

CUSFu Sing



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SF SUBVENTION DOWN BY 30%

News and more news

The Student Polity of Columbia College has decided to cut our subvention by 30% next year. This money represents how much we can lose on the various events and activities that the Society runs during the coming year. This year our subvention was \$250, next year it will be \$175. The year previous it had been \$330. This means we have gone down about 47% in the last two years, the two years that we have shown the greatest amount of activity.

The money granted goes to certain activities that the Society conducts. \$50 is for maintenance and upkeep of the library, \$50 for subscriptions to magazines, and \$25 goes to advertising the library. The other fifty dollars goes to office and mimeo expenses. Not funded for the year were the buying of new books to keep the library current, the magazine SOL III, and the newsletter CUSFuSSing, or shelving for the library.

This of course puts us in a bind. We do have a surplus at this time of about \$60 which will be put toward next year's expenses. Our subscriptions will not run out since we have money from Mr. Leonard to continue them for another three years. Our problems include the fact we have run out of room for the books. This will hopefully be less of a problem since the milk strike is over and we can gather plastic milk cartons again. There will be a problem funding SOL III. We might start to take ads for it with the September issue. CUSFuSSing is another matter of course.

Since we have trouble with money next year, discussions about fund-raising activities have begun. At the moment there are three plans. (1) Have a flea market, possibly on a regular basis, of science fiction, comics, and related merchandise, (2) show a "big" movie such as 2001 sometime early in the year, (3) sell refreshments at other movies. All three are definitely being looked into. There are two other places we might be receiving money from in the next few months, the newly formed Student Government at the College, and Barnard Activities Council. With the new \$40 a year fee, the College will probably be giving money out to various organizations including the Society but the situation at Barnard is still very much up in the air.

We did get some good news at the Polity meeting. Dani Eder, our librarian was elected secretary of the Steering Committee. He was elected without opposition.

In other good news, Richard Lappin, former President of the organization, was chosen for Phi Beta Kappa honors. This marks the second time that one of our Presidents has received that honor. He will also be receiving an award for his work in the Society this Thursday, May 3rd, along with Dani Eder and Charles Seelig.

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Other people have been receiving awards this month, Nebulas that is. Vonda McIntyre won the Best Novel Award for Dreamsnake, which is soon to be published in paperback. The winner of the Novella award was John Verley for The Persistence of Vision. In the Novelette category, A Glow of Candles, A Unicorn's Eye by Charles L. Grant won. Edward Bryant took the Short Story award for Stone.

In media news, the New York Times reported on April 24th that Battlestar Galactica was cancelled next year by ABC. Mork & Mindy will continue and the future of Salvage 1 is still uncertain. The Times in a report Monday that Star Wars will become an original radio series next spring on NPR for 13 episodes. Considering the quality of much of the NPR (National Public Radio) programming this could be very good. The show will be co-produced by NPR and the BBC.

The library had its usual growth this month moving from 3330 on April 2nd to 3418 on April 30th.

Sandy Hausler has been chosen Apricon III convention chairman. The tentative date is March 29th, but it might be changed because of other convention dates as they are determined. Posts already filled include Dealers: Merrick Lex Berman, Films: John Chu, Publicity: Dave Cook, Program: Bill Lancaster, Speakers: Barbara Brittain, and Crew Chief: Charles Seelig.

There will be an end-of-the-year party at 1309 John Jay on May 11th, starting at 9:00pm. Activities for those who are here this summer include possible visits to movies, a few regular meetings if we have enough people, and a trip down to Disclave during Memorial Day weekend.

Answers to 2 Quiz #4, "The Rip-off Quiz" by Ben Fulves

1. The first issue of Amazing Stories in mint condition is worth \$90.
2. The first issue of Astounding Stories in mint condition is worth \$300.
3. The first issue of the Thrill Book in mint condition is worth \$1000. It is the most valuable issue of any magazine in the realm of fantastic literature.
4. The first issue of Unknown, Astounding's sister magazine, and thought by some to be better than Astounding, is worth \$17.50.
5. The first issue of Weird Tales in mint condition is worth \$600. Forrest Ackerman just had his copy of the first issue of Weird Tales stolen, I don't know whether it was recovered.
6. Any of the issues of Ray Bradbury's fanzine Future Fantasia are worth \$35. It is bettered only by the issue of the Amateur Correspondent with Virgil Finlay illustrations, which is worth \$75.
7. A Princess of Mars by Edgar Rice Burroughs is worth \$550. It is the most valuable of Burroughs's books because it is the first one he ever wrote.
8. The Outsider and Others by H.P. Lovecraft is worth \$240. It was the first book published by Arkham House, which was founded to publish the works of Lovecraft.
9. The Ship That Sailed To Mars by William M. Timlin is worth \$850. It is considered the most valuable sf book ever published. Before this, I never heard of it.
10. Any original color artwork by Frank Frazetta is worth \$2000 @.
11. The Buck Rogers Map of the Universe is worth \$325.

Foreign Affairs

Early in the school year I bought the International Science Fiction Handbook, dited by Colin Lester. It contained a list of clubs and organizations in various parts of the world, including England. Listed was a society with the same initials that we have, the Cambridge University Science Fiction Society. In the description of the Society was a line that read "would like to hear from other groups to set up channels of communication". So I started sending them CUSFuSsing. After a few months, (surface mail going both ways) the Society received two issues of their newsletter, which changes each issue. Each title does however have the same initials, TTBA, such as The Typewriter's Broken Again and Travolta Tamed By Amputation. What follows is a synopsis what I have gleaned from these two issues.

This Society began back in 1961, far outdating ours (1974-75). Their library has over 2000 books and more than a thousand magazines. They have had problems with missing books and have now started an index card system to keep track of who has what books. They have a problem with people who are members and interested in Sf, but are never at meetings. For us, it's just getting members, they have 200 while we just hit about 30, not including all the people we send CUSFuSsing. They also gave trouble with getting people to contibute to TTBA, a similar problem here with SOL III. The issues of the newsletter contain many of the same elements that we have here in CUSFuSsing, book reviews, news about the Society, movie reviews, and one thing we don't have, short-short stories. Also included was an article on Cambridge University in SF. (Hmmm! I can name three for Columbia, maybe an article?) They have had guest speakers during April including Colin Kapp. Hopefully this trading of newsletters and just plain letters will be enjoyable.

Book Reviews and Analysis

Titan by John Varley

Reviewed by William Lancaster

Titan does not show John Varley at his best. Varley has been showing himself in recent years to be a writer of enormous talent and potential. I have been seeking out and reading everything I could find by him for a couple of years now, and at this writing only know of one published story that I haven't read. I enjoyed The Ophiuchi Hotline a good deal--while being far from flawless, it was a lot of fun, and seemed to promise further excellent work from Varley. "Persistence of Vision" affected me as only two or three other stories have. Naturally, I had high hopes for Titan. Perhaps too high.

The first part of the book (the first installment in Analog) was only confusing. It presented a number of characters, none of whom seemed very well drawn. Throughout the book, Varley seems to have been more interested in describing the scenery than he was with developing the characters. Admittedly, the landscape was spectacular, but one can't really feel it unless the people viewing it are better realized and able to provide anchors in the story for the reader. As it stands, the reader often finds himself adrift in the unknown with nothing solid to latch onto.

Cirocco Jones, or Rocky, does begin to emerge as a person during the course of the story, but her relationships with the other characters remain nebulous and ill-resolved. I wanted to believe in her, but given the way she reacted to others, I couldn't.

The whole thing is largely a whimsical fantasy, but it doesn't begin to appear as such until well into the second part. After the scene with Rocky, Gaby, and Bill floating downriver in a peanut-shell boat, I was willing to accept most anything. After that, the planet and the various creatures who inhabited it became a joy to behold. That is, they were fun to watch. But still, it's hard to keep up an interest in the scenery if the people who walk across it are so unbelievable. Characters are motivated here mostly by quirks and impulses. No one seems to have any real reason for doing most of what they do other than that they kind of felt like it. Many of the events happen more or less at random, at the whim of the planet Gaea or, more accurately, at the whim of the author (who makes an appearance at the end as the Wizard of Oz).

Titan is simply not what I've come to expect of Varley. The man is capable of much more. Titan is still well worth reading, but it may go a bit easier if the reader can forget who wrote it. Perhaps at this point in his career Varley's writing is better suited to shorter fiction, and his fans (and I definitely number myself among them, oh yes) will have to wait a bit longer for a successful novel. In the meantime, I suppose we'll have to be content with stories like "Persistence of Vision," "In the Hall of the Martian Kings," and "Lollipop and the Tar Baby." Sigh.

Titan by John Varley, Berkley/Putnam, c. 1979, \$9.95, pp. 302

Reviewed by Charles Seelig

I now have read Titan in both the Analog and hardcover editions, and the latter is much better than the former. Why? The Analog version is sanitized to an extent that the relationships between the characters are hard to pick up. There seems to be far more background to the hardcover edition and the explanations of the structure known as Gaea seem for more easy to understand. All this might be because it was the second time that I read the novel. When I read the Analog version, I thought the first part was far too slow and it tried to introduce the reader to far too much. The second time I had all the background and knew something about what was going on.

And it's that second time that makes Titan one of the best novels I have read in the past few months. Specific situations in the book are not unique, but added together they form something new. For instance, the protagonist is female. Varley has done this before (The Phantom of Kansas) and other authors have handled it also, but only over the last few years. The idea of having a large structure in space, habitable for human beings and others is not new (Ringworld), but the reasons for having the structure and what it is are new.

To give a brief synopsis of the book for those who have read neither version, the United States under the auspices of the UN has sent out an expedition to Saturn to investigate the moons and other bodies in the area. While there the crew discover another moon, one that is thousands of kilometres in diameter, but has a very low albedo. While nearing it they are captured by the structure and after a time of unconsciousness and then consciousness find that they are on the surface. The structure is a world with species of animals and plants very much like Earth in some respects and quite different in others. After orientating themselves to the environment and its peoples a few go on a journey to find out who controls the structure.

This basic plot is followed both in the Analog version and the hardcover. The magazine however left out the sexual relationships of the characters. This part of the plot is not the central theme of the book, but along with these relationships are the non-sexual ones and they seem less full in Analog. And even though one of the major points of the book is Gaea, the point of the novel is to bring about changes or non-changes in the various characters. These changes must have reasons, and the episodes in the hardcover are those reasons. With Analog however those reasons are missing and the chain is broken.

DO NOT READ THE NEXT PARAGRAPH IF YOU HAVE NOT READ THE STORY!

As mentioned in the previous review, there is at least one similarity between this novel and the movie version of the Wizard of Oz. The scene in which Rocky and Gaby meet Gaea is almost the duplicate of the movie if several scenes are looked at simultaneously. Other points include the fact that the characters under go transformations of their mental abilities, their psyche, and sometimes even physical appearance. The angels are Titan's flying monkeys, and in one respect the centaurs are like the munchkins in the fact that they both sing all the time, or speak with singing voices. Another is the fact that our intrepid heroes must travel through several different climates to get to their goal. Might the arms of Oceanus represent the tornado since both brought havoc? There is one other movie that the story reminded me of, 2001. The story is mentioned early in the book, when the ship and its mission are being discussed, but the likeness really comes through when the quarters of Gaea are described and Freff paints a picture with a background almost identical to that of the last stop of Frank Bowman.

The illustrations by Feeff are a great addition to the book. All except the title-piece faithfully depict episodes in the book. The maps supplied in the beginning are very helpful, especially in the early stages of the novel. The cover is done by Ron Walotsky and depicts the scene fairly well, with many of the species of the planet represented.

The novel in my opinion is a success. The characters are people that I would like to meet, Gaea is a place I'd like to visit, and there is even enough loose ends to make looking forward to its sequel Wizard enjoyable. Do give this book a chance, and read it if you can in the hardcover.

The Illustrated Roger Zelazny, illustrated by Gray Morrow, edited and adapted by Byron Preiss, Ace Books, 1979, \$2.50

Reviewed by William Lancaster

Sometimes I wish I were rich: then I could buy all those neat trade paperbacks that abound in the world of science fiction comics. But my budget forces me to be extremely selective and has kept me reluctantly away from the deluxe edition of Byron Preiss' The Illustrated Roger Zelazny. I confined myself to reading the excerpts published in Star*Reach and Heavy Metal and to paging occasionally through it in bookstores. I am indebted to James Baen and Ace Books for bringing it out in a regular-sized paperback edition. I snatched up the new edition the moment I saw it, and only later allowed myself to worry about the quality of the reproduction.

For those of you who haven't seen it, The Illustrated Roger Zelazny contains several of Zelazny's personal favorites among his stories--"The Furies," "A Rose for Ecclesiastes," and "The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth"--along with a new Shadowjack story, all set to pictures by Gray Morrow. There is also a "Zelazny Tapestry" and an "Amber Tapestry" in which Morrow presents his visual impressions of various Zelazny novels.

Of the stories themselves, little needs to be said. They have received enough recognition in the past that even a reader only casually interested in Zelazny's work will be familiar with a couple of them. The new story, called only "Shadowjack," is not Zelazny at his best, but that may be due mostly to the author's unfamiliarity with comics.

The selling point here is that it is the Illustrated Roger Zelazny. Gray Morrow has been around in science fiction, comics, and science fiction comics illustration for a good long while now. He delights in showing scantily-clad women and square-jaw men, all done in bright, vivid colors. Morrow is good, and his work here is some of his best. It is made even more pleasant by the subject: the stories of Roger Zelazny. Trouble is, a long time ago Morrow found a formula that he was secure in and has struck rigidly with it ever since. His series Crion and his new 8 Belles look almost exactly like his work on the Illustrated Zelazny. His style is a pleasant one, but one can only take so many women with the exact same faces and figures and exposed breasts before one begins to yawn. In only one story--"The Furies"--does the art get away from Morrow's strict formula. The pencil art on "Furies" is credited to Michael Golden, who has always struck me as being an interesting and innovative comics artist. His work here is inked beyond recognition by Morrow, but it stands as the most understated, unconventional, and most interesting art in the book.

Much of the trouble with the art is due to the size and production of the new edition. Many of the illustrations were rather small to begin with, and here they tend to get lost easily in the crease of the binding. Some of the drawings reproduced here in black and white were originally in color, and they did not make the transition gracefully; they often appear murky and ill-defined. Also, I can't help but wonder why Ace didn't put in a couple of blank pages at the end. As it stands, Jean Luharich has glue 'l over her face on the last page.

But I'm just quibbling. Overall, this book is a nice one: it's nice to see good stories visualized by a competent hand. And Gray Morrow is, above all, a competent and professional artist. The way he draws Zelazny's characters and worlds may not be the way you or I visualized them, but they are the way Morrow sees them, and they are therefore as legitimate as any science fiction art can be that isn't drawn by the author himself. Zelazny is a gutsy, highly-visual writer, and Morrow is a gutsy, highly-colorful artist. Much as Morrow's art tends to distress me from time to time, I still can't think of anybody better suited to illustrate the work of Roger Zelazny.

So overlook the book's faults--if, indeed, you see them as such--and go out and buy this book. Goodness knows you can afford the price, and you owe yourself the treat.

Movie Review

Dawn of the Dead Reviewed by Victor McNeil

Having some free time Saturday, and having read the Voice's interview with George A. Romano, I decided to see Dawn of the Dead, which is playing on Broadway and 49th. Price is too high, \$4.50, and there is no official rating, but no one under 17 is admitted.

Dead is the sequel to Night of the Living Dead and it picks up where the first movie left off.

The zombies are now nationwide, there is federal martial law, and chaos abounds. Private sanctuary is forbidden, but more and more people are turning toward it for survival. Before I go on

let me tell you about the zombies. Because of some unknown atomic radiation, anyone who dies turns into a zombie; a being who has an unquenchable appetite for human flesh. Most of these zombies have a bluish skin tone and look and act like comical wind-up dolls. But there's nothing comical about the way they attack humans. And the only way to destroy them is either burn the body completely or wreck their spinal cords and brains, or else they'll keep right on coming.

Anyway, there are four main characters: two SWAT cops, a helicopter pilot, and his girlfriend. They decide to leave a rapidly worsening situation for parts unknown. After an encounter with some zombies, they land on a huge shopping mall, empty except for zombies. Why are the zombies there? Who knows? One of the characters gets a brainstorm: why not get rid of the zombies inside the mall, barricade the entrances, and set up house? And after a fashion, this occurs. Everything is grand, until the bandits discover them and attack the mall. What happens then composes some of the most ghastly and stomach-turning scenes ever. Dead is unrated but I will give it one: PV, which stands for Possible Vomiting. Luckily, I was conditioned by eating at John Jay, but if you plan to see Dead, do not eat beforehand.

If you can look beyond the blood and guts (almost impossible because there's so much of it) there are some good elements. Although all of the actors are unknown, they give a believable performance, especially the SWAT cops. The lighting and photography are excellent, but the best element was a satirical message given by Roamna concerning American consumers. If you see the movie and think awhile afterward, I'm sure you're agree that it's brilliant. (If not, see me and I'll tell you what it is.) Was Dawn of the Dead a good movie? Well, it's debatable. But if you like horror movies, collect some friends and go see Dawn, especially at midnight. And don't plan to eat for awhile afterward.

Another book Review

The 1979 Annual World's Best SF, edited by Doanld Wollheim
DAW Books, May 1979, \$2.25, pp. 268

Reviewed by Charles Seelig

This is the first of the annual Best Sf books to come ou this year. Wollheim has picked 2 stories from Analog, 3 from F&SF, 1 from IASFM and the rest from various anthologies. Probably the best story in the book is the Nebula winner by Jonn Varley, "Persistence of Vision". I was a liittle disturbed to find out that Wollheim doesn't consider the story science fiction, but had put it in because the fans had loved it and it had recieved the most comment of any single story in the year. Neither of the other two shorter Nebula winners are in the book and the other nominees are only represented by "Cassandra" by C.J. Cherryh.

Though they are left out other good stories take their places. "Dance Band on the Titanic" contains the old idea of parallel worlds, but in a new setting, a river or ferry boat. "In Alein Flesh" by Gregory Benford tells the story of the relationship between men and giant whalelike creatures who form mathematical patters while they swim. James Tiptree, Jr. is represented by "We Who Stole the Dream" in which a race tries to find their original home.

The only problem is that many of the stories I thought well of didn't make it into the book. Not one Orson Scott Card story for instance, and to me he wrote some of the powerful and moving stories this year. Oh well, there are other anthologies to look forward to. The cover is done by Jack Gaughan, and has nothing to do with any of the stories.

Journal from John Jay

As it is I can't believe that I have gotten an issue out so close to finals (they start tomorrow). The stencils have been working well, though they took some time to get used to. They certainly are cutting down on the mimeo bill for each issue.

We are printing during the summer, but many of us are leaving during the next few months. To be able to receive your issues, I will need your summer address and three 15¢ postage stamps or the equivalent in coin. During the next few issues CUSFuSSing will bring you a report from Disclave, my preparations to go to Worldcon and news of the Hugo nominations. We might have a couple of articles on what people are doing over the summer, such as selling chickens, or working downtown in Manhattan.

By Septemeber, the Society should have a non-profit mailing permit for bulk use. This means we will have to send out at least 200 copies of CUSFuSSing each issue. To maintain that rate of production money will be needed, and we hope to raise it by getting people to subscribe. Maybe it won't work. If it doesn't, after four issues we will go back to our low circulation of 60 and just build on that.

Good luck on all your finals whatever they may be.

Charles

CUSFuSSing
Barnard-Columbia Science Fiction Society
317 Ferris Booth Hall
Columbia University
NY, NY
10027

Cover by Merrick Lex Berman

Edited by Charles Seelig

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