

CUSFuSsing

It's those
*\$W
fans
again!



The Newsletter of the Columbia Science Fiction Society
No. 5 (the sequence continues from Quandry No. 4
Finals, Fall Semester, 1978)

The Society has a lot to be thankful for in news that came during and after the Thanksgiving weekend. Mr. William C. Bridge sent us a letter saying that he wanted to donate about 200 magazines and 25 books. Included in the donation that Dani Eder and Elliot Freedman picked up were more than 40 pre-1950 large format Amazing Stories. We were very happy about this donation from a 1959 alumnus as this helped to push the total for the library over the 2300 mark. To be exact, the library now has 2302 books and magazines; 1367 paperbacks, 765 magazines, and 170 hardcovers.

But the library will be receiving an even larger donation next month. Mr. George Stephen Leonard, C'39, saw the Society's ad in the alumni magazine, "Columbia College Today" and responded by saying that he wanted to donate about 1,000 paperbacks, 100 hardcovers and a 25 year run of Astounding/Analog and Galaxy, the latter starting with issue 1. Though there will be a few gaps in those runs the total number of magazines should come to about 550 to 600, therefore the complete donation should run to at about 1650 to 1700. Looking at the cost ratio, the ad we put in this fall cost us \$8.50, and the donation should be worth at least one thousand dollars, using the figures to determine the worth of the library. Arrangements are being made with Mr. Leonard to pick up the collection during the intersession in early January.

Of course we do have bad news once in a while, and it happened that the Monday after Thanksgiving was the day it came. The Society, the Chess Club, and the Games Club joined in sponsoring the film "Yellow Submarine" with an episode of a Flash Gordon serial. Unfortunately we lost money on the venture since only about 50 people showed up. The two main problems were that many people had papers due or tests to take that week and that "Love and Death" and "MASH" were shown on other nights that week. We will be trying again, hopefully to make a profit, sometime after the convention.

Speaking about the convention, we have gained a fourth guest speaker, Jim Baen, editor at Ace Books and Destinies magazine, and past editor of Galaxy. We have received one letter stating interest in the convention so far, and we have our convention listed in Locus, and in Grand Pierre's convention calendar. Our mailing will take place in early January to both individual fans, and also to colleges, high schools, and organizations that might be interested. Again advanced registration for the con is \$2.50 before February 21st and \$4.00 after that and at the door. For people holding a current Columbia I.D. the cost will be \$2.50 in advance or at the door. Dave Cook has sent out letters to dealers telling them about the convention rates; \$2.50 for the first table, (includes one free registration) and \$5.00 for each additional table. Sandy Hausler has sent out letters to the movie rental companies.

CUSFuSsing is the newsletter of the Columbia University Science Fiction Society, 317 Ferris Booth Hall, Columbia University, NY, NY, 10027. It is published every three weeks during the school year, Sept.-May, and every four weeks during the rest of the year. It is available for show of interest, 15¢, a first class stamp, donation to the library, contributions to the newsletter, or editorial whim. (We also like plastic milk crates.)

The UFO Movie Quiz Book by Jeff Rovin, Signet, 166p., \$1.75
The Annotated Jules Verne: From the Earth to the Moon, newly translated
and annotated by Walter James Miller, Thoams Y. Cromwell, 171p., \$16.95

Reviewed by Dani Eder

When I checked our mailbox today I didn't know if I was going to have a good or bad day. There were two packages, a small one and a large one. Operating on the principle of 'good things come in small packages', I opened the small one first. Inside I found The UFO Movie Quiz Book. Ugh! This book is similar to The Star Trek Quiz Book, and other creatures of this ilk. It contains about a hundred short quizzes on various topics in the UFO/Alien film group. One quarter is devoted to Close Encounters alone, and there are a few quizzes each on other films and TV series. There are also 8 pages of schlocky pictures.

If you are a devoted trivia nut, you would want this book for completeness' sake, but otherwise it is pretty boring reading.

I opened the other box with a feeling of resignation, and received a pleasant surprise, the kind that makes you believe in the tooth fairy again. Walter J. Miller has done it again with another annotated Jules Verne. From the Earth to the Moon is something you would be proud to have on your bookshelf. Printed in large format on quality paper, the book has over 100 illustrations. We are given a forward on Verne's life and a bibliography.

The best part of the book, next to the story itself, are the annotations. Fully as long as the text, the hundreds of notes explain Verne's political allusions, scientific details, and anything else you would want to know. It greatly enhances your understanding and appreciation of the story. Couple this to a translation which is true to the original French and you have a must for serious readers of SF and anyone interested in Jules Verne. We hope to see more volumes in this series soon.

more reviews by Charles Seelig

The Magic Goes Away by Larry Niven, Ace, 218p., \$4.95
Illustrated by Esteban Maroto

This novel is placed in the same Niven universe as his earlier stories, "Not Long Before The End", "Unfinished Story #1", and "What Good is a Glass Dagger", in which magic is a natural resource and is slowly being used up by the wizards, warlocks, and magicians. The story itself concerns the efforts of four magicians and a warrior to try to get more mana the stuff of reach magic uses. Of course, there are problems, including barbarians, evil warlocks, and a god. The only source that seems not to have been used up is the moon, and the problem is how to get the moon to come down to Earth so it can be used to supply mana.

The characters in the novel are real. Magicians facing the problems of declining powers and having little hope of overcoming them, and a barbarian-warrior who feels guilty about helping to destroy Atlantis. That character in fact seems to be much more original than many of the macho men who parade in front of the readers. About the only problem with the book is the ending. It left me with a sense of incompleteness, and a feeling that there should be much more written about this age. The illustrations are profuse, and the book is a larger size than the regular paperback. One fun thing; the woman on the cover of the book only bears a faint resemblance to the description in the novel and the black and white illustrations. Admittedly, the cover is done by another artist, (Boris Vallejo), but the two should be consistent.

and even more book reviews

The Dreaming Jewels by Theodore Sturgeon, Dell, pp.188, \$1.75

This novel seems to be a fantasy of sorts, with one truly unbelievable element added to a real life world. A boy runs away from home because his step-father has severely beaten him. He brings along with him his favorite toy, a wooden jack-in-the-box that has two crystals for eyes. He joins a circus, and meets a group of strange animals and people.

Now his step-father had crushed several of the kid's fingers so that they were beyond repair, but in a few weeks the fingers have rejuvenated. The head of the circus, The Maneater, has over the years collected crystals like the ones that are in the kid's toy's eyes. He has proven that these crystals are alive and can change the forms of living objects, so they can be a duplicate of another or a completely different form. Using the power of the crystals and his own strengths the Maneater can control other human beings and possibly the world. Others in the circus realize this, and they also know he is looking for something or someone to communicate with the creatures, so that he can do much more. The kid, Horty, appears to be the person who is looking for, but the others are able to hide this fact.

There are a few sub-plots involved, including the kid's step-father, his childhood friend, and the circus itself. It all winds up with the classic battle between good and evil. This conclusion, unlike the last book, ties up all the strings, and ends all the plots and subplots. The characters are a mixed bag, mostly well-developed, but in a couple of instances, especially the step-father, a bit unreal or stereotyped.

The cover does depict the background and main character well, so it is successful. Unfortunately, the cover artist is not mentioned on the copyright page, though the last name, Rowena, does appear on the cover.

Unfamiliar Territory by Robert Silverberg, Berkley, pp.207, \$1.95

This is a collection of short stories written by Silverberg, and appearing in various anthologies between 1971 and 1973. Some of them I had read before in those anthologies, or other works, but most I had not read before. Silverberg, in his introduction, says that he was trying to use different styles of writing during this period, unlike the grinding out process of his earlier period, therefore these stories explored unfamiliar territory.

Some of them went to far toward the literary spectrum for me, and left me with a feeling that I had just read a bunch of style and little story. Others though like "Now+n Now-n" and "When We Went to See the End of the World" had plenty of substance to bit into. For those who like the literary style and for Silverberg readers, I would certainly say buy it. For anybody else I would put it on the possible list.

The cover is done by Alexander, who is not named on the copyright page. It depicts one of the scenes quite accurately.

I Paint What I See by Gahan Wilson, Fireside Books, pp. 126, \$3.95

This is a collection of cartoons by Gahan Wilson, who is best known by fans for his work in the pages of F&SF. Some of the cartoons have the style of Charles Addams in them, while others are uniquely Wilson. For those who like this type of artistry, buy it, and for those unfamiliar with Wilson's work, buy it, since the price is certainly affordable and there are a large number of cartoons in the book.

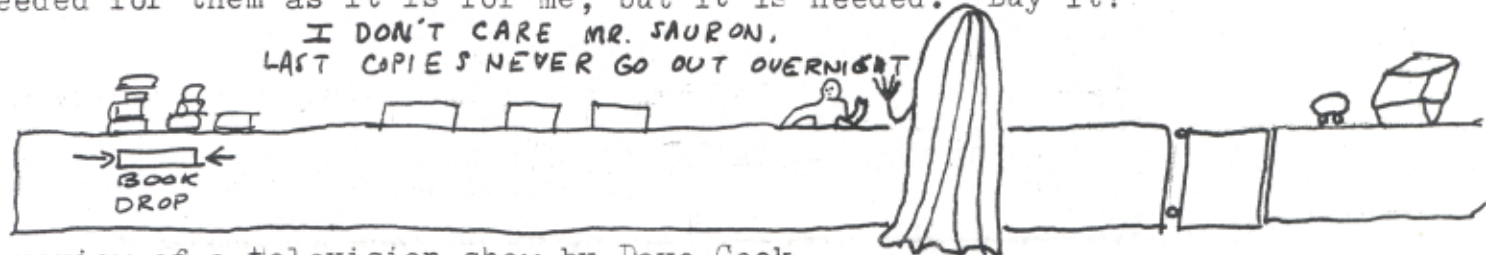
and even another book review arrgh! no please stop I beg of you!

The International Science Fiction Yearbook, edited by Colin Lester
Quick Fox, pp. 394, \$7.95

Let us say, to begin with, that this book is an invaluable guide and reference work, for the fan, new or old, for the editor, for the academic, for the collector, for the conventioneer, for just about anyone who is connected with the SF field. It has lists of everything, including fanzines, organizations, libraries, publishers, agents, awards, the whole shamboozle. And it is an international work, not just the U.S., the U.K., and Canada, but many European countries and Japan. It is filled with illustrations, (all black and white), many of which are cartoons by James Barker, some of them quite funny. I'll certainly be using this for getting the addresses of fanzines and organizations, and I'm sure that there will be others in the Society who will be using it frequently.

The various categories are cross-referenced, which makes it better, especially for cons, zines, and orgs. Now is there anything wrong with this book? I can't say for sure, though I assume with the amount of information contained in this volume that some stuff will be wrong, I haven't found any glaring errors, such as putting the location of the Society in Colombia, South America rather than in New York City. I'm sure that for people who have been connected with the field that this work won't be as needed for them as it is for me, but it is needed. Buy it!

I DON'T CARE MR. SAURON.
LAST COPIES NEVER GO OUT OVERNIGHT



A review of a television show by Dave Cook

How do you convince the average American housewife that we should be spending money on the development of space colonization? A recent broadcast of "Straight Talk" (11:00 A.M. on Nov. 24, though this was a rebroadcast from two months ago) allowed Richard Hoagland, the president of High Frontiers Foundation, and Ben Bova to demonstrate the benefits we would enjoy if we invested in space colonies. Robert Malone, author of the Robot Book, was also a guest; apparently, the producers couldn't find anyone else to talk about space colonization, so rather than give Mr. Bova and Mr. Hoagland more time, they asked Mr. Malone to talk about something entirely unrelated. (Hey, we could get this guy instead to talk about UFOs! No, we're giving him tomorrow's show all to himself. Oh.) Mr. Malone's discussion led to a particularly grisly misquote in the tag of the program, but I'll save that for later.

Ben Bova talked about space colonies for fifteen minutes, getting in a few plugs for his novel, Colony, where appropriate. (By the way each guest was interviewed seperately.) Most of his discussion would not have been new to a regular reader of Galaxy or Analog. He stressed that a space colony could be built with our present technology - use an electric catapult to launch the new raw materials from the moon, construct a cylinder in space, power it by the use of solar mirrors, and export solar energy to Earth by microwave transmission. Mr. Bova also stressed that most governments look into the past for the solutions to their problems, but that "Only the future will provide the solutions to the problems of today."

I really wonder if Mr. Bova got through at all to the interviewers, who were two concerned looking ladies in their mid-twenties. After Mr. Bova had explained that the colony would be tube-shaped, and had shown an illustration of the interior, one of the interviewers asked the stunning question, "How would gravity be?" Aside from the contorted syntax,

this sentence displays an ignorance of the centrifugal effect that I would have thought impossible for a college graduate, let alone an interviewer on a science-related show. "How then", you ask, "could these two ladies conduct an interview about space colonization?" Dummy sheets, of course. I don't know if either lady said anything not printed in front of her (the guests had dummy sheets, too, but none of them looked at his more than once or twice.) Another fascinating question: "Is there any place in your model for recycling human wastes and using them again?" Mr. Bova handled this one patiently, but he must have been relieved (sorry) to let Mr. Hoagland take his place.

Richard Hoagland absorbed my attention for the next part of the program with his clear, persuasive arguments and his reluctance to let the ladies get a word in edgewise. (You can't expect Mr. Hoagland to give these two a course in Physics for Poets first, or he'd never get to space colonies. At least Mr. Bova and Mr. Hoagland should be allowed to have a dialogue, but then the female interviewers would have to sit in silence, and the producers are afraid of scaring away the housewives (remember the time). So we get two know-nothings and one guest. No connection should be made between my opinion of these ladies and my opinion of any others.)

The following is a paraphrase of some of what Mr. Hoagland squeezed into fifteen minutes:

High Frontiers is a coalition of technicians, politicians, and artists united to educate the public regarding the benefits of space colonization. We should not work toward specific end-point goals, but rather invest in a broad technological front. By investing in this broad front, we uplift the American industry in general - four studies (unnamed) have shown that every dollar spent on NASA has produced twenty dollars of revenue for American industry through the use of the new technology produced by NASA. Studies at Harvard and Yale have shown that the decrease in American productivity is due to the lack of research and development. HEW spends the equivalent of NASA's yearly budget (\$3.5 billion) each week. Benefits we now have due to space exploration include the knowledge about the Earth's weather from our exploration of Venus and a one-cubic-foot medical lab developed for the Viking lander, ideal for a doctor working in the field. There is a parallel between Lewis and Clark's expedition and our future investigation of outer space.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hoagland didn't give an address for High Frontiers.

In the teaser before Mr. Malone's talk, I heard, "And next, the mechanical man", in a tone designed to intrigue grade-schoolers home sick for the day. Mr. Malone discussed the etymology of the word "robot",* and mentioned the fascination men have always had for human-like objects such as marionettes and automatons. Two examples he showed in pictures were the bellringer of St. Mark's Cathedral and a 17th-century automaton that had a repertoire of sixteen different drawings. He also mentioned man's fascination with the destructive robot and alluded to Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics. Throughout his talk he stressed that robots would not replace, but only switch men's jobs, and that man's technological problems could only be solved by technological means.

*"Robot is derived from the Czech "robota", meaning laborer. The word "robot" was first used in 1923 in the play R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots) by Karel Capek.

Then came the tag to the show. Unfortunately, the hosts always have the last word, and one of the ladies came up with this terrific line: "I've been told by one of our guests today that robots may take over a lot of our jobs (emphasis mine), but there's still hope of our individual personalities lasting out." Well now! Not only did she misquote Mr. Malone, she cast a pall over everything that had been said about space colonies (after all, a tag wraps up a program, and people are likely to remember it well.) I would suspect a payoff by some anti-colonization group except that the tag is consistent with the asinities perpetrated throughout the program by these two ladies. Fortunately, the producers of Straight Talk probably won't have a science fiction or space colonization-related program for a long while. This should give our two interviewers time to take a few refresher courses.

A reminder to convention goers, the Worldcon rates go up on January 1st, for Noreascon (1980) attending membership goes from \$15 to \$20, while for Seacon (1979) it goes up from \$15 to unknown (probably \$20-25). The addresses for the cons are Noreascon II, P.O. Box 46, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, Ma., 02139, while the U.S. address for Seacon memberships is Tony Lewis, Box 429, Natick, Ma. 01760

From all of us at the Society, we wish you a Happy Holiday, and New Year. The next issue will be out about Jan. 10th so after you finish reading that book you received, sending us 150 words or so.

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