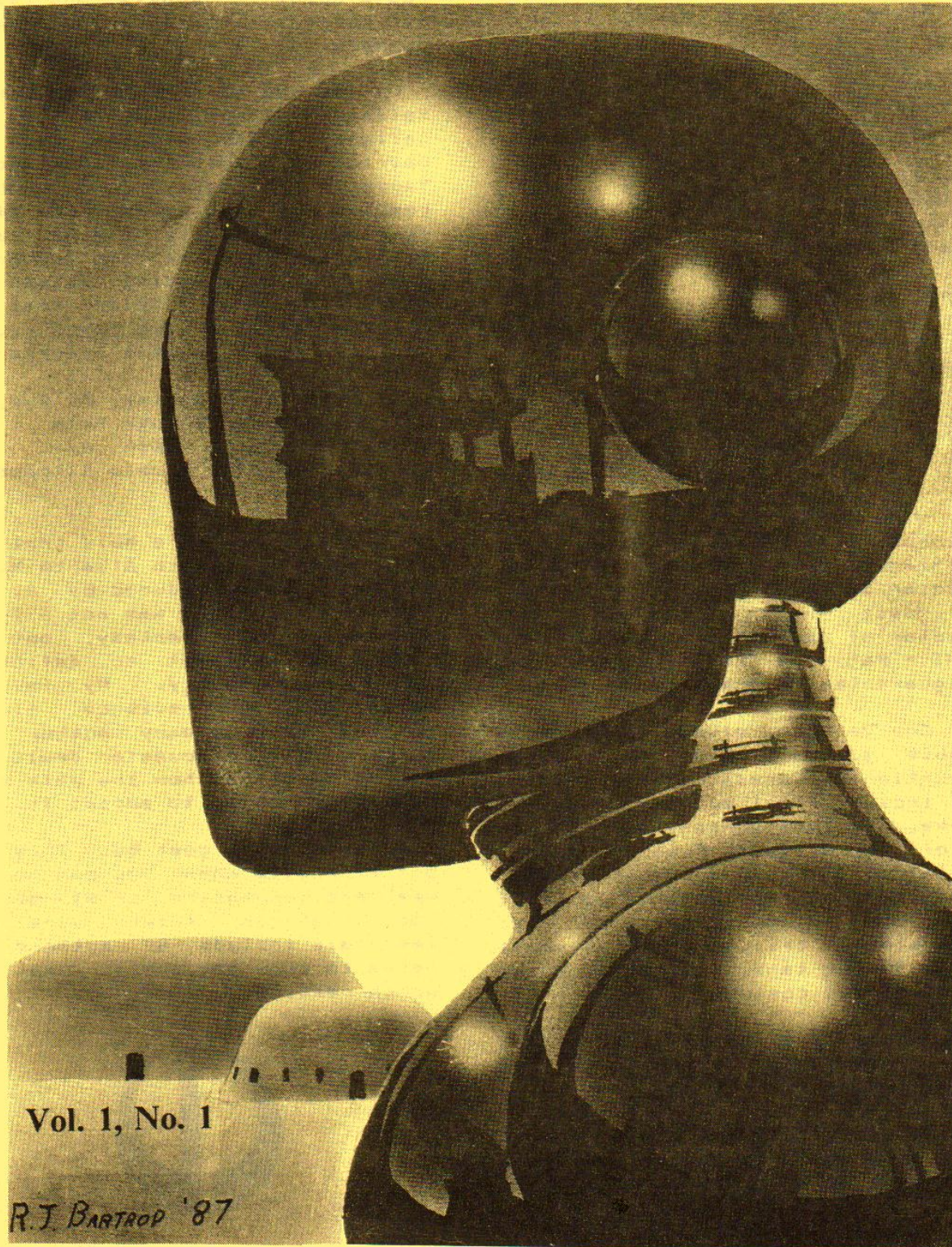


Xeno-file

Science Fiction and Fantasy Zine



Vol. 1, No. 1

R.J. BARTROP '87

Xenofile
Volume 1, Number 1

Table of Contents

Con-Version V.....p.1
 Olympic Arts Festival.....p.1
 Conversation.....p.2
 Dave's Raves.....p.2
 Up and Coming.....p.4
 Red Stars.....p.4

Xenofile is a quarterly publication of the Con-Version Science Fiction Society. Mailing address:

Xenofile
PO Box 1088 Stn.M
Calgary, Alberta,
Canada T2P 2K9

phone (403)-242-8041

Subscription rates are \$4.00 Canadian/year postpaid.

Con-Version V
Cliff Samuels

With guests like Robert Silverberg, Karen Haber Silverberg, L. Sprague and Catherine de Camp, Canadian author - Crawford Kilian, fan guest - Jon Gustafson, and director of marketing at Lucas Film (ILM) - Patricia Rose Duignan, you are guaranteed a great convention.

Con-Version gives you more notable guests than any other convention in Canada. Other guests will include local authors, J. Brian Clarke, and Dave Duncan, as well as out of town writers, Frank Robinson, Leslie Gadallah, and Eileen Brady. In addition to our guests, we will have lots of contests such as: short story, trivia quiz, Gumball Rally, Turing tank, gaming, computer graphics, and costume.

Memberships are only \$15 until July 1, 1988, and \$20 thereafter and at the convention.

SPECIAL NOTE: we are limiting the daily attendance to 700, so get your membership before they're gone.

Olympic Arts Festival
Cliff Samuels

Science fiction has finally been recognized as a legitimate genre. The Olympic Arts Festival had a number of panels and readings by science fiction and fantasy authors.

The two main readings were by Spider Robinson, author of the Callahan's Bar stories, and Guy Gavriel Kay, author of the Fionavar Tapestry trilogy. The Robinson reading was the second one of the festival, directly after author Pierre Berton. The room was packed, with people standing outside the doors listening. Spider read from his new novel, Time Pressure, and kept the audience well entertained.

The other reading, by Guy, was well attended, though held in the afternoon on a week day. It's amazing how many people slipped away from work.

Two panels were held that week, one on fantasy, with Alberto Manguel and Guy Kay, introduced by J. Brian Clarke. The panel was not a typical discussion on fantasy, but was rather, an attempt to define the genre more clearly. My favourite panel was on science fiction, chaired by Calgary author Dave Duncan. The discussion dealt with trends in SF and how the main stream public is coming to accept it.

Each panel cost \$5. This is a bit expensive when you can go to a week end convention for \$15-\$20. I hope that in future more arts festivals include SF authors. It helps to show the public that SF is worth reading.



Conversation

Cris Stroup

Welcome to Xeno-file, the first in a long series of interesting and informative publications, I hope. Xeno-file is sponsored by the Con-Version society, and as such, it will contain much information about the above mentioned convention. This, however, need not deter those who work on other conventions from submitting similar information to Xeno-file. Also, our regular contributors will review other conventions as often as possible, always with as fair minded an approach as can be achieved by people for whom Con-Version is "a way of life."

We are offering the first issue of Xeno-file free of charge, in a crude attempt to get you to subscribe to subsequent zines. If we receive sufficient subscriptions, (about 200 would be nice) the second issue will be even bigger and better than this one. I read few zines, and, therefore, have only a vague, and possibly distorted, idea of what they should contain. Thus, suggestions and contributions are vital to the survival of this fledgling publication. Future zines might include stories, poems, computer programmes and movie reviews, as well as other wild and wonderful things which mere words cannot describe. Our only limit is your imagination.

Dave's Raves

Dave Hall

Welcome to this first installment of book reviews. As far as I know, this is the first thing that I have ever written for publication in a fanzine or whatever, and I hope that you enjoy it as much as I have enjoyed writing it. There is, however, an ulterior motive driving me to do this in my most valued spare time. Quite frankly, I'm hoping that somewhere along the line hosts of publishers may notice these ramblings and take it upon themselves to send me free books and galleys. (No chance, eh)! Should this remote possibility occur, there is a chance that I could get out some reviews while the books are still on store shelves.

I am hoping that these reviews will prove beneficial to you, the reader, in choosing what to read. The problem is vast. During 1987, there were near 900 new books, and nearly 700 reprints to choose from. There is just no way any of us can take it all in. The other problem,

of course, is that most reviewers of books are writers themselves. To a rather large extent their opinions are based on the quality of the writing, and the form of the novel as a novel. I'm not a writer, as should be manifestly clear by now. I am a reader, and also a book store manager and, as such, come into contact with many people who have their own opinions. Hopefully this combination will work.

As will be evident in the reviews, I read a very mixed bag of books. I like to read first novels, best sellers, quasi-science fiction, and non-fiction by SF authors. I am hoping that with such a diverse selection everyone will be able to find something of value to read. If not, please write and let me know what you would like to hear about, and I'll give it a stab.

Enough prattling. Let's try a review and see what happens. First up is Tommyknockers by Stephen King. (Putnams, 1987. 560pp. hc) Now, wait a minute---I heard that groan. Face the facts, People: I'll bet that nearly half the people who read SF also read King. And I'll also bet that most of these people like King's books more than most of the science fiction that they read. And why not? He's a good writer. King can portray perfectly normal people in totally bizarre situations and have them react rationally in a way that we can accept. Tommyknockers is certainly no exception.

Stephen King is finally showing that he has matured as a writer. The process started with the publication of It and culminates within the pages of Tommyknockers. Where King used to use children as vehicles for portraying horrific scenes, he now uses adults. And the story, well, it's something else. No, there are no vampires nor werewolves nor, thankfully, rabid dogs. What there is is a spaceship. That's right, a spaceship. One that has been buried in the ground for millenia. As the ship is slowly unearthed by its discoverer, it begins to exert control over the neighbouring community, and slowly begins to change the inhabitants into "tommyknockers".

Sounds alot like a science fiction story, no? NO! While all the elements are there, none of them are really science fiction. No attempt is made to explain the propulsive force of the ship. No attempt is made to explain how the people are becoming tommyknockers. No attempt is made to explain how these people can make some of the most incredible machines ever seen with batteries, egg crates and whatnot. No, this is definitely not a science fiction novel. Yet, as we read, we find mentions of Lovecraft, of Bradbury, of Anderson. Why,

there's even mention of Gernsback as the father of science fiction. In fact, as I was reading this book, I felt like I was watching some of the classic SF and horror movies of the '50s. Some scenes were certainly drawn from these movies. King is most definitely paying homage to a past heritage that has helped him to become the success that he is. He does remain true to form, however, as this is most decidedly a horror novel. I give this book my highest recommendation--but be warned. This book does not have a happy ending.

A short note here for Crooked House by Thomas Monteleone and John DeChancie. (Tor, Dec. 1987, 346pp. pb) I like to read non-genre books by sf authors and I especially like post nuclear holocaust novels. The blurb on the cover reads, "In an endless labyrinth, the spirits walk, carrying death on an atomic wind." What a rip! There was no bomb. Not even on the last page. The book was OK, insomuch as a normal, readable horror novel is OK, but, and this is a big but, I hate blurbs that are so misleading. I can recommend this book to any architecture buffs that may be out there. To all else, I'd say don't waste your time. If, like me, you do enjoy post-holocaust novels, then definitely pick up Swan's Song by Robert R. McCammon. (Pocket, June 1987, 956pp. pb) This was definitely THE book of the year in Horror and I fully recommend it to everyone. I'll do a review of this one when I see it on the shelves again.



Up And Coming

Cliff Samuels

This is a column about books that you will soon see in your bookstore, and what your favorite authors have sold.

Last year, of the 900 publications, there were 298 new science fiction novels and 352 new fantasy/horror novels - some good, many awful. I will not list all books coming out, but I will let you know when your favorite series will have its next installment.

May

Riders Of The Wind by Jack Chalker
The Ragged Astronauts by Bob Shaw
The Annals Of The Heechee by Fred Pohl
The Reluctant Swordsman by Dave Duncan
Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency by Douglas Adams
Prelude To Foundation by Isaac Asimov

June

To Sail Beyond The Sunset by Robert Heinlein
Future Magic by Robert Forward
The Man-Kzin Wars Ed. by Larry Niven
Highway To Eternity by Clifford Simak
Federation World by James White

July

Sign Of Chaos by Roger Zelazny
Flinx In Flux by Alad Dean Foster
Dance Band On The Titanic by Jack Chalker
The Story Of The Stone by Barry Hughart
Stainless Steel Rat Gets Drafted by Harry Harrison

This is just a taste of what's to come. See you next issue.

Red Stars

Stephen Johnson

Having just spent five months (Sept. '87 - Jan. '88) in Moscow, I believe that I am in a better position than most Canadians to try to present some kind of description of the state of Science Fiction & Fantasy over there. This column will be a more or less regular feature in which I will deal with F&SF of Eastern Europe in general and the Soviet Union in particular. If any of you have any suggestions or questions on the column or the subject, please feel free to let me know.

My arrival in the Soviet Union was not as well organized as I would have liked, as I found out that I was going only a little over a month before the fact. As a result, I didn't really have adequate time to warn my regular Soviet correspondent, Igor Tolokonnikov (who lives in Volgograd) of my arrival, and to arrange for introductions. Also, my Russian was severely limited, and I wanted to develop a reasonable degree of fluency in the language before meeting a group of strangers.

At the beginning of October, however, Igor came to Moscow, and introduced me to Volodya Orlov, the secretary of the Moscow Science Fiction Club, MKLF (from the Russian initials Moskovski Klub Loobeetelyee Fantasteeka) and we generally had a reunion over a bottle of Bailey's Irish Cream.

Anyway, I started going to a monthly series of lectures on SF that were going on at the Library of Foreign Literature, and resolved to attend the October meeting of the SF club. Unfortunately, I got lost looking for it (it's quite difficult to find...no, really) and so the November meeting ended up being my first. The club meetings run for

about two hours, a stone's throw from the Tretyakov gallery. My first meeting was quite interesting, involving a debate about how to reform the main Soviet SF publishing house Molodaya Gvardia (Young Guard). The club meetings, however, are not the main working sessions - those are mostly conducted informally at gatherings in the homes of the more active members.

The topic of the December meeting was "Canadian SF Fandom - particularly Con-Version" and was presented by yours truly in Russian (more or less). January's meeting, 3 days before my departure, featured the All-Union (i.e. national) Science Fiction Convention to be held mid-March in Kiev, and Eurocon (the European SF convention, as if you couldn't guess) coming up in July.

While I was in Moscow, I became quite well acquainted with the local fans, and it was very interesting to compare literary views with them. A good percentage (10-20%) do at least some of their SF reading in English, and a couple of people asked to advertise for pen pals (in English). They are:

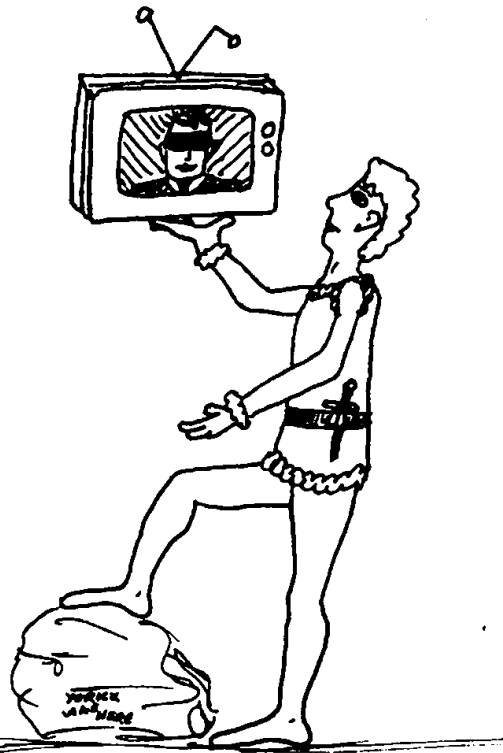
USSR 105264 Moscow
7th. Parkovaya St. #28 Apt.100
Alexander Korzhenevski

and:

USSR 107076 Moscow
Korolenko St. #7 corpus 3 Apt.24
Raisa Zemel

From experience, I can tell you that they're both very interesting people, with broad literary interests. Amongst Western authors, Alexander particularly likes authors such as Robert Silverberg, George R.R. Martin, and Bob Shaw. As for Raisa, her favourite authors include Ray Bradbury and Isaac Asimov.

In future columns I will expound in more detail on what is going on in both the literature and fandom, and try to cover some of the history of both. So tune in again to the Soviet affairs column next time in Xenofile!



ALAS, POOR MAX. I KNEW HIM, HORATIO..

Xenofile Credits
Volume 1, Number 1

Chief Editor: Cris Stroup

Staff: Eileen Capes
Stephen Johnson
Cliff Samuels

Art: Richard Bartrop (cover)
Leslie Williams (cartoon)
Grant Zelych (logo)
Eileen Capes (incidental art)