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EDITOR & PUBLISHER
Charles N. Brown

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Faren C. Miller

ADVERTISING/PRODUCTION
Carolyn F. Cushman

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Pamela F. Troy

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Dan Chow
Richard Curtis
Fritz Leiber
Debbie Notkin
Frank M. Robinson
Amy Thomson

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Editorial Matters

The front cover story on the ALA is a non-story, but an important non-story. We didn't know it was going to be that way when we took the color photograph of the convention floor and started to cover the event. In the past, the American Library Association has been very supportive of science fiction, with various sections on authors, publishing, and academic coverage. There was nothing this year. SFWA president Jane Yolen was there, but only in her juvenile fiction alter ego. I wonder if there isn't some sort of reverse discrimination working. Now that sf is so commercially successful, it doesn't need the intellectual backing it has gotten in the past. In any case, the lead time for color photos made it too difficult to drop unless we had something better for page 1. The event wasn't a total loss. Kristina Anderson gave out *Locus* and various flyers at the Davis booth, thanks to the generosity of Bill Battista.

A VISIT WITH ROBERT HEINLEIN

Robert Heinlein called in early July to tell us he was moving and wanted to get rid of some books and magazines. I offered to sell them through *Locus* and at our various convention tables. He accepted, and Ricia Mainhardt and I went down to visit the Heinleins and pick up a load of magazines -- *F&SF*, *Galaxy*, and *Asiouding/Analog*, plus a few miscellaneous items. There have been rumors that he was very ill, and we were gratified to find him in good health, both physically and mentally. It was true he had been very ill, but had recovered just recently. He has emphysema and has to rest frequently, and uses a cane to get around, but is as charming, cheerful, and friendly as ever. Ricia fell in love with him, of course. The Heinleins' present house is beautiful, but isolated, large, and in need of constant upkeep. They bought a condominium further south and plan to move rather quickly. Our "short" visit stretched to five hours, with more talk,

picture taking, and book signing than actual work. We had a marvelous time. Several days later we went back to pick up more books -- mostly recent paperbacks, but some older books and some extra foreign editions of his own work, which he signed. He told us about his meeting with H.G. Wells, who autographed a book for him and told him he would only sign copies of his own work -- no autograph books, napkins, etc. Heinlein was impressed and has followed the same philosophy. We had more talk, more photo taking (including the cover photo), and a fine home cooked dinner cooked by Mrs. Heinlein, which included an 80th birthday cake. It was another near perfect day.

The Heinleins obviously don't need the money, but feel the books and magazines should go to readers who appreciate them. (The manuscripts, correspondence, and other personal papers went to the special Heinlein collection at Santa Cruz.) We hope to have the material catalogued and priced by the next issue, and may have some at NASFiC.

POLAND

I was supposed to spend 10 days in Poland in June, partially as a guest at the Polish convention, but never got there. My acceptance took 8 weeks via air mail to get to Warsaw (apparently standard in Poland), the official letter the Polish group requested from the government never arrived, and the Polish Consulate in Washington sat on my visa application and passport. I got caught in a classic catch-22. In order to get my visa approved, I had to call the press attaché at the Polish Embassy. The press attaché was never there and would not return calls. Mind you, they never said no, they just made it impossible. I finally had to cancel my flight (and pay the cancellation fee). I didn't get my passport back until well after the convention. To add insult to

(Continued on page 56)