

FANZINES 13

January 2002

By Ted White

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SCIENCE-FICTION FIVE-YEARLY #11 (Lee Hoffman, “Founder, editor emeritus;” Geri Sullivan, Jeff Schalles & Terry Hughes, “Guest editor-publishers” at 3444 Blaisdell Ave S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315; e-mail to SFFY@toad-hall.com; available by request – no price listed but send a couple of bucks to cover postage)

Science-Fiction Five-Yearly occupies a unique position among fanzines: it has been published *regularly* since 1951. Once every lustrum – or half-decade – a new issue appears. For the first twenty-five years Lee Hoffman put them out by herself, but starting in 1976 she began using “guest editors” who did most of the scut-work of publishing. The first was Terry Hughes, who came back on board for this issue, but whose participation was tragically cut short by his sudden death from a brain tumor shortly before the issue was completed. Geri Sullivan and Jeff Schalles have produced the last couple of issues and have done most of the work on this one.

Over the years *S-FF-Y* has established certain traditions. In #2 (1956) both Robert Silverberg (as “Calvin Aaargh”) and Harlan Ellison (as “Nalrah Nosille”) started serials which continued in subsequent issues (although occasionally in a perfunctory form). Ellison’s “!Nissassa” was revived in 1996 and has established yet another tradition – that of arriving just in the nick of time to be included. (I might add that I’ve been in every issue since #3.)

#11 – the 50th Anniversary issue – runs 42 pages of impeccable mimeoing from electrostencilled computer-set type, and the mimeography, following a tradition established in the first issue, makes use of colored inks. In this *S-FF-Y* bears a family resemblance to Geri’s own fanzine, *Idea*. And to some extent so do the contents.

Lee Hoffman offers an opening editorial and her blessings upon the enterprise of those who have carried on the task of producing *S-FF-Y*. Kip Williams contributes two fannish song pastiches, “The SF Family” and “All in the SF Family.” Greg Benford produces “How to Write a Scientific Paper” from years of pent-up frustrations with reading real scientific papers. Denny Lien turns his post to the Stumpers-L e-list into an article titled “A Treatise on Dot.Com(edy) With Purple Prose” – it deals in “academic” fashion with the lyrics of two ’50s rock’n’roll novelty records. Steve Stiles, in addition to a cover takeoff on *2001*, has drawn a full-page piece, “Great Moments from Star Trek By Arthur C. Clarke,” which is a great sendup of both *Star Trek* and Clarke.

The star piece of the issue, however, is Dave Langford’s “The Secret History of *Ansible*,” a written version of a talk he gave at Tropicon/Fanhistoricon in November, 2000. In its ten pages Dave talks about the (then) 21 year history of *Ansible* by providing a series of

anecdotes and quotes which stopped all too soon. Langford wins the Fanwriter Hugo with monotonous regularity every year – but probably *is* the best fanwriter we have now.

Following Langford's piece is my own "Crime Stalks the Fanworld." I've been writing fanfiction – fiction *about* fans – for *S-FF-Y* for years now. My "The Purple Fields of Fanac" first appeared in the 1981 issue and was serialized in the following three issues. This story is Complete In This Issue. Jeff Schalles' "Never Back Up" talks about his days as a cab driver in Pittsburgh twenty-five years ago. There is, for the first time, a letter column, and then – rushing to make the issue and virtually the last item in it – Harlan Ellison's latest installment of "Nissassa."

It's both a solid issue and a Fannish Event and I recommend *S-FF-Y* highly.

—Ted White