service to all the members in providing a regular means of communication. There's a good mix of letters, articles and reviews.

In particular, I liked the review by Dennis Jarog of THE FOREVER WAR. When I read it, I had an uneasy feeling towards the whole thing and he seems to have pinned down for me exactly what bothered me about the book---the lack of a hero who makes things happen. With a good strong leader (or hero) events should react to the actions of the hero; a weak leader will be reacting to events and spend his time continually running around putting out fires. In THE FOREVER WAR, there is an all too passive acceptance of fate. I suspect it was deliberately written that way to show that the average combat soldier has little direct say in how his life is directed. But it doesn't make for a very interesting hero.

The letter by David Shank was laughable in its ignorance. In it he claims that the mammoth shows like MIDAMERICON will be a thing of the past. Maybe, maybe not. But his statement about SUNCON and the Hotel Fountainebleau shows a willingness to rush into print without checking his facts. (A problem I've noticed all too much lately, when worldcons are discussed.) The Fountainebleau will not be sold for back taxes within four months or anything even remotely like

that. What has happened was that the hotel was late paying its taxes and the politicians seized on this as a means for excusing their financial woes. Since the Fountainbleau is the single biggest taxpayer in the area (and was late in paying) they got singled out and the story hit the wire services. The taxes have since been paid, but it doesn't make as interesting a story, so there has been nothing on the wire services.

Of course the hilarious part about Shank's shooting from the hip is the suggestion that the Eden Rec be the main hotel and the Doral be the overflow. He is obviously unaware of the facilities and rooms available in the Eden Rec. They are simply not big enough for the big Worldcon events like the masquerade and banquet. And there are only about 3 to 400 rooms in the Eden Rec. Not to mention that the Doral (his choice of an overflow hotel) is very definitely not within walking distance of the Eden Rec. So what will happen---David Shank?

Suggestions for the worldcon are always welcome, but at least have the courtesy to send them to the people responsible for the worldcon and get your facts checked before rushing into print.

% % % % % % % % %

William Goodson
Jalan 2/12, No 11
Shah Alam, Selangor,
Malaysia

While I do enjoy some Burroughs imitators---especially Edward P. Bradbury, I welcomed your clearly expressed and logically formed denunciation of John Nerman. I have read the Gor books and agree that he makes no sense when it comes to male-female relationships. Even,

in fact especially, in a conventional, sexist, Islamic-orientated society like the one I am now living in, the idea of women enjoying sex of any kind, with or without masochism, is considered strange. Yet in Gor it is assumed women enjoy a little loving after a little whipping. No primitive could believe that.

The sad thing is that I don't believe Nerman, and I have heard rumors he is Michael Crichton of THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN, is really sick. I think he is a skillful writer of the hack variety, having the ability to gauge the reactions he produces in his readers but having no philosophy or viewpoint he wishes to impress on them. His third book THE PRIEST KINGS OF GOR did a

fair job of creating an alien insect-based culture. Still there is no reason to assume that insect evolved intelligence would still be insects any more than man is still an ape. I wouldn't give him much thought except he is on sale here in Malaysia and the good stuff isn't.

((John Nerman is not Michael Crichton. His real name is John Lange and he is a professor of philosophy in a NY college. Maybe he's studied too much Nietzsche and Schopenhauer.))

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Ritchie Dean
Sand Gap,
Kentucky 40481

This latest issue of TIGHTBEAM was one of the very best I've seen during my N3F membership. Keep it up. Keep it up! I got it the 13th but it could easily have arrived earlier. I had been away from home for a couple of weeks and it was in the box when I got back. I liked the genzine like content and am pleased that you are actively soliciting material. Sign of a good editor.

If it is not too inconvenient, do you think you could mention that I am now head of the Welcommittee and any interested persons who would like to welcome new Neffers should write to me directly? I need all the help I can get and shouldn't have to tell you what an effect a few personal welcome letters have on a new member of the

N3F



I plan to send more to members of the Welcommittee than new member info. Hopefully the Welcommittee will have a fanzine something like the old BULLZINE. Members will probably be subjected to my perzine if nothing else.

In addition, I am presently negotiating to have the new member info sent more often---like weekly or biweekly. I have my own devious reasons for this, e.g. if a Welcommittee member is not hit with too many names at once, he is more apt to write to ALL the members of the list. But I think that the faster we can get the info around, the more everyone will be benefitted.

Sand Gap is listed as having a population of 200 but it is a lie---they are counting about 100 coffins to get that number. Political graft is very much alive here; they up the population count so that more "votes" can be cast. I don't live in Sand Gap, anyway, just pick up the mail there. I live too deep in the wilds for them to deliver mail to my house so I drive the seven miles to the post office every day. The nearest real center of civilization, Richmond is 31 miles from my front door---about due north. I was certain that this part of the country was a fanish desert, but checking the N3F roster, I see we have another Kentucky member in Richmond.

#

Winston F. Dawson
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48015

Your first TIGHTBEAM is excellent. The cover is well above average. I found the book review section especially interesting. I don't think I'd like

THE HERITAGE OF HASTUR despite your recommendation. Maybe you wrote too good a review. On the other hand I do have a copy of WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG and I shall move it up a little on my stack of "to be read"s. I am a fairly fast reader but I don't read four in one morning. I don't imagine you included any Wheatley books when you read four. ((No. I read four books of the 160-90 page pure adventure sort such as THE DREAMING EARTH and SWORDS OF LANKHEMAR.))

Regarding Wheatley (one of my favorites), add two more stories to your SF list; THE MAN WHO MISSED THE WAR and UNCHARTED SEAS. ((I had mentioned that Wheatley had written three SF novels that I knew of THEY FOUND ATLANTIS, STAR OF ILL OMEN, and BLACK AUGUST.)) UNCHARTED SEAS may be more a "lost race" but it is definately fantastic fiction and I could argue that his "black magic" stories fall in this category especially STRANGE CONFLICT. I also like his regular fiction such as the "Roger Brooke" series and especially the "Gregory Sallust" WW2 series. ((I wasn't aware that Wheatley's books were generally available here. All mine are British editions. Also I have read THE MAN WHO MISSED THE WAR; it simply slipped my mind.))

#

Phil Kohn
P. O. Box 12,
Benjamin 30500
Israel

I was born in Vienna, Austria in 1922 and was motivated to leave there one half a year after the Anschluss. My English, such as it is, is a good deal better than my Hebrew. Some SF has been translated and some people somewhere may be fans but I can't really tell you much along that line much as I am tempted to invent an active fandom and invogle some here.

Hebrew ought to be a warning to all others trying the idiotic stunt of reviving a dead or primitive language. Outwardly it is working. Newspapers, books, theatre. Unfortunately a modern nation lives on textbooks and trade periodicals which had better be up to date. I doubt if anyone except the English and Russian speaking areas



...ahhh...

'mechanic' has to be able to read his ENGLISH instruction books.

If we had chosen English, every child would be about two years ahead in education or training and we would be part of a world-wide system. If we had chosen Arabic, we might be leaders, at least culturally, of the Arab world, our papers circulated etc. Also we wouldn't have the dangerous social split between European and Afro-Asian since the latter's cultural handicap would be outweighed by their language advantage. If that's how Jews do, I am not optimistic about Gaelic and the languages of various African tribes.

You wanted to know about Israeli fandom. Well, Lt. General Haim Laskov, former chief of staff (the rank says that) is an Analog reader. Told me so in '71 when I tried through him to pass a warning about the coming fuel crisis. I had read a JWC editorial and added some ideas of my own about the whys---and it really took no genius to perceive that an Arab monopoly of scarce oil might complicate things for Israel. I might have been talking to a wall. ((My dad worked for an oil company and he was always saying that a lack of R&D plus a dependance on foreign oil, would get us into big trouble but the US gov't made it much cheaper to companies to develop foreign oil sources. This was in 1963 or so))

I once found some fen in a Negev border Kibbutz---but that was in the 50's. Before that in '51, I found myself without access to ASTOUNDING so I took the ones I had to a bookstore and let him lend them out on condition that with every mag he would pass on one of my questionnaires. Netted an interesting family: Mother, a bloated diabetic with 8 or 9 languages who (or husband) had been something in the Spanish Loyalist Government; Son Maxim Gilan is now an ultra peacenik sitting in Paris and editing something; Daughter, Yvette, also with about 9 languages, got to hate me because I was a bit slow responding but that was later. Meanwhile Dianetics arrived and with it an American, Bernie Ross, and we all started mutual dianetic treatment. Mother got much better and (as was to be expected) more poisonous. We all discovered past lives for ourselves. Anyone will who does a few people's early lives in all seriousness by dianetics or (police forbid) hypnotic methods. Unfortunately these past lives do not seem to be genuine or we ought to be flooded with discoveries.....But its all so old and not very relevant or anything.

I am still looking for an Objectivist discussion partner. I say Ayn Rand is the medicine we need against a flood of unreason---but she is only 60% right, 20% didactic exaggeration and 20% vicious drivel. My need for such a discussion---aggressive as is usual with me, comes from the fact that I more often have to defend her views---like a Big Bang astronomer who has to defend Hoyle and the steady state when confronted with the savage Velikovskian! who wants to befriend him because the big bang is more Biblical. Yet Ayn Rand's sins are grievous indeed---like deriving human nature from the dictionary rather than from research and evolution.

I am also looking for any traces of Frieda A. Murray about 27. Last heard of around 1971 as a Negro student in Chicago and a Medieval fan. Her last known address was 5821 S. University, Chicago, IL 60631. Any Neffer know of her? ((Maybe the SCA might know of her; I sure don't))

##

Paul Meyer
704 E. Raynor Ave.
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Hi! How ya doin? TIGHTBEAM was great last issue. I was really amazed at the change. Keep up the good work.

I'm glad I was finally able to get my membership dues paid up again. I really missed the two zines. I joined the N3F about two years ago (I think) because of the people I met in the WorldCon rooms and I wanted to get a little more active this year. However a few things came up which are sort of hindering me. The greatest is my new job. (I'm manager of ~~a~~ ~~that~~ an adult bookstore

which means between 56 and 84 hours a week.) Between that, my bookstore, (Nebulus Books), our convention (Conebulus), my newsletter THE CHIEF PROCURER SPEAKS, and the bothersome chores of having to eat and sleep, I haven't had much time for anything. I'll be lucky if I'm able to attend the last three conventions in my area that I've been planning for. (PgHlange 8, Anonycon 2, Alpha Draconis)

But back to the N3F, it was my introduction as a neo which caused me to join. I think it's great for neos (somewhat confusing maybe) But the N3F should not revolve totally around the neos. It should have equal interest and activities for the truefan. Because a truefan is a neo's best friend when it comes to aiding the ecstasy and cushioning the confusion and agonies of a first convention. Show me a neo who enjoyed his first convention because of the people he met and I'll show you a good potential truefan.

((I got Paul's address wrong above. The street address is 141 Avondale Pl.--- otherwise it's correct.))

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Ben Indick
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Your introductory editorial comments were nice but it wouldn't have hurt to identify yourself would it? ((No) A rasthead page can be useful. By the way I do regret forgetting to renew my sub; nobody told me nuttin' and

I even asked John Robinson to find out for me. ((Janie Lamb is the person to contact to find out about membership status.))

Anyway, damn it, Buck has no "d" in his name. It always was, is and will be Buck Rogers!

That sly devil Gil Gaier is pushing his old favorite DHALGREN again, I see! Won't work! The book is a dead, deflatable dud. I wish I could share my RAPS OE's enthusiasm for the Kate Wilhelm book. I found the first section most moving with the human encounter and the discovery of love. Subsequently the book became a trite belaboring of SF themes; clones, etc., the glory of being a human instead of a mere clone etc.

It is interesting to me that, although I receive a great many fanzines and do much corresponding with fen, most of the names I see in TIGHTBEAM (past issues too) are new to me. Is N3F a place where some fen are content to do such fanac as they do, or is it an intro, a watering place for neos perhaps? Either is okay and I'm certain I'll be seeing the younger fen elsewhere soon.

Again my CE, Cathy is here with a letter. I should caution her that N3F has been in the process of burial for at least twenty or thirty years and still persists. I don't "get" anything out of it other than a sense of supporting a worthwhile group and I suppose others are in it for the same reason.

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Eric Jamborsky
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Harriman, Tn 37748

I will be moving in August or September, (no change of address though), so the next issue of N3F COLLECTOR will probably be delayed. (#4) I may also be delayed in answering correspondence. The N3F COLLECTOR #3 is now

out featuring part one of the Index to UNKNOWN and UNKNOWN WORLDS. Four issues for \$1.00; one issue 50¢.

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Allan Chen
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I think I'd like to reply to Anji Valenza's article, TECHNOLOGY IN SF: A LAMENT. While she makes some very sensible and (I think) true points about what is happening in the genre, I have to disagree with some of her basic premises.

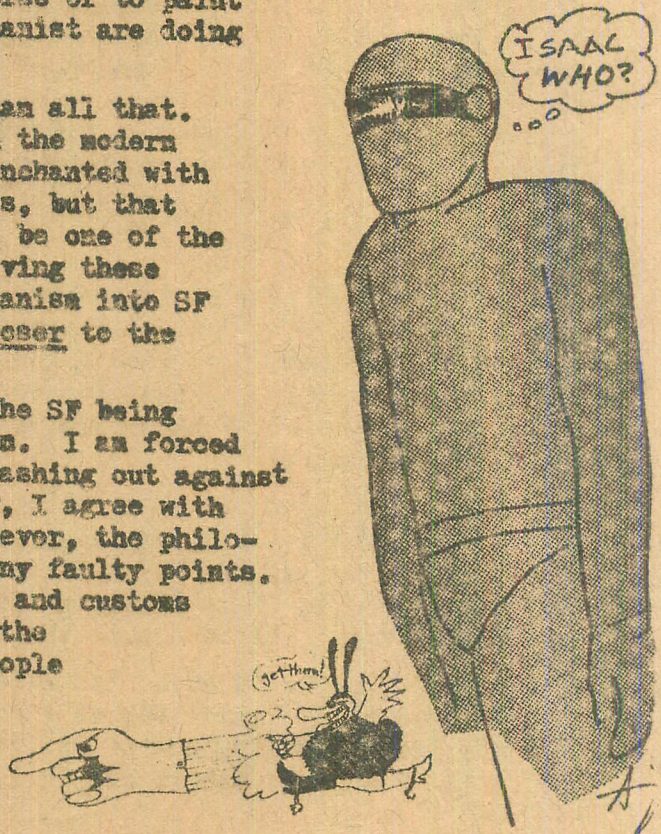
Like Anji, I prefer the technological stories too. But science and humanism are not opposed, at least in an abstract sense "since time immemorial". Joshua Lederberg, the Nobel prize winning biologist, as well as others like Jacob Bronowski, has stated that "in order to be a scientist, one must be a humanist, and in order to be a humanist, one must be a scientist." Scientists by the very nature of their work, are human and deal with human problems just as much as a poet or an artist would. This isn't a tenuous connection either, as in the idea that "since scientists seek to understand the nature of the universe in the final analysis, just as a poet or an artist does when he sits down to write verse or to paint a picture, both the scientist and the humanist are doing essentially the same thing."

The connection is far more substantial than all that. Science is becoming far more important in the modern world. True, the public is becoming disenchanted with science as a means of solving its problems, but that doesn't change the fact that science will be one of the few fields that has the capability of solving these problems. By injecting an element of humanism into SF today, SF writers are bringing science closer to the lay public.

Unfortunately, it is true that a lot of the SF being written is definitely anti-science fiction. I am forced to agree that SF is becoming a tool for lashing out against science. On matters of practical reality, I agree with the points expressed in the article. However, the philosophy behind the article seems to have many faulty points. I believe, for example, that human values and customs will not really change radically despite the spaceships and time travel apparatus. People still love each other in the same way, they still kill for the same basic reasons, and all the elements that make us human, from greed to passion will forever be with us, unless of course, we mutate into another form. That is another story entirely.....

The point is that SF is not all that bad today. Despite all of the anti-science sentiment, SF is performing an important practical function in presenting stories that are human as well as scientific. Even the anti-science fiction could be performing a useful function. After all there are two sides to every story.

((What I object to is that there is so little technological SF being written at all and what is written is anti rather than pro science. I also like fantasy and the old Planets type stories but that's all there seems to be. Yet Clarke and Niven works sell very well. Is it because they alone write pro-science tech. fiction?



T. L. Bohman
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Being relatively new to fandom and very new to the N3F I am uniquely qualified to offer my opinion on a topic of current discussion: the place of the N3F in fandom. My opinion is entirely untainted by knowledge or experience.

It seems to me that any organization exists primarily to serve its members in whatever their various aims might be. I joined the National Fantasy Fan Federation simply because I understood that it would be enjoyable. Fan writing and editing, correspondence, all the usual fanish activities are here, and anyone, even someone as new as I am, can enjoy them. The N3F is precisely the activities it encourages; it is an expression of its members' interests. What I am so ineptly trying to say is that the N3F is a service organization to fandom at large only to the extent that its members want to do something special for fandom. The N3F should assist in the Fan Awards not because it "ought to do something for fandom" but only if there is a need for that assistance and a large number of the membership who want to help. Neffer Books and special publications at cons are good projects, I think. Any project with which the N3F could help its members would be good, but the main thrust should come from the members. Much of the "Why doesn't the N3F do something for fandom" agonizing seems futile and irrelevant. I have little sympathy for those who wish only to make the N3F more visible. If a project emerges which deserves support, let's hear of it. I would even be willing to see a substantial part of my dues support a worthy project, though a referendum should be held to ratify a general assessment.

So let's hear from the members---officers and directors included, of course. Don't look at me, I'm just a neo without knowledge or experience.

Perhaps this is the time to thank the Welcommittee members for the cards and letters. They were gratifying and informative. I also received a friendly postcard from Allan Chen inviting me to a round robin. It was a great idea on his part. As a new member, I have at most a general understanding of the N3F and its activities. Why doesn't every bureau have a member who will serve as an unofficial member of the Welcommittee? Forgive me if this is standard procedure, because I got very informative notes from several people, but Allan's was the first one specifically inviting my participation in an activity. Thanks, Allan.

TNFF was again full of good things, with Michael Smith's book reviews near the top of my list.

Steve Miller's "Stranger Beast" was an interesting column and I hope he'll find time to continue it. Donn Brazier's Manuscript Bureau report suggests that poetry is not much in demand in the fan press, either. I wonder why?

And, oh yes, in the old days of my schoolhood, English teachers would cringe at your use of "disinterested." I don't want to sound old-fashioned or pedantic but, well.....okay, Steve?

Joanne Burger's note on T-K Graphics reminded me of my own experiences with them. They apparently list books in their catalog which have not been in stock for months. They last catalog they sent me listed books I've had on order from them since last December. Really! Linda Bushyager has been plugging F&SF Book Company (P.O. Box 415, Staten Island, NY 10302), and Purple Unicorn (4532 London Road, Duluth, MN 55804) has been advertized in the prozines. Has anyone had experience with them? ((Okay, Lynne here; I've had experience with Purple Unicorn Books and generally they do a good job. If they are out of stock, they send you a credit slip rather than back order. The one real problem I did have with them was caused by the PO. However, they send their catalogue loose leaf style and I'm always misplacing parts of it. What I don't understand about T-K Graphics is that the bookstore where I work often gets books I've ordered long before I get them from T-k Graphics.))

The only sour note in the August TNFF at all was that DISMAL excuse for a cover. ((Oh, I don't know.))

TIGHTBEAM was luckier, at least in terms of art. On the whole, the issue was interesting and well-balanced. My compliments to the editor.

Gil's review of DHALGREN is a good one, as far as I can tell without having read the novel, but one which has already appeared several places. I have nothing against reprinting good articles, quite the contrary, but I dislike reading reprints which are not labeled as such. ((Yes, I should have said "reprinted from" but didn't. I meant to but, well.....)).

Anji Valenza and Dennis Jarog make good points for the vitality that a lot of modern SF seems to have lost. I agree with much of this---I grew up on the old SF and learned to love it. I loved a lot of it that was pretty dismal, too, and I've learned to understand some new messages and ideas that SF is trying hard to formulate. SF has lost something in the last few decades, but it has gained new insights too. This is the point: SF has changed, is changing. If it doesn't it goes stale.

Actually, SF hasn't changed that much. The bulk of it is still the action-adventure, technological gimmick "SF trappings" stuff that Anji dislikes. Only the best has changed.

"Why is it necessary to make SF into art?" Well, it's not. Look at 95% of the stuff on the paperback racks. ((I have to all too often as I work in a bookstore. And if a few writers are overly conscious of their prose style, or want to experiment with unusual narrative forms, or wish to portray modes of consciousness beyond what is common in SF, fine. Why make such a big deal about it? The New Wave has receded, leaving a different, and often better, fiction, one which is realistically sensitive to human emotions and aspirations. If this is humanism let us make the most of it.

It's very easy to contrast the best of the old SF with the excesses of the new. I agree that much SF is now morbidly introspective. I, too, love a good technological puzzle story. But any theme, well-handled, can generate a powerful and effective story. I do not believe in defining a "normal, natural state" of SF and in fighting off "insidious plots" on that neat tidy definition. The strength of SF lies in its limitless range of speculation; right now we are most aware of one form of expression of the possibilities of SF. I think that expression will change and evolve---as it always has. I stretch to see what new horizons will be revealed.

** ** *

Rome Scherer
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Congratulations on your first issue of TIGHTBEAM! It was very enjoyable. You rounded up quite a collection of ideas and opinions. It was good to see a favorable review of DHALGREN in a fanzine. Especially one as nicely thought out and presented as Gil Gaier's. On the whole I agree with his analysis, though I do have certain differences with the emphases he places on some things. I don't think Delany's ultimate preoccupation is with sex", for example. Or the minimal mention of Delany's self-indulgence. There is a LOT of self-indulgence and some cheap literary trickery, especially in the very beginning, which turns a lot of people off who might have gone on if they had been prewarned.

I think the placement of the DHALGREN review next to the "Buck Rogers etc." article makes for some interesting crossplay. Would Dennis consider the Kid a hero? He acts more than he reacts. He gains knowledge of, and a certain control over, the environment he is in. He is looked up to by many of the characters. And yet, at the end, he must leave Bellona.

I also found Anji Valenza's article on technology interesting. Here though, there are some things I disagree with. I do agree that there are fewer technologically orientated SF books than there were. However, I don't think the picture is nearly as bleak as she pictured it quantity-wise. And quality-wise, I think contemporary SF far superior to the old stuff. Just off the spur of the moment, I can think of IMPERIAL EARTH by Clarke, TRITON by Delany (compare his artificial gravity explanation to anything in the forties), THE GODWHALE by Bass, the KNOWN SPACE series by Niven, anything by Bova and so on. And of course ANALOG every month.

It seems to me that the N3F is quite defensive in its role in fandom. This I just don't understand. I joined the N3F several months ago and was very pleased, as I have already told many of you, with my reception. I felt a genuine interest by the members to make me feel welcome and to help me find a niche in fandom. This is in strong contrast to the strong aura of condescension that emanated from many (not all) long time fen I ran into at the several cons I attended.

I'm not saying that the N3F is perfect and needn't change. Anything can improve. I've heard several ideas that sound good and there are probably a lot more circulating around. Maybe an issue of TIGHTBEAM could be devoted to suggestions for possible improvements. We need input from as many people as possible. Decisions are made best when all the possibilities are understood.

((I am always interested in hearing ideas (and grotches) from the members especially as I am running for the Directorate and, if elected, would be in a position to forward any suggestions. So write. Get in your 5¢ worth.))

* * * * *

Rich Hubbard
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Alton, Ill 62002

I am a newcomer to fandom in general as well as to the N3F, and fandom is rather intriguing from what I've seen of it at MAC. (I haven't tired of telling about the Mid AmeriCon though my friends are tired of hearing about it.)

I am interested in photography; I own a Mamiya-Secor 1000 DTL Camera and a Revere Stereo 3 Camera (takes 3D pictures). I would like to correspond with other fans, and would enjoy writing critiques and reviews of books and movies. Another interest is stage magic and legerdemain so I would like to hear from any fan group related to this. I'll add that I'm something of a dilettante in astronomy.

MAC was my first con and I didn't know quite what to expect---except to be lonely since I was an absolute stranger. Luckily I wound up in the N3F room. It sounds hokey but I am impressed by the friendliness of the people I met there. I am looking forward to participation in the N3F.

((John Robinson, the N3F president, has remarked several times that his first Con was such a traumatic experience (he didn't know anyone) that he didn't go to another for several years until he had met fen by mail so it is easy to feel lost. I'm just glad you found a friendly spot.))

* * * * *

Rob Blenheim
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19055

I really enjoyed the July issue of TIGHTBEAM you sent me. Of course (as you probably could guess) the book review section interested me the most. You know what I think of DHALGREEN (not too much) and I also read INFERNO and THE FOREVER WAR. I liked both, but I didn't think the former

was all that well-written. The "Hero" section of the latter was the only section that pleased me 100%, but I still liked the complete book. Jarog's review of THE FOREVER WAR was well written with many good points. I wasn't as impressed with Tyrrell's INFERNO review, but it was readable and entertaining and still good. Your review on THE HERITAGE OF HASTUR (which you know I didn't read) was probably the best written of all the reviews and made me want to read the book. I wish I could comment more on it, but it pleased me a lot. You make it seem a crime that it wasn't.

up for the Hugos. ((You got my message loud and clear)) Is it the best SF novel you've read all year? ((Yes))

"Buck Rodgers, Where are You When We Need You?" was a fine article, but it seemed to try to force an already-decided-upon- theme of "no heroes" too much and I really don't think it's a valid way to review the books. ((It wasn't meant to be a review and I included other reviews of two the the Hugo nominees. I would have included separate reviews of all of them but couldn't get the reviews.)) I would have appreciated a more over-all artistic study of the books, but it was still an enjoyable article. The letter column was also interesting but sometimes slightly esoteric as I'm not a member of N3F and haven't seen any past issues of TIGHTBEAM. ((But you are planning to join and about half the members of the N3F haven't seen an issue of TIGHTBEAM before.))

As for the problems with the inking, yes I do hope it's improved next issue for some parts are very hard to read.

Hey, please let me know more about your column for Dick Geis. Believe it or not, I do not have a single issue of his SFR, but I've seen it when I was in Florida last. I'll try to begin getting his zine. (By new SF authors' books, do you mean by new writers? If so that'll be interesting because I am interested in young writers coming up in this genre.)

((Yes the column which will start in February is about novels by new, but not necessarily young, SF writers. After all LeGuin's first novel was half an Ace double. Mostly I am looking for writers that show promise. I have found very few good books but lots with only minor flaws. Read BROTHERS OF EARTH by C.J. Cherryh))
((That's SF Review, PO Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211. \$4.00 for one year. \$7 for

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Jackson B. Lackey
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Richmond, KY 40475

I sympathize with your difficulty. I've been editing a local newsletter for Mensa for a couple of years and I wind up writing too much of it myself.

I won't give you a list of my favorite novels. I'm not sure that there are reasonable grounds for such selections. For example, if I were asked for an Asimov novel I would probably say "The Mule". When I try to decide why this rather than another the best answer is that the first copy of ASTOUNDING I bought was the one in which this serial began. This may be a good personal reason but would it help anyone else

Recently I have been doing some introspecting. It started when I was thinking of writing a short story. One night, without any warning, my subconscious popped up with a complete short story about a man marooned on an asteroid. But when it also illustrated it in addition, I got suspicious. Right, it was from one of the first ASTOUNDINGS I'd bought. The only parts left out were the title and author.

I've noticed other examples of this retention of stories from this period. Less pleasant was the realization that some permanent additions to my personal store of images were some from the Shaver Mystery. Not just the sexual and sadistic either; it's worse traces were some of the pseudo-sophistication and mystery-mongering. I got over it of course but RAP has much to answer for. Well maybe I should give some credit; it immunized against dianetics and such like.

The whole period of my life was, it seems now, one in which I was intoxicated with SF. I recall grabbing each magazine as it appeared on the newsstands. I listed all the stories in a notebook and checked them off when I finished them. Everything was read, editorials, letters, stories, serials..... And some of it, I see now, was pretty puny stuff (I know, nothing is ever thrown away at our house and I've recently reread some). But I enjoyed it and a lot has stuck with me.

As for fantasy, I don't recall that I enjoyed it at so early an age. Fairy tales weren't so prominent. Science-Fiction was probably the path that led me to fantasy.

Trying to write something about myself may not produce much else but it has led me to rethink the whole business of what reading has been and should be for me.