

SCIENCE FICTION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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SFRA NEWSLETTER #4

15 SEPTEMBER 1971

The SFRA NEWSLETTER is published irregularly by the Science Fiction Research Association, Inc, a nonprofit scholarly organization. It is edited by the Secretary-Treasurer of SFRA (Fred Lerner, 7 Amsterdam Avenue, Teaneck, New Jersey 07666 USA) and is sent to all voting, supporting, student, and institutional members.

29TH WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

Noreascon, the 29th World Science Fiction Convention, attracted more than 1600 people to the Sheraton Boston Hotel over the Labor Day weekend. In addition to the traditional program elements appealing to SF writers, fans, and collectors, a new tradition was begun by SFRA with two special sessions. Under the collective title of "Current Problems in the Critical Analysis of SF", papers by Virginia Carew, Thomas Clareson, Alexei Panshin, and Ivor Rogers were presented. The session was held in the Sheraton's Grand Ballroom, and given a favorable time slot by the Noreascon Committee; it attracted an attentive audience of about 150. For many of them it was their first exposure to the academic view of science fiction. A morning bibliographic meeting brought together about 40 people, providing an informal exchange of experiences and opinions among fan bibliographers and SFRA members. Both sessions were led by SFRA Chairman Thomas Clareson. The Noreascon committee's splendid cooperation made possible what will hopefully be the first of many such productive sessions at future world-cons.

THE HUGO WINNERS

At the Noreascon banquet, the following Hugo awards were given for the best SF of 1970:

Novel	<i>Ringworld</i> , by Larry Niven
Novella	"Ill Met in Lankmar", by Fritz Leiber
Short Story	"Slow Sculpture", by Theodore Sturgeon
Dramatic	
Presentation	No Award
Professional	
Magazine	<i>Fantasy and Science Fiction</i>
Professional	
Artist	Leo and Diane Dillon
Fanzine	<i>Locus</i> (edited by Charles and Dena Brown)
Fan Writer	Richard Geis
Fan Artist	Alicia Austin

SECONDARY UNIVERSE IV

At press time, over 40 confirmed titles had been received for papers to be presented at the 4th Secondary Universe Conference; 15 to 20 conferences, workshops, and seminars had been scheduled. SecCon IV, which the committee expects to be the largest ever, will be held in Toronto over the Canadian Thanksgiving/Columbus Day period; it is a three-day holiday weekend in both countries. Sessions will be held at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; the Park Plaza has been designated the official Conference hotel. The Conference registration fee will be \$10; there will be no charge to SFRA members. For registration or further information contact:

Madeleine Morton
 Secondary Universe IV
 566 Palmerston Avenue
 Toronto 174, Ontario
 CANADA

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT

With the aid of people too numerous to list, I have been gathering information on academic courses in science fiction. The total number of courses reported, at every level from high school to graduate school, is now nearing 100.

I have distributed nearly 250 copies of a preliminary report on these courses, and I hope to get out a new version of the report later this year. This report has aroused a good deal of interest; *Time* and *Wall Street Journal* researchers, among other people, have phoned me about it.

Two publications have resulted from the survey: "Science Fiction Comes to College", in the May 1971 issue of *Extrapolation*, and "Science Fiction: Emerging from Its Exile in Limbo" in *Publishers Weekly* for July 5, 1971.

-- Jack Williamson, Chairman
 Curriculum Committee

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Dick Allen, ed. *Science Fiction: The Future*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971). xvi, 345p.

It is a pleasure to see an SF textbook put together by someone who knows something about both science fiction and teaching; there are still far too few such texts. There are, of course, many good critical anthologies in the field, notably Silverberg's *Mirrors of Infinity*; but I know of no other volume specifically designed for students who are new both to SF and to analytical reading.

Professor Allen, who teaches at the University of Bridgeport, is familiar with the intellectual conservatism that often characterises the liberal young. Thus, he has provided an introductory section designed as a sop to the cultural idols of college freshmen and as a bridge from ordinary ratiocination to SF thinking; it includes a bit of Hawthorne, an excerpt from *Time*, a Richard Wilbur poem, an essay on ecology. The first actual SF is reached after sixty-odd pages; a section called "The Present as Future" offers an odd mixture of black humor and hard logic -- Isaac Bashevis Singer and Robert Heinlein, Donald Barthelme and H G Wells make strange juxtapositions, which very probably illustrate something

about the nature of the genre. The next section, "The Future", has ten stories by widely recognised modern authors -- Zelazny, Ellison, Clarke, et al. Altho the selection is generally good, I object to the inclusion of Forster's "The Machine Stops"; not only is it in every second freshman anthology published, but also it is a badly paced, very dated story based on untenable premises.

A final section includes half a dozen essays on SF and constitutes an introduction to the special type of critical thinking apt to be useful to SF readers. Portions of the bibliography devoted to anthologies, futurology, and criticism are adequate, but the dateless sampling of SF works is good for a small shock. John Collier, Cyrano de Bergerac, and Samuel R Delany are, by grace of the alphabet, side by side. So are Harlan Ellison and Arthur Conan Doyle. There are no dates of publication provided, a serious oversight in a field whose style and content have developed very rapidly in the recent past.

Further, there is no index, not even one listing names and titles; for this omission the publishers, not the editor, ought to be severely criticised. Pen-nies were saved in the wrong way, since the absence of indices seriously limits the book's durability as well as its immediate usefulness. It would seem that it is the responsibility of SFRA members and their friends to make loud and continued noises until publishers begin to treat our scholarly needs with the same respect they give to other fields. At this point, however, we must be pleased that Allen's book comes from a major textbook publisher and will be well distributed; his next book may even be well produced.

-- Virginia Carew,
Queensborough Comm Coll

TSA YULE MOOT

The Tolkien Society of America will hold its annual Yule Moot on Wednesday evening, 29 December 1971, at Bronx House in New York City. As an 80th birthday tribute to Prof Tolkien, a special issue of the *Tolkien Journal* is planned. Papers are solicited for presentation at the meeting or in this special *Journal*. For further information, write to:

Edmund R Meskys
President, Tolkien Society of America
Belknap College
Center Harbor, New Hampshire 03226.

SFRA CALENDAR

OCTOBER 9, 1971

SecCon IV, Toronto, Ontario. The 4th Secondary Universe Conference. See article on page 2 of this issue. (Thru October 11).

DECEMBER 10, 1971

PhilCon, Sheraton Hotel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Annual Philadelphia Science Fiction Conference. Principal Speaker: Keith Laumer. Information from: Sandy Meschkow, President, Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, 4413 Larchwood Avenue, Philadelphia PA.

DECEMBER 27, 1971

MLA Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois. The Modern Language Association of America. English sessions at the Palmer House; foreign language sessions at the Conrad Hilton. Registration: \$8 in advance for members, \$10 at the meeting; \$15 at the meeting for non-members. Information from: Mrs Annabelle Quick, Convention and Exhibit Manager, Modern Language Assn of America, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York City 10011. (Thru December 30).

MLA Seminar on Science Fiction, Palmer House, Chicago, Illinois. Meets in room TDR 9 from 1.15 to 2.30 pm. Discussion leader: Thomas Clareson, College of Wooster.

DECEMBER 29, 1971

Tolkien Society of America annual Yule Moot, Bronx House, New York City. See article on page 3 of this issue.

FEBRUARY 11, 1972

BaltiCon, Baltimore, Maryland. No information available at press time.

JULY 12, 1972

EuroCon I, Trieste, Italy. The 1st European SF Convention (1° Congresso Europeo di SF). Chairman: Gianluigi Missiaja. Registration: \$4 supporting, \$7 attending. Information from: Anthony R Lewis, 33 Unity Ave, Belmont MA 02178; Leland Sapiro, Box 40, University Station, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; Bruce Gillespie, Box 245, Ararat, Victoria 3377, Australia. (Thru July 16).

SEPTEMBER 1, 1972

30th World Science Fiction Convention, Los Angeles. Further information in next SFRA Calendar. (Thru September 4).

AUGUST 31, 1973

TorCon II, 31st World Science Fiction Convention, Royal York Hotel, Toronto, Ontario. Further information in next SFRA Calendar. (Thru September 3).