

FANZINES 11

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By Ted White

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ARGENTUS (Steven H Silver, 707 Sapling Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015-3969; e-mail to shsilver@sfsite.com; available for \$3.00 or “the usual” – letters of comment, contributions of material or fanzines sent in trade)

Steven H (no period) Silver is a young up-and-comer who has, he tells us, a three-book contract (for anthologies of authors’ first stories) with DAW Books, and who has campaigned vigorously for a Fan Writer Hugo for a couple of years now. He started planning *Argentus* #1 more than a year ago, originally hoping to publish it in 2000 and then scheduling it for May, 2001. It finally appeared in late September.

“Initially, I had viewed *Argentus* as having a specific theme: ‘Origins, Beginnings and Geneses,’ as it was my first issue,” Silver tells us in his editorial, “The Mine.” “This theme quickly fell by the wayside as I decided to get articles which were interesting in and of themselves, rather than because they fit a specific theme. The only article which survives from that period is Pat Sayre McCoy’s memoir of her first professional sale [“Winter Roses’ Bloom”] ... The only theme remaining in this issue is the final, mock section, which is made up of several reviews of science fiction films. I commissioned film reviewers to select a science fiction novel or story which they would like to see made into a movie. They could cast and staff the film however they chose, giving it the type of budget they wanted and then write a review of the final product. None of these films has been made, nor are plans in the works to make these specific films. I hope you enjoy their efforts.”

What Silver has produced for *Argentus*’ maiden voyage is a rather earnest attempt at the sort of “sercon” fanzine better exemplified by *Nova Express*. The lead article is David Truesdale’s “Thoughts on the State of Short Science Fiction,” which turns out to be only part one of an extended series and deals, somewhat unsatisfactorily, with the present state of the surviving prozines. Pat McCoy’s piece describes, a bit breathlessly, how she came up with and sold her first story. Rich Horton describes what it was like to be a contestant on *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. Michael A. Andaluz’s “Dumpster Diving and Conspiracy Theory” is a tease: he thinks up a scheme which strikes him as clever and tells us he intends to execute it “next week.” Silver offers a last-minute page of thoughts on September 11th. Tom Whitmore, the chair of the forthcoming Worldcon, ConJose, gives us a dense four paragraphs entitled “Do We Know the Way to ConJose?” without telling us any facts about the convention (date, location, address to join) at all. Erik V. Olson’s “The Five Throated Voice of Ghu” is a heavily footnoted piece about a trip to Kennedy Space Center. Silver plugs Midwest Construction, a con-runner’s con for the Wimpy Zone. Mike Resnick has produced an annotated list of “The Best African Movies” which is both more comprehensive and better thought-out than one might

expect. The issue concludes with six “mock” reviews of never-made SF movies, followed by a two-page rundown of the issue’s contributors. That’s a lot of wordage, some of it serious in tone and some of it lighter. Not all of the pieces are successful, but none is a complete waste of space.

Physically, *Argentus*’ 40 pages are photo-copied (and occasionally creased by the copier) from double-columned computer-set type. The layouts are dull and unimaginative and every page without exception has an obtrusive running head of swords and the *Argentus* logo which Silver has promised to banish from #2. In sum, like many first issues, this one has flaws of both conception and execution, but holds promise for future improvement.

—Ted White