A Voyage to Dari
by Ian Wallace

DARING VOYAGE TO DARI is probably one of the few in science fiction that is both a political issue, but he had wanted me to believe, initiate, the art. self-criticism of the press, as well as reasoned criticisms from outside the newspaper establishment, has been a tradition in America for decades, dating back at least to A. J. Liefing and Walter Lippmann in the 1920s and 1930s. While critics have had their ups and downs, the tradition of criticism has continued since.

Only recently, however, has the press, or "media," if you prefer (which is necessary to institutionalize this tradition. Journalism reviews, announcements, editor and viewer commentary, stories, and a variety of other efforts have been undertaken to allow discussion of what is wrong with the press, where it can be improved, and what its role in society should be. This book, Of the Press, For the Press, is, in a way, the story of the efforts by one paper, the Charleston Post, to establish an ombudsman system for criticism of the paper's work.

The book consists of a collection of internal memos, columns, and ombudsman reports, reflecting complaints against stories published, criticisms of how stories are covered and written, and discussions of how the Post should go about its task of producing a daily newspaper. They provide a view of a controversial system which has had demonstrable success in affecting the quality of the paper that would be hard to obtain in any other way.

One can approach this book in two ways: either as the story of an attempt to institutionalize press criticism, or as valuable, if somewhat limited, primer on the issues that some of the best reporters and editors in the country feel are important to their business. In the latter sense, this is one of the best introductions I could find to a variety of journalistic issues ranging from bias to background briefings, use of "source" stories, and the conflict of interests that occurs when the First Amendment rights of the press meet with the rights of accused criminals, public officials, private citizens, and others. It is in this latter capacity that I recommend this book.

Understanding of the function of the press in America today seems to be in doubt. This book provides an interesting introduction to an area of knowledge that many citizens today could profit from studying.

By Mike McKeage

A guide to SciFi

Science Fiction Reader's Guide by L. David Allen

If you have been immersed in Science Fiction for life will smirk at this guide. I did at first. Then I thought that there was a place for this book besides the notorious circular file.

Allan categorizes Science Fiction as Hard (extrapolated science), Soft (sensuous, social), and Fantasy (alternative ethics). He proceeds to comment on some of the best science fiction writers. These include 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, The War of the Worlds, The Foundation Trilogy, Rite of Passage and eleven other famous novels. Summaries revise chapters on pre-historical and pre-technological societies and the particular story was chosen for the Guide.

Before and after these summaries are a section which tells how to approach a situation, a section which tells how to remember their high school literature? We here have a capsule review of an outline of such a course.

I promised to tell you where to put this book, the junior high or high school mentality virgin to Science Fiction. If such a creature exists, he has probably been kept away by Big Eyed Monsters. Here is a sympathetic build up to some of the great science fiction. It is so mind-bending and takes five times as long as Haldane Edition would to say such things, but to the uninformed it may be palatable.

Another nice feature for the novice is a listing of applications (Hugo and Nebula) winning stories, added to a printed author list with some of the better known stories. This might help the newly converted from literature a string of turkeys right away. It isn't foolproof; Fambo's Freehold made the Hominin list. But then who's perfect?

The other potential readers will be those who like to know what a book is about, which particularly makes them want to like to read about their own good taste will probably like this.

The one unquestionably positive portion of the book is that Allen is teaching science fiction is a university. It is put forward therefore with the spirit that science fiction is expanding and improving its image and itself.