ALPHA LOG

ISSUE ELEVEN-TWELVE EDITOR: CHRIS LANDRY

EDITORIAL

Welcome to a very special issue of ALPHA LOG. As you may have previously noticed, this newsletter is a special double issue. In this issue, you will find many special features that are new to ALPHA LOG. Among them are three interviews with popular science fiction writers, a fantastic SPACE: 1999 short story, poetry, atrwork, and a photo section. I'm sure that you'll enjoy this issue.

I would like to point out that though submissions for ALPHA LOG are pouring in (good work, gang), contributions for The Gerry Anderson Album have been slow. Only a dozen or so have sent anything in. If you have not yet sent anything in, please do.

Finally, I am happy to report that The Alpha Book is now in its second printing. If you would like to obtain a copy (it really is very well written), just send $3.95 to this newsletter.

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"SPACE: 1999" CONVENTION '79 UPDATE

As I reported in ALPHA LOG 10, this year's SPACE: 1999 summer convention is scheduled for July 27-29 at the William Penn Hotel in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

So far, confirmed guests include Gerry Anderson, Barry Gray, and Anton Phillips. Barry Morse has also arranged to be at the convention. In addition to the guests and their talks, features will include an auction, a costume party, a banquet, an art show, and a large dealers' room. Science fiction films and SPACE: 1999 episodes are being collected for the con and a SPACE: 1999 slide show has been planned.

For more information, reservation forms, and such, write to: "The National Save: 1999 Alliance"; 123 Fawn Valley Drive; McMurray, PA 15317.

THE SCIENCE FICTION SPACE HAPPENING III

On March 23-25, 1979, the third anual SCIENCE FICTION SPACE HAPPENING was held in Springfield, Massachusetts. As in previous years, the HAPPENING "happened" at the Springfield Quadrangle complex. Since the first two years of THE SCIENCE FICTION SPACE HAPPENING series were sell outs, the managers of the program extended it for two days (Saturday and Sunday, the 24th and 25th) with a coctail reception the night before (Friday, the 23rd). The turn out was impressive.

Many guest speakers were featured at THE SCIENCE FICTION SPACE HAPPENING III. Among them were science fiction authors Robert Adams, Ben Bova, James P. Hogan, Janet Morris, Victoria Schochet, and Robert Thurston, NASA specialist Larry Bilbrough, Space Shuttle pilot Col. Donald Peterson, Chief Investigator Allan Hendry from the Center for UFO Studies, and Drs. David Van Blerkom and William Herbst, Associate Professors of Astronomy. Interviews are in this issue.

Film showings included the classic THIS ISLAND EARTH, THE MYSTERIANS, and NOVA episodes "The Universe," "The Case of the Bermuda Triangle," and "The Search for Life." Dr. J. Allen Hynek's UFO REPORT slide show could also be seen

Continuous displays at THE SCIENCE FICTION SPACE HAPPENING III featured several NASA and Smithsonian Institution exhibits (including a 1/15 scale model of the Space Shuttle), a Goddard rocketry display, and a book fair. The Hamden County Radio Association's display of audio and video broadcasting equipment was also shown.



"The Springfield SPACE: 1999 Club" lent a hand in production and operation in the SCIENCE FICTION SPACE HAPPENING III as it had in past years. Many local members, some even in costume, worked as information consultants, guides, book salesmen, ushers, and such. The program was greatly enjoyed by the public and staff alike.

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INTERVIEW INTRIDUCTORY

As stated above, interviews conducted at THE SCIENCE FICTION SPACE HAPPENING will be featured in the next two issues of ALPHA LOG. In this issue, you may find interviews with authors Robert Thurston, Ben Bova, and James P. Hogan.

ROBERT THURSTON INTERVIEW

BIO: Robert Thurston is the creator of the popular television series BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. He is the author of the novel Alicia II. Thurston has also co-authored, with Glen Larson, the novel adaptations of Battlestar Galactica and The Cylon Death Machine.

Landry: First of all, since we are primarily a SPACE: 1999 publication, what are your feelings towards the series?

Thurston: I saw the first episode where the moon split away and that's the only one I've ever seen. I may have seen a later episode, now that I think about it, but it's run on syndication so I didn't see it very often. They carry it, but I just haven't seen very much of it. I wouldn't want to criticize it. It looked pretty good to me, but I haven't kept up with it. I don't watch DOCTOR WHO either, so don't feel too bad.

Landry: What got you interested in science fiction?

Thurston: When I was a kid, I read it alot. From the time I was, oh say ten or twelve, I started getting interested. I can't remember what I got interested in first. We had pulps back then. I'm older then you are by a couple of years. They had pulps then, y'know, Astounding Stories and all of that kind of thing, and one of the sleaziest pulps was Planet Stories. It had the worst monsters on the cover and they were always carrying away the most scantly clad women, so naturally I wanted to read that. But in the middle of this awful "stuff" in Planet Stories were stories by Ray Bradbury; he was fairly early in his career, and you know Ray Bradbury stories. I got interested in the poetic quality of them and the imaginative aspect of them and this whole business about Mars fascinated me, probably in the same way that SPACE: 1999 fascinates you now. In other words, our reactions are probably very similar, just generations apart or so. I started getting interested in that for a while and was reading whatever I could get my hands on. At the same time I was reading westerns and everything else. I devoured anything I could get ahold of. I was reading alot of comic books, but at that time I think science fiction was probably my favorite. As I got older I got away from it for awhile, although I would read it occationally for someone like Bradbury. I got very interested in

Thurston: (cont.) Phillip K. Dick for awhile and I'm still interested in him. Then later, when I was a teacher, Professor of English at Western Pennsylvania College, I was told by a friend that his office-mate, Robin Scott Wilson, who was a science fiction author and still is, was starting a science fiction workshop at Clarion College in Pennsylvania. He took me over and Robin and I hit it off very well. We started talking about science fiction and he told me about what was going on lately. And as a result of a very complicated set of events that I won't go into, I wound up at the Clarion Science Fiction Writers Workshop. So really, it was the workshop that brought me back into science fiction and increased my interest.

Landry: Of all of your science fiction works, which is your personal favorite? and why?

Thurston: Well, I suppose that for me at this point it's my novel, my own movel, since it's the only one I've done outside of the BATTLESTAR GALACTICA novelizations which are a different thing. Its title is Alicia II and it's published by Putnam-Berkley in hardback and will be out later in paperback. So it's at the forefront of my consciousness. Among short stories, I don't know that I have a personal favorite. One of my favorites is a story called Wheels because it did more for me than any other short story. It's one that came out of the Clarion Workshop and got a prize or an award or whatever they were giving at the time. It's also the one that I'm working on for my next novel. I'm developing the ideas into the next novel of my own. And then there's another story that I'm very fond of. It was published in Fantasy and Science Fiction and was called The Mars Ship. I don't know why I'm so fond of it. It's really basically a story about banal people doing banal things and at one point, they come to realize what this Mars Ship is. I won't say what it is, but it had this particular effect on all of them. For some reason, this story haunts me. Most of the stories I write, y'know, go away until they get published and they're good, I hope. But this one haunts me in a way that no other story that I've written probably does. There are a number of other stories. I could go on and just hype all my stories for you here, but why do that.

Landry: Concerning BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, did the series live up to your expectations?

Thurston: I don't know quite how to answer that. I don't think that anybody who's deeply involved in science fiction would say that a series like this completely lives up to their expectations. They might, as people have, be disturbed by inaccuracies and certain inconsistancies that are caused not so much by any lack of art by the people who do it, but simply by the needs of television and changes that have to be made. Several changes were made from the original script that I saw 'till the script that went on television. There were even changes made between the feature movie version which was released in Canada and the television pilot as it was done. On the other hand, I think that anybody who's written science fiction for a long time and is particularly interested in the space opera aspect or the cinematic aspect as done in FLASH GORDON and BUCK ROGERS, this series along with movies like STAR WARS must at least have a nostalgic value and at least bring them to remembering. In other words, it has the "feel" of what we used to read, y'know, like dogfights in the sky and the whole optimistic message. The search for Earth has that kind of mythical value that we used to read science fiction for. I don't know, maybe we still do.

Landry: What does the future have in store for the production of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA?

Thurston: Well, in terms of my books, I've just finished the third one which I believe will be subtitled as The Tombs of Cobal. It's based on the episode that was shown in the second week of the series, "Lost Planet of the Gods." At that point, my responsibility to the show runs out. I'm contracted for a total of three books and any more depends on some very dull business things. I'm not enthusiastic about doing any more right now because I have alot of my own work that I'd like to get to. I've been dealing with other people's characters for a good deal of time, thirteen or fourteen months now, with very little time in between books. As far as the future of the production of the series goes, the answer to that occurs sometime around April when the network executives all get together and decide what shows will remain on the schedule and what shows will not. I am not terribly familiar with the ratings on GALACTICA.

Thurston: (cont.) I know they started out with very high ratings and that they slipped and a couple of shows were very low and then that they came back up, so that now they're somewhere in the middle. The middle is that grey area that is impossible to predict in terms of television. They may renew it, on the basis of all kinds of reasons that only network executives can explain, or they may not because it has a very high cost-per-episode expense. And that cost ratio is the kind of thing that would sway them one way or another.

Landry: Do you have a science fiction author? and who?

Thurston: It depends upon the mood I'm in. I'm very fond of Samuel R. Delany, Chip Delany, and most of his work. I've read almost everything that Phil Dick has written at this point, partially because I had to do a critical essay on him, but mostly because I enjoy it. I like very much what Tom Dish does. I still go back to Bradbury now and then, and to Heinlein, y'know. Heinlein did some amazing things. His politics may not always please me, some of his reactionary qualities don't get to me, but the man has a great imagination. He's done more for science fiction that any single author that I know. He may not be my favorite, but I sure do admire him alot.

Landry: What is your favorite science fiction movie or television series?

Thurston: Well, devoid of the television series (I believe this refers to BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. -Ed.), I suppose I could get off on something like STAR TREK for the reasons I said earlier about reminding me of old science fiction reading. Currently, I was much more impressed by CLOSE ENCOUNTERS. I really got excited by that film. It's got its dead spots and I know there are some things not interesting about it. But when he got to the end and that big ship was there, that big ship was more awesome to me than anything I saw in STAR TREK. I wanted to go with Dreyfuss on to that ship and see what it was like inside. I understand that they're filming a new thing for a re-release where we actually see what Dreyfuss found inside and I'm really dieing to see that. As far as other science fiction movies go, I've always been an admirer of the first INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS film. Not so much the second, although I found the second quite entertaining. I don't know, those are the most recent ones that interest me.

Landry: Why do you think that science fiction has been so popular?

Thurston: Certainly it has waves of popularity and, fortunately, we're on another wave of it right now. It seems to be doing better that it's done in more recent years. There's a great demand for books, y'know, so they're publishing more books and they're doing more. I don't know exactly what the reason is when they have some periods where it's really popular and other periods where it sort of lies fallow; popular among fans but not popular outside. It's very pleasant that now we are in an area where everyone's interested. One of the things that GALACTICA, in terms of the books, is maybe doing is getting people interested in reading science fiction. Not just watching it, but reading it. And if GALACTICA novelizations can be sort of a conduit to really great science fiction, then they really have accomplished something beyond what I had originally hoped. I'm getting clues that this may be so. We seem to be in a period where people need escape, for whatever reason. Perhaps it is a reaction to social consciousness of the sixties and then all the ugliness of the Watergate period. I couldn't say that authoritatively, but I think it might have something to do with that. Since science fiction is usually popular among young people, perhaps we have to look into what young people are interested in now in order to find out why science fiction is popular at any given time. It was not popular when young people were marching around doing political things in the sixties. It's much more popular now that politics is not popular. I would hope that science fiction and politics could be popular at one and the same time, but...

Landry: Do you think that its popularity will continue?

Thurston: No, not particularly. It'll have waves. It'll be popular again, it'll die again, going on and on. I would hope, since it seems that I'm pretty much geared into writing it, that it stays reasonably popular for awhile.

Landry: What would you like to see in the future of science fiction?

Thurston: Well, I think I'd like to see... it's all very difficult to explain. The old science fiction dealed with inventions, y'know, "We've invented something, now what can it do." And then there's the special effects of your invention. Alot of science fiction

Thurston: (cont.) now is not only that, an invention, but a science fiction concept and the effects of your concept on a society or on individuals in that society. I'd like to see science fiction go further and deal with their problems against a science fiction background. I perceive a difference in the effect on society because you're talking about basically a social issue or something like that. I'd like to see science fiction get more specific and see how the general technology affects people, really showing people and their problems. I think what I'm saying, very simply, is a broadening of characterization in science fiction. Whether that will happen or not, I don't know.

Landry: Do you have any current or future projects that you could tell us about?

Thurston: Well, as soon as I finish the third BATTLESTAR GALACTICA novelization which is, in effect, finished at the moment, I just have to do some final and minor work on it. I will be finishing a novel which is based upon a pair of short stories that I did called Wheels and Wheels Westward. They are both about s future in which cars are, more or less, liscenced to the privi-ledged few. It follows from the idea of what could happen if we banned cars. The main character of the novel is a person who could not get liscenced to have a car and bought some bootleg Wheels. And the stories and the novel go on from there to see what happens to him with his bootleg Wheels on the highways of America. I start the story somewhere in the East and it's finishing somewhere in the West.

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FOLLOW UP

I would like to take this time to thank Robert Thurston for agreeing to do this interview. For the many of you who are fans of the television series BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, Universal Studios has confirmed that they will be releasing the theatrical feature film version of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA in the United States this summer.

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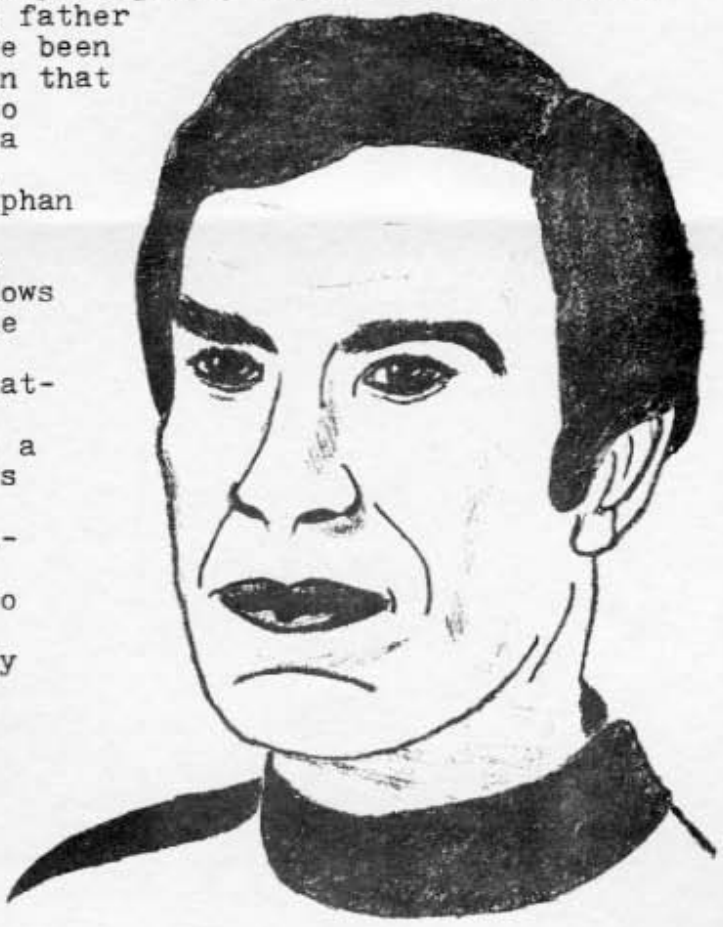


ANIMATED REVIEWS

Here again is a review of another episode in the animated SPACE: 1999 series produced by Charlton Magazines. This particular episode, "Dawn of Extinction," is a favorite of mine. This is because the story itself stands as an independant science fiction adventure, using the SPACE: 1999 characters as background. Very few episodes did this in the animated series, in fact, only one other comes to mind (which will be reviewed in a future ALPHA LOG). Next issue: "The Lonely Emperor."

DAWN OF EXTINCTION (Episode 10; March 1976)
Written by Nicola Cuti
Animated by Gray Morrow

It is morning on the planet Remo. Alien citizen Jord has taken his son Delke on a photography expedition to a nearby forest. Delke tells his father that in school they have been told of a wandering moon that will be passing close to their planet. While in a dense part of the wood, they meet up with an Alphan landing party. The two groups are peaceful and become friends. Jord shows Commander Koenig and the rest of the party many beautiful animals and natural resources in the alien forest. Suddenly, a group of hunters charges through the brush and slaughters a herd of innocent deer-like creatures. Jord complains to the area Wildlife Commission, but his society is corrupt and disregards Jord's pleas. The hunters learn of Jord's campaign to stop them. With the ecological balance on a thread, the hunters confront the conservationists and their Alphan allies for an all out war to determine the future of this once-peaceful world.



Leo Mack

BEN BOVA INTERVIEW

BIO: Ben Bova is the fiction editor of Omni magazine. Also a former editor of Analog magazine, he has written such science fiction novels as Millenium, Colony, Multiple Man, and the adaptation of THX 1138.

Landry: Since we are basically a SPACE: 1999 publication, what are your feelings on the series?

Bova: There's only one worse science fiction television show that I know of and that was THE STARLOST, in which I was the science advisor. It was so bad that I ended up writing a novel about it called The Star-Crossed which tried to show how crazy it is when you're in with a bunch of idiots who don't know anything at all about science fiction and are trying to do a science fiction series. So, compared to THE STARLOST, SPACE: 1999 isn't too terrible. But the kindest thing I've heard said about the show was a friend of mine who said that the title should be SPACE: 1999- MARKED DOWN FROM 2001.

Landry: How did you get interested in science fiction?

Bova: Actually, I think it was the Felds Planetarium in Philadelphia. I went there as a kid and got turned on to the whole astronomy business. This led me into an interest of science in general and science fiction.

Landry: Of all of your science fiction works, which is your personal favorite?

Bova: All of them. It's like asking a mother which baby she's going to save. Ha-ha.

Landry: How did you get into your field?

Bova: Through newspapering. I started working on a newspaper in high school and learned how to write that way.

Landry: Do you write anything besides science fiction?

Bova: Not too much. I've written a few things. My wife and I wrote a book about divorce, actually, because we'd both been divorced before we met each other. We wrote a book on that subject. But most of what I've written has either been science or science fiction.

Landry: Would you like to?

Bova: Well, what I'm writing today is novels for the general reader. They're not called science fiction any more, they're mainstream novels. I think five or ten years ago, they would have been science fiction because they deal essentially with scientific exploration and new technological developments. But the field has changed to the point where the general reader is now willing to read this stuff and skip the science fiction label.

Landry: Do you have a favorite science fiction author who's work you admire?

Bova: Well, since I'm an editor and I buy science fiction from authors, I think the kindest thing I could say is to read the magazines I've edited and you'll see who my favorite authors are.

Landry: Do you have a favorite science fiction television series or film?

Bova: My favorite science fiction film is called THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT. It starred Alec Guinness and was made in 1950 by the Ealing Studios in Britain. Very few people think of it as science fiction because it's never been advertised as such. But it's a film about a scientest who invents or tries to invent a fabric that will never wear out and never get dirty. And the entire textile industry of Britain, both labor and management, tries to kill him. A very funny movie... and very good science fiction.

Landry: Why do you feel that science fiction has been so popular? and do you expect its popularity to continue?

Bova: I think the popularity is growing enormously. I mean, Omni is out with only seven issues now and it's averaging over a million sales per month. So there is a large and growing audience for science fiction. I think that this will continue to grow for the foreseeable future.

Landry: What would you like to see in the future of science fiction?

Bova: I think I'd like to see a higher ratio of realistic fiction dealing with the real possibilities of the future. My own special area of interest is in near-term future scenarios dealing with the politics and the social impact of new technological developments.

Bova: (cont.) I think an awful lot of science fiction today is repetitive. It's a re-hashing of old themes and old ideas. And as a consequence, it may interest new readers who haven't read science fiction before, but it actually gets pretty dull for people who have been reading the stuff steadily for twenty years.

Landry: Do you have any current or future projects that you could tell us about?

Bova: Well, in addition to my work editing Omni, I'm writing a novel now for Doubleday which probably won't be out until sometime in 1980. I'm about 4/5 the way through the first draft and I'm just getting to the point where I know what the book should be about. It takes awhile to learn who the characters are and what they want to do, but when it reaches the point where they're telling me what they're going to do, then everything goes very smoothly. I'm just about at that point now.

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FOLLOW UP

I would like to take a moment to thank Ben Bova for taking the time to do this interview. For those members who are readers of Omni magazine, Allan Hendry, Chief Investigator of the Center for UFO Studies (also a guest at THE SCIENCE FICTION SPACE HAPPENING III) told me that he will have an article on UFOs in an upcoming issue of Omni.

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POEM #63 IN A COLLECTION OF 40

by Alice Kimanski

We take the moon for granted,
On Alpha it isn't so.
Because they really can't you see,
It's the only home they know.

The moon's blown out of orbit,
Floating out in space.
The people all are stranded there,
It's quite a lonely place.

First there is John Koenig,
Broad and strong and tall.
He commands all of Alpha,
And never tires at all.

Next is Doctor Russell,
Small and plain of face.
Lacking in intelligence,
And even more in grace.

Tony is a friend of theirs,
The third among the bunch.
His main interest is mixing beer,
To drink along with lunch.

Now we come to Maya,
Last but not the least.
With apparent ease,
She can turn into a beast.

Crisis after crisis,
They take them all in stride.
They overcome all obstacles,
And hang on to their pride.

The troubles they encounter,
Can make your head just spin.
But in the end good triumphs,
And the Alphans always win.



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"UFO" REPLACES "SPACE: 1999"

Quite recently, I was informed by one of our members that Worcester (Massachusetts) station WSMW-TV, channel 27, had replaced a six month run of SPACE: 1999 with its very own predecessor, UFO. Reactions have been mixed. I am interested in hearing a reader's response about the matter. Results and comments will be printed in the next issue of ALPHA LOG.

14

JAMES P. HOGAN INTERVIEW

BIO: James P. Hogan is the author of the science fiction novels Inherit the Stars, its sequel The Gentle Giants of Ganymede, and Genesis Machine.

Landry: First of all, since ALPHA LOG is primarily a SPACE: 1999 publication, what are your feelings about the series?

Hogan: I've never seen it. I can't honestly offer a comment. I should perhaps elaborate on that. I didn't own a television in England and I haven't watched one for approxomately five years.

Landry: What got you interested in science fiction?

Hogan: I think probably I became irritated by it before I got interested in it. I more or less started out with research for a scientific and technical background. I suppose like all kids of that age, late teens or early twenties, I read science fiction and got increasingly irritated by the opinion that I formed; that that science I read about and was depicted in these stories really didn't have any connection with real science. This went on for years and years. I eventually evolved from research, I suppose "evolved" is the right term, into the selling side of electronics and later computers. And for about fifteen years, I was selling computers to astronomers, physicists, space scientests, every kind of specialist in every scientific discipline throughout Europe. I became fascinated by the kind of people they were and the kind of problems they would solve. As a salesman, you get a rather privileged view in that you see a very broad cross-section of the different areas of science. And none of them resembled what I had read about in science fiction. So I continued to complain about this and, I think, just to shut me up my friends said, "Well if you can do any better then do it!" So I did and I wrote Inherit the Stars. I attempted to present science more as a mammoth detective story. This is the kind of impression I get of how science works, but I never really saw it described that way. And people seemed to like it and started saying that they wanted more, so I wrote another one and another one. Then it started paying money and I suppose it was at that point that I really got interested in it.

Landry: Of all of your science fiction works, which is your personal favorite? and why?

Hogan: Probably one that isn't on sale yet. It will be in a couple of months time. It's called The Two Faces of Tomorrow. Broadly, the theme is machine intelligence. Machines getting smarter, more sophisticated than what we know as computers. And when you connect tens of thousands of these machines together, strange things start to happen. If I were asked to put money on it, a self-modifying behavioral pattern that we would classify as intelligent would be more likely to emerge in that way than boxes that start saying, "I don't want to die!" and all this stuff we've seen before.

Landry: How did you get into the writing field?

Hogan: I think when I left school, I really wanted to write. I loved subjects that connected with English, compositions, essays, short stories, language as a communication medium. The use of language and the power to express thoughts and ideas was always something that had fascinated me. But at the age of sixteen, what experience have you had that the world wants to read about? The answer is nothing. I think it was always in the back of my mind as I was off selling computers. Then, some fifteen years later, I had seen some very interesting people in very different environments doing different things. Every one a character in their own right. all doing something exciting in its own way, and here were lots of things to write about. And the time seemed right to start putting some of this down on paper.

Landry: Do you write anything else aside from science fiction?

Hogan: Right now I don't. The reason is mainly lack of time, as I still hold down a full-time job. Occationally, I'll write small articles and short stories and that sort of thing just for amusement more than anything. I would like to during the next twelve months, though there's no particular hurry. Sometime after that, I would like to get into what would be described in America as the mainstream field. I think that, despite the James Bond types, there are some very, very interesting topics that haven't been explored from some of the angles that they could be explored from. Of course, there's a wider readership there.

Landry: Do you have a favorite science fiction author who's work you admire? If so, who?

Hogan: I suppose so, yes. I read very little, by the way, again purely lack of time. I have a pile of rubbish at home with a label on it that says, "To be read one day." I continue to throw things on top of it and I've forgotten what's on the bottom. So I don't get the time to read a fraction of the things I'd like to read and that includes science fiction. I think the two names that come to mind are, well... I like Arthur Clarke's writing because I think some of his technical writings are staggering. He seems to be one of these writers who is able to think of an angle first. And Asimov I ought to say, of course. The thing I like about Asimov is not only his fiction, but his non-fiction. And certainly it was reading Asimov's non-fiction, his chemestry and astronomy, when I was very much younger that I think helped to put science and things related to science into a very positive attitude that I see it in; the message that I wish was seen more widely instead of this pessimism and doom prophecy which, in my opinion, petpetuate in general by people who don't know what they're atlking about and listened to by people who know even less. That doesn't sound like a very good formula to go into the next century with.

Landry: Do you have a favorite science fiction film or television series?

Hogan: I have to struggle to think of one. I'm not a television watcher as I said earlier, so I'll have to stick with a film. I think I saw STAR TREK once in England about six years ago, but I can't remember much about it. The science fiction that's being depicted in movies today; they've all had flaws that I've found quite serious. I think that this is probably understandable because the movie industry has its goals. It's in the business first and foremost to make money. I'm sure they do a thoroughly good job in terms of meeting the objectives they set out to achieve. It seems to me a bit foolish to criticize something for failing to achieve something that it never set out to achieve in the first place. Fortunately, I tend to judge science fiction by a totally different criteria. All the movies I've seen have failed, in one way or another, when judged against those criteria. For example, I suppose I have to mention STAR WARS. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I wouldn't describe it as science fiction, it was childrens fan-

Hogan: (cont.) tasy. But well done, superbly done. I went to see it with the right expectations. I expected to see exactly what I saw, and that was two hours of sheer escapism and alot of fun. I don't think that you can really expect to come away with some stimulating thought or philosophy that you'll still be thinking about in six months time. I mean, the science was awful, the plot was one of any of a thousand of childrens fairy stories. You know, fair-haired princess, castle, nasty baron, and a knight comes to the rescue. So there's certainly nothing original there. Having said that, I still feel that they did a superb job of doing what they set out to achieve. What else comes to mind? Ah, CLOSE ENCOUNTERS. I was dissappointed. At the end of the first fifteen minutes, I though this could be a good film. Then it degenerated into sixty minutes of sort of soap opera rubbish. The principal character never really did anything except get into everybody's way. I think it would have been a better movie if they had started with the beginning and then followed on to the ending, telling the story which was hinted at, but never told. And if that sounds like sour grapes, then let's go on to the next question.

Landry: Why do you feel that science fiction has been so popular?

Hogan: I suppose there must be alot of cliche answers for this. The honest answer is I don't know because I've never thought about it. Why is Greek pottery of interest to fans of Greek pottery? And all the other things that people become fans of. Maybe it's popular now perhaps for its escapism value, perhaps for its optomism value. I think there are so many people painting absurd pictures of energy running out or people polluting rivers or, I don't know, burning the sun with aerosol cans. I think there's a side of human nature that reacts to the positive view; seeing the human race accomplishing things it's capable of doing, conquoring its problems instead of running away from them. Perhaps this is the same reason that people like to see murder movies where the villian is always caught and law and order always triumphs. That may or may not be true, I don't intend to be a psychiatrist or a psychologist. I'll offer that for what it's worth.

Landry: What would you like to see in the future of science fiction?

Hogan: I would like to see the public taste become more demanding, become more sophisticated, insist on better quality in the media of science fiction. I've accused the movie industry of producing garbage, but I really don't blame them for that in that they're thoroughly professional at the business they're in and that is giving the public what it wants. If they would stop trying to draw standards as to what they think the public ought to watch and read and look at the figures as a realistic barometer of what the public likes, I think it says something. And I'd like to see the reading on this barometer go higher.

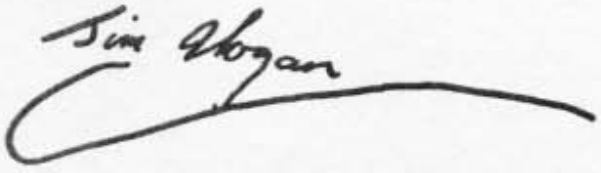
Landry: Finally, are there any current or future projects that you're working on that you could tell us about?

Hogan: Yeah. There's a book that I'm probably about a month away from completing right now, as yet untitled, which deals with time travel. Incidentally, it's a total re-write. I first wrote this book at about this time last year. It didn't come out very well. The problem was not with the physics, I finally straightened that out, but I'm not going to spoil anything by saying how. The problem was with the fiction and not the science, you see. One of the reasons a reader reads a novel, I would contend, is for an element of the unknown; suspense in its most general sense. The protagonist has to untangle the riddle or whatever, so you follow him through the book to see how he's going to do it. Well we've just postulated a science where the means of finding out is perfectly obvious. He talks to himself tomorrow and says, "How did you solve the problem?" and himself tomorrow says, "Perfectly simple, I did this, this, this, and this, and it all worked out okay." "Thank you very much," switches off the machine, and does it. You've just kicked away one of the cornerstones of fiction, so how do you get a good novel? Ha-ha. That's what took me so long to answer. And how I did I'm not going to tell you.

****

FOLLOW UP

I would like to express my thanks to James P. Hogan for taking the time to do this interview.



19

ALIEN SPECTRES

by Rebecca Eisenbuth

John Koenig had made a mistake. Helena could feel it in her bones.

John, Tony, and Maya did not have to go down to the planet, but Koenig wanted to check it out. He was sure that they would find some vital minerals that could aid Moonbase Alpha if they were in trouble with their life-support systems.

Alan Carter had taken over as acting Commander and Helena admired the way he looked in the spot. It was as if he had been in command for years instead of just a few hours. Helena's sixth sense brought her memory back to Koenig and company. As nice as Alan looked in the Commander's spot, she would gladly have Koenig himself giving the orders. The fact was, she was nervous. The landing party hadn't reported into Alpha for nearly an hour and any attempt to call them would only bring up static.

Helena touched Carter's arm. "Any word yet?" she asked.

"No, but I wouldn't worry. Maya said that there was some sort of distrubances in the planet's atmosphere, positron storms probably, that caused electrical blackouts on the Eagle's viewing screen."

Helena smiled at him as if she was reassured. She wasn't.

Suddenly, the Command Center screen lit up and the Eagle was in full view.

"Commander Koenig to Moonbase Alpha," said Koenig, "We are ready to come in."

"John? That didn't take long. You may land when ready."

"Koenig out."

Helena wasn't sure, but there was something odd about John Koenig's voice tone. She would talk to him about it later.

John Koenig smiled as Helena came up to hug him.

"Did you pick up anything while you were down there?" she asked, relieved at his prescence.

"Not really, not really... just some rock and mineral samples."

"Good, let's see them."

20

"NO!" Maya said, just a little too quickly, "I mean, I want to give them a good check before they go any further."

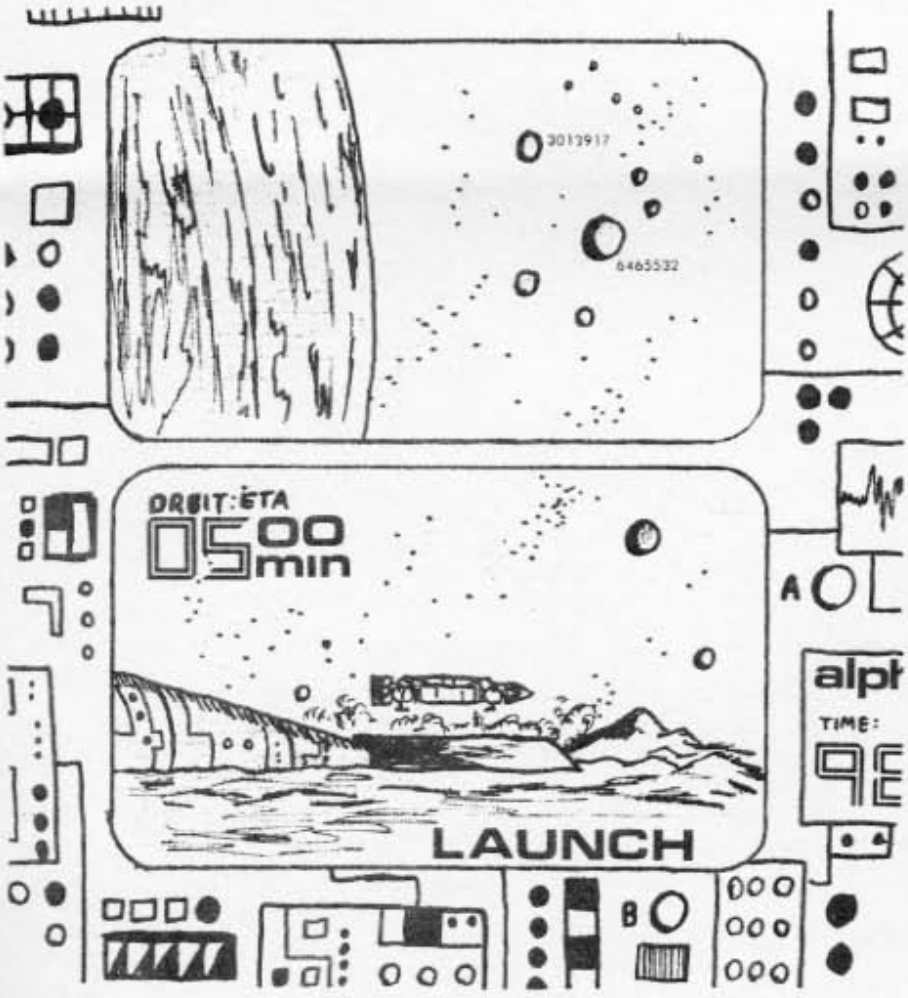
Suspiciously, Helena looked at her, "Maya, you were supposed to check them on the planet," she stated, surprised that Koenig should let the Psychon get away with such a serious matter.

She looked up at Koenig and was suddenly shocked. The look he was giving her could have made her scream. It wasn't human.

"I have to go to Medical Center," she gave as an excuse to break away from his stare.

As she left, Tony looked up at the Commander. "She will be trouble. What do we do?"

"We wait. If she causes problems later on, we will... figure something out."



Helena was still troubled by Koenig's cold stare. It was not like him to turn on her like that. More so when she was right.

There had to be something about the rocks or minerals Koenig had found. What was it? Why was he keeping it from her?

Helena found herself not walking to the Medical Center, but towards the Observatory. That was where the samples would be and that was where she would be able to find her answers.

Walking in, she felt ashamed. She felt as if she was calling Koenig, Maya, and Tony liars, but there was something odd going on and she wanted to know what it was. She finally came upon the rock

samples and drew a microscope over. Picking up a rock, she didn't notice the tall figure behind her.

She carefully scraped a tiny sample off of the rock and placed it beneath the scope.

Helena could hear breathing.

"You should not be in here Dr. Russell," Koenig's voice boomed.

Shocked, Helena turned and looked at him.

"Who are you? You are not John Koenig."

"As far as anybody else is concerned, I am."

"I know better."

Koenig's imposter smiled at her. She had courage.

"Would you like to know what that is?" he said, looking at the rock.

"Would it serve any point?"

"Yes, if you would like to know where Commander Koenig and your friends are."

Hesitating, Helena looked through the microscope. As if she had received a blow, she looked up at the alien Commander.

"It's living tissue! Human tissue!"

"It's your friends."

"You have killed them?"

"No, they're alive. We have put them in a form you Alphans can accept."

"Accept?" said Helena, angrily.

"Yes, it was a good cover when we came aboard."

As the alien spoke, his partners came through the door. The woman that looked like Maya was giving Helena the same cold stare that she had receivei earlier from Koenig.

"You told her," Tony's imposter stated firmly.

Before anybody could answer, Helena jumped in.

"But if this rock is John Koenig and if he is alive, how could he and the rest be brought back to normal?"

"A laser beam fired at the direct surface or the rock coating produces heat, enough to make the inner core, or heart, to burst. When it bursts it will only take time for

their molecules to form and they will be back as their cormal selves."

"If we let them come back," added the woman.

"Why are you here?" asked Helena.

She was interested, although still mortified.

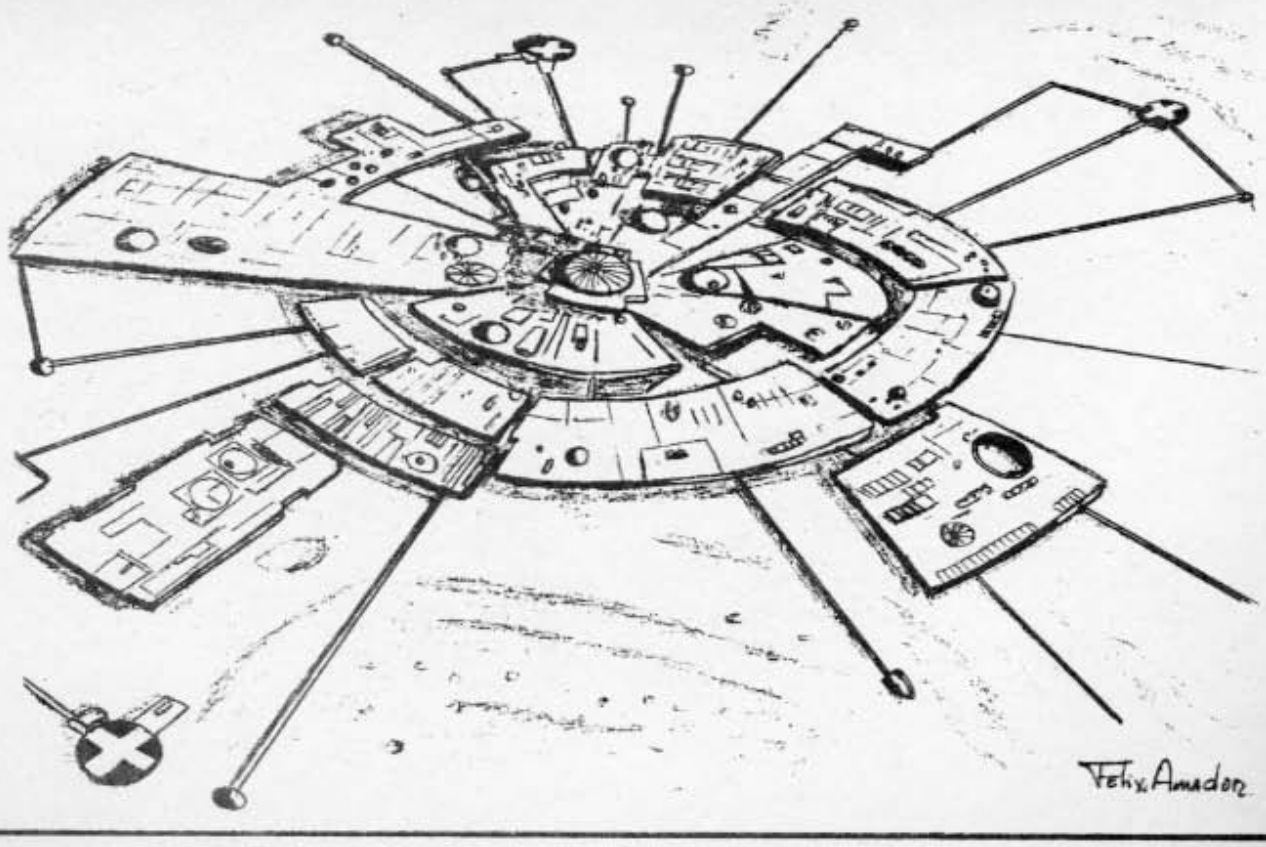
"Can't you guess? Although it is very productive, our planet is lacking in some facilities."

"Yes, nearly three years ago a terrible holocaust hit our planet and almost destroyed all of those who lived on it. A very few escaped with their lives and vowed to make it as perfect as it once was. We are the results. We rebuilt the planet. We made it perfect. But we need more scientific equipment to finish the job. This will come from Moonbase Alpha."

Helena's eyes were wide. She was looking at people who were mad; insane or inspired. The radiation from the holocaust must have affected their minds.

"So, what do we do with her?" asked Verdeschi, "She knows too much now."

"We can't kill her without causing suspicion," said the woman.



23

"We will arrange an 'accident'."

Helena backed up untill she felt the door behind her. She pushed her hand up and the door opened. Running toward the travel tube, Helena could hear footsteps behind her. Right now, the only thought on her mind was to get into Command Center and say something about what she had learned.

The travel tube doors were right in front of her. The footsteps behind her were also close.

She made one great effort and was inside with the doors closed behind her. The tube made its way toward level E and Helena could feel herself breath again. It stopped and she knew that she was at her destination.

When the doors were open, Helena was surprised to see three security guards with stun guns.

"What is this?"

"Come here Dr. Russell. We don't want to hurt you," said one of the guards.

"What do you want?"

"Don't get hysterical."

"What do you want?"

Another guard, unseen by Helena, came behind her and reached out to grab her. Alerted, Helena jumped back and with trained evasive actions kicked the guard and knocked him flat against the padded travel tube wall. Unfortunately, the other security men were just a little faster than she and stunned her untill she fell unconscious on the floor.

"John, I'm not sure I understand," said Alan Carter, "Helena attacked you?"

"I can't explain it, Alan. She was fine and then she started to accuse me of not being me. She said that I was some sort of alien creature."

"She was going mad, Alan. I've never seen her this way," said Maya, "I tried to explain to her that she was wrong, but when I tried to defend John, she got after me as well."

"Could space have finally gotten to her?" asked Carter.

He didn't believe it even as he said it, but what other explination could there be? He looked at Koenig who was wearing a pained expression, as were Tony and Maya. They were sad, it was obvious, but as sad as they may have seemed there was something plainly artificial about them.

No, Carter decided, space was finally getting to him.

24

Helena was uncomfortable. They had her pinned down to her bed in Medical Center with strong restraints. She tried to move, but couldn't. It wasn't just from the effect of the restraints, but also from the strong stun she had received earlier. She finally concluded that the alien Commander must have called guards on her while she was in the travel tube. He had guessed that she would be headed toward Command Center so it was easy to tell the security guards where to wait for her.

Helena turned her head and saw Ben Vincent come toward her.

"Helena, I have to leave for a few minutes. Will you be okay?" asked the assistant medical officer.

"Terrific," Helena said dryly.

As Vincent left Alan Certer entered.

He was glad to see Helena alone. He knew that if he was put away for being a sick person, he wouldn't want too many people around him.

"Helena?"

"Alan...," she sounded relieved.

"How do you feel?"

"Alan, you have to believe me. I'm not insane."

"Of course you're not."

"Alan, don't humor me. Either you believe me or you don't."

"You're ill, Helena; not insane."

"Would you believe me if I were to tell you that John, Maya, and Tony are aliens?"

"Helena, don't ask me to believe something I don't understand."

"What's to understand? John Koenig is an imposter from the alien planet."

Alan wasn't sure where to put himself. He was loyal to Koenig, but Helena wasn't the type to jump into wild accusations.

"Alan," she protested, "look at the rocks he brought back from the planet. They're living tissue!"

"Helena..."

"It's John, Maya, and Tony."

"Helena, that's rediculous!"

"Why? It's happened to us before."

25

Carter paused, remembering the time an alien came on board and pretended to be the Commander. He nearly destroyed Alpha and all its residents.

"Okay Helena, suppose you are right. What do you want?"

"They need information on our technical and scientific works."

"Why didn't they just ask?"

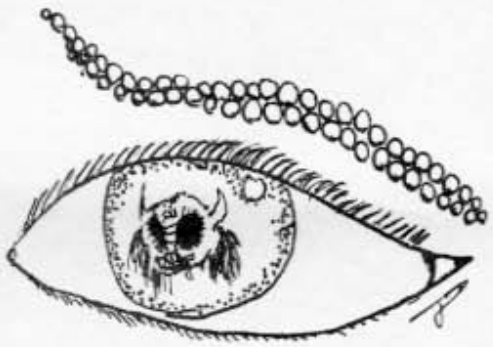
"Alan, they're mad. They take what they want. They're aliens trying to rebuild their planet."

"Helena, I'm sorry but you just don't have me convenced."

"Alan!" Helena cried desperatly, "Ask him some questions that only John Koenig would know."

He considered it for a moment, "I'll do what I can."

"I have his file in my office. There will be some information on him in there."



Alan nodded and walked into her office. The file cabinet was on the other side of her desk so he had to make a zig-zag motion to aviod a collision with other furnature in the room. As he looked through the file, he heard a commlock in action and turned to see the Commander himself walking through the door. Carter ducked and moved to see him through the doorway.

"What do you want?" Helena asked, already visibly disturbed.

"Now is that any way to say 'hello' Dr. Russell?"

"Go away."

"I've come to speak to you," he smiled, sitting on a corner of the bed.

Taking her hand, he smiled, "Tell me where the energy stores are."

"You mean you don't know? I thought you were better programmed than that."

Squeezing her hand so that pain showed on her face, he yelled, "Koenig left you in charge of that area. I talked to him on the planet and there were certain things he would not talk about and there was no way I could get it out of him."

"And I suppose that was one of them," Helena said, even though the pain in her hand was mounting.

Releasing her, the imposter began to smile again, "No need to hurt you. We will find out one way or another."

The alien laughed and leaned down close to her face. He kissed her hard on the mouth and got up. Helena cringed and gave him a look that only the well hidded Carter could define.

Amused with himself, the alien left and Helena began to cry. Alan dropped the file and bounded over toward her.

Unstrapping the restraints, he said, "You're not hurt are you?"

"No," she said, drying her tears.

"I should have believed you, Helena. I'm sorry."

"There's no was you could have possibly known."

Gaining back composure, Helena grabbed Carter's arm. A thought struck her.

"Alan, we have to get to the energy stores. If he gets there first, all of Alpha will be at his mercy."

Carter, who had been thinking of the same thing, grabbed hold of Helena's hand and pulled her along with him.

Running toward the technical section, another thought struck Helena and she slowed a little.

"Alan, go to the Observatory and get the rock samples the aliens brought."

"What...?"

"No questions, just go."

"You're the boss."

As Alan left, Helena made her way toward the power room. She was releived to see that there were no security men or that the aliens themselves had not been there first. She switched the machine to auxilary and pulled all six energy stores out. The lights around the Moonbase dimmed slightly and then lit brightly again.

Helena could feel her heart beating. Her main priority right at the moment was to get the energy stores and meet Alan half way with the rocks. They would work something out.

As she turned to leave, she suddenly heard the red alert klaxtons. Koenig had learned of her escape. At first, she started to panic, but getting herself together, she thought a moment.

Her thoughts were disturbed, however, when the Commander began to speak to all sections of Alpha.

"Attention all sections Alpha. Dr. Helena Russell has just escaped from Medical Center. She is to be considered extremely dangerous. Stun on sight. That is all."

Carter had heard it also as he raced toward the Observatory. He had to hurry before a security guard got wise and found Helena in the power room. He reached the Observatory and with one smooth motion, picked up the rocks and ran as quickly as he could to a travel tube.

The aliens were tired of the slow progress the Alphans were making on the capture of Dr. Russell. The imposter Koenig was certain that they were going deliberately slow because she was one of them.

"The fools!" he murmured to Maya and Tony, "You two check around this area. I'll head that way."

Nodding, the two figures strode off as if that had been their attention all along.

Then they met Carter. It was by a great surprise that they saw the man holding the pieces of alien tissue which was actually his Commander and two good friends.

"Alan," said the male alien, "where are you going?"

He was stuck for an answer. This made the female alien very suspicious.

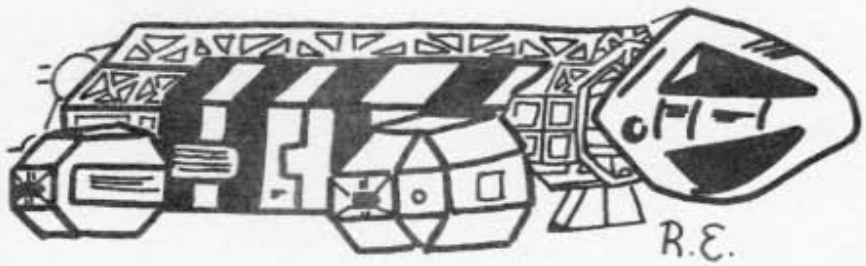
"Yes Alan, where are you going?"

"There are a few things I have to check out," he said at last.

"Give them to me," she said firmly.

Carter stepped back a few paces as a denile.

"We can take them by force, Alan."



"If you took them at all, that is the way you would have to take them. I know you're not who you pretend to be and I also know that Dr. Russell knew it."

28

They drew out their laser guns.

"I thought you could be a little more original than that," he said, not gaining any points with them.

Unexpectedly, the aliens did fire their guns. The hot molten rays bounced off the rocks, making Carter drop them. Simultaneously, they began to glow and the aliens, as Carter noticed, looked terrified.

"You missed me," said Carter, seriously, but entranced by the glowing objects beside him.

Soon, they erupted into an even brighter light than before, a glow which made Carter shield his eyes. He could hear the woman screaming and the man giving out harsh wolf-like cries.

In a few moments, it was all over with. The man and woman were standing in the exact same positions as before, but there was a new expression on their faces. One of confusion.

"Alan!" they screamed.

There was no doubt. It was the real Tony and Maya. Carter ran over to them and when the hugging was over, he asked, "Where is John?"

"He can only come back if his double is present," replied Maya.

"I have a good idea where they might be. Come on!"

Gathering up the remaining rock, Maya and Tony followed him.

Meanwhile, Helena was having her own problems. The imposter had found her and was getting a great joy out of watching her fear.

"I could kill them right now," he smiled, "but there is something about you, Doctor, that interests me. Perhaps I should go to the Observatory and destroy your Commander Koenig."

He laughed as Helena shook her head and pleaded, "NO!"

Looking down at the table, he saw where the energy stores had been put.

"I thank you again, Dr. Russell, for obtaining these for us. You will be helping a great new generation of my people."

"If you take those, you will destroy Moonbase Alpha."

"Do you really think I care about Moonbase Alpha?" he asked as he backed her up against a wall.

Trying to look brave, Helena said, "No, I suppose you don't. I suppose you don't care about anything."

This at least made the alien angry and he grabbed for her wanting to put an end to her right there.

Carter, Tony, and Maya burst into the room just in time to save Helena from a fatal blow.

Considering the fact that Carter was holding the rock and that Tony and Maya were not doing a thing about it, the alien concluded that the real Alphan people had reverted into their original selves.

Pulling Helena in front of him, the alien shouted, "If you fire, she will be the first to go!"

He had them at a disadvantage, but Carter was the first to speak at a practical sense, "How do you expect to get what you want? You are alone. It's just you and nobody else."

"I have my people behind me!"

He looked desperate and Helena took this advantage and slipped out of his grip while Tony fired his gun.

The effect had been the same as before. There was a bright glow that enveloped into a brighter glow and soon the real Commander Koenig was standing in front of them. He looked confused and disoriented.

"Helena?"

"Are you alright John?"

"Yes, and you?" he asked, noticing that she didn't look one hundred percent fit.

"I have had better days, but I'll be fine."

"I'm not really sure I know what's been happening."

"I'll explain it over a quiet supper..."

"But first," Carter intercepted, "John, you had better call off the guard you put on Helena."

"I put guards on..."

Smiling at him, Helena said, "Just do as he says. I'll explain everything later."

"I think I may enjoy hearing this."

SPECIAL PHOTO SECTION

Here is a small sample of THE SCIENCE FICTION SPACE HAPPENING 3 as seen through the lens of Mike Perrone. At press time, I am unsure as to the quality of these reproductions. If the readers find the quality to be satisfactory, photos will be printed in future issues of ALPHA LOG.



"Just don't ask me about centons!"

-Robert Thurston (1)

←

James P. Hogan and Ben Bova (l to r)

→



Allan Hendry
(r)





Chris Landry
and Ben Bova
(l to r)



"Jolly good!"

-Jim Hogan
and Chris Landry
(l to r)

←

Larry Bilbrough
in a good mood
(r)

→



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At this time, I would like to thank all of those members who have generously contributed their time and efforts in donating to this special double issue of ALPHA LOG:

Felix Amador for his SPACE: 1999 artwork.

Becky Eisenbuth for her story "Alien Spectres" and her artwork.

Alice Kimanski for her strange, yet entertaining poem and Marcia DeVeronica for sending the poem in.

Lisa Mack for her John Koenig art.

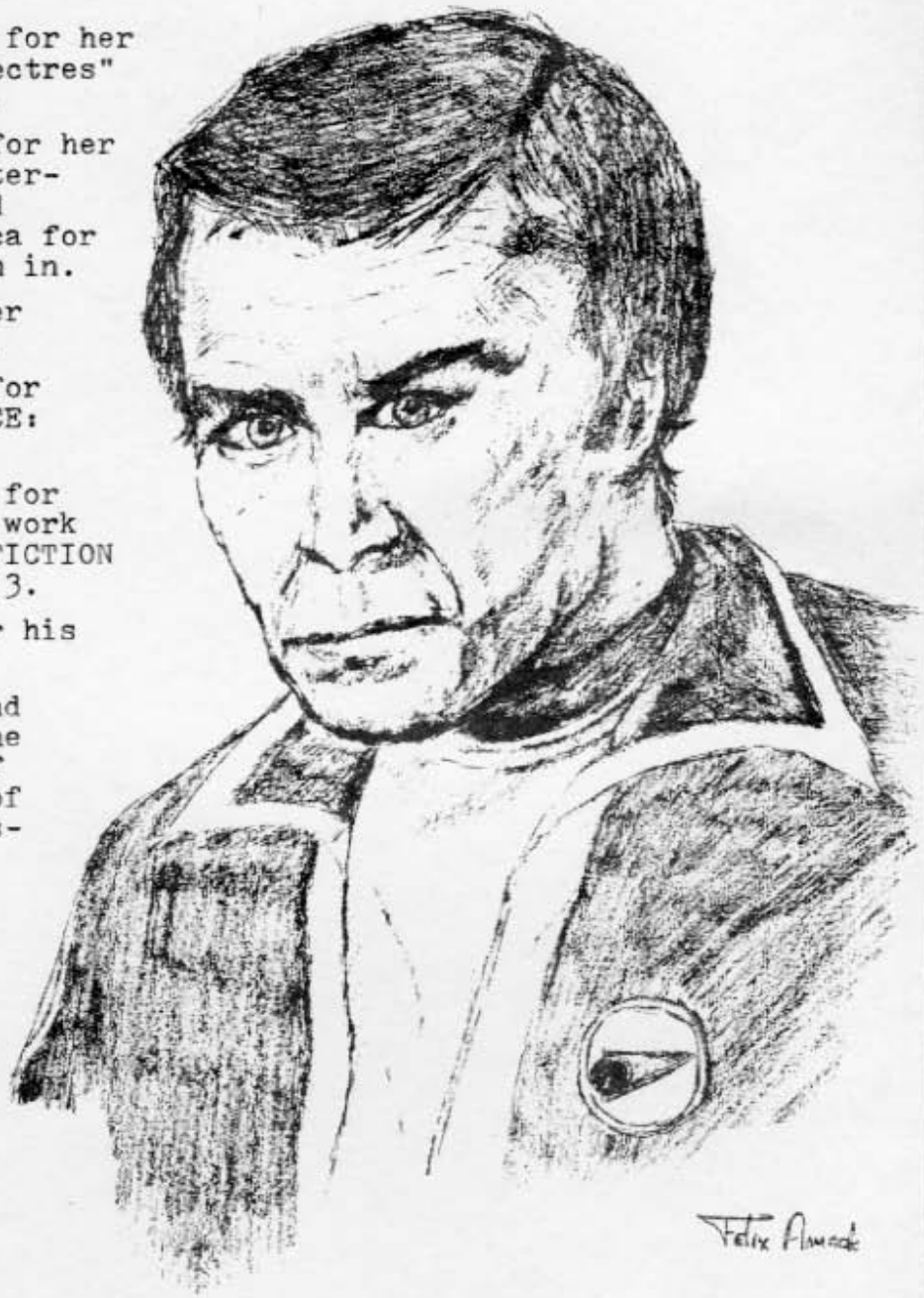
Jeff Patterson for his various SPACE: 1999 drawings.

Michael Perrone for his photography work at THE SCIENCE FICTION SPACE HAPPENING 3.

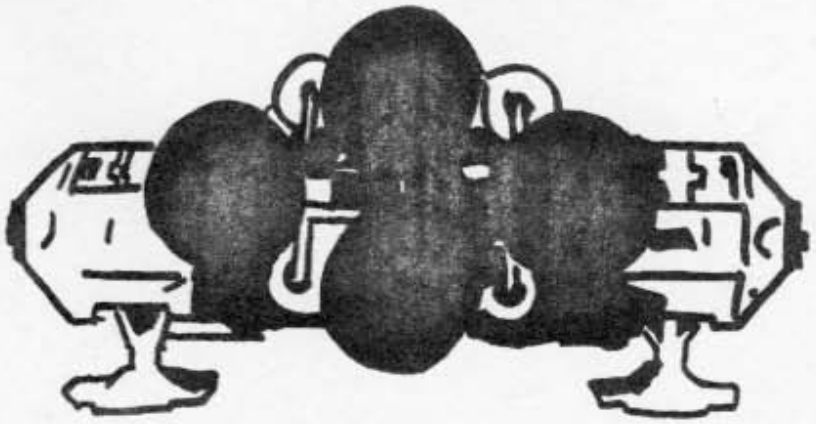
Steve Poleri for his alien art.

Patti Bartlet and Bob Staron of the Quadrangle staff and Jay Berger of Samuel Black Distributors for helping to arrange the interviews in this issue.

Finally, to the many local members who gave their time at SFSH3.



SPRINGFIELD SPACE: 1999 CLUB



SO LONG FROM "ALPHA LOG" !!!!

president: chris landry; 12 maplewood terrace; springfield, ma