

SCIENCE FICTION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

SFRA NEWSLETTER #30

MAY 1974

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ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The SFRA Executive Committee has often hinted at its dissatisfaction with the Newsletter, but has never responded to our repeated requests for instructions. Members of the Committee have been uncooperative about sending in news of their own activities; and we have received little communication from the various standing committees of SFRA. Under these circumstances it is extremely difficult to publish the Newsletter, and impossible to publish it on anything like a regular schedule.

Yet the continual stream of requests which we receive indicates that there is a real need for the sort of communications process which we have been trying to foster. Most of the complaints we have received from SFRA members indicate that their major source of dissatisfaction with the Newsletter is its irregularity of publication.

Therefore we have decided to attempt to continue publication of the SFRA Newsletter for the time being, relying on the cooperation of those who wish this communications medium to function. What we need most of all is news: information on research projects, new publications, meetings, curricular developments, and the like. If you want a Newsletter, you'll have to contribute to it: there's no other way.

NOTES AND NOTICES

The Science Fiction Research Association's Annual Meeting will be held at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee on 12-14 July 1974. Completed papers are due by 1 June 1974. A Workshop on Teaching Science Fiction in the High School and College Classroom will be held on the UWM campus on 9-11 July, under the direction of Thomas D Clareson and Beverly Friend. For information consult: Dr Robert Galbreath, Local Chairman, Center for Twentieth Century Studies, UWM, Milwaukee WI 53201.

The Ninth Annual Nebula Awards were presented by the Science Fiction Writers of America on Saturday, 27 April 1974, at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. The ceremonies began with the introduction of notables by Norman Spinrad, who also introduced Robert Bloch, the evening's Master of Ceremonies. Short speeches (and poetry readings) were given by Ray Bradbury, Theodore Sturgeon, Col Alfred Worden, Dr Bruce Murray, Dr Harrison Brown, and Robert Heinlein. Harry Harrison presented a special posthumous SFWA award to Edward G Robinson. Capt Edgar Mitchell read off the nominees for Nebula Awards, and announced the winners:

Best Dramatic Presentation of 1973:

Soylent Green, by Stanley R Greenberg from
Harry Harrison's novel Make Room, Make Room

Best Short Story of 1973:

"Love Is the Plan, the Plan Is Death", by
James Tiptree, Jr (from Alien Condition)

Best Novelette of 1973:

"Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand", by Vonda
N McIntyre (Analog)

Best Novella of 1973:

"The Death of Dr Island", by Gene Wolfe
(Universe 3)

Best Novel of 1973:

Rendezvous with Rama, by Arthur C Clarke
(Galaxy; Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch)

The proceedings concluded with a talk on Clarke by Robert Heinlein, while a copy of Rendezvous with Rama made the rounds for everyone's signature; the book will be airmailed to Clarke in Sri Lanka.

A week previously, the Second Annual John W Campbell Memorial Award for the Best Science Fiction Novel of 1973 was presented at California State University, Fullerton. After coordinator Prof Willis McNelly's introduction the program seemed to lapse into disarray; but a good crowd was present for the evening Awards Ceremony. James Gunn was Master of Ceremonies; Harry Harrison contributed a reminiscence of John Campbell. A special nonfiction award went to Carl Sagan for Cosmic Connection. In a surprise tie, the winners of the John W Campbell Memorial Award were announced as Malevil, by Robert Merle, and Rendezvous with Rama, by Arthur C Clarke. Judges were Thomas D Claeson, Beverly Friend, James Gunn, Mark R Hillegas, Willis E McNelly, and Peter Nicholls.

Our correspondent comments that "while the evening activities went smoothly, the disorganized state of the afternoon's indicated a lack of planning and/or control (apparently McNelly had little or no help). The result was a very bad impression of SF on the minds of those attendees who are new to the field, and a feeling of dismay in those who are more experienced... Discontent was expressed

by a number of writers as well. Badly presented activities of this sort, occurring in an academic setting, can only add fuel to the arguments of those who feel that an academic rape of the field is in progress." A final note: a commemorative poster sold at the affair misspelled Campbell's name as "Cambell".

Of the making of awards there seems to be no end. Prof Charles G Waugh of the University of Maine at Augusta recently announced the formation of an organisation of instructors of science fiction in higher education (ISFHE):

If you teach or have taught a course about science fiction at a junior college, college, or university within the last three years you are eligible to join. The purpose of founding this organization was to create a comfortable home for the broadly based individuals who teach science fiction in higher education and to create what will hopefully become a major new award in science fiction: The Jupiter Award.

The Jupiter Award is intended to represent for instructors of science fiction in higher education what the Hugo Award represents for fans and what the Nebula Award represents for writers. The award will be voted on each year by the membership of ISFHE and will be given for best science fiction novel, novella, novelette, and short story.

Further information may be obtained from Charles G Waugh, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Communication, University of Maine at Augusta, Augusta ME 04330.

In view of the dissatisfaction expressed in many quarters with the John W Campbell Memorial Award, the introduction of a new award may be somewhat controversial. The SFRA NEWSLETTER solicits its readers' comments on science fiction awards; we hope to devote space to this matter in the next issue.

A new World Future Studies Federation is being formed; its general assembly was held 29-30 March 1974 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. 600 people from 45 countries are involved in the creation of this organisation; a charter and provisional Executive Board are now in existence. Bertrand de Jouvenel (France) is Chairman; Pavel Apostol (Rumania) is Deputy Chairman; and Peter Menke Glückert (German Federal Republic) is General Secretary. Further information on WFSF will appear in forthcoming issues of the SFRA NEWSLETTER.

Since January 1974, Prognoza has been published by the Centre of Information and Documentation in Social and Political Sciences as a journal "illustrating the major trends in economic and social forecasting, in forecasting methods and techniques". Prognoza is published monthly in Rumanian.

BISNAAK:

a column, conducted by Leslie Kay Swigart

Suggestions of things that "someone really ought to do" should be sent to me at: Box 8570, Long Beach CA 90808.

9. Someone really ought to do a motif-index for science fiction. (S J Sackett, "A Motif Index for Science Fiction?", Extrapolation 1:38 (May 1960))
10. Someone really ought to do a continuing bibliography of the critical literature of SF. (LKS, Hal Hall, Fred Lerner)
11. Someone really ought to do a continuing bibliography of SF reference works of many kinds: biographical dictionaries, indexes, abstracting efforts, etc. (LKS & FL)
12. Someone really ought to do subject bibliographies of primary materials by categories, e g, ecological SF, sword & sorcery, space opera, SF dealing with... (art, religion, mutations, communications, chemistry, etc), and so forth. (LKS)
13. Someone really ought to do subject bibliographies of secondary materials by categories, as above. (LKS)
14. Someone really ought to do a "Fanzine Digest" to publish more widely many useful excerpts from fanzines. (FL)
15. Someone really ought to do a new Fancylopedia type of publication with definitions of things unique to the SF field (e g, "space warp") or which have special meanings in the SF field; perhaps with various definitions of the same term drawn from a number of works or solicited from a number of various writers, scholars, etc. (LKS)
16. Someone really ought to do a listing of recordings available in the field as the beginnings of an Oral History Archives. Oral history interviews should be set up with writers and others, particularly to cover the early period of science fiction. (LKS & FL)

Reader contributions are solicited for this column.