

ELDRITCH *
LEANNINGS *
NO. 16 *****

This issue is written and published for the Esoteric Order of Dagon, mailing 32, Hallomass, but on Nov. 30th, instead of Oct. 31st., 1980, by William E. Hart, [REDACTED], Fullerton, CA, 92632. Telephone (714) [REDACTED].

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Welcome to another strange conglomeration of odds and ends; once again sans mailing comments (although this time I have the same excuse as everyone else, i.e., the 31st. mailing was just a little bit late arriving here, and I haven't had a chance to really read it yet).

Somewhere within this issue you'll find some information on E. Hoffmann Price, and how I'd like to try and help him get some of his non-fiction published by circulating a petition nationwide among fans. So I hope all of you will take the time to skim through the filler in this issue to reach the important stuff.

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LOVECRAFT A LESBIAN?

Came as quite a surprise to me also. But yes, Lovecraft is a lesbian. What's that? Impossible you say? Oops! I forgot to mention I'm of course referring to Laurie Lovecraft. I think I should explain; While perusing through one of my stacks of off-the-wall "men's" magazines, I happened to find myself leafing through a copy of NIGHT AND DAY YEAR-BOOK 1979, where I ended up being amusingly surprised when I noticed an interview-article entitled "Sex School for Lesbians" was stated to have been conducted in LAURIE LOVECRAFT'S SEX SCHOOL for LESBIANS. I think I can imagine how Grandpa Theobald would react to this!; But how would he react to those of you who are now going to rush out and try to find a copy of this to add to your collections?

ARE THERE "DEEP ONES" IN THE FOG?

While watching John Carpenter's THE FOG on the cable television network I subscribe to, I noticed a very Lovecraftian tidbit that most people might have missed if they've only had one chance to see the film. The scene I'm referring to is the one in which Adrienne Barbeau (as the local disc-jockey) is driving along the coastline the day after the first strange things have begun to happen in the movie, and she hears a special news bulletin on the radio of her jeep which caused me to do a double-take, and ask my wife if I had really heard what I thought I had. The broadcast was discussing the "Seagrass", a boat that had failed to return to port when it should have (because of falling victim to "The Fog"), and was of great interest to me when it said, "As of 1:57 today, the Seagrass has not responded to radio communications. The Coast Guard has begun a sweep south from Whately, around Arkham Reef, and should be in the area of Spivey Point in approximately one hour." Since this film takes place on the west coast, I think I better watch out for people with the "Insmouth look" ...!!

"Insmouth Look"

RECENTLY READ BOOKS

DAUGHTER OF THE BRIGHT MOON, by Lynn Abbey; This is an excellent introduction to a new fantasy and magic female lead (Rifkind), and an excellent introduction to a new, and very enjoyable writer--Lynn Abbey. Rifkind is a new sword-wielding, magic using priestess, healer, witch, and warrior, who in this first book of a series (of unknown length) is just beginning to discover her own purpose and powers. One of the "must read" books for this year; and a good sign that Lynn Abbey will be a very welcome addition to the small circle of really good new writers. Also recommended, although I haven't read it since I don't have a copy yet, is the sequel to Lynn's first book THE BLACK FLAME, which is also about Rifkind. Both books are available from Ace.

CONAN THE REBEL, by Poul Anderson; For fans of Conan, Poul Anderson bringing his writing talents in to add more new material to the history of Robert E. Howard's long lived character, is a very welcome change from some of the earlier pastiches. Conan in this tale has one of his best adventures with his one true love Belit, and it's sure to be one you'll want to read, whether you're a fan of Howard, Conan, or Poul Anderson. This is available from Bantam.

THE SWORD SMITH, by Eleanor Arnason; This is the first book that I've read by this author, and although it was enjoyable, it seemed the author either wasn't sure how to climax the book, or perhaps there is an immediate sequel to it that gives this tale of a wandering sword smith, and his companion baby dragon "Nargri" some more adventures, or at least a definite end to their tale. This book is available from Condor.

THE MOON RAPERS, by Raymond E. Banks; If you like science fiction mixed with sex; and you like the sex "hard-core", then this book is for you. This book is part of a new line of paperback books being published by World-Wide Publishing Company, in Encino, California, under the Hustler Paperbacks imprint. Most of this series is typical porn novel material, with titles like LATE NIGHT STUD, ACAPULCO ORGY, HARD AT THE TOP, etc., but a few of the books are and will be in the science-fiction, and fantasy genre. The title, THE MOON RAPERS, really has nothing to do with this book at all, and was probably picked out by the publisher to try and sell it as a more sexual book than it is. The story itself, can best be described as a Marion Zimmer Bradley, Darkover type of novel, with some very interesting, and very original sex scenes involved. As a bonus, if you like artwork, I think you'll rather like the somewhat Hannes Bokish wrap-around cover artwork. For sex and s.f., this is one of the best I've read.

NIGHTWORLD, by David Bischoff; This is a clever tale of a world where all the creatures of our medieval mythologies come to life every night, but with a very interesting difference; How about a vampire using an identification card and code number to get into "Hell"? Or werewolves, dragons, griffins, and others, that tend to show metal parts and wiring when they are hurt? Worthwhile reading from Ballantine.

THE BEST OF ROBERT BLOCH, by Robert Bloch; This is one of those collections where I feel that collectors of Bloch would be glad to get some of the stories, but for the most part, too many of the stories are very dated. At the time each one of these stories was published though, I don't doubt they would have been considered among Bloch's best. I'm just glad I'm a Bloch fan. Get this one from Ballantine.

TWO TO CONQUER, by Marion Zimmer Bradley; Anytime there's a new Darkover novel published it's time for celebrating, and this book proves that statement. It seems that the more Marion writes, the better she writes, and each time I read a book like this, I just feel bad because I have to wait so long for the next one. Someday I'd like to visit Darkover, but from what I've heard Marion say about the number of people who've said the same thing, if they started having flights to there tomorrow, by the time I'd get to go after waiting my turn, I'd be dead. Oh well. In the meantime I'll just have to content myself with reading about it in these books from D.A.W..

WOLF TRACKS, by David Case; It would appear that fans of horror tales are about to experience a long awaited treat; that is, new writings by David Case. Thanks to Reg Smith bringing the writings of David Case to my attention, I now count myself in, when I refer to Case's fans. For those of you who have not followed his career, I'm enclosing the following list of his horror appearances for your pleasure: Horror collection THE CELL (British 1969); comprised of three long tales, which Herbert Van Thal promptly used in the PAN BOOK OF HORROR STORIES anthologies, volumes 11, 12, & 13. Then his second collection FENGRIFFEN (British 1971), which was also composed of three tales; the lead story in this collection was subsequently filmed as AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS, and the other two stories were reprinted in volumes 14, & 15 of THE PAN BOOK OF HORROR STORIES. After this, Case seems to have disappeared until the publication in 1976 of a Western by him entitled PLUMB DRILLIN'; but now with his reappearance with WOLF TRACKS, which is an excellent tale of what seems to be a case of Lycanthropy in modern day Canada, and the advertised plans by Arkham House to publish his next book THE THIRD GRAVE, it would seem the David Case is back "with a vengeance"; and if he sticks with it this time, I'm sure he's going to be one of the top horror writers of the eighties! Get this one from Belmont Tower Books.

THE CLOCKS OF IRAZ, by L. Sprague de Camp; Having read de Camp's THE FALLIBLE FIEND, and THE GOBLIN TOWER, I was very glad to finally get the chance to read THE CLOCKS OF IRAZ; not only does it take place in the same world as the other two titles, but it's a direct sequel to THE GOBLIN TOWER. I consider these three books to be some of de Camp's best humorous fantasy tales, and I highly recommend them to everyone. The original of C. of I. was published by Pyramid, and is long out of print, but Sphere Books in England has recently reprinted it.

BORN TO EXILE, by Phyllis Eisenstein; This was a very enjoyable tale of a wandering minstrel with the power to teleport to any place he'd ever seen, but as happens to often, the story doesn't really have an ending; and in fact, the majority of the story's conflicts, and the majority of the lead character's longings and desires, are never settled or satisfied. In short, although the book is good, as it stands it's incomplete. If this is meant to be the first part of a series, or the first part of a trilogy, then there is hope yet for Alaric, the star of this tale. If you're interested, Get the hardcover from Arkham House; or better yet, save some money by buying the Dell paperback.

SORCERER'S SON, Phyllis Eisenstein; Now this, unlike the above title, leaves no loose ends, and is extremely satisfying!! If any of this tale managed to telegraph to the readers exactly where the story was going, that factor was offset completely by the pleasure of the story. This is one I put on my highly recommended list (which contains very few books). Perhaps I'm biased because I happen to enjoy tales of Demons with very distinctive personalities, but if you're too, GET THIS BOOK.

DARE, by Philip Jose Farmer; Even though this Ballantine paperback came out in (or at least bears the printing date of) 1965, I find this science fiction version of what the true story behind the disappearance of the Roanoke, Virginia colony to still be a very imaginative blend of fact and fiction. If you've ever wondered about this mystery yourself (and who hasn't), I really think you'll get a kick out of this.

THE LOVERS, by Philip Jose Farmer; As with the above book, this book also withstands the test of time; and is still a very enjoyable tale after being around for some twenty years. Both of these books by Farmer deal with love relationships between Human and Non-Human species, and I think this is one of those topics that Farmer excels at; so if you hadn't read these yet, do so, as soon as you get a chance to. The LOVERS is once again available from Ballantine.

THE DARK, by James Herbert; If it's a James Herbert book, I'll buy it; and with good reason. There lurks within every one of his books, all the gruesome, disturbing, sexy, frightening, supernatural elements you could ever want to create a really good, and original horror novel. This one is no exception; and if you want a book that will give you the creeps, read this one late at night when you're all alone. A goody from Signet.

THE RATS, by James Herbert; Literally everything I said about the above book also fits when describing this one. Also from Signet.

LAIR, by James Herbert; Not only do the above statements on James Herbert's books apply to this one, but reading this one right after its prequel THE RATS gives you a good indication of how much Herbert's writing style changed in five years. Again, from Signet.

NECROMANCER, by Robert Holdstock; THIS IS IT FOLKS! This is the one book that stands out in my mind as being the most well-written book I've found in a very long time. This is not on my highly recommended list; THIS IS ON MY MUST READ LIST! When I bought this book, I had never heard of Robert Holdstock; and I still know next to nothing about him. Regardless, with this the first book by him that I've read, I'm very impressed. From the blurbs on the cover the book sounded like your average gothic tale, but the story itself, without having a thing to do with the Love-

craft Mythos, conveys a very strong feeling of being part of it. There within this book you'll find one of the best written stories of an eternal creature trying to enter this dimension completely by using humans, that you could want to find. As you read this book, you'll quickly realize what I mean by well written; from the writing style, I'd say that Holdstock is a very fine "main-stream" writer, that just happened to write a novel of terror, which I feel is a grand piece of writing. This book goes beyond any pigeon hole label, e.g., Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, Terror, Gothic, etc., THIS IS JUST A DAMNED FINE BOOK, AND WOULD-BE WRITERS SHOULD READ THIS TO SEE HOW IT SHOULD BE DONE! Get this one from Avon just as soon as you can!

THE NEBULON HORROR, by Hugh B. Cave; This is an above average tale of a sleepy little Florida town being gripped by terror when some of the youngest children begin showing strange powers, and people begin to get murdered in the most gruesome ways, i.e., slit throats with their eyes ripped or gouged out. If you like stories of maniacal children with red glowing eyes, who seem like escapees from the "Village of the Damned", then this one from Dell should grab you.

WORLD ENOUGH AND TIME, by James Kahn; This book has received the highest praise from so many people here on the west coast, you'd swear someone was paying fans to spread the word. I read it, and they're right; it is one of the best Fantasy (with the worst bright yellow cover) paperbacks available this year. In this book you'll find Vampires, Griffins, Centaurs, Bearmen, Clones, every kind of strange Mutant and creatures from myth (including Hobbits), and even a few Humans; although Humans are a dying species three hundred years in the future when this story takes place. One of the nice things about this book is that the existence of all of the strange "mythological" creatures is explained to the point that the whole book sounds possible. This will probably be considered one of the best Fantasy Books of this decade. From Ballantine.

COMPANIONS OF THE ROAD, by Tanith Lee; Two rather strange (but fascinating) stories make up this slim paperback; both tales deal with unusual quests, and make for light reading when you are in the mood to get away from long novels for a little while. This is not Tanith Lee at her best, but even Lee at her average, is above average for most people. If you like her books, get this one from Bantam.

SABELLA, by Tanith Lee; Ah, now this is more like it! While this is still a rather thin one from Lee (157 pages), it's an excellent book, and a must for those with the slightest interest in Vampires. This book somehow is very reminiscent of C. L. Moore's legendary classic "Shambleau", but with its own very original concepts too. I've read a lot of Vampire novels, and I have to say Tanith Lee can truly refresh an old idea. Read and enjoy, from D.A.W. Books.

ZARSTHOR'S BANE, by Andre Norton; I think this one is for Norton collectors only. Either I got confused, or the book itself was confused, but something just didn't flow with this story. Perhaps I'm just not that big a fan of hers. If you are, read the book and let me know what you think. As it stands, I really find nothing to recommend this one. This is one of Ace's "Illustrated Novels".

MARTIAN SEXPOT, by Scott O'Neill; Now here's an oldy but silly. This 1963 collection of short stories, is only good for one thing; that's adding one more sexual science fiction paperback to a collection. I happen to be fascinated by some of the older attempts made at mixing sex and science fiction, and even though most of these books are silly when you read them now, they still make an interesting section in any collection. This is "A Jade Book", published by Onsko Publications.

THE CAVE OF TIME, by Edward Packard; This is book 1 of a series of at least three "Choose Your Own Adventure" books. The premise is simple; every few paragraphs the reader is faced with the choice of having to decide what's going to happen next in the story by turning to whatever page you're instructed to turn to based on what you've decided to do. This book is not meant to be read from start to finish in one setting, but rather one adventure at a time. And since there are at least 39 different ways the story can go, this is a good book to keep in your bathroom to look at only once in a while to keep the novelty of it still going. If you've ever tried playing Dungeons and Dragons, or any other role playing fantasy game you'll really enjoy this "solo dungeon" type of book. Published by Bantam.

VIRGIN'S SACRIFICE, by Jacques Pascal; This is another one of the new adult books from Hustler Paperbacks. This adventure takes place in the medieval kingdom of Cornhole, where lusty George must pit himself against the proverbial dragon. This is nowhere near as good as THE MOON RAPERS, but it's still an amusing (and lustful) story; and if you always thought St. George was a bit stuffy, try this one from World-Wide Publishing.

OPERATION MISFIT, by E. Hoffmann Price; This new book from Price is a flash-back to the old "space-opera" days, and if you liked those, you'll enjoy this. I enjoyed this one, but have to admit I like his last book, THE DEVIL WIVES OF LI FONG, even better; but both of these just make me very anxious to see the next one he's working on (which I hope Ballantine will also buy and publish), JU HAI & THE JADE ENCHANTRESS; his T'ang Dynasty novel. Get Operation Misfit from Ballantine. You might also keep your eye out for Price's wetern paperback GRUBSTAKE; which I haven't found a copy of yet.

SPACE WHORES, by A. J. Rimmer; Here it is folks; you've heard of The Black Hole? Well here's THE PITS!! The other two Hustler Paperbacks I mentioned in this issue were not only novelties, but in the case of THE MOON RAPERS turned out to be a very original and well written piece of science fiction; but SPACE WHORES is not only bad science fiction (because the science almost doesn't exist), but it's just incredibly bad fiction. I've even shown it to friends as an example of the worst form of porno that I've ever seen. If you see a copy of this, and you want a few laughs, just open it to any page, and the chances are you'll read some of the worst writing, and some of the absurd sexual descriptions that make this a total farce. I'm almost tempted to recommend this as an example of how to not write science fiction or porno. Truly Sucks!

THORN, by Fred Saberhagen; Once again the legendary count is at it again in this new novel which continues the series begun with THE HOLMES DRACULA FILE, AN OLD FRIEND OF THE FAMILY, and THE DRACULA TAPE. My wife and I both look forward to each new vampire novel from Saberhagen, and he's never let us down yet. So if you'd like to find out what the Count was really like, read these books soon. These books from Ace would also make a nice gift set for Christmas.

THE STRICKLAND DEMON, by Jack D. Shackelford; This thin little occult horror novel from Corgi Books in England is a mild diversion for a cold winter evening, and does have its moments. For the people interested in ritual magic, this is one to pick up.

THE CATS, by Nick Sharman; Somehow this slim book from Signet seems like a pastiche of James Herbert; and a fair one at that. It's your typical story of nature-versus-mankind again, with plenty of attacks by ferocious felines, which have suddenly gained the intelligence to organize. Will mankind survive? Will Purina be able to sell all of its stock? Who will be the next target?

BLOODRIGHT, by Peter Tremayne; I'm afraid I was a bit disappointed in this first volume about Mircea, son of Dracula. It's a wealth of material about the life and time of the real Dracula, but there just isn't enough of a plot ~~lot~~ to make it that interesting; and when the major conflict is whether or not Mircea will be able to destroy his vampire father, I'm afraid the fact of so many of his later exploits having already been chronicled tends to let you know the ending far in advance of everything in this book. Nice try Peter; but try reading Fred Saberhagen's books for something a bit more original on the Dracula family. From Dell.

THE SPACE VAMPIRES, by Colin Wilson; I forget who it was who first introduced "Ubbo-Sathla" to the Cthulhu Mythos, but I really got a kick out of finding it (them, they, that, him, her, ?,) in this new contribution from Colin Wilson. The book is nothing like the name implies; The title made me think of blood sucking creatures like the beast in ALIEN; But instead what you find is a story about gorgeous, sexually attractive energy vampires, that have almost nothing in common with standard Earth type vampires. And where does Ubbo-Sathla come in? I'll let you find out for yourselves. I'm not going to tell anything except to say this is a Cthulhu Mythos story, and not a Lovecraftian Mythos story. Get this one from Pocket Books and you'll understand.

AMAZONS!, edited by Jessica Amanda Salmonson; Since I happen to really enjoy Heroic Fantasy, and I happen to be especially fond of stories of female fantasy characters, and since Jessica has excellent taste in writers for an anthology of this type, I happened to love this book!! This is one of the best collections like this that I expect to ever see; and if the stories weren't enough, the introduction and introductory notes are also very well written. Since I seemed to have forgotten to mention, I'm also fascinated by Amazon women, and women in general who display a high level of intelligence, independence, and courage; and this book is dedicated to just this type of women. I highly recommend this to everyone; get it from D.A.W. Books soon.

DANGEROUS VISIONS, edited by Harlan Ellison; What can I say about one of the most talked about anthologies of the SF world; nothing other than I shouldn't have waited so long to read it. A massive treasury for all tastes from Berkley.

THE KEEPER'S PRICE, edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley; If you like Marion's stories of her semi-medieval world Darkover, then you're in for a really big treat when you finally sit down to read these stories written by the "Friends of Darkover" over the past few years. A very special book from D.A.W. Books. I hope this is just the 1st. of many!

SHADOWS, edited by Charles L. Grant; Overall this book was a disappointment to me. Even the Stephen King story (which I thought would redeem the rest of the book) left me unimpressed. Somehow most of the stories in this volume just didn't have everything cut-and-dried enough for me. There was a vagueness to each story that left me cold. I wish you better luck in this paperback from Playboy.

WEIRD TALES, and MORE WEIRD TALES, edited by Peter Haining; These British paperbacks from Sphere are the reprints from the earlier Neville Spearman hardcover, and as such were much handier for me to carry back and forth to work with me; and that's exactly where I read them; Truly a wonderful way to take my mind off and away from the workday world. These books also serve as a very good reminder of why so many of us collect WEIRD TALES magazine, and the books which reprint material from it. These books are a must for all of us, and I hope you'll get them soon if you haven't already.

THE YEAR'S FINEST FANTASY VOL.2, edited by Terry Carr; That title's a little facetious, but most of these stories are very good. And for those of you who enjoy Stephen King's short story in here (which reads like a chapter from an unfinished book), you'll be glad to know its sequel, The Way Station, has been published in the April, 1980 issue of THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. This more than above average collection of stories in the fantasy vein is from Berkley Books.

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A PETITION FOR E. HOFFMANN PRICE

As most of you know, E. Hoffmann Price has written a book about many of the writers and friends he's known throughout his long life, and called the book FRIENDS OF YESTERYEAR: FICTIONEERS & OTHERS. Unfortunately, no publisher to date feels there is enough interest in this type of non-fiction material to pay the \$5000.00 advance Price needs to make it worthwhile to publish at this time. It's my contention that if enough people sign a petition saying they want the book to be published, someone will finally do it. I'm enclosing with this zine, a rundown of what Price's book will contain, and I'm also enclosing copies of a petition which I'd like as many of you as possible to also copy, and then have as many people as you can sign them to help get the book out. Please try to get your friends to sign up on this petition, and together we can help ourselves and Price. I for one am very anxious to read his memories of his fellow writers, and I know a great many of you are. There are very few people left who personally knew Lovecraft, Howard, Smith, Quinn, Kuttner, and all of the others that Price knew, and yet there are more and more people all of the time that want to know what it was really like to have had the pleasure of knowing these people, so I truly believe there is a market for this book; and I truly believe enough names and addresses on a petition will convince Ballantine or some other publisher that I'm right. I'm enclosing a copy of the petition in this zine, and a loose one in this mailing so you can use that one for making copies from for people to sign. As you fill in the sheets, please send them to me so I can keep track of how many signatures we have (I'll gladly return postage), and so I can put them together to send in to the publishers all at the same time. Thank you all greatly for helping if you can!!!!

