

# **SCA's a group rooted in past**

Keith Roysdon

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The Society for Creative Anachronism is one of a number of obscure and unusual offshoots of science fiction fandom, but it is one of the most interesting. Begun 15 years ago as a costume and theme party, the SCA is now an international non-profit organization with a growing and active membership.

The SCA is rooted firmly in the past — right where it wants to be. The membership gathers at preordained meetings, at which everyone assumes a persona, a fictional character from pre-17<sup>th</sup> century history. The society is peopled with Vikings, Celts, Egyptian kings, knights, dukes, barons, and so on. The members create an entire history for their personas, as well as appropriate costuming.

Many of the originators of the group were University of California at Berkeley students, and many of them were SF fans. The name of the organization itself comes from “Darkover” series author Marion Zimmer Bradley, a member of the SCA from the early days.

Many SF and fantasy writers are members of the SCA, and that includes John Maddox Roberts, author of “King of the Wood,” available from Doubleday for \$11.95. The novel, set in 1450, mixes history and fantasy well in its tale of young Viking Hring Dristjan, exiled after slaying his half-brother. Our hero finds himself in the company of blood sects and creatures of legend, and the adventure is all pretty fine.

One SF writer who is probably not a member of the SCA is Isaac Asimov, as forward-looking a man as you can imagine. His latest book is “Counting the Eons,” and it is another in a series of collections of his science fact articles for the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. It is available from Doubleday for \$13.95.

In this one, the Good Doctor holds forth on a number of topics in 17 essays culled from the magazine. These include a fascinating look at medieval efforts to calculate Day One for more accurate calendars; the case for a “closed” universe; his retelling of the origins of his three laws of robotics; and best of all, Asimov’s rendering of modern science’s best explanation for the extinction of the dinosaurs.

“The Steel Tsar,” available from DAW books for \$2.25, is the latest in Michael Moorcock’s “Guild of Temporal Adventurers” series — in other words, the latest manuscript by Chrononaut Oswald Bastable. The previous volumes were “The Land Leviathan” and “The Warlord of the Air.”

In this one, Bastable encounters an alternative Earth in which the Russian Bolshevik Revolution never happened.

Also from DAW is “I, Zombie,” by Curt Selby. Selling for \$2.25, the book is SF, not horror as the title might imply. It concerns a future lime in which reanimated corpses have replaced robots as cheap labor. The main character is an apparently dead young woman, who shouldn’t have any more feelings or control of her life than any of her zombie fellows — yet she does.

Adult fantasy is the order of the day in two more DAW releases. Lin Carter’s “Keswick” is a quest adventure that features knights, dragons, princesses, wizards, and even a fairy godmother. This is high fantasy as Carter is wont to do it, and his fans should be pleased.

Sharon Green's latest tale of blood and guts is "The Warrior Enchained," the second in the "Terrlllan" series. In this one, Green's futuristic secret agent goes up against barbarians on a world where women are property and men are into bondage. The book makes much out of comparing this to the "Gor" novels of John Norman, and if that is to your taste, then you might enjoy this mess.

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*Letters of comment concerning this column or SF in general may be sent to Keith Roysdon, P.O. Box 2108, Muncie, Ind. 17302.*

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