

CUSF<sub>u</sub><sup>S</sup> sing 8

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*Special Apricon  
Issue*

## News and more news

Welcome to Apricon II, the second convention that the Columbia University Science Fiction Society has held. To those who are reading this after the time the convention takes place, greetings to you also. This is our mid-year and special convention issue. We've managed to put together a ten-pager, the largest so far in the newsletter's short history. Inside we have four pages of reviews of the movie Superman, which has been out for several months. There are our usual book reviews, this time done by Bill Lancaster and Vic McNeil. We also have a report about Boskone, the annual convention held by the New England Science Fiction Association during Washington's Birthday weekend.

A few interesting facts have come up this semester. Ursula K. LeGuin's award winning book, The Left Hand of Darkness, is on reserve at the Barnard library for a course on sex roles in society. This is one of the few times that science fiction has reached such a status since there is no SF course at any of the divisions of the university. (A pity) There is a Robert Silverberg attending classes at the University. We don't know if he is any relation to the famous author and Columbia College alumnus, but he does write for Spectator's weekly magazine Broadway.

The growth of the library has slowed down this month. The reason for this is twofold. Last month was the biggest increase in the Society's history and also people are worrying about the convention and not so much about the library. However the catalog is back to an almost complete state.

Our magazine, SOL III, is in its final stages of completion as I write this. There is a distinct possibility that we will have it out by the convention. Most of the material is from last year, but there are some new pieces. 206 FBH (the head office for Student Activities) has asked us to start thinking about our budget for next year. At the moment, it looks like there will be about the same amount of money available to activities next year as there was this year since the student activities fee and the student government have not been approved by the trustees as of this time. This year we received \$150 for bookcases, \$50 for speakers and \$50 for office expenses (mimeo, phone, paper, etc.) One thing we definitely be requesting is either a new room or 317 to ourselves. The library will continue to grow and we need room for that, and the second most active organization in the room we share, The Games Club, continues to leave garbage all over the place including the selves. If one of us moves out then this problem will be solved.

We also have to start thinking about after the convention. Are we going to have a speakers series? A book discussion group? Have a downfall of Sauron party on Mar. 24th.? And what do we do about the profit or loss of the convention?

One change in CUSFuSsing. I'll going to start typing the stencils myself, because it's about seven times the cost fro electrostenciling, so we will have a few more typos per issue for a while. Most pages with artwork will still go through with electo since we don't have anyone right now who can draw well on a stencil.

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Edited by Charles Seelig



Book Reviews

Fireship by Joan D. Vinge, Dell Publishing Co., Dec. 1978, pp.191, \$1.75

Joan D. Vinge recently received a Hugo for her story "Eyes of Amber." Now two books bearing her name have been printed in the same month. One of these, Fireship, is composed of two unrelated "short novels." "Fireship" first appeared in the December 1978 issue of Analog, while "Mother and Child" first appeared in Orbit 16 in 1975.

"Fireship" is standard stuff. The idea behind the story, that of a man linked to a computer, is hardly original, calling Michaelmas and the comic-book Deathlok to mind. Even worse, the treatment of this idea has little new to offer. The lead character(s?) is propelled through the story mostly by 1940's-style bravado, with perhaps a bit of 1950's motivation (blackmail) thrown in. "Fireship" is not a bad story; it is readable and rather entertaining. However, it is trivial and shouldn't have been used to lead off the book.

"Mother and Child" is marvelous, and quite a surprise for the Analog reader who just made his way through "Fireship." The story is set in the far future on a forgotten and isolated human colony where mankind is divided between the Kotaane, who worship Mother Earth, and the Neaane, who pay homage to the golden-robed gods from outer space. It tells the story of Earth-priestess Etaa and her relationships with her Kotaane husband, the king of the Neaane, and a minor god. The way Vinge moves the story, the way she describes events, and the way she reveals vital information; these qualities and others combine to make this story a delight to read. It is gripping, well-told, and highly-recommended. If you don't have a copy of Orbit 16 (alas, only available in hardcover), pick up Fireship.

The very attractive cover is uncredited but apparently by Stephen Hickman. The scene is referred to in the book, but the aliens are doubtful.

---William Lancaster

The Nightmare Factor by Thomas Scortia and Frank Robinson, Bantam Books

The growing trend in science fiction seems to be the disaster novel. Overall, their quality and style have been very poor. But The Nightmare Factor is the exception to the rule. Factor uses a rather old plot; killer disease might wipe out mankind if cure isn't found, i.e., Andromeda Strain. But intriguing action, realistic scenes, and some authentic science information makes for enjoyment.

There is never a dull moment and the character development, especially for Dr. French, is excellent. The only two weaknesses are that the male doctor hero has an obligatory affair with a beautiful woman doctor for no particular reason; and holds out important information from U.S. medics for, again, no particular reason that I can see. Ironically enough, the authors of this fine novel, Thomas Scortia and Frank Robinson, also wrote the horrid Glass Inferno, which started the disaster trend. Needless to say, they have redeemed themselves with Factor. I highly recommend it.

---Victor McNeil

# SUPERMAN

## THE REVIEWS

Quack! It was just ducky.

--Dion Marshall

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The film was definitely worth seeing once. You are hit by the grand opening theme; and it is hauntingly familiar. In fact it is one chord away from the Star Wars theme. The part I liked best was when California started to sink into the ocean.

---Dani Eder



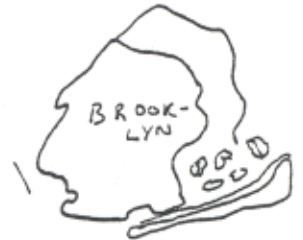
WHO YOU  
CALLING A  
MYTH, BOY?

Literally Superman is not worth a fifty word review, nine will do: silly, pompus, dull, and a general waste of time.

See it! Superman is a superb parody at itself, and pokes fun at society today and yesterday. For those who blew all their money on comic books, and for those who didn't this is a picture to see.

--Alan Gerber

NOW WHY  
DIDN'T  
SUPERMAN  
SAVE A CAT  
IN BROOKLYN  
INSTEAD OF  
QUEENS?



For the last 40 years, the Superman mythos has been progressively re-complicated to the point where today's comic product bears practically no resemblance to the original. Superman used to be fun; with the movie, he is once more. The Superman movie is Superman done as he always should have been: Superman done right. Clark Kent has fun outrunning a locomotive, and he also feels the anguish and frustration of not being able to use his powers to their fullest extent. Superman has fantastic powers, but he is still an alien, and as such set apart from the other inhabitants of his adopted planet. The movie is far from being a perfect treatment of the material, but it is a good start. I enjoyed it.

--William Lancaster

One of America's best loved fantasy heroes lives in the movie Superman. Newcomer Chris Reeve plays the title role with such earnest energy and timing that he's a strong candidate for an Oscar. (Ed. --He did not get nominated.) Margot Kidder as Lois Lane provides great chemistry and from to Reeve's Clark Kent and Superman. Gene Hackman as old foe Lex Luthor and Ned Beatty provide both comic relief and a challenge to Superman. There are several cameos, but they're somewhat unimportant. The photography, lighting, music, and special effects; especially Superman's flying is A-1 first rate. All in all, an enjoyment for everyone.



I've always been of the opinion that fans of a genre will always enjoy a movie of that genre more than the average guy. That's not to say that others cannot join in the fun. The popularity of Star Wars certainly disproves that. In the case of Superman, however, I say that Hausler's rule is in force. The small fry and the comic book/fantasy crowd will enjoy it more because their thinking is unhibited by the more mundane matters of the world. Being a comic book fan, a conniseur of fantasy and being young at heart, I loved Superman.

Christopher Reeve ( no s mind you) was the ultimate Superman. He had the perfect blend of innocence as Supes and clumsiness as Clark Kent. His evil counterpart Lex Luthor played by Gene Hackman was not the usual comic book version, but he played the part with the tongue-in-cheek humor and charm the plot required. "Call me foolish. Call me irresponsible." he giggles, as he explains his plot to destroy the West Coast. His supporting cast, Ned Beatty and Valeri Ferrine were both well done caricatures. Superman's buddies were equally well done by Margot Kidder and company, but I wish people would remember that Jimmy Olsen had red hair.

The transitionary scences were well done and sequences, such as the baby picking up the truck and young Clark Kent (played by Jeff East) were hilarious. The only thing that bothered me was Krypton. Everything was white. They should have used color and they forgot the Kryptonian head bands. Marlon Brando was overpriced, natch.

Superman is a movie for a world that needs heroes. People may argue that heroes will ultimately let us down, but I don' think that Superman will.. (At least not until the sequel)

--Sandy Hausler

Superman was one of the better movies of the year 1978. The special effects were very nice, but the most impressive part of the movie was the careful underplaying of roles. There were many very nice effects such as when Clark Kent ran to a telephone booth to change into Superman; He could only find a half booth phone. That was definitely a nice modern touch.

Christopher Reeve was an excellent Superman. His good looks and engaging grin, are in my opinion, very effective for playing Superman and the way he mutes them makes a marvelously bumbling Clark Kent.

Gene Hackman who is not a comic actor was simply excellent. His portrayal of Lex Luthor was evily nasty. He over and underplayed the role to perfection.

The only fault I found was in the music. Because John Williams did the music, it seemed to me, that it was very similar to Star Wars. The chords were often the same, with only the resolutions changed. However, the music was very nice and enjoyable.

All in all, I found the movie very enjoyable. Indeed it was one of the most delightful escapist movies, I have ever seen. I do reccommend it.

--Jana Schulman

WAS LOIS LANE  
HAVING A CLOSE  
ENCOUNTER?



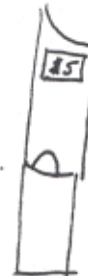
CAN YOU IMAGINE  
SUPERMAN W. THE  
DEATH STAR



I JUST LOVE  
THE GUY WHO PLAYS  
SUPERMAN.



BUT THE ACTOR WHO IS  
CLARK KENT IS JUST  
AWFUL



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These reviews are from some of the members of the Society who gave me any where from 5 to a couple of hundred words. I'd like to thank all of them for their cooperation and hope that all of them will continue to contribute regularly. (Some of these "pieces" are not serious, but why not have some fun.)

When I first attended the movie Superman, I was not expecting much. I was most pleasantly surprised! The film was well made and as fun as it was interesting. Krypton (-That's with a 'Kry' not a 'Cri'.) was marv-  
eously created, although the 'Phantom Zone' could have been clarified. It was done in traditional S.F. style, whereas the other scenes were each done individually, lending a more realistic feel to the entire film. At no point did the characters behave differently then would you or I -- except for Kal-El, who was his super self. Aside from good writing, the acting, the casting, and directing were admirably done. It was obvious that time was taken to get even the smallest detail down properly. I have seen it twice, and a third time wouldn't be too many.  
--Tanira Phoenix

From the desk of Lois Lane

It was his grin that captured my heart. As the film progressed, I felt myself drawn ever inward, ever deeper into his endless blue eyes. When he flew, I was beside him. As the kryptonite obtained him, I felt his pain. Together we flew and became one in the clouds, one with the cosmos; never to be parted. His strong arms surround me and unto him I shall yield... completely.

This is only to maintain my image, in case anyone was worried.

"Look, up in the sky, it's a bird, it's a plane, no... it's some jerk in a Red, Yellow, and Blue suit." Well. The remake of Superman, geared for an immature and commercial-intoxicated audience was semi-adequate. Marlon Brando, laughing all the way to the bank for his walk-on part, was, actually, rather convincing. Christopher Reeve was a good choice for the man of chrome himself, and the babes were suitably sexy. The special effects were mediocre, and the plot ridiculous. There were a few good scenes, including the ones with Brando, the helicopter where Superman was revealed and finds Manhattan phone booths inadequate (for Underdog), and the touching scene -- "Save my mother in Hackensack." Anyway, the good guys won, and we're all waiting to waste \$4.00 on the sequel.

Lex Luthor

I wanted his body. It was strong and splendid. I loved each bicep and sturdy limb of his. His deep blue eyes drew me in... closer and closer. When he flew, I flew beside him. We were two in the wind and clouds. And when Lois got him I was pissed as all hell.



- DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY SEQUELS TO SF AND FANTASY FILMS WE'RE WAITING FOR NOW?

- PASS THE POPCORN



Warner Brothers, in an effort to stem off stock losses due to rumors of Mafia connections, has managed to finally push the schedule of Superman ahead enough to get it out by Christmas.

In genral, it was well done, all though there were some minor flaws and one major flaw (dealing with the paradox of changing the past). For once, a superhero was taken seriously, a tribute to our intelligences by Hollywood. The movie seemed divided into three parts. The first was the destruction of Krypton, dominated by Marlon Brando's unusually clear sounding performance and impressive special effects. It also introduced the villians of the second Superman movie, though that was not made clear.

The second part, the coming of Superman, was given a fairly straight treatment, with light humor speckled throughout (as in young Superman telling his mother he was heading north and the next scene was in the artic.) There were also in this part near references to the common knowledge of Superman (such as Perry White's almost--but not quite--complaints of "Don't call me chief!" and Superman's consternation of modern phone booths.)

The final part, the battle with Lex Luthor, had many of virtues of the old Batman series, with almost none of the faults. Gene Hackman did a very good job of hamming it up as the self-confident Luthor, while Valerie Ferrine did her best to give the movie its PG rating.

This final part was played more broadly than previous parts, and was really not as successful.

The special effects were well done (although I don't believe that a man can fly.) The film's one song ("Can You Read My Mind") was poorly done and superfluous, and will therefore almost certainly win an Academy Award.

Even so, the movie does rise above its flaws, and is, in general, worth seeing.

It's one thing to bring your favorit comic book character to life on the television screen. One only need mention "Wonder Woman", "The Incredible Hulk", "The Man From Atlantis", etc. It's quite another thing, however, to turn a world famous comic strip into a full-length movie. Superman, the Movie, has done it though, and supprisingly well. All of Siegal's and Schuster's (Superman's creators) are there, from Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen, to the villanous Lex Luthor. And, of course, Superman--bigger than life, and doing some pretty believable flying. Which brings us to the topic of special effects. Superman's flying scenes, naturally, are the main attraction, and these are possibly the best seen in cinema yet. Other spectacular scenes include the explosion of the planet Krypton, the Fortress of Solitude, and the disaster scenes. The latter are realistic enough for anyone's taste. One more comment might be added, and this concerns the characters themselves. Superman gives them real, down-to-earth, individual personalities--something the comic strip and the T.V. show never quite managed weel enough. And it was this, if nothing else, that really makes Superman a movie, and not just another spectacular exhibit of special effects.



## My Trip To Boskone or Why Fandom Is A Way of Life

by Charles Seelig

I left for Boston Friday at noon, with a load of flyers for Apricon and a bunch of clothes plus more money than I had carried around with me ever before. The bus ride was uneventful. It was an express that stopped at Riverside Station before getting to the Greyhound terminal in Boston. It arrived on time and I left for the Sheraton-Boston, which is located in the Prudential complex about a mile from the station.

This was the first time I had really been in Boston for at least a year and a half and it would be my first Boskone in two years. Checking in at the hotel was rather easy since the convention committee and the hotel had arranged a separate line for us. One problem did occur. My Columbia University Identification Card is not a valid I.D. in my home state of Massachusetts. That meant I had to cash, which I had planned to do anyhow. The only thing that disturbs me is that a driver's license is needed for identification. You see, I don't drive, and in New York City you don't have to know how to drive since the transportation system runs 24 hours a day. But what happens when I get back to live?

I went up to my room on the 15th floor and found out that an economy single which costs \$27 per night plus tax is smaller than a Jay single. Ah, the advantages to going to college. The room actually wasn't bad; the bed was very comfortable.

I then went down to registration. This was quick since I have paid the life membership fee and because of that received a quickie registration form. The system worked very well, just trading in my form for a packet. One bonus, instead of the regular grey button I had in my packet a gold one. Then I sat down to read the program book and other paraphernalia. The program book was very nice; 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  by 11, with heavy covers. The GoH at the convention was to be Frank Herbert, with Mark Chartrand of the Hayden Planetarium as Science Speaker and Mike Symes as Official Artist.

I then went back to my room and brought down my packet of flyers. With a final attendance of at least 2000, the 125 flyers didn't last past noon Saturday and the CUSFuSsings lasted about half an hour. I had placed them on the freebie table, where there are usually a couple of dozen flyers about conventions, magazines, and other science fiction related items.

Another thing I did that night was to visit the people mover headquarters, where volunteers are sent to various parts of the con such as registration, panels, games, the play, movies, etc. to help out. That night I worked at the art show putting up some of the pieces that would be shown during the next two days. The art show was probably the best part of the convention. There was a substantial increase in the number of 3-D art, including a soft sculpture scene from the White Dragon. The Sign of the Unicorn Shop, located on Cape Cod, displayed an Amber chess set. Michael Whelan won first prize for best professional while Victoria Foyser took Best Amateur honors. Much of the artwork though, did not seem to be selling well. I was somewhat surprised when I saw the originals of the Mike Symes portfolio only attracting a few bids. This was the first show in which I actually bought some art. I bought Foglio's Children of Dune showing two kids with pails and shovels, the original of the cover of the first issue of Voice of the Lobster done by Stu Shiffman, and one of the pieces by Michael Symes done for the pre-bidding flyers of Boston in 1980.



Though there was that shortage of money, bidding on some pieces was extremely heavy; a few reaching prices ten times the minimum bid. Next door to the art show was the mural and the popular topic was knocking Battlestar Galactica. Another topic was sandworms. These murals were sold at the art auction.

I didn't buy anything at the hucksters room except for a few fanzines. Prices seemed to very reasonable this year and it was jammed every time I went through. I went to the evening filksinging session Friday night and enjoyed myself. There were probably 150 people there, so even if your voice was terrible, it didn't hurt.

Unfortunately I didn't get to visit many panels. I did make it for the GoH speech by Herbert. I didn't agree with much of what he said especially when he said Richard Nixon wasn't fully to blame for the Watergate mess and its consequences. He said that the people had not given him a chance to say he blew and try and get things together. The thing that Kennedy was able to turn the Bay of Pigs incident around rather quickly while Nixon kept denying everything. There is a substantial difference there.

I also attended a panel where Anne McCaffrey and Gordon Dickson talked about the problems of getting good cover art for their books. McCaffrey's third book in the juvenile series on Pern, Dragondrums, was on sale at the NESFA table. There were only 150 copies of the book available since the official publishing date is next month. Her series seems to be very popular with the people who attend Boskones and much of the art show had dragon themes.

Movie wise the lineup was not as good as two years ago. Featured were Sleeper, Forbidden Planet, and Young Frankenstein. Maybe it's because I didn't see these three but instead watched stuff like Laserblast. (AArggh!) I also missed the two Bambi shorts but did get to see Hardware Wars and an episode of Space Patrol.

The bidding parties were profuse Saturday night. The problem is that I didn't learn much either there or at the panel devoted to the bids for 1981. You see I'm not so worried about where it is as I am who is running it. And I don't know any of these people either personally or by reputation. Boston was easy since I've been to conventions in which the people on the bidding committee had been running it. Does any one have suggestions on how to make a decision?

So instead of going to bidding parties Saturday I went to one sponsored by the New Haven Society (FRED) and by New Hampshire. I stayed up to three talking about any number of topics, from Columbia to visiting Russia to the decline of the American economy. I hope to see these people again soon.

The last thing I did was attend the post-mortem session on Sunday night. It was interesting, both because of the views of the people there and also it revealed a little more about the convention process. The post-mortem meeting is where problems and blessings about the con are discussed.

Some general impressions, not necessarily facts. Iouanacon did not seem well organized according to people I heard. The fringe fans, not just Star Trek and Star Wars seem to be increasing in numbers faster than that of the regular fans. And that the Boskone committee continues to do a great job every year.

Next issue reports on Apricon II, how to attend a convention and what to do there, and 2 QUIZ comes back.

"MIKE, BOY... YOU'RE ONE OF MY BEST WORKERS.  
BUT IF I EVER CATCH YOU FLIRTING WITH MY  
AIR CONDITIONER AGAIN -- YOU'RE FIRED!"



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Carol Downing  
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Next issue out  
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6 pages then