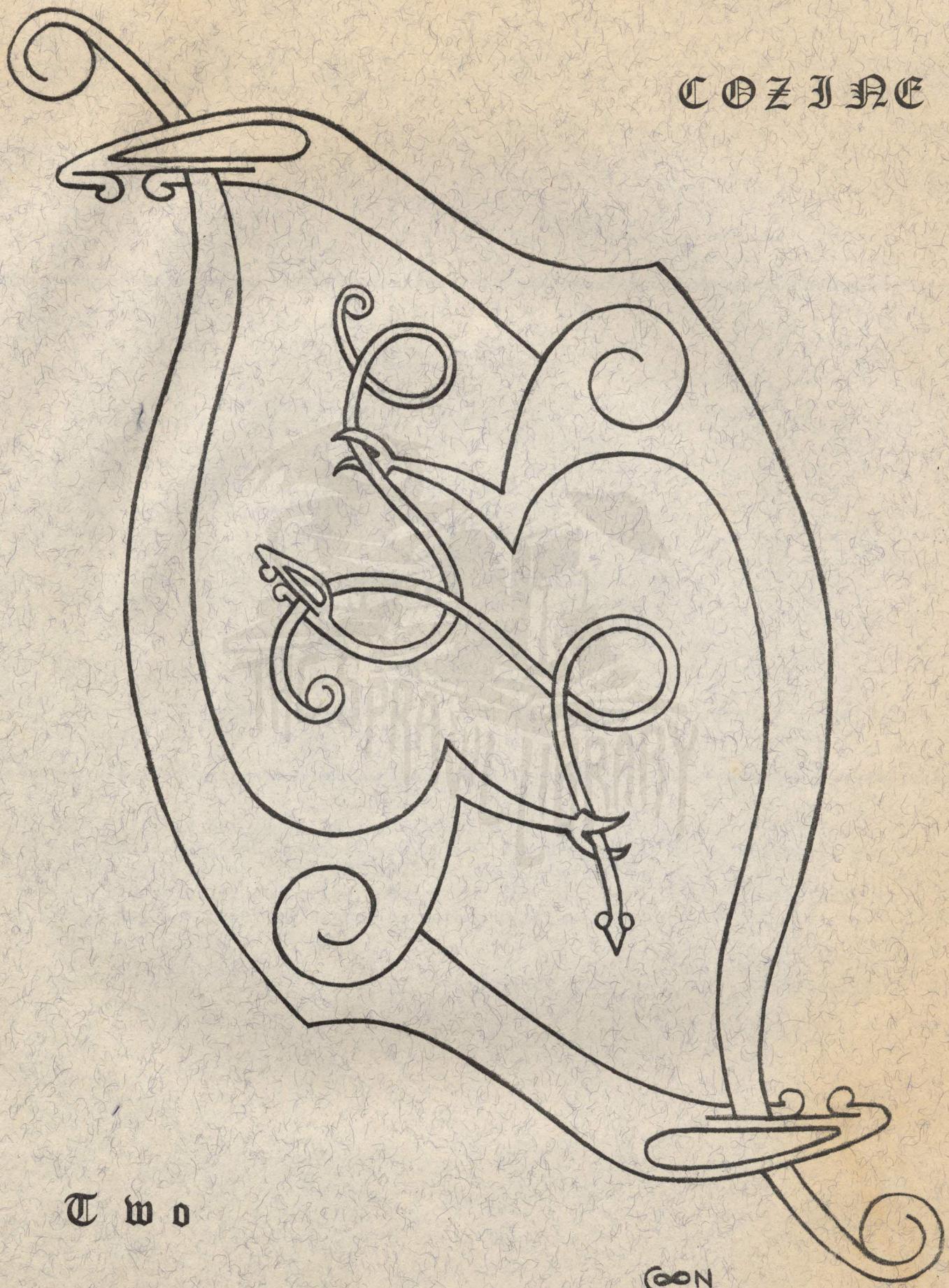


C O Z I N E



T w o

COON

COZINE II

STAFF

* * * * *
EDITOR.....LARRY SMITH
PUBLISHER.....CELE SMITH

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Chief Slave-Driver.....Larry Coon
Lord High Stapler.....Dot Coon
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ART CREDITS

Larry Coon - Cover and page 18; Cele Smith - pages 5, 9 and back cover;
Alexis Gilliland - pages 7, 13 and 25.

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Since I was more than a little vague on some points in the last issue, I thought I'd better make a stab at elaborating on them this time.

The club (re-formed CØSFS, that is) consists of the following members, as of the first of the year: Larry Coon (President), Dot Coon, Larry Smith (Secretary-Treasurer), Cele Smith, Bob Hillis, Bob Gaines, Betty Gaines and Tom Heany. The first seven names constitute the rotten core of CØSFS, a self-perpetuating oligarchy devoted to all and whatever, primarily oligarchic preservation. Four of the Rotten Core are the continuing remnant of old CØSFS, Bob Hillis and I having been two of the founders of that group back in early 1966. My wife joined the club for obvious reasons (read "I was dragooned!"), and Larry and Dot Coon hapened upon us by fortuitous accident - Larry ran across my name in an ad for Marcon VI and that lead to their downfall.

CØSFS is trying to operate on as informal a basis as possible; obviously, no group of 8 is going to be very successful following Robert's Rules rigidly and expecting joy and happiness everlasting. Therefore, there hasn't been any sort of membership drive attempted yet. We'd like to expand the club, however, so I'm going to go on with a bit more of how we function, in an effort to entice you into showing up at one or even more than one of our meetings--try it, you'll like it!

We're currently working on a trial-membership basis: If, after attending three or four meetings, you're really desperate for our company, we'll probably extend to you a membership invitation. The reasons for the trial period are many and varied; suffice it to say that it stems from the experiences of the old group and is an attempt to avoid past mistakes. If you decide to accept, the treasurer will then hit you for dues: no less than \$1 per annum, mostly to insure your continued interest in the club. The primary reason for the low rate, however, is that CØSFS isn't currently supporting any large, expensive projects. If the members get gung-ho and decide to erect a slan-shack, then we'll have to consider a slight increase. The other huge fiscal drain on each member is coverage of a proportionat share of the "party" expenses - the hosts for any given meeting pick up all the supplies; if there are more members than there are people housing meetings (as is currently the case), those who don't supply a home pick up the tab, in rotation, for one of the meetings from whomever is holding it that night. Clear? If not, don't worry, it will be after a couple of gatherings. We generally figure that dinner (or hot snacks) and drinks run about \$1 per head attending, on an average, or maybe just a bit more. In other words, it won't cause instant bankruptcy when it comes your turn to cough up.

That's about all for the operations and so forth of CØSFS: If anyone out there pressures me enough, I can churn out reams and bales of old history, past problems and projects, Cosign, the ØCon bid, etc., but I really rather doubt that many of you are desperately intersted anymore.

As you may have noticed by now, the editor of this periodical has a new toy: an IBM Selectric with six type heads. I'm hoping that it will make a great difference in the appearance and legibility of COZINE, and better justify the use of offset reproduction. The face I'm using for most of this issue is known as Dual Gothic and, despite appearances, is an elite (12 characters per linear inch) face. I'm going to experiment with other fonts elsewhere in this issue, and I'd like to get your opinions of them so I can make a guess on which other heads to get. You might also have noticed that I am not adhering to the publication schedule announced in COZINE I. If you'll remember, I'd originally planned COZINE II for Disclave at the earliest. However, I got such a gratifying response, in the form of contributions, that I've decided to put II out well ahead of schedule. The cover date for

this issue is 5 May 1972 (the opening date of Marcon VII, entirely uncoincidentally): at this rate, COZINE III may be out by Midwestcon, if the readership continues to send in material. Letters of comment will be most welcome, as will submissions of almost any other nature. I still intend to publish an "irregular" fanzine, but the frequency may be rather higher than it seemed it would be at first.

On to other matters, namely, money. If you'd like to subscribe to COZINE, the rates are \$.25 per copy, or five for a dollar. I'd really prefer material, but I'll accept cash without being too ungracious. My wife and I put COZINE out entirely at our own expense - this is a club project of sorts, but CØSFS isn't paying for it. And, by the way, should we decide to cease publication before any long term subs expire, we'll refund any unearned portion of your subscription if you'll send us an envelope to do so with. This doesn't mean that COZINE is anticipating an early death, but I don't want to make iron-clad promises of longevity at this stage. 20 or 30 pages every so often isn't bad, but 50 per month I don't intend to try. Oh, yes: I'll accept mint U.S. postage (either current or collectable - I'm a philatelist, among other hobbies) in payment; otherwise, send a cheque or money order made payable to Laurence C. Smith, or cash, if you must.

Cele and I and Bob Hillis made the drive up to Monroe, Michigan the weekend of the 11th through the 13th of March to attend Michicon 8, sponsored by the Misfits (I guess) and organized by Roger and Pat Sims. It was a low-key, quiet and fairly enjoyable con, disrupted only by the fact that the Holiday Inn was full when we arrived and the three of us had to get rooms at the nearest HoJo's - over the river and through the woods away. Some 40 or so fen and pros attended, mostly from the Detroit area, although Lynn and Carol Hickman came up from Wauseon and Ray Beam, Frank Johnson and Brad Balfour appeared from the vicinity of Cincinnati. The highlight of the con, to most of those there, was the screening of "The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari" in a silent b&w print of the original, and of Laurel and Hardy's "The Two Tars". I spent most of the con, when I wasn't driving back and forth to the HoJo, sharpening up by bridge-playing skills around the pool - the Michigan fen play a mean game, and I confess to being rusty, to say the least. There were no general parties, since Roger hadn't reserved a meeting room for the duration, but it was still a nice affair. I believe that the first seven Michicons were held back in the late fifties in Battle Creek, but that's way the hell before my time, so I'm not certain.

Speaking of cons, most of CØSFS (or maybe even all of CØSFS) will be going to this year's Midwestcon; a few of us are going to try to make it to Disclave. As far as I know, no one is going to LACon - time and or money. Speaking personally, this will be the third consecutive Worldcon I've missed, and I'm greatly looking forward to Torcon II. Toronto is a great city (yes, I've been there), and those of the con committee I know are a good group.

I'd also like to put in a plug for DC IN 74. I know many of the Washington group well, and I like all of them, and trust them to run a really great Worldcon. DC has one hell of a lot going for it, and I'd like to see the con held there. If you're not a member of LACon, ferGhussake join, and then vote.

Bob Hillis brought something to my attention recently that I thought might make interesting reading. It's a portion of the Hamilton Township High School Course Offering for Language Arts 1972-73, and reads as follows:

"538-539 SCIENCE FICTION AND THE SUPERNATURAL (2-3)

This course is designed for students with average command of basic skills but who like to move at a slow to moderate pace.

In this course we will study major works fo science fiction both in the form of short stories and novels. Much of the

class time will be spent in discussion of the works read, dealing with such topics as: the reality of the work, the probability of the occurrences and the believability of the story. We will spend time on personal occurrences with the supernatural and dreams. If you are a student who likes to read science fiction and talk about what you have read and your personal experiences, then this course is for you.

540-541 FOLK HERO AND HIS WORLD (2-3)

The study of the folk hero and his world will be divided into three major areas. We will begin with a study of the development of the entire folk, myth and fantasy world by studying major works in all three areas. In the second area we will study the impact which the folk hero and his world have made on our society both socially and politically by studying and analyzing various works. The concluding area will involve individual class creations which comment on our own world in the present as the folk hero's compositions have commented in the past."

So far, so good. Now comes the not-so-easy-to-take part: those bracketed numbers after each course description are "phase levels", and (2-3) translates as follows:

"PHASE 2 - These are courses designed for students who do not have serious difficulty with basic language skills but need to improve and refine them and can do so best by learning at a slower pace.

PHASE 3 - These are courses for students who have an average command of basic language skills and would like to advance beyond these basic skills but do so at a moderate rather than an advanced pace."

It would seem, then, that this curriculum coordinator, at least, considers SF to be easy, or, at least, easily digestible, and suitable for mediocre students. I, of course, would politely beg to differ, and to point out that this is the sort of philistine attitude that all fans of SF have had to suffer with all these years. I'm not claiming that SF is "Great Literature" (partly because I don't find a lot of enjoyment in capital "L" literature); neither, however, do I consider it pabulum for the contentment of the masses. I have no idea of what sort of class will gather next September (and I've found out that the teacher will not ram Verne, Wells, Bradbury and Burroughs exclusively down their throats - Bob tells me that she intends to use some of the Heinlein juveniles and some of Norton's easier books instead. Remarkable!), but I rather fear that it won't be particularly inspired.

The reason for printing all of this is simple: I'd like to generate some cogent discussion of the area of science fiction vs academe in the pages of COZINE, and this is as good a way to begin as any. I hope some of you will think about the implications of the above, and decide to comment. Please don't misconstrue my attitude; I've no real wish to be hung for a bloody elitist, which I'm not, but then the above are really what I feel on this subject.

See you all at Marcon? If not, until again.....



HEAR THE LAMENT OF THE STARBEGOTTEN!

I've got the interplanetary exploration blues,
I'm tired of barren, lifeless moonscape views.
There's no bug-eyed monsters to behold,
With wild waving tentacles to enfold.
There's no brass-bra'd beauties to save,
No big-lunged, red-eyed Martians to rave.
There's no baffling traces of alien races,
No canals, cities, or flying saucer bases!

Let's face it, fans. The solar system, as so far explored by astronauts, cosmonauts and robots, casts only a pale shadow of the colorful island-worlds of the Sun's domain as envisioned by SF writers from Bradbury and Burroughs to Weinbaum and Wells.

On the Moon and Mars we've found dust, rocks, cracks, craters, rilles, hills, mountains and empty plains.. From this no doubt will come a wealth of exciting geologic discoveries. But what about alien life?

Well, it looks like we'll have to travel to the stars if we want to encounter any highly developed life forms. The Moon, Mars and Venus have been revealed as unlikely places, and I just don't think the outer gas giants such as Jupiter and Saturn harbor exotic beings.

But how can we get to the stars and travel among them?

Current prospects for interstellar flight, as held by many science writers and as expressed often in SF, can be summed up something like this: "Men may fly to the stars one day, but the voyage will take so long that many generations will pass en route."

And because it would take so long to move among the stars, these writers say, interstellar flight will never be like international flight is today on earth. According to these current notions, hundreds and even thousands of years would elapse at velocities near the speed of light before a starship could travel the distance between Star A and Star B.

So it's easy to see from prospects such as these that interstellar flight would be essentially a one-way affair, carried on by huge craft serving as miniature worlds for generations of passengers who would live and die on the voyage.

Up to now, Einstein's Theory of Relativity has given futurists little scientific ground on which to build dreams of "hyperspace" or "space warp" spaceship drives. The speed of light, 186326 miles per second, is the Einsteinian speed limit for starships.

But does this speed limit really exist in interstellar space, or is it only a local limit found within the planetary vicinity of a star?

As of now, man has only been as far away as the moon and his machines have surveyed only nearby planets. Our view of the galaxy is very limited - we know it only by the radiation it sends in from the Great Out There.

A tantalizing hint that the physics of Einstein may not reign in the galaxy has just been discovered by scientists studying the new technique of detecting gravity waves developed by Dr. Joseph Weber of the University of Maryland.

Looking for a way to detect gravity waves in the midst of the earth's steady gravitational field, Dr. Weber theorized that some massive cosmic events, like the final collapse of a dying star, would yield signals strong enough to reach earth.

He hoped radiation from such a powerful gravitational event might distort (through attraction) the surface of a massive ton-and-a-half cylinder of aluminum he devised as an antenna. To detect such a slight distortion, he used piezo-electric crystals, which can produce electric current when squeezed, even ever-so-slightly. The crystals change mechanical energy into electrical energy.

In this case, "ever-so-slightly" was a squeeze spanning mere hundredths of the radius of an atom - a distance almost unimaginably small.

Dr. Weber was successful in detecting gravity waves, and after several years of recording and studying them, he has convinced other scientists that he is able to do so.

Other researchers have since built devices similar to Weber's and the information about gravity they are amassing suggests something may be very wrong with current theories about mass, energy and gravity in the galaxy.

Gravity waves received by the massive aluminum antennas from points of origin near the center of the galaxy are coming in too strong to fit into established theory. Scientists say that if matter really was being converted into energy at the rate apparent from the gravity waves received, all matter in the center of the galaxy would have been converted into energy 9 billion years ago!

The all-important implication of this is to prospects of interstellar flight. It would seem that astronomers have been wrong in projecting the Einstein theory of relativity out into the stars.

The 9-billion-year gap in the rate of the conversion of mass into energy opens the door to some pretty wild speculation, such as the possibility that light may travel much faster than 186326 miles per second in interstellar space. The variation is great enough to suggest that round trip voyages of 200 days, instead of 200 years, between Star A and Star B might just be possible.

The vision of spaceflight as a galactic extension of the present international airline traffic, long cherished by imaginative SF writers not intimidated by Einstein's speed limit, may yet prove to be accurate prophecy.

* * *

On To The Stars!



A beautiful spring-like day on Madison Avenue. People moved to and fro on the streets. In the offices of the various advertising agencies thousands of keen and razor-sharp minds grappled with the problem of selling a product. These keen and razor-sharp minds reviewed other sales pitches that had been used successfully in the past. At exactly 10:42:17.25 AM every one of these keen and razor-sharp minds thought of the Bounty Towel ad.

The air above Madison Avenue shimmered and at a point which could be computed to be the mid point and focus of all the keen and razor-sharp minds there appeared a gigantic roll of Bounty Towels, created by thousands of keen and razor-sharp minds focussing for a split second on a single thought! The roll of towels lurched down the street, disrupting traffic and causing panic.

Even in air-conditioned comfort the screams from the street penetrated the offices. The owners of many of the keen and razor-sharp minds dashed to the windows. As if on cue, a shriek went up.

"My God! A giant Bounty Towel! Just what I was thinking of!" (They prefer good taste.)

The keen and razor-sharp mind of Jack Bron (nee Josephus Bronislawski) instantly grasped the situation.

"We - we must have created it by thinking about it! Just like on that episode of 'Fantasy Playhouse'!" he cried. "What'll we do?"

"Maybe if we don't think about it, it'll go away," suggested someone else in his firm.

After a few moments all the keen and razor-sharp minds agreed that the harder they tried not to think of the towel, the more they thought about it.

"What'll we do?" they wailed.

Meanwhile, out in the street, the roll of towels had stopped. An officer of the law was firing his gun at it to no avail. A roll of paper towels has no vital parts. Created without intellect, it was driven by an insatiable thirst for moisture in any form. Guided by its uncanny and supernormal moisture-detecting Bounty Towel sense, the roll of towels flicked a straw-proboscis out of its body at the unfortunate officer of the law, striking the poor wretch full in the chest. With a disgusting SLURP! it drew out his fluids. Casting the withered hulk that had been a man aside, it withdrew the straw-proboscis into its body, belched once, and shambled on down the street in search of more liquids. The occasional shrieks of victims indicated a fruitful hunt.

Meanwhile, back in the offices of Jones, Torino & Schwartz Jack Bron was slowly gathering his wits. "Quick, Ruthie," he shouted to his secretary, "get a conference line open to every agency. What Madison Avenue can create, Madison Avenue can destroy!"

Soon, through the magic technology of Ma Bell, most of the thousands of keen and razor-sharp minds, cowering under desks, which had created the monster were linked in conference.

"My God! What'll we do? What'll we do?" they shrieked.

"Wait, wait," shouted Jack. "we created this thing, we can destroy it."

"Oh, my God, my God! It's the end of the world! I'll never get another account after this!! My God!" shrieked someone. "I'll jump - end it all," he continued. "Oh, my God! My window's sealed, I can't even jump. Ol' Phil Preston can't even go out in style." A sobbing came over the conference line.

"Preston? Preston? That's it!" yelled Jack. "We can destroy this thing."

Grabbing another phone he shouted, "Ruthie, Ruthie, get me the mayor. Don't try city hall, you'll never get through; call party headquarters, tell them how

much we contributed, and tell them we have to speak to the mayor - the giant roll of towels can be stopped!"

Soon Jack was speaking to the mayor. "I'll explain later where it came from, right now we've got to stop it. Get tank trucks loaded with no-leak antifreeze, hook them up to fire-department pumbers, and cover the roll with leak sealing anti-freeze. Don't you see: it'll seal it up!"

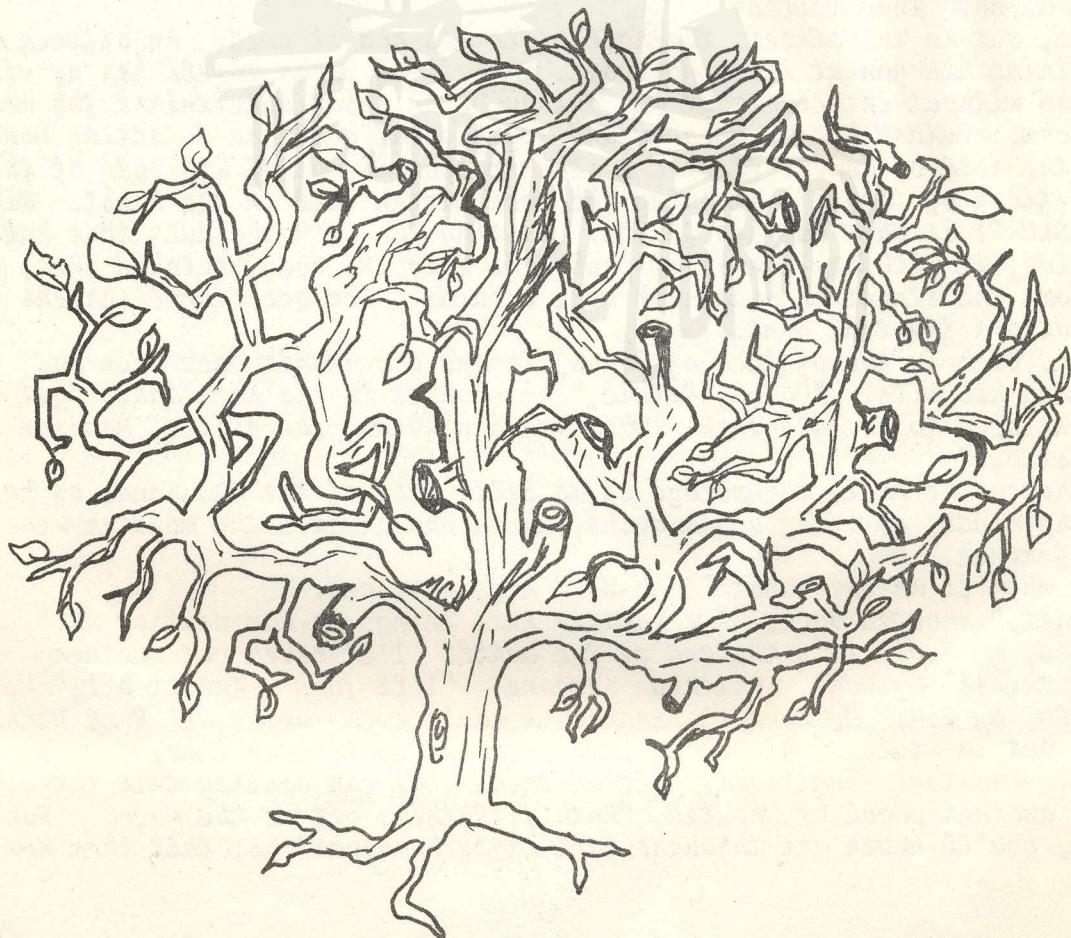
"By God!" exclaimed the mayor, "it just might work."

Soon tank trucks of no-leak antifreeze and fire department pumbers (no, the tank trucks were not loaded with fire department pumbers) were converging on the monster. The dauntless men of the fire department sprayed to shambling roll of towels. Being a fluid, the antifreeze was at first absorbed by the surface of the gigantic Bounty Towel, but soon its leak preventative powers, strengthened by the faith of thousands of keen and razor-sharp minds, began to take effect: the roll of towels shuddered, staggered, flailed about with its straw-proboscis, and retreated. But it had been covered. The gigantic Bounty Towel roll collapsed (crushing several cars), gave a final shudder, and lay still.

"It worked!" the mayor shouted into the radiophone of his car, "but what was that thing?"

Jack, at his phone under his desk, explained, "It - it was a giant roll of Bounty Towels, created by all of us in the advertising agencies thinking about it at the same time. Thank God we didn't all think of a White Tornado!"

Jack had forgotten he was also on a conference line. For a split instant thousands of keen and razor-sharp minds thought of a White Tornado.....



THE DANCER FROM ATLANTIS
by Poul Anderson

Why, Poul, why? Did you need money that badly? L. Sprague de Camp has written one major work of straight history, THE ANCIENT ENGINEERS, which is a standard reference in the field, and several good historical novels, but most other historical efforts by SF writers have been disasters, including one pretentious effort that was published recently in American Heritage. The turkey being reviewed decidedly should not have been submitted to a publisher.

This loose retelling of an attempt to prevent Theseus' destruction of the Cretan thassocracy (sea empire) is slow moving and pointless. Since most literate individuals are already aware of the recent tentative identification of the fall of Atlantis with the volcanic destruction of Thera circa 1400BC, either the plot or the characterization would have to carry the novel, but neither exist to any noticeable extent. The device of the innocent victims of a malfunctioning time machine has already been done; furthermore, either the medieval Russian or the Hun were potentially more interesting vehicles for carrying a story, rather than the colorless American and the Cretan half-wit representing prehistoric women's lib. Poul Anderson has written some great fantasy and some very good science fiction; let us hope that this specimen will be quickly forgotten.

* * * * *

I WILL FEAR NO EVIL
by Robert A. Heinlein

This reviewer almost wishes that this chore might be shared with some female chauvinist sow, even if the result would be a camel (a horse designed by a committee). Personally, I think that this book is demeaning to any woman of any intelligence and/or moral standards. Some of the hero/heroine's bed partners surely should have been rejected on hygenic or snobbish grounds (if no others), and it is also questionable whether any person accustomed to enjoying and using personal power on the vast scale postulated for the protagonist would ever voluntarily turn to domesticity and the life of a clothes horse even if changed from male to female by a brain transplant operation. The sexual viewpoint particularly cries out for commentary by someone obviously more qualified than either this writer or the author seems to be, but, even in passing, it seems highly unlikely that any surgical team hoping to achieve the first succesful brain transplant would be stupid enough to greatly increas the probability of a rejection reaction by shifting a male brain to a female body, since the biologist assures us that every cell of the body reflects the sex of the whole organism.

Of course, not only has smut played practically no role in any important science fiction but it has been seriously debated whether the *genre* lends itself to the inclusion of such material since, in any science fiction (including new wave), ideas have always dominated both the characters and the subject matter. Heinlein, an acknowledged master in the field of SF, has attempted to combine the two areas, but, unfortunately for the readers of this weighty (512pp) and pretentious tome, he cannot write a smutty story when he tries - and tries - and tries. The hero/heroine jumps into bed with virtually every significant (and some insignificant) member of the cast, but the effect is just boring. In fact, the only believable sex episode in the entire book occurs in the crusty old hero's recollections during and after the operation. (Incidentally, the protagonist is almost exactly

same age that Heinlein will be in 2004, if he lasts that long.) For a literary genre which thrives on ideas it is really unfortunate that there are no new ideas anywhere in this book. The legal maneuvering, mass financial manipulation, and exposition of the author's political and religious views have all had better presentation in his excellent juveniles of a generation ago, and his ideas on sex and alternate life styles were much better done in THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS. By the way, the bed scenes were also handled more skilfully in the earlier effort. In any case, this reviewer is turned off by a philosophy that a poor dropout is a reprehensible creep, but a rich dropout is a noble inspiration to us all. Even the concept of two, later three, souls in the same body seems to have been stolen from another authors work which this writer remembers reading back in the late fifties. It does give Heinlein a chance to expound his private obsessions for the umpteenth time in extended talky interludes with no noticeable forward progress, but it is simply a clumsily executed stream-of-consciousness technique by a writer who is nowhere near as deft as Joyce or Faulkner. It is quite possible that, while the style and mannerisms of the master are still there, he has run out of ideas and should consider resting on his past reputation before he lowers it any further.

* * * * *

THE GODS OF FOXCRAFT
by David Levy

Recently, when one of this reviewer's students exclaimed that this was the greatest book he had ever read, this writer questioned first the student's and then his own critical faculties. This book is essentially simialr in theme to James Gunn's THE IMMORTALS and Clifford Simak's WHY CALL THEM BACK FROM HEAVEN. All three writers consider the obsession with prolonging human life and the new possibilites if cryogenics as a definite threat, not only to personal liberty, but also to our entire society. I, personally, would classify these works with BRAVE NEW WORLD and 1984 as realistically firghtening visions of a possible future and not as recommended light escapist reading.

Basically, the characters, stricken with unspecified terminal ailments, are quick frozen in the twentieth century and revived in a totally controlled environment in the twenty-fifth in which the medical research complex has become the real and only master of the solar system. It rules a world without death and without freedom in which death is an impossible blessing to achieve. Disobedient and uncooperative subjects are extensively tortured and then reborn, ready to obey or be tortured again. The principal characters are finally reduced to a genetic code and sent to a far colony in another star system where they will be able to live and end a normal life.

As in most polemics, all these authors overstate their case. While it is probably true that our culture does have hyperchondria, just as it seems to be obsessed with sex; while any organization holding unlimited control over life and death will indeed possess and wield great power; it is not necessarily true that they will be unopposed or ever capable of erasing all possibilites of opposition. The three authors mentioned claim that religion's only attraction is its offer of a hope of life after death; consider, then, that all the great religions of India promise Nirvana, the end of personal existence, as their ultimate reward and, in fact, regard eternal life through reincarnation as the greatest (and only) punishment imposed as a result of each individual's personal Karma. The Tao of China essentially requires the individual to blend with the rythms of the uni-

verse and accept the essential unity of its seeming opposites including life and death. It is only we heirs to the Semitic tradition who consider man to be distinct from the universe and death to be some kind of curse.

Metaphysics aside, both the apostles and enemies of cryogenics have probably overstated the probabilities. While the average life expectancy of the individual has more than doubled, a sixty year old man today has a life expectancy only about five years longer than that he would have had at the time of Julius Caesar at the same age. Virtually all our medical advances have removed threats to the young and active and thus allowed many more to die of such previously minor threats as cancer, high blood pressure and heart disease.

I personally found this book depressing, but then I do not read science fiction in order to be educated. Maybe this is just the thing for those who do.

* * * * *

SOLOMON KANE, THE MOON OF SKULLS, THE HAND OF KANE, THE DARK MAN AND OTHERS
by Robert E. Howard

SEVEN SAMURAI
by Toho Productions

It is easy to lop off large chunks of an author's literary reputation with your favorite battle axe whilst dissecting some convenient dog of a book on which you have just wasted ninety cents, but for some reason no one can write an interesting review of a book or film of which he approves. Of the books by Howard, only the last is available at your friendly local newsstand; to obtain the Kane trilogy you had best attend some regional SF conventions and hope. The writer will explain the relevance of a Japanese-language historical drama to this article later on.

In a sense it is unfortunate that REH ever wrote a Conan story. Conan is essentially a superjock like all those in the interminable Italian "*Sons of Hercules*" flics, who reacts to all possible situations with his gonads and who invariably triumphs without bothering his primitive brain with a single thought. Of course, even so, Conan is incomparably better than any of his foreign or domestic successors, and this writer at least has no intention of parting with one story of the series. Solomon Kane, however, is by far a more interesting character, motivated by much more than momentary emotion. While facing much the same kind of menaces as the Cimmerian, the Puritan is much more by conscious choice the warrior of Jehova (I also know the correct name, but the Puritans did not) against the forces of Lucifer. Howard, in his Bible Belt surroundings of rural Texas, clearly understood that the Puritans and their fundamentalist followers adhered to the stern God of Battles who got mad, exacted vengeance, rewarded his friends, and stood for something as found in the Old Testament and who commanded "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" rather than to the vaguely colorless image of the Son, currently being peddled by the clergymen of the "God wants me to be happy; if I do this I will be happy; therefore it must be all right" school.

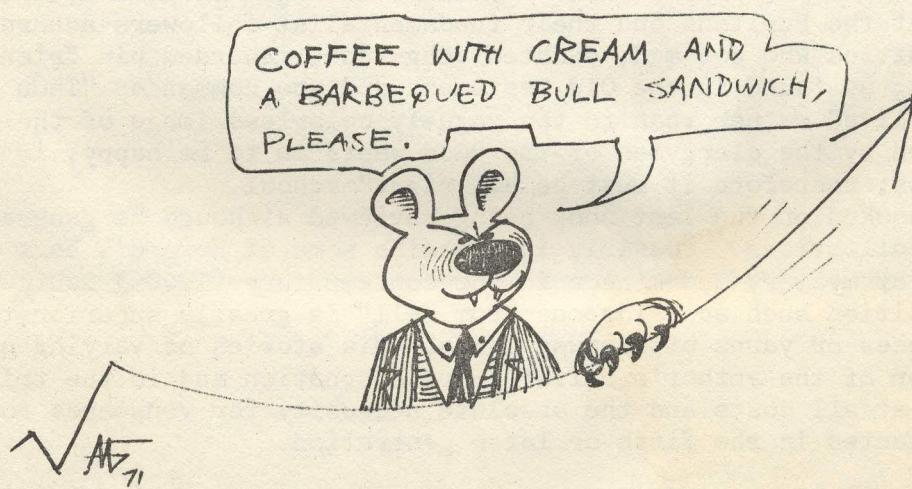
This writer got hooked on the last book being reviewed although he generally does not buy or read collections. Possibly it contains some of Howard's best work. His invocation of mystery and menace in the contemporary (1920s) South and South-West in a composition such as "Pigeons From Hell" is greatly superior to any of his costume pieces or yarns of faraway lands. His stories of varying quality convince the reader of the author's belief in reincarnation and in the tribal morality of his group at all costs and the absolute necessity for vengeance for wrongs done even if exacted in the fifth or later generation.

Much as the South had the better songs and novelists, but the North had the better cause and the larger battallions, so the Pacifists seem to have the greater artists, even though, when push comes to shove, the human race always sticks to the God of Battles rather than the Prince of Peace. Which is a roundabout introduction to the relevance of the film to this discussion. The classic "All Quiet on the Western Front" and the more recent "M.A.S.H." are incredibly superior to hawkish trash such as "The Green Berets". In England, "Oh, What a Lovely War" was unintentionally balanced by "Zulu" (about the stand of about 100 Welshmen at Rouke's Drift against thousands of Zulu) and "The Naked Prey" (one man's fight for survival in 19th century Africa), but there have been no comparable American films since "Battleground" (the Battle of the Bulge) and "The Bridges of Toko-Ri" (Korea). In the same way one must go back to "Le Marseillaise" to match the hauntingly beautiful "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?". Thus it was surprising that the Japanese, who had recently suffered crushing defeat and occupation by a nation which they consider to be racially inferior, would make a film which so effectively conveys the artistically less fashionable message. Turning the other cheek and moral suasion only work if your opponent adheres to some moral values himself; on the contrary, these tactics only inspire contempt in the minds of the truly ruthless and oppressive, and inspire them to commit even greater outrages. In these situations, force must be met with force, or else the group (village) will no longer survive. But the reason that this film (which is available only on the Public Broadcasting Service [PBS] or for college showings and which runs a good 200 minutes) should be required viewing for all fantasy writers is a technical one. The flic contains many superb examples of fencing and weaponry usage, particularly mass tactics, which should drive home some lessons in reality to the creators of lusty heroes who fight ten professional killers all at once. Five peasants with ten-foot pikes are going to finish off anybody, ahorse or afoot, with a sword. Fencing duels, particularly between experts, tend to be silent, short and final since, if for no other reason, medieval warriors rarely sterilized their blades before they stabbed an adversary in the gut or lung.

Incidentally, the American versions, which stole plot, characters, and considerable dialog from the Japanese, are infinitely inferior; even so, they are still a vast improvement over the run -of-the-mill Western.

A love of heroic fantasy probably betrays a nostalgia for a never-never land in which opponents are evil, good always triumphs, and solutions are quick and easy, but that does not excuse the writers from their obligation to take the necessary care to present a plausible story. "Easy writing is hard reading" is still a valid truism. Of course, Howard could violate every one of the maxims in this discourse and still write a stirring tale. Oh, well....

* * * * *



This analysis of what has become a very popular example of the so-called "hard core" portion of science fiction is divided into five sections, for purposes of clarity. Since this analysis was originally done as part of the requirements for a physics course at Ohio State University, some of the material covered herein may seem a bit redundant to the readers of COZINE, but I think you will all find it interesting. The sections are: (I) Astronomical and Gravitational Features, (II) Geological Features, (III) Biological Features, (IV) Plot and Characters, (V) Unanswered Questions and Illustrations.

I. Astronomical and Gravitational Features

The story takes place on the planet Mesklin, located in some unspecified direction about 11 light years from Earth (or, approximately 2.25 of the Mesklinite years [at light-speed]). Mesklin is a planet of the sun Belne and a minor companion sun, Esstes, and possesses one moon, Toorey. Esstes and Belne are in orbits around a common center of gravity; therefore, at midsummer when both are in the sky together, Esstes is rather difficult to see. Belne is responsible for the diurnal cycle, Esstes being visible even at night.

Midwinter on Mesklin occurs when the planet passes perihelion with Belne, and the planetary proper motion during autumn and winter is extremely rapid. Autumn and winter are each two months long (equal to four of Earth's), and spring and summer are each 26 Earth-months long (making a Mesklinite year equal to five of ours). Winter is a time of perpetual storms, and the suns look small even during perihelion. One Earthly day is equivalent to 80 of Mesklin's; one of theirs (sun crossing horizon to horizon) amount to eight minutes Earth time.

Mesklin has a peculiar shape: "it was not even approximately spherical." It is an oblate spheroid with proportions of 6 wide by 3.5 deep, and "it's curvature was smooth, but far from uniform." A ray of light could pass around Mesklin's equator in .80 seconds (the distance being 2.4×10 to the tenth kilometers). The equatorial area was known as the "Rim", and it had rings like those of Saturn.

A peculiar feature of the planet is its extreme range of gravitational attraction. Since the polar diameter was 20000 miles and the equatorial 48000, the force ranged from 3 Gs at the equator to nearly 700 at the poles. The largest life forms were found at the Rim, and the fewest and smallest at the poles.

Due to the great gravity at the poles, things behaved differently than they did at the Rim. At 600 Gs a fall of 7.5 inches was fatal to an insect and flattening to a rocket. Anything that did fall at that gravity whizzed by so fast that it couldn't be seen, and created a small crater where it landed, similar to those on our moon. Picking up anything at 600 Gs is just about impossible, except, possibly, for a Mesklinite; a fly couldn't climb a perpendicular wall; and a pendulum at one of the poles started with a .5 second period would rapidly increase to a sonic rate and jar its foundations loose, if it had any.

The author posits that a rocket carrying scientific instrumentation has landed at Mesklin's South Pole, and mentions that it was "mighty indeed to ease it down without letting it be smashed completely." I agree, and wonder what sort of engines he used. Said rocket was 20 feet in diameter and 20 feet high.

II. Geological Features

There is no mention in MISSION OF GRAVITY of the composition of the rocks and soil of Mesklin, but the rain, seas and snow are methane tainted with ammonia, and the atmosphere is gaseous hydrogen.

There was at least one active volcano on the planet, but nothing more of the geological history of Mesklin is noted.

Exact temperatures were not mentioned, except that at one point Clement says that Mesklin "had a bitter temperature". In another place he mentions that, during the winter, "the sun was warm enough to thaw the snow," but the perpetual wind from the northern polar cap prevented that. Also, during the southern winter, evaporation from the polar cap created storms that were unbelievable in the equatorial regions; the northern ice cap was, however, permanently frozen (freezing methane requires a temperature of better than -100°C).

It was possible to have widely different sea levels at the same time; in the higher latitudes, the sea levels rose as spring began, and the storms decreased in intensity and frequency as Mesklin's distance from the sun increased.

There were a number of cliffs, most of them with sheer sides; one was a sixty foot perpendicular cliff which formed part of an 1800 mile ridge at the 8 G level; another is mentioned as being 300 feet high. The Mesklinite Barlennan and his crew had to traverse both of these, using a system of pulleys and an extremely strong rope made from native plant fibers. This was done at more than eight gravities, and I am inclined to think it is not possible.

A large area of Mesklin was evidently covered by seas, most of the land area being located near the poles, with unexplored islands scattered between the major land masses. At one place, there is an isthmus, ranging from 2000 to 7000 miles in width, which separates the major seas. Wave action is greatest at the equator, due to decreasing gravity.

III. Biological Features

Plant and animal life are evidently both capable of living on methane and ammonia liquids in a gaseous hydrogen atmosphere under 3 to 600 Gs. Although the author doesn't say upon what elements life is based, I would venture to guess that they would be carbon, because of its abundance and reactivity with NH₃ or H₂ under pressure. The only time O₂ is mentioned is when the Earthman, Lackland, opens the visor of his spacesuit and O₂ and CO₂ pours out. With out oxygen, of course, there is no water.

Plant life consists of low, spreading vines and a few trees. Seaweed exists along the beaches just north of the equator, and is described as "black, rope-branched vegetation". Some, if not all, plants are chlorine-storers, holding crystalline chlorine in their stems, which Barlennans men used to make flame-throwers, the fumes of which are deadly to animals.

At the equator, grasslike plants, plants with seeds, roots and leaflike appendages, and stumpy trees grow. Farther from the equator, the height of the vegetation decreased, disappearing entirely when the gravity level went high enough. Many of the plants were poisonous and/or unpalatable, even to native forms. The wood of the trees was so incredibly tough that even the metal-cutting pincers of the Mesklinites couldn't handle it; they had to use bone (teeth) tools to handle it. Obviously, wood was only used for items requiring great structural strength and durability such as masts or pulley framings. The wood was combustible, but I can't imagine how.

Mesklin harbors many diverse types of fauna, including fish but excluding birds. There are both herbivores and carnivores; the largest of these inhabit the equatorial regions, of course. Again, as the distance from the equator increased, the size of the animals decreased in direct proportion; they became lower, tougher and longer. There are both non-intelligent and sapient forms of animal life. Most creatures larger than Barlennan's people living under 200 Gs were either amphibious or completely aquatic.

The first creature encountered by Barlennan and Lackland on their journey south is a sea-beast 600 feet long and 80 feet across, somewhat resembling a stout sea snake or streamlined whale; it somewhat resembles a Zenglodon, which the author

says existed on Earth about 30 million years ago, was carnivorous with large teeth, and had extremely tough flesh. In fact, the meat had the consistency of teak, and a scalpel could barely scrape off a few pieces. The gums and tongue were softer, and Barlennan was able to snip off pieces with his pincers. One of the crew took to looking under rocks, and found eggs (apparently the Mesklinites aren't overly particular about their diet); someone else set up a hatchery to see what would come forth into the world.

The next discovery was a colony of caterpillarlike-people related to Barlennan's, but averaging five feet long instead of 18 inches. These villagers constructed their homes in ridges lining a shallow bowl. At the top of the ridges they placed rocks so they could roll them down on animals and kill them.

One form of animal trapped by the travellers was a dinosaur-like creature with an elephantine body and legs and a twenty-foot neck. It also possessed 10 pairs of legs, short and quite thick to better carry its tonnage; it was apparently carnivorous. There were also giant herbivores in scattered groups.

IV Plot and Characters

The plot of the story is that our Earthman, Lackland, has landed on Mesklin, 11 light years from home, in order to retrieve a rocket loaded with scientific equipment which had been brought down to Mesklin's surface at the south pole. The equipment was supposed to measure the extreme gravity at that point to provide information enabling Earthian scientists to devise some method of controlling gravity. In order to reach this rocket, Lackland had to obtain the aid of the natives, since he was obviously not capable of sustaining 6 to 700 Gs.

Barlennan and his people were caterpillar-shaped beings, intelligent insects, with a segmented body, multidudinous legs, a heart in each segment, armour resembling the chitin of Earthly insects but stronger, multiple eyes, and a pair of pincers on the anterior end. They were omnivorous (although they preferred meat), were 15 to 18 inches long and two inches in diameter, had sucker-tipped feet, and normally lived in the 200 to 700 gravity range. They were apparently passing through a developmental phase of their culture at the time of discovery, comparable to American cultures of circa 1500 here on Earth. They were searching for a trade rout to find spices, which is a rather too obvious parallel. The Mesklinites were capable of absorbing new things and ideas into their culture, but had not yet discovered mechanics or science as we know it. Many ideas, such as climbing and throwing, had never been investigated by them because they were usually under such high gravity to make these actions impossible. They had a well-founded fear of heights, since at 600 Gs a fall of half a body-length was fatal. They were not, even so, afraid of traveling, and were good sailors. Their boat, the *Bree*, was fourty feet long and had a waterline of three inches. The Mesklinites were also capable of great strength, but were not terribly well coordinated. Near the end of the tale, the Mesklinites were beginning to attempt many new things, based on their travels, discoveries, and the subtle proddings of Lackland.

The deal was that Lackland wanted the contents of the rocket; in return, the Mesklinites asked only for weather information to help them find their trade route. At the end, however, Barlennan holds out for another shuffle, asking for some knowledge of Earthly science; Lackland agrees, and all parties are satisfied.

Lackland has his difficulties with most of the physical problems of the planet; he is forced to use pressurized armour, a pressurized and Terrestrialized dome, and an armoured tank to shield him from the elements. He is, of course, equipped with only the latest and greatest of gear, all of which is built for high pressure useage (except for his rifle, which he figures is fairly useless anyway, since the bullet-drop figures would amaze any normal ballistician). Lackland uses his own portable rocket to go hither and yon in; alas, Clement doesn't explain how he manages a takeoff at even 8 Gs, but it's an interesting problem.

V. Unanswered Questions

I couldn't understand exactly why the planet Mesklin was saucer shaped, since the most economical shape is the sphere. I know galaxies are shaped this way, but I have no knowledge of a planet like Mesklin. It would have had to have cooled rapidly to have left it in that shape. Just the spin would have had a tendency to round it off.

I also wondered what sort of drive enabled Lackland to get to Mesklin and back in anything approaching a reasonable amount of time. Clement mentions neither the chronological age of Lackland nor any sort of faster-than-light drive, so the reader is left to make guesses.

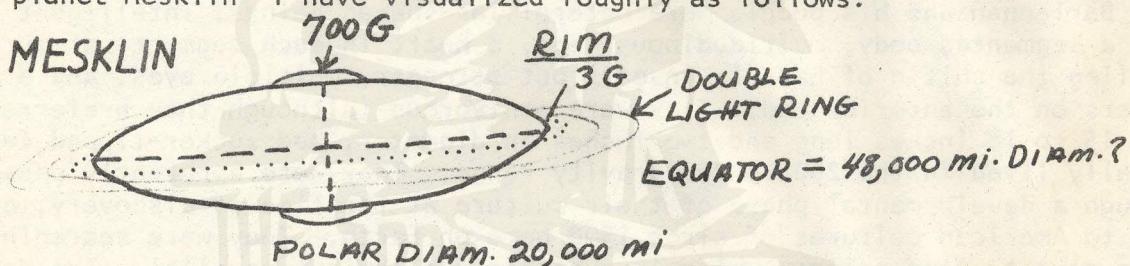
I am also curious as to whether or not a planet with methane seas and a hydrogen atmosphere could logically exist even under high gravity. I looked up the melting points and so forth of methane, hydrogen and ammonia and also their reactions in TEXTBOOK OF CHEMISTRY by Mack, Garrett, Haskins and Verhoek; the temperatures and critical pressures are all right, but I keep wondering what happened to the oxygen, since it's a rather common element.

I was also puzzled by the possible chemical composition, amino acid structure and so on of the Mesklinites. How can they function physiologically? and, if they are intelligent, how is the brain and nervous system structured?

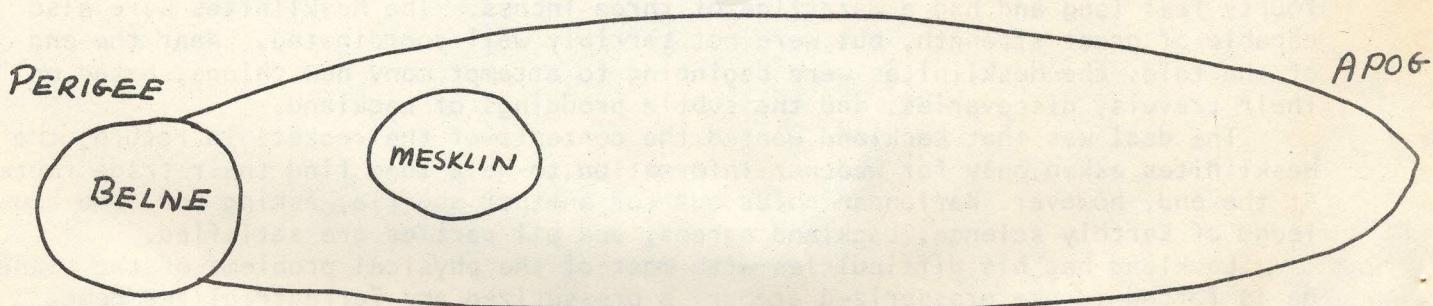
VI. Illustrations and Additional Notes

Mesklin's circumference is equal to .80 seconds at C or: 3×10^{10} cm/sec for .8 sec = 2.4×10 to the tenth = circumference at the equator = roughly 48000 miles.

The planet Mesklin I have visualized roughly as follows:



And the Mesklin-Belne system looks something like this:





RAUMKRIEG

A GAME OF INTERSTELLAR WARFARE

The Huginese Hegemony and the Munninian Federation first came into contact in 873 A.S. At the time of contact each was in full control of its system, and at the height of its pre-drive power. A mutual antagonism quickly developed, based primarily on the fact that the dominant lifeforms of the two empires were based on drastically divergent evolutionary lines. Since intercourse between the systems was minimal, as it was limited to vessels with sublight drives and involved tremendous cost, no major trouble ensued. However, the simultaneous discovery by each of the Trautmann Drive made it inevitable that this inherent abhorrence would find its final expression in all-out war.

Raumkrieg is a simulation (not duplication) of the resulting conflict. YOU are in command, YOU lead the fleets into combat in the depths of interstellar space, and YOU experience victory (or defeat) as the vanquished system is totally and utterly destroyed.

There are three versions of the game. Only the first will be described here; the others will appear in later issues.

The BASIC GAME is a two-player game designed primarily to introduce those who are unfamiliar with simulation games to the elements of movement and combat. It also serves as a short game for those who haven't the time required by the other, more complex, versions.

The STANDARD GAME is also for two players (although more can play). Play more closely resembles actual combat since, unlike the BASIC GAME where the location of all vessels is known to both players, an essential part of the game is locating the enemy.

The MULTIPLAYER GAME is for three or more players (what else?) and differs from most multiple player simulation games in that no player has a strategic or tactical advantage over any other - each has an equal opportunity to win.

THE BASIC GAME

THE BATTLEBOARD

The game is played on a hexagonal grid 40 x 40 , each hex representing 1/4 light year. The Huginese and Munninian systems are located at diagonally opposite corners of the board, 8 hexes from the edge. The markers used on these two hexes should be removable since in the other versions of the game the board is used to represent what, in this version, corresponds to one hex.

THE PIECES

Due to the tremendous expense of maintaining an interstellar armada, each empire has only two fleets, each consisting of 2 patrol craft, 4 cruisers and one dreadnaught. In addition, the home stellar system is heavily fortified. The relative offensive and defensive strengths of these units and the maximum number of hexes each type of vessel can move through open space are given below:

Unit Type	Offensive/Defensive Strength	Movement Ability
Patrol Craft	2	12
Cruiser	4	6
Dreadnaught	10	4
Stellar System	10	0

These basic capabilities are subject to the following limitations:

1. The six hexes adjacent to the hex containing a unit constitute that units FIELD OF FIRE. Vessels entering a enemy's field of fire MUST stop and engage the enemy.
2. A unit is said to be ENGLOBED if it is engaged by enemy units in such a manner that each of the hexes in its field of fire is either occupied by an enemy or covered by the field of fire of one of the engaging units.
3. When a unit is engaged, it has the option to channel all its energy into its defensive screens. Exercise of this FULL SCREEN OPTION doubles the defensive strength of the unit. However, since nothing can penetrate a full screen in either direction, it can neither move during the next movement phase nor fire during the next combat phase, ie, it is inert for the next turn. Normal screen operation involves strengthening the screen in the area of attack by diverting part of the screen's power from other areas. Since this cannot be done by an englobed unit, the attacker's offensive strength is doubled.
4. A unit which is disabled in battle must operate at half its movement ability during its next movement phase, half its offensive ability during its next combat phase and half its defensive strength during the next enemy combat phase, ie, half its capabilities for two turns.

THE PLAY

The player with the highest toss of a die places his vessels wherever he likes within 8 hexes of his home system. The other player does likewise. Play then proceeds with the players taking alternate turns (each turn consisting of a movement phase followed by a combat phase) until one wins or a draw is mutually agreed upon.

CONDITIONS OF VICTORY

Each player is initially considered to be in control of his home system. Thereafter, a player gains control of a system by occupying the hex containing the system's star for one turn after destroying the star's offensive capability; ie. if the occupying vessel is still undestroyed after the enemy's next move.

A player wins if he either (1) destroys all of the enemy vessels or (2) gains control of both systems and has an offensive strength of 10 left after the next turn.

MOVEMENT

In the movement phase of a turn, a player may move all, some or none of his vessels in any direction he wishes, provided he observes the following restrictions:

1. At no time can a vessel move through a hex occupied by another vessel nor can two vessels occupy the same hex. However, a vessel can occupy the same hex as a star.
2. Movement cannot exceed the allowed movement ability nor can movement ability be accumulated from one turn to the next or transferred from one vessel to another.
3. Since the Trautmann Drive cannot operate inside a star's gravity-well, vessels in the hexes adjacent to a star can only travel one hex per turn. Hence, a vessel entering such a hex must stop, but a vessel leaving such a hex for any hex not adjacent to a star can move normally.
4. When a vessel enters an enemy's field of fire, it MUST stop and engage.
5. However, a vessel which starts its turn in an enemy's field of fire can retreat.
6. A vessel which has exercised its full screen option cannot move on the next turn.
7. A disabled vessel must operate at half its movement capability during the movement phase of its next turn, while repairs are being made.

COMBAT

In the combat phase of a turn the player must observe the following restrictions:

1. ALL units with enemy units in their field of fire must participate in battle, and ALL enemy units in the field of fire of friendly units must be attacked.
2. Each of the battles brought about is resolved separately in any order the attacking player wishes.
3. A unit cannot divide its fire - it cannot fire on more than one enemy per turn.
4. More than one unit can attack a single enemy unit, provided that this does not lead to a violation of the other rules.
5. A unit which has exercised its full screen option cannot fire during the combat phase of its next turn.
6. A disabled unit must operate at half its offensive strength during the combat phase of its next turn, and at half its defensive strength during the combat phase of the enemy's next turn, while repairs are being made.

BATTLE RESULTS

The results of each battle are determined as follows:

1. The ODDS are determined by calculating the ratio of the attacker's offensive strength to the defender's defensive strength, after the attacking player specifies which battle he is about to fight and the defending player indicates whether or not he is going to exercise his full screen option (and turns his piece over if he does). Odds are rounded off in favor of the defender; for example, $3/4$ gives odds of 1 - 2 and $14/4$ gives odds of 3 - 1.
2. A die is cast (NOTE: the die controls combat, not movement), and the results

are read from the following table:

ODDS	1-6	1-5	1-4	1-3	1-2	1-1	2-1	3-1	4-1	5-1 or better
	AE	AD	BD	DD	DD	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE
D	AE	AE	AD	BD	DD	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE
I	AE	AE	AE	AD	BD	DD	DE	DE	DE	DE
E	AE	AE	AE	AE	AD	BD	DD	DE	DE	DE
	AE	AE	AE	AE	AE	AD	BD	DD	DE	DE
	AE	AE	AE	AE	AE	AE	AD	BD	DD	DE

Explanation:

AE: Attacker Eliminated: The attacker has been destroyed; remove piece from board.

AD: Attacker Disabled: The attacker has suffered severe damage; this should be indicated by turning over the piece so that the capability restrictions are followed during the subsequent turns.

BD: Both Disabled: Both attacker and defender are damaged; turn over both pieces.

DD: Defender Disabled: Defender has suffered damage; turn piece over.

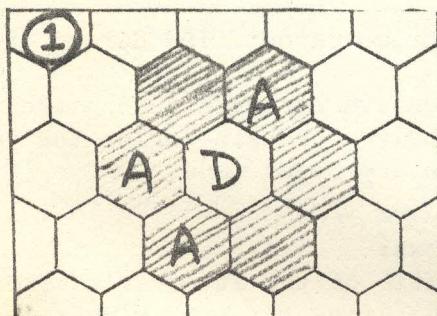
DE: Defender Eliminated: The defender has been destroyed; remove piece from board.

3. NOTES: If a disabled unit is engaged and the combat results in a second disablement, it is then equivalent to total destruction of the disabled vessel. Obviously, destruction of a Stellar System means elimination of that System's offensive and defensive capabilities.

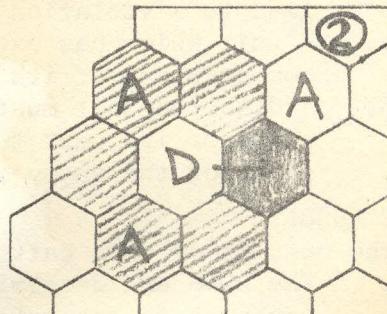
I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bob Hillis for the suggestions he contributed during our discussions on designing a game of space warfare. I would also like to solicit suggestions, improvements and general comments on Raumkrieg from any and all of you. Suggestions, etc. will be published in future issues of COZINE with such comments as I feel necessary.

EXAMPLES

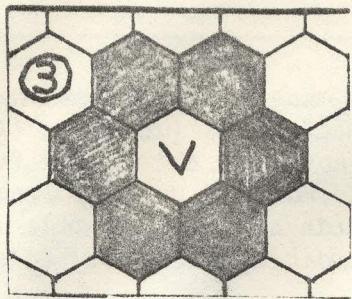
The following figures will illustrate some of the fine points of Raumkrieg that are difficult to properly convey verbally.



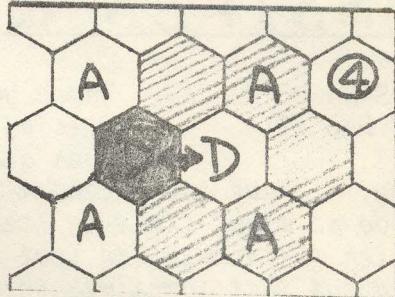
1. Defender (D) is ENGLOBED



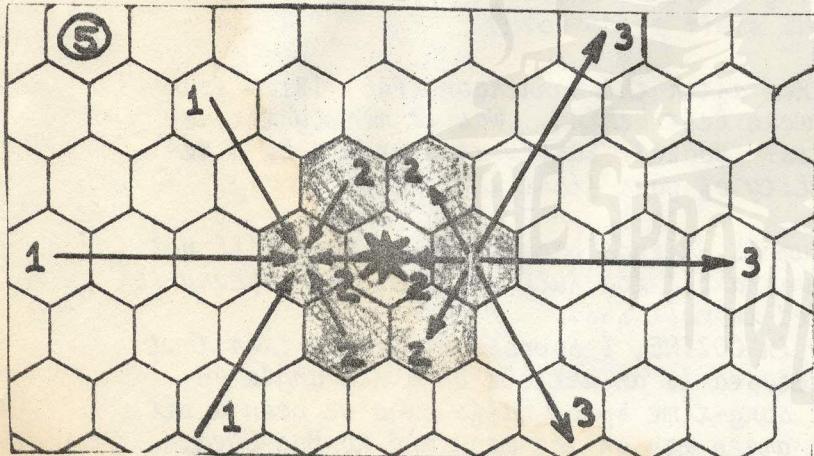
2. Defender (D) is NOT englobed



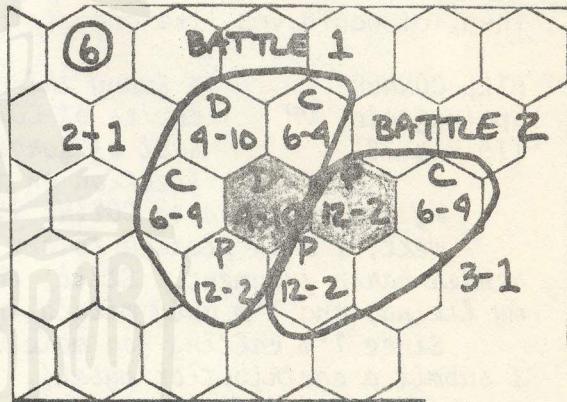
3. The field of fire of any vessel (V) is indicated by the shaded area.



4. The hex occupied by the leftmost defender (dark D) is not in the field of fire or occupied by an attacker (A), therefore, the defender on the right (light D) is NOT englobed.



5. Illustrating movement in a gravity well: (1) stop on entering; (2) move one hex per turn while inside grav well; (3) resume regular movements on leaving.



6. Illustrating multiple combat. Shaded hexes are the defenders, white hexes are the attackers. First figure is movement, second is combat. Notations outside circles are odds.

MISSIVES & MISSILES

L. SPRAGUE de CAMP Thank you for COZINE 1. Mr. Coon has made a very shrewd analysis of my Novarian calendar, which will be useful to me if I ever get around to writing the third novel of the Iorian trilogy. I have the calendar in my notes but don't intend to make it public, because to do so might limit my freedom of choice in future Novarian stories and amke it easier for readers to spot those inconsistencies that we working hacks try to avoid but that sometimes sneak in anyway.

The Novarians use a system of months like the ancient Semitic system: lunar months, intercalating an extra month when the calendar gets too far out of step with the seasons. The lunar month (as I found out in writing historical novels) has great advantages for the fictioneer, because one can easily tell what phase the moon was in on any given day of the month without having to go through tedious calculations.

For a biography of H. P. Lovecraft, I am interested in locating unpublished letters (other than those in the Lovecraft Collection of Brown University) by Lovecraft and other members of the HPL-WT circle of the 1930s, e.g., Robert E. Howard and Clark Ashton Smith, to borrow for photocopying. Any leads that your readers can give me will be much appreciated.

[[There's nothing much on HPL in the Columbus area, Sprague, unless the Ohio State University might have something in its archives. Have you contacted them, or would you like one of the COZINE staff to do so?]]

BILL CONNER
Springfield, OH
(15 Mar 72)

A funny thing happened after the Connercon (Feb. 12) - four copies of COZINE 1 were left behind. Was it merely the result of forgetfulness? Booze? Surely it couldn't be a reflection on the quality of your first ish. (!)(?)

My own reaction to COZINE 1?

Well, I'm so pleased to see my Columbus friends back in print that I'll not render harsh judgment. Still, the ish was a bit too full of sword and sorcery for my liking, and I'm only mildly interested in most s&s.

Since I'm calling for more variety in COZINE, I suppose it's only fair that I submit a contribution myself. So, enclosed is an article on a new angle on spaceflight of interest (I hope) to all song-time space buffs who've been a bit disappointed that we've found no little green men on the moon and no Bug Eyed, Big-Junged monsters on Mars.

[[Referring to Bill's article, there was a short note in a recent issue of NEWSWEEK which mentioned Dr. Weber and noted that a couple of Israeli scientists may have come up with independant confirmation of his findings. Alas, I forgot to clip the column, and I can't remember exactly which issue it appeared in.]]

DICK BYERS
495 Village Dr.
Columbus, OH 43214
(20 Mar 72)

Thanks for sending me the first issue of COZINE. I nearly went blind doing the Wordsearch.

I heartily agree with Bob Hillis concerning Moorcock's "Swords" trilogy, which has to be the most ghastly fantasy I've ever read; next to it, opuses like BRAK THE BARBARIAN GIVES A HICKEY TO A DEMON and KOTHAR IN DRAG look great. (You have to hand it to Moorcock, though; anybody who divides a 150 page novel into three "books" has a lot of guts.) But I would like to take exception to the review of Brian Stalpford's trilogy, on several grounds.

First, though there are a number of similarities, DAY OF WRATH isn't a steal from THE RETURN OF THE KING. Mark Chaos is nothing at all like Frodo. The semi-villain Darkscar has nothing in common with Gandalf beyond the fact that each desires to stop a would-be conqueror. Helljanita has nothing in common with Sauron beyond the desire to conquer; their plans and motives are completely different. Stapleford has no characters corresponding to Sam, Aragorn, Denethor, Merry, Pip-pin, the Nazgul, Gollum, Legolas, Gimli, What's-her-face the princess of Rohan (I'm too lazy to look it up), or Saruman. Stapleford has nothing corresponding to the "drag-the-ring-to-the-volcano-and-chuck-it-in" plot of LOTR. There's no-think in Tolkien at all resembling the "distortion of time" plot of the DIES IRAE trilogy. LOTR is largely concerned with the restoration of a great empire; Stapleford has written about the fall of a galactic empire ruled by the House of Stars. So, you can see that they aren't all that similar.

Second, admitting freely that the first two volumes are a reworking of the Homeric material, what's wrong with that, as long as we are given a fresh slant on it? Any artist is free to work with myth, his task being to make the old plot interesting with new ideas and insights (and, of course, good writing), and, in my opinion, Stapleford does that. I think that his new interpretations of the characters are very convincing and very interesting; this feature of the work especially reminds me of White's reworking of Mallory and Graves' treatment of the story of Jason and the Argonauts.

Third, the revelation of Chaos's origin isn't just pulled out of the air in volume three, as Bob implies; Stapleford carefully builds up to it through the first two books. Fourth, in my opinion, the writing of the trilogy is exceedingly good, especially for novels of this genre, and keeps the story moving right along; in other words, I don't agree that the plot drags between battle scenes or that the social comment is clumsily done.

Fifth, Stapleford does provide an answer to the thematic questions he has raised. I don't want to discuss the theme in depth, partly because of laziness, partly because I wouldn't want to spoil the books for anyone who hasn't read them yet, but I will say that Chaos's final decision (more complex by far than merely to "do nothing", as Bob puts it), which represents a refusal to violate the freedom of his fellow man, is Stapleford's solution to the ethical issues he raised.

Sixth, I would respond to Bob's comment that Stapleford has nothing new to say by pointing out that a totally new idea (in philosophy or literature, at least) is incredibly rare. The most a reader can expect is a new approach, and Stapleford provides this; if you doubt it, look at the eccentric construction of these books (their most striking feature). This construction, though not discussed in Bob's review, which periodically brings the story to a grinding halt while the author gives commentary on characters and situations (something like the chorus of a Greek tragedy) would be deadly to a novel if the author weren't in complete control of his subject matter; Stapleford is, and so this technique adds greatly to the depth and richness of his work.

Finally, Bob says that the author doesn't understand the psychology of leadership. In the trilogy, Stapleford claims that men become leaders because they possess charisma, bravado or brute power, rather than wisdom, intelligence or virtue. This is perhaps an unpleasant view, but I wouldn't say that it's wrong; maybe Bob's perspective on the human condition is a little more optimistic than mine.

Well, I didn't mean to write quite so much; I think my comments are longer than the original review. But I was concerned that Bob's remarks would keep people from buying the books, and wanted to present an opposing viewpoint. It would be a pity for anyone to overlook some good SF books when they are as scarce as they have been for the past few months. All the new stuff is really bad! Even LeGuin's THE LATHE OF HEAVEN and Asimov's THE GODS THEMSELVES are atrocious!

It's reached to point where there's nothing to read except the reprints in the Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series.

[[Thanks for a very well-detailed letter, Dick. Since I haven't yet read the Stapleford books, I can't very well comment on your comments; and Bob isn't here to give his views. I can, however, most heartily concur with you regarding the parlous state of new SF publishing: I used to buy (and read) something like 200 new SF books a year; now, it's down to more like 20. Even the new releases lists in LOCUS look awfully barren nowadays. I wonder, is it a creative drought on the part of the authors, an effect of the current mini-recession, a lack of buying interest on the part of the SF reading public, or what? Anyone got any good ideas, or, better yet, useful suggestions? I'm fresh out of ideas, myself.]]

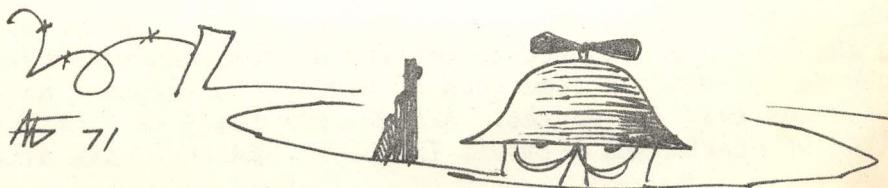
We Also Heard From the following Nice People, who had intersting things to say, but either didn't wish them published or didn't write for a larger audience: ALEXIS GILLILAND, who sent art (we love you, Alexis, really!); MIKE GLICKSOHN, who thought COZINE needed a better visual aspect (I hope we're achieving that, Mike); and LARRY PROPP, who thinks COZINE I suffered from a dearth of material worth commenting on - he enjoyed the issue, but hadn't read any of the books that formed the basis for the articles and reviews.

((Special Announcement))

SCIENCE FICTION EXHIBIT AT OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Libraries at the Ohio State University have an exhibit now on display called "Science Fiction: A Modern Genre". The exhibit features SF magazines (Amazing, Astounding, etc.), criticism, fanzines and other material from the collections of the Division of Special Collections (Rare Books). Mr. Richard Centing, Reference Librarian, OSU, 1858 Neil Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43210 is doing a checklist of Ohio fanzines (retrospective and current), and would like to hear from editors and collectors. Please contact Mr. Centing directly, since the editor of COZINE doesn't as yet know exactly what he has in mind or needs for his checklist. Mr. Centing has also mentioned that the exhibit at OSU will be open during Marcon; since the exhibit is in the main lobby of the Main Library and no fee card or other identification is required (to the best of my knowledge; I'm not a student there) to see it, I would strongly urge all of you to drop by and take a good look at some of the old treasures of the field. Most of the COZINE staff, or the members of CØSFS can give you directions to the Library.

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