

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

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4/4/79'

News and more news

First, we received a comment about one of our news items in our last issue.

Dear CUSFS:

Please be advised that the other Robert Silverberg currently at Columbia is no kin (or clone) of mine. And I bet he's getting tired of being asked about it. Oddly, there's another Robert Silverberg living right here in Oakland, and he's black. I wonder how that happened! (I get a lot of his phone calls, and I don't sound at all black, so the callers go away quickly. Could be he gets a lot of my phone calls & maybe some of my royalties.)

Best,

Robert Silverberg C'56  
(The Original)

We'd like to thank Mr. Silverberg for his loc (letter of comment), one of the few we have received. He will be Toastmaster at the Worldcon in Boston in 1980, Noreascon II.

In more basic news the library increased from 3,182 on Feb. 19th to 3,261 on Mar. 20th. This includes 1,995 paperbacks, 994 magazines, and 272 hardcovers. We now have a complete run of Astounding/Analog from September 1948 and an almost complete run of Galaxy. The issues we are missing are mostly recent so we should have the whole run by the end of the semester. Also, our Star Wars publicity book has been returned after being out for almost a year.

Our proposed budget for the year 1979-1980 was sent to the Student Polity late in March. The total is \$1150 with \$875 going toward the library, mostly for acquisitions, \$225 for publications, and \$50 going for general office expenses and the telephone bill. We suspect we will not get any where near this amount, since every organization asks for what it thinks is a reasonable sum and what any other organization doesn't. This creates conflicts since there isn't much money to go around and most groups have to settle for about a 1/3 to 1/4. This year we received \$250 when we asked for about \$800.

Our second party for the year will be held on April 5th from 8:30pm until whenever we have to leave the East Wing of Ferris Booth Hall. This issue will be there and there have been rumors that SOL III will also make a rare appearance. Admission should be about \$1.

About this issue. I realize this one is three weeks late. There are several reasons for this occurrence, the convention and its aftermath, mid-terms, vacation, and a slight pile-up of academic work. Since we are three weeks behind now, what is going to happen is that we will publish every two weeks for the next three issues. It will be about six pages per issue, and they will come out April 18th, May 2nd, and May 16th and after that go to a once every four weeks schedule.

CUSFuSSing is published by the Columbia University Science Fiction Society as its 15 times a year newsletter. It comes out once every three weeks during the regular school year, once every four otherwise. It can be had for loc, contribution, 20¢ an issue, \$2.50 for 15, or a donation of blue plastic milk cartons for Rachel Furer. (Edited by Charles Seelig)



## Z Quiz

Here are the answers to Quiz #2 Lines From the Hugoes. Each correct answer was worth 10 points.

1. The Gods Themselves by Isaac Asimov  
The name of the character and the phrase left-right were the clues.
2. The Demolished Man by Alfred Bester  
Peeped an Reich were the clues here.
3. The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula K. LeGuin  
Kerm should be the clue.
4. The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress by Robert A. Heinlein  
The main characters in the story included water miners.
5. Starship Troopers by Robert A. Heinlein  
Infantry eliminated most of the novels.
6. A Case of Conscience by James Blish  
This phrase just indicated one of the main issues of the novel.
7. The Wanderer by Fritz Leiber  
This might have been the most difficult question, but it still eliminated most of the novels.
8. Lord of Light by Roger Zelazny  
This is from the end of one of the climatic battles in the book.
9. Ringworld by Larry Niven  
The clues are Heaven and the cycles.
10. To Your Scattered Bodies Go. by Philip Jose Farmer  
Second chance was the concept of the story.

Quiz #3 These questions are based on material from Anne McCaffrey's Dragon novels, not including Dragondrums, her most recent novel.

1. Name each of Menolly's ten fire lizards. Each one is worth a point.  
For an additional five points get their colors correct.
  2. Name the seven weyrs. One point apiece.
  3. Name the ten masters of the arts. (Music, farming, mining, etc.)  
Two points a piece.
  4. Name the ~~seven~~ Weyrleaders and Weyrwomen at the end of the White Dragon.  
Each leader is worth one point and each woman worth two.
  5. Name the color of each of these dragons. Ramoth, Canth, Mirath, Ruth, Orth, Path, Tegath, Mnementh, Wirenth, Golanth, Larth, Lioth, Beth, Branth.  
one point each.
  6. Name the riders of the above fourteen dragons. (A bit harder for F'lar)  
one point each
  7. Name the following: Menolly's father, the planet that most of the action takes place, Jaxom's excuse for going to Keroon and the person who became Jaxom's Lady, Menolly's love, Robinton's place of recovery, the three strange objects in the sky at dawn, each of these is worth two points.
- Answers in issue #10

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## Book Reviews

The reason we have a lot of them is that we haven't been out for six weeks. We will have many more in the next three issues plus an analysis of John Varley's Titan in relation to a fantasy novel.

Blind Voices by Tom Reamy, Berkley/Putnam, 1978, pp. 254, \$8.95

Tom Reamy is dead, and the whole of science fiction readership should be saddened by this fact. He is survived by a handful of stories like "Twillia" (which was nominated for the Nebula), "San Diego Lightfoot Sue" (which won it), "The Detweiler Boy," and "Insects in Amber." All of them are excellent, often surprising in their depth and subtlety. He also managed to finish one novel: Blind Voices.

Most of Reamy's stories are set in the same rural county in Kansas. His novel takes place in this county, but about fifty years earlier, just before the Depression.



The book has a very folksy tone to it that makes the inhabitants of Hawley, Kansas, come alive. Reamy centers on three girls just graduated from high school, friends all their lives, and their individual reactions to a traveling circus that comes to town. Each girl is attracted by-and attracts-a different part of the entourage. What each does and what happens to each is what the book is all about. Pay attention as you read-although I can't imagine anyone not being totally captivated by everything that happens-and you will be well-rewarded for your trouble. And you will read it, won't you? Blind Voices may very well win the Nebula for best novel of 1978. It will deserve it.

Good as it is, the book is not completely perfect. To me, the most bothersome aspect was its more than superficial resemblance to Theodore Sturgeon's The Dreaming Jewels (or The Synthetic Man, depending on the edition). For example, Reamy's Haverstock is very similar to Sturgeon's Maneater.

Still, what Reamy does here is new. On one level, he shows the importance of sex in 1920's American life. But sex is just a means of showing how different people deal with vulnerability and responsibility and growing up. At the same time, I believe Reamy was building up a coherent mythic structure around this part of Kansas. To what extent he would have taken this we can have no idea, as he died when he was just starting. I will be forever plagued by not knowing. You will be too, if you read this beautiful book. Then read everything else you can find by this incredible man.

#### Empire by Samuel R. Delany and Howard V. Chaykin

Byron Preiss is doing great things in the world of Comix. He is the man responsible for Weird Heroes, Fiction Illustrated (The second issue was an SF novel called Starfawn with illustrations by Stephen Fabian), The Illustrated Roger Zelazny, The Illustrated Harlan Ellison, the graphic version of More Than Human, and the upcoming illustrated (by Chaykin) version of Bester's The Stars My Destination. Now, with Samuel R. Delany and Howard V. Chaykin, he has given us Empire, probably the most important of all Preiss' projects. Samule R. Delany may be remembered for his scripts on several excellent issues of Wonder Woman, as well as a number of award-winning SF novels and stories. Howard Chaykin is an amazing comic book/strip artist whose best work has been on SF comix like Iron Wolf, Cody Starbuck, and Monark Starstalker. (The reader may recall Chaykin's work on the much-reprinted Star Wars comic, but I'm trying to forget all but the first issue.) Together they have produced a brand new illustrated SF novel. The fact that Empire is not entirely successful is secondary to the fact of its existence: it is really the first of its kind and with luck will lead the way to more.

The plot is standard (?!) Delany: the kid (Kid) coming of age in the incomprehensible world of the future against a background of intense conflict and high adventure. Like in Jewels of Apor. And The Einstein Intersection. And Nova. And.... The characterization is not as thick, complete, or convincing as Delany usually strives for, but this is probably a difficulty inherent in the genre (comix, not SF) and is only rarely surmounted even by a writer as talented as Delany. This is comix, and as such places a high premium on action over thought. Delany has attempted, I think, to balance it out here, but he is obviously a better writer of straight SF than he is of comix. Writers like Don McGregor and Steve Gerber have both wrestled and comes to terms with the problem of action and violence in comix. Delany, as a mostly non-comix writer, is somewhat awkward in his approach. The story of Empire is good, even excellent, but it is not Delany's best.



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The art, however, is the best I've seen from Chaykin--and I've seen most everything he's done in comix. Howard Chaykin is an artist of enormous talent, and he has the energy to sustain and expand that talent. His art for Empire is nothing short of breathtaking. Just as important here, it follows the text perfectly. It is hard to believe that Chaykin could ever do better, but he probably will. Empire will do for the time being.

What we have in Empire is not a great SF novel. What it is is one of the greatest comic books--or visual novles--ever created. The art for The Stars My Destination may well surpass the art for Empire, but Stars was not originally intended to be illustrated in this manner (although Bester did write comix) while Empire was. The balance between text and art is near-perfect here, while the quality of each is high. The fan of Delany's work might find it possible to pass Empire by. The lover of excellent comix should get Empire as soon as possible.

### On Wings of Song by Thomas Disch

What can one say about a book as good as On Wings of Song? Let's start with: this is the way science ficiton should be. And: On Wings of Song may be the best SF novel ever written. Thomas M. Disch awes me; after I read something by him, I find it difficult to read anybody else. He has already produced what I feel are two of the genuine classics of the genre, Camp Concentration and 334. After 334, little or nothing appeared from Disch until recently. Now he has unleashed a string of work that leaves one reeling: "Chanson Perpetuelle," "Concepts," "The Man Who Had No Idea," and On Wings of Song. The lover of excellent SF can only rejoice at Disch's return. Perhaps single-handedly this man will make our genre something worthwhile.

On Wings of Song is the life of one man, Daniel Weinreb, and his search for fulfillment through song. Through Daniel's eyes, we see what it will be like to grow up in the next century--after reading this, I find it hard to believe that the future could be anything but the way Disch describes it here. Daniel is not a character but a man who walks and occasionally stumbles though a living, breathing, and sometimes gasping future. We are not shown his entire life, but three major portions of it that are indicative of the rest. When the book passes over a 12-year chunk of Daniel's life, we still know exactly what he was doing during that time.

While the characters and actions are realistic, the reader is fully conscious of the writer. Disch writes marvelously; his style is always witty, even while he touches at the edges of despair in his descriptions of the world of the future. Disch the narrator is ever-present as he chronicles with love and understanding the life of his "hero". Disch plays with the reader as he plays with the other characters, taking us through subtle nuances of emotion and experience, making us feel what he wants us to.

The closest relative I can think of this book is not anything from within SF but Charles Dicken's David Copperfield. The reader is privy to the protagonist's most intimate secrets, his actions, his thoughts, his desires. In short, we learn everything about him and he ceases being--for us--a fictional construct. When the book ends, we are saddened: we have come to know and like--and perhaps love--Daniel and the people he encountered in his life. I wanted the story to go on forever.

Disch is probably the best writer currently involved with science ficiton. He could have distinguished himself in any genre, but he has chosen to remain--for the time being at least--with science fiction. We can only profit from the experience.



And a movie reviewQuintet

"QUINTET: A game for six players the object of which is to be the last player left alive by killing everyone else." Quintet is the new movie from producer/director/co-writer Robert Altman, starring Paul Newman, Bibi Andersson, and Fernando Rey. The setting is the remnants of a once great city that still feebly survives during the next ice age. The people of the city have become obsessed with playing the game Quintet (Full directions are given in a flyer available at the box office. Read it before you see the movie.) to the point where they do nothing else. They have become so obsessed with it that they begin to act out the games rather than confining them to the boards. Enter Essex (Paul Newman) and his young female companion Vivia. Essex has been hunting selas in the south for 12 years and isn't aware of the degeneration of the city. Suddenly, he finds himself caught up inexorably in the web of the game without even realizing what he's doing.

The character of Essex is rather weak and sometimes incredibly naive or stupid. Or maybe he just isn't used to "sci fi" movies about deadly future games. Perhaps he is meant to act as a surrogate for the viewer as he searches the city for some clue as to what is happening to him and those around him.

The city itself, with its five sectors, heavily-robed inhabitants, and packs of roving dogs, is very well-done. It is a future city, not just a present-day city with lots of ice. The important people of the city have developed various philosophies to justify their participation in the game. St. Christopher (Vittorio Gassman), one of the sickest-and-deadliest-, tells the charity cases around him that they should cherish their lives, no matter how wretched or miserable, because what awaits them in death is horrible beyond belief. It's an interesting perversion of St. Augustine's Christianity, and in this stark setting one can almost believe St. Christopher is right.

The movie is bleak; it is disturbing. Most of all, it is convincing. And it is not "sci fi": it is intelligently done and apparently well-thought out. Perhaps a ray of hope does exist in the world of the movie as Essex seems to feel, but one will have to search long and hard to find it.

Quintet is recommended, although those who get upset or depressed easily may want to wait until spring to see it: so that the world they see on leaving the theatre doesn't resemble the one in the movie so distressingly.

All of the above were written by Bill Lancaster

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Apricon and It's Aftermath by Charles Seelig

This will be more about some of the successes and failures of the con, then a report about the con itself, since it has been six weeks since Apricon II. Some basic facts. We lost money. Plenty of money. \$441. This is not as bad as it might be, because it looks like two years ago, the controller's office fouled up in their bookkeeping and we have \$260 as a surplus carried from them until now. We were also able to sell a large amount of stuff at our dealer's table, we resold the plastic badges to supply, our printing costs were not as high as we thought they were going to be and a few other factors.

And of course the reason we lost money in the first place, was that only about 150 people attended the con. We had hoped for about 80 people from the university and 250 from the outside. We failed in both cater-



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gories. Problems with the attendance from the campus included the Furdal Folk Fest which we did not find out about until the Sunday before the convention, the Columbia-Penn basketball game, which we thought would not draw as well as it did because Columbia was out of the race for the championship of the Ivy League, that the ad in Spec only ran one day instead of the three we planned because of errors on their part, and that our poster failed to attract notice. Some of them were torn down hours after they went up and others failed to get up. Outside of the campus, advertising was better. We frequently replenished the supply of flyers at The Science Fiction Shop, distributed about 250 at Boskone, had announcements in the Daily News and Cue magazine and other places.

So what happened outside the campus? We had a number of guests, but it appears that none of them was a large enough drawing card. We showed six movies including Metropolis and Slaughterhouse-Five, but it appears that movies do not draw new people. There was Boskone, and there were to be two conventions after us within two months in the metropolitan area. Also the price might have been too high.

Now to some successes. The speakers all came! The movies were all shown twice! The gamers had to turn people away at the D&D tournament! And the people who were there did seem to have a good time! That is probably the most important thing of all.

The guests were all very good. Andrew Porter spoke about Algol-Starship and his newszine SF Chronicle which he is producing with Larry Carmody. Christopher Stasheff talked about influences on his work and described his series which started with The Warlock In Spite of Himself and continued with King Kobold. He will have a third novel coming out in June called A Wizard in Bedlam which will be published by Doubleday. Charles L. Grant, P.J. Plauger, and Barry Malzberg formed on science fiction in general. This was the longest one lasting about an hour and one-half. James Baen spoke to a large audience in the evening, mostly about Destinies and the forms of space exploration and colonization. Then Frank Belknap Long spoke about mysticism and myths in science fiction and fantasy.

With the films, things went generally well. There was a problem with one of the projectors in Wollman Auditorium, but that was solved. Probably the most annoying thing about the showing of films in Wollman was that they played disco music between movies. They did finally stop after we asked them. The dealers did not do very well I believe, but with a low attendance we could not expect anything else to happen. However several said that it had been worthwhile coming nevertheless. And the tables were still a good buy for \$5 for the first one and \$2.50 for any other, each including a free membership. The trivia quiz did not receive many entries, but I can't think of how we could have bettered either the quiz or the process.

Now a discussion about next year, assuming that there will be one which is not at all certain. First speakers. Their room should be moved down to the first floor, possibly in the Hewitt Lounge, with the speaker at the opposite end of the room from the entrance/exit so people coming in or out won't disturb the speaker or the listener. Also we should try to have panels next year rather than individual speakers as this is easier on our guests and more entertaining to the audience. One other thing we must try and do is try and get different speakers from other parts of the country.

Films were the largest item in our budget this year. The same thing should not be true next year. Less than six films should be shown, and they should be a little less expensive. We should try for a few shorts



also and possibly a few science films or films about science fiction. We should try to make sure that our features have not been shown on campus in the last year. And if possible have someone from our group be the projectionist for Wollman Auditorium since this would lower our personnel expenses. Some kind of schedule between films and speakers should be tried so we won't have many cases of people leaving one for another and disturbing other attendees.

The publicity category is one that we must work on to have a successful convention next year. Phil Golden had suggested that we put an announcement about the convention in each student's mailbox, but we had decided against that since we thought that most students would see the posters on the walls. Of course this didn't happen, so we shall try and do both next year. Again there should be a concerted effort to send announcements out to every magazine, newspaper, radio and television station in the area, plus any group or fanzine nearby. At other conventions we should have flyers, this one applies especially to Boskone. And as we did this year anyone who was at our convention should receive an announcement about in the mail.

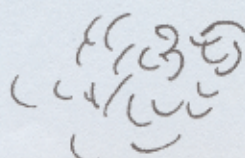
The games events should be pushed. Some people I believe just came for that aspect of the convention though I'm sure many of them sneaked a peak at one of the movies or speakers. Possibly we could have a speaker from the games industry since some of the companies have offices in the New York City area. As far as which games should be played, D&D did well and should be brought back next year. Possibly Games Club members should ask other area groups what seems to be popular that year and plan on having those games at the convention.

As far as the entire concept goes there have been several suggestions. Of course, one of them is not to have a con since this drains the energies and time of the people on the committee and sometimes hurts their marks. Then there are those who think instead of having a con, try having a number of speakers and/or movies throughout the year. There are also a few possibilities for a con, one might be to have a three day con during June using the housing here at Columbia for overnight facilities and Ferris Booth and possibly other buildings for activities. And of course there is the one-day concept which we have followed the last two years. There might be a small change though in that idea. We could have a convention that would lose money if Polity and/or Ferris Booth subsidized it to a certain extent. With this in mind we could lower admission or keep the admission and have more expensive items in our budget, such as bringing in guests from other parts of the country or having top-class movies.

With the three-day idea, people who don't attend conventions in New York because of hotel costs might be persuaded to come, and there would be more time for more activities. This would be beneficial since the schedule this year was a bit crowded with movies and speakers running throughout most of the con. A disadvantage with this plan is that many members of the Society would have left by that time since finals end about the middle of May. This disadvantage could be countered by having a more "New York" convention with people outside the University working on it.

Whatever we do decide there is a decision to make, preferably before the end of this semester so we will have time to plan before the mad rush begins again next September.

, I'm free





A few notices

The election meeting of the Columbia University Science Fiction Society will be April 10th, at 5:30pm in 317 Ferris Booth Hall. Officers elected will be President, Business Manager, Librarian, editor-Sol III, editor-CUSFuSsing, activities chairman, and possibly convention chairman. All members of the Society are able to vote, but only full-time students in the undergraduate facilities of Columbia are eligible to hold office.

Registration rates for Noreascon go up to \$30.00 from \$20.00 after June 30, 1979, so get them in now folks.

The library has been counted again and is now up to 3330.

We ain't got no more to say.

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