

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΔ)

\$2.00

A few days ago I watched a documentary in which one of the Russian space shuttles was shown sitting sadly in a parking lot with snow blocking its wheels. It was slated to be turned into a tourist restaurant. I stared unbelievably at this spaceship which had once explored the wonders of space. What was happening to it now was wrong. Yet if the Soviets had won the Cold War my people would have suffered the same fate as the former satellite countries in Eastern Europe. I know that it was win or be conquered. I still wish the Russian spaceships weren't being turned into just another version of McDonald's.

— Lisa

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Lisa's Birthday is **October 30, 2006**

Our **Tenth Anniversary** is **November 22, 2006**

The Breeders' Cup World Championships are **November 4, 2006** at Churchill Downs.
The 52nd Running of the Yonkers Trot (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **November 25, 2006** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, NY

The 50th Running of the Messenger Stakes (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) is **November 5, 2006** at Yonkers Raceway.

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Deadline is **December 1, 2006**

Reviewer's Notes

ARTHUR WILSON "BOB" TUCKER
November 23, 1914 — October 6, 2006

We have lost our favorite uncle — the one who had the fun stories, who had been there since the beginning and knew all the things the rest of the family had forgotten, and who lit up the room just by coming in

The fannish and the professional careers of Bob Tucker and Wilson Tucker (respectively) are too well known to need more than the slightest mention. Bob Tucker had been a participant in fandom from the days before fandom, almost, up to the very present, from fanzines before they were called fanzines down to a website and ezines. As a professional, his career began in the forties and ran on from there, with respectable work in the SF and mystery fields.

As a Midwestern fan, he was an active congoer for as long as his health permitted. Thus I myself saw him at a number of Kubla Khans, RiverCons, and so on, as well as at my first WorldCon. His first great mark on con fandom (I omit the obvious contraction, which he would have enjoyed tremendously) was being the Treasurer for the first ChiCon — because he was the only member of the committee who was over 21! He enjoyed many publications, including this one.

Tucker died of congestive heart failure, in St. Petersburg, Florida, while staying with his daughter Judy.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium coordinator Cathy Gill announces that the 2007 Symposium will be at the Holiday Inn Miamisburg, near Dayton, on **March 9-11, 2007**. The topic will be "Food and Drink In the Canon". We hope to see some of you there.

New Dreams for Old (Pyr; 2006; ISBN 159102441-2; \$15) is a collection of Mike Resnick's stories. Of which he has a great variety; from serious analyses of why the past is past (that's the Kirinyaga stories; you know, the ones where the guy tried to recreate traditional Kikuyu culture and after a long and painful succession of failures discovered you can't go back) to comical fantasy takeoffs on hardboiled detective stories. Some of these tales are rather ghastly (the Alzheimer's stories hit a nerve and I went to see my centenarian stepcousin Robley to recuperate) and others are just plain weird (i.e., "Mwalimu in the Squared Circle", or why Machiavelli was right about single combat, and featuring in a supporting role [so not his sort of thing] Louisville's own Muhammad Ali).

No, Bwana, I didn't read it over dinner.

Where did Mandarin of the First Rank Chuan Ch'ing-fu [Zhuan Qingfu] (also known in the barbarian lands as "Dr. Fu Manchu") get his start? A fascinating, scholarly yet popular work on the factors that led to the decline of the previous dynasty is *1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline* by Ray Huang (1981; Yale University Press). In brief biographies of people who should have made a difference

but didn't, from the Wan-li [Wanli] Emperor himself, on down, including generals, administrators, and scholars, Huang shows how the Great Ming had decentralized and bureaucratized, and as a result China couldn't get its act together. Which was why Nurhaci was a tribal chief, and his grandson was the Shun-chih [Shunzhi] Emperor.

Please look at this:

<http://www.pearlharborstories.org/>

The U of L Library Rare Books Room had a copy of the fabled *Notes on Jurgen* by James P. Cover (1928), the limited-edition annotation of Cabell's book (1919, 1920). But because it was a limited edition, it was sort of inaccessible.

Well, now *Notes on Jurgen* is available on line, with not only cross-links (to an on-line edition of *Jurgen*) but even updates, thanks to David Rolfe:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~davidrolfe/jurgen.htm>

Not only that, but he also has the other work of commentary, *Notes on Figures of Earth*, by Cover and John Philips Cranwell (1929):

<http://home.earthlink.net/~davidrolfe/foe.htm>

Is he not a monstrous clever fellow?

Rome (reviewed in *Alexiad* V. IV #iv et v) is now available on DVD (HBO Video; 2006; ISBN 0-7831-3599-8; \$99.99) in a six-disc set which includes an interactive onscreen guide ("Who is that man under Atia? Mark Antony or Timon?" <click> "Joxer!?") as well as documentaries on various aspects of the production. Salve.

At the same meeting where they deplanitized Pluto (and, in some interpretations, reduced the solar system to Mercury, Venus, and a bunch of "dwarf planets"), the International Astronomical Union has officially announced that dwarf planet 2003 UB313 has been named **Eris**, while its satellite has been named **Dysnomia**.

DIG UP THE IAU'S BONES!!!!

There is a book about all the unusual

people who build rafts that ancient people could have built and drift across the oceans on them: *Sea Drift: Rafting Adventures in the Wake of Kon-Tiki* (by P. J. Capelotti, Rutgers University Press, 2001). He covers the many expeditions of Thor Heyerdahl, and his imitators and followers as they drifted across the Pacific, the Atlantic, and even the Indian Oceans. Strangely enough, only one expedition member ever died during such a voyage, Eric de Bisschop on *Tahiti Nui III*. The reader will also find the story of the *Hsu Fu* (*The China Voyage* by Tim Severin, reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #4), as well as a strange case of a crewless bamboo raft that somehow drifted from Burma to the Maldives.

We note with some interest that in the spring of 2007 Christopher Tolkien is going to bring out a novel-length version of the *Ἡρόδοτος ἰστορίων* (*Narn i Hîn Húrin*), the Tale of the Children of Hurin, that epic saga of sex and violence in Middle-earth. If JRRT had buckled down and turned to so as to get this out in his own lifetime, a lot of the utter tripe uttered about him would have been strangled in the cradle. The story is an extension of material previously published in *The Silmarillion* (1977) and *Unfinished Tales* (1980).

There is depressing news from the Internet Movie Data Base (<http://www.imdb.com>) for September 26. The top grossing movie for the weekend of September 22-24 was *Jackass Number Two*. The most profitable movie of 2006 was *The Da Vinci Code*.

OBITS

We regret to report the death of pro and fan **John M. "Mike" Ford** on **September 24, 2006**. Known for his unique and eccentric approach to writing, both generally and specifically, Ford was recognized in a number of fields, from his Rhydling Award winning poetry to his STAR TREK novels such as *How Must for Just the Planet?* (1987) to his noteworthy fantasy *The Dragon Waiting* (1983). My favorite was *The Princes of the Air* (1982), a different sort of space opera that was amusing, interesting, and really needed to be carried on.

Oriana Fallaci

June 29, 1929 — September 14, 2006

"Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt?"

MONARCHIST NEWS

Princess Kiko gave birth by Caesarian section to **Prince Hisahito** on **September 5, 2006**, in the Aiku Hospital in Tokyo.

He is third in line to the Chrysanthemum Throne, after the **Crown Prince Naruhito** and his father, **Prince Akishino**.

BANZAI! BANZAI! BANZAI!

King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV of Tonga died **September 10, 2006** in Mercy Hospital, Auckland, New Zealand. Born **July 4, 1918**, the king succeeded his mother **Queen Salote** upon her death in 1965. The king had directed a modernization of the national economy, but had lost status due to bad investments and even pseudoscientific ones. His health had been declining for some time (to be expected for an 88 year old man who has trimmed down from 440 pounds). His son, the former Crown Prince, has been proclaimed **King Tupou V**.

Lord Nicholas Windsor, younger son of **Prince Edward, Duke of Kent**, has become engaged to Princess **Paola de Doimi de Frankopan**. Or maybe Miss Paola Frankopan, or even Paola Doimi de Dalupis. The Frankopans are, or were, a Croatian princely family, but the family apparently died out in the seventeenth century, and Paola's family only changed its name in 2000. But Paola and Nicholas had been going out together for a while, they were at his mother's seventieth birthday party in 2003.

Nicholas, like his mother, is a convert to Roman Catholicism, which makes him ineligible to succeed to the British Throne. On the other hand, his mother, **Katharine, Duchess of Kent** (néé Katharine Lucy Mary Worsley) is descended from Oliver Cromwell.

JAGS IN SPACE

Commentary by Joseph T Major on

A JUST DETERMINATION

(Ace; 2003; ISBN 0-441-01052-0; \$6.50)

BURDEN OF PROOF

(Ace; 2004; ISBN 0-441-01147-0; \$6.50)

RULE OF EVIDENCE

(Ace; 2005; ISBN 0-441-01262-0; \$6.99)

and *AGAINST ALL ENEMIES*

(Ace; 2006; ISBN 0-441-01382-1; \$7.99)

by John G. Henry

The captain paced the bridge, her mechanical legs humming efficiently. She turned her head and snapped out an order: "Ensign Sinclair, take another search party over and search that Peep ship again, keel to truck! They must have a new secret weapon on board, else they would not have crossed into Manticorean space where I could intercept them, fighting a great smashing ship-to-ship battle with high casualties, outnumbered and under-equipped as I always am!" She raised her mechanical arms towards the viewscreen, where the astrographical ship floated, its hull riddled by the deadly accurate fire from the RMN *Ankletooth*. "Find it, Ensign!" she said, her artificial eyes glinting.

— Not by John G. Henry or David Weber

One of Alexei Panshin's critiques of *Starship Troopers* (1959) was that the book had to have a war, since "Starship troopers are not half so glorious sitting on their butts polishing their weapons for the tenth time for lack of anything else to do." [Heinlein *In Dimension*] In *Space Cadet* (1948), for example, Heinlein did portray a military not at war, not reduced to polishing weapons for the tenth time for lack of anything else to do, but doing worthwhile things, while enduring the innumerable small pains of being in a military forced to work smarter, not harder, make do and mend, and creatively employ its resources. In other words, underfunded and overworked. Heinlein really knew this from consuming (and eventually consumptive) personal experience.

John G. Henry was one of those "whodat?" writers who sprang up in Stanley Schmidt's *Analog*, one of those houseplants who only seems to flourish in a very limited

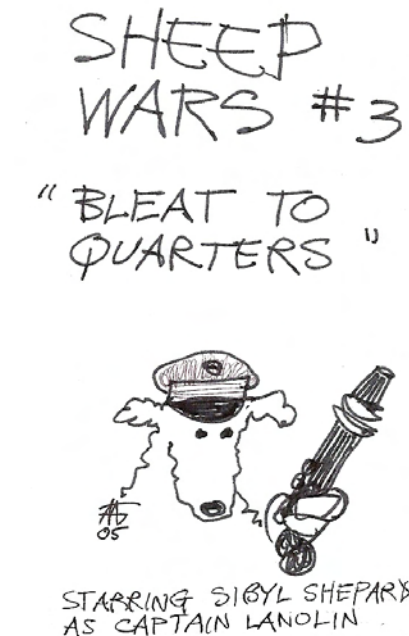
environment. Well, maybe not.

The decision to do what is in effect a version of *JAG* set in space also sounds not so hot at first. The producers of that show solved the problem of boring legal matters by making all the lawyers (except the comic-relief naive Ensign) also macho types — the two leads were also a fighter pilot and a Marine respectively, and the Admiral was also a SEAL. It also seems odd that so much of the U.S. Navy of the period will remain in this solar system expansion. Well, it's better than assuming that the war of the Galactic Empire will be remarkably like World War Two spelled backwards (ref. Bill Baldwin's *Helmsman* series), say. Or even before that.

Paul Sinclair is one of the heirs to hundreds of years of experience at Bancroft Hall, as our saga opens. In his career, as chronicled thus far, he will encounter the usual events of a naval career, whether in wet navy or spatial one. Equipment is broken, unavailable, or chronically malfunctioning, to take one example. What comes to mind in this context is Eric Frank Russell's "Allamagoosa" (*Astounding* May 1955; 1956 Hugo Award for Best Short Story), a portrayal of a unit of a space navy having to deal with an official inspection and audit. Fortunately for him, Sinclair hasn't had to deal with an inquiry into how the ship's offog came apart under gravitational stress. Yet.

Similarly, the officers of the U.S. (Space) Navy in these books are not all wise, brave, humane, tough, concerned, and able. This bit of realism will come up time and again; Henry has chosen stories that turn on it in differing ways.

The result is reminiscent more of works such as Thomas Heggen's *Mr. Roberts* (1948, 1955) and William Brinkley's *Don't Go Near the Water* (1956, 1957). Indeed, the foul-mouthed, lewd, crude, and tattooed sailor Farragut Jones of the USS *Ankletooth* of Brinkley's book would not be totally out of place on Henry's ships, albeit because of his choice of language frequently up in front of Mr. Sinclair, that — er. (*Don't Go Near the Water* also has a hilarious chapter on the preparations for a visit by a war correspondent — Edgar Rice Burroughs!)



Ensign Sinclair begins looking for *A Just Determination* as thousands of ensigns have begun since, if not the beginning of time, since the U.S. Navy begin. (Mr Midshipman Sinclair, snotty in HM Space Navy, would have gone a different route — incidentally there is a meeting with a HMS *Lord Nelson* — and no doubt a space navy based on yet other nations' navies would have done it other ways.) He reports on board the USS *Michaelson*, gets stuffed into cramped and inadequate quarters (appropriately called an "Ensign locker"), meets his roommates, other senior officers (a running gag is that one officer is never to be found), and the Captain.

As we've said before, not all officers of this future U.S. Navy are wise, brave, humane, tough, concerned, and able. There is, however, one who does perform the task of being the mentor to the sheep ripe for shearing; the cynical, dryly witty Supply Officer Commander Sykes, the man who knows how things work and why.

As opposed to Captain Wakefield of the

Michaelson, who in an early scene shows that he is rather light-hearted and ill-informed. At least he isn't hopping from off-ship romantic encounter to off-ship romantic encounter, bedding the Science Officer, or rolling ball bearings in his hand while worrying about who ate the strawberries. (Indeed there is the matter of Paul and Ensign Shen — but we're getting ahead of the plot.)

This happy-go-lucky attitude turns out to be a real bummer when the Captain decides to intercept a secret intruder sent by the South Asian Alliance into American space — only to find out that the ship was in fact nothing more than an astrographical probe ship. As a result, he is up on charges — and Sinclair has to honestly say he said he supported the captain.

What Henry is discussing here is the problem of why one can't just say to an incompetent superior, "Captain Queeg, er Wakefield, I'm taking over temporarily." For all that this may be distracting to one's personal development, there are situations and structures where such behaviors are counterproductive.

At the end of the previous book, Paul got into circumstances where his relationship with Ensign Jen Shen was not improper fraternization. She got a transfer. (This is a consideration of sex-integrated navies; Henry doesn't analyze the explosive issue implicit in, for example, maternity combat fatigues.) But then, when an emergency occurs, the *Burden of Proof* falls heavy on Paul's shoulders.

The continued presence of environmental movements is, if anything, an expected extrapolation, though at the same time, it should be clear, as it is in these books, that it is only one of many factions, not the ruling class (as in say *Fallen Angels* by Flynn, Niven, and Pournelle (1991)). And as obnoxious and devoted to propaganda of the deed as well. Which sets up the premise for one of the seemingly more implausible scenes in the book.

A fire breaks out on the *Michaelson*. So what's the problem? Open the compartment to vacuum, as they've been doing since Kim Kinnison was a pup. But they can't spill fuel in a docking area. *It would cause an environmental hazard*. Thus, Sinclair has to put the fire out the old-fashioned way, with water. Then he has to endure getting ignored while his do-nothing superior officer

Lieutenant Silver gets commended. Indeed, Silver is a suck-up, always managing to look good to superiors at others' expense.

Then the worm turns, and when Silver starts blaming the man killed in the accident, Paul has to deal with this accusation. In the only way he can see, which is to get Silver up on charges. Dueling is not an option.

How does a navy, or an individual, deal with careerism, sycophancy, and pull? Sometimes it gets very bad, as on HMS *Hermione* and her Captain Hugh Pigot, the admiral's nephew who had a good record but a bad hand. Dudley Pope's *The Black Ship* (1963) describes the bloody results of this, and then he wrote a fictionalized version of how that issue was resolved, *Ramage's Mutiny* (1977). (Let's just say that Pigot was not around to see his ship recovered from the Spanish.)

Then there's the problem that Jen Shen's father doesn't think that Paul is good enough for his little girl. Since he's also a captain, this makes Sinclair's career as problematic as his life, which is not the usual impediment to the course of true love.

Not as much as what happens when Jen finds that a *Rule of Evidence* may be bent against her favor. Her ship is testing a new piece of equipment. Then, there is an explosion in the engine compartment, leaving her trapped in the after compartments of a damaged ship, the only officer there. She was a minor hero, keeping order in a desperate situation. Right?

Wrong. Since accidents couldn't possibly happen, the explosion had to be intentional. And how better to look heroic than to set up an explosion, conveniently be just out of the way when it happens, and heroically save the day? Everything looks bad for Jen, and with all the lives lost this is a capital case. However, not all was on the up and up about this new equipment or how the product guidelines were distributed.

They all took the oath to defend the country *Against All Enemies*, but some people thought to game the system. International relations get a bit of a shock when a South Asian Alliance observer destroys a Greenspace asteroid habitat that the *Michaelson* is also observing. There's a security leak on board, it seems, and Paul gets chosen to be the snitch, seeing as he's also the legal officer. (Another item in the realistic touch department, the ship having to have junior officers do a multitude of things.)

He has moral qualms, and even more so when the accused leaker turns out to be a classmate who games the system. Literally, too, since part of his defense is that the spy stuff found in his gear is real, just for a Live Action Role-Playing Game. But that isn't the least of Paul's problems, neither is the identity of the civilian lawyer for the accused — Paul's own brother, and yes there is sibling rivalry — it's the guy's unshakable, absolute confidence in the face of all the evidence.

It makes finally getting married to Jen, just before he gets shipped off to Mars, almost second order. What Paul has to make clear here is that trying to game the system doesn't apply to real life.

Mike Resnick's criticism of Eric Frank Russell's *Wasp* (1957) is worth analyzing in this context. *Wasp* is the tale of a deep-penetration covert agent/saboteur. Because Russell set it in an interstellar war, it was "that Buck Rogers stuff"; had he set it, say, in the recent conflict on Earth, which could have been done with minimal changes to the plot, Resnick argues that the book would have been recognized as a brilliant and profound work on the potential and the qualms of covert action.

And so it is with this. Arguably, Henry could have written about Paul Sinclair of the U.S. [Surface] Navy, dealing with threats and problems in a water navy. But the contemporary naval thriller market seems to be cornered for the moment by Stephen Coonts and David Poyer, and while their Jake Grafton and Dan Lenson (respectively) show where Eric Sinclair may be going, they also don't leave much room for him in the here-and-now. (Note that David Poyer got his start in *Analog*.)

What brings the story down to earth, so to speak, is that Sinclair isn't a superman. He didn't graduate first in his class, and get given command of an experimental battlecruiser on a "safe return doubtful" mission. But then, neither did he barely survive a training course with a 99%+ washout rate and get thrown into a mission where absolute genius and uncommon valor were the utter minimum needed not to get canned in disgrace.

It's interesting to note how familial this navy is; Sinclair is the son of two officers, Jen is the daughter of a captain, and others too. This could never happen like, say,

Senator (Captain ret) John S. McCain III being the son of Admiral John S. McCain, Jr. and the grandson of Admiral John S. McCain. Oh no, of course not.

What these books do is to show that all those canned ritualistic legal phrases — "a just determination", "burden of proof", "rule of evidence", "against all enemies" — have very real meanings and very real applications in the real world.

THAT'S NOT MY DEPARTMENT

Review by Joseph T Major of
SETTLING ACCOUNTS: THE GRAPPLE

by Harry Turtledove
(Del Rey; 2006;

ISBN 987-0-345-45725-7; \$26.95)

Sequel to *How Few Remain*,

Great War Series,

American Empire Series,

Settling Accounts: Return Engagement,
and *Settling Accounts: Drive to the East*

FREEDOM!

Okay, so the war isn't continuing quite to Jake Featherston's advantage. We could lick 'em with cornstalks, but they won't fite with cornstalks, more like with barrels that got three-and-a-half inch cannons (that's one tiger of a barrel there — you know, if you used that there atheist met-ric system they got in France, them big guns would be 88mm, which is a downright odd number), and aircraft carriers built on merchant hulls which are slow, and only got thirty planes apiece. More of them, too.

But Mistah Jake, he done got him some aces up his sleeve. For example, they's them rockets that fly over a hundred miles, so's you can hit Philadelphia all the ways from Virginny ("Ah's a-aimin' at the stahs; sometimes ah hits Phil-a-del-phi-ay."). Not to mention that little 'ol project in the hills, near Washington University. Is that old scoundrel the Yankee President LaFollette complaining that Jake is a-buyin' yellow cake in French West Africa? (Don't they got enough lemon cake at home?) Maybe that's why he's a-lookin' for them Confederate Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The shrinking number of survivors from the earlier books are finding that the war is becoming ever more grim and desperate. In the last book, the Confederate army in

Pittsburgh finally surrendered; now the recrudescing Union forces turn to driving the Southrons out of Ohio, then indeed out of Kentucky (*sigh*) and Tennessee, all the way to Georgia. The Mississippi may yet flow vexed to the sea, but as God is my witness, they may be burning Atlanta soon!

Race relations continue to deteriorate. Well, that's one way of putting it. Featherston's final solution to the colored folks problem turns out to be a substantial impedance to the war effort, since not only is he killing off labor and using up transport, it takes a serious troop commitment in Texas to keep it on the quiet, not that that works. Why does this sound familiar?

And the war at sea grinds on and on, including a capture of Midway from the Japanese and British (a Lemon-Limey alliance, huh?) using those little carriers on merchant hulls that carry only thirty planes each, since the U.S. Navy hasn't any big ones to spare.

But then, the one Confederate secret weapon kicks in — and the other looks all too possible all too soon . . .

This book has the usual limits of a middle-of-the-series volume. There is too much going on that doesn't end, for example. On the other hand, there is too much that does end, along with the people doing it. Such as the Chicano who can't take the strain of sending *mulates* to the showers any longer.

Turtledove is undertaking the difficult task of covering an entire war at a multitude of levels, from the "little people" — the men in the trenches, the civilians making do, and so on — up to the leadership. This will understandably mean a diverse and diffuse plot progression.

The war has become even more grim and bloody, and what is to happen when we are *In At the Death* will be dreadful. We'll see *How Few Remain* if any when this series is . . . [To Be Concluded]

A FIVE DAYS' WONDER

Review by Joseph T Major of
EVERY INCH A KING

by Harry Turtledove

(Illinois Science Fiction in Chicago Press;
2005; ISBN 0-9759156-1-4; \$25.00)

One of the old fantasy tropes is of the little tinker who is really Heir to the Throne,

all unknowing, and one day a wise old wizard comes by and says, "Boy, you in a heap of trouble . . ." You get the idea.

GOD AND I PLOTTED
OUR FOREIGN POLICY,
BUT IF GOD HAD TOLD
ME WHAT HE HAD IN
MIND FOR THE COUNTRY,
I WOULD HAVE DONE SOME-
THING ELSE!



women, fame, and oh yes a harem of women, Otto was tempted. Flashy would definitely have been, after all.

You see, as a result of the latest round of wars, the Hassockian Empire (as the Prince Padriag of Sandusky said of that realm, "the Hassockian Empire, so-called because it had the same amount of intelligence and energy as a footstool") was going to have to give up its province of Shqiperi, making its Prince Halim Eddin the king of that land. Unless, of course, someone who looked exactly like him got there first. So, blessing his good fortune, Otto set off, with only the circus's sword swallower, Max of Witte as his entourage. Since Max is six feet eight inches tall, that's enough of an entourage.

And so, the peerless prince and his mighty adjutant set off, in a masquerade worthy of the Hauptmann of Köpenick. Except that the Hauptmann of Köpenick only had to worry about being picked up by the Berlin police department on the way to clean out the Köpenicker municipal treasury under the cover of the officer's uniform he bought at a pawn shop. Otto, er Halim Eddin, and Max have to worry about vampires, smugglers, sea dragons, and other mundane hazards of the Lokrian seas.

What they find when they arrive at Shqiperi might make them wish for the curse of the vampire. The country is one where the national sport is the blood feud. One would think that Halim Eddin had got somebody

mad at him.

In spite of everything, the new kingdom is born amid blood (some of those harem women were new indeed) and strife. A war with the neighboring country of Belagora, that is, and King Halim Eddin hasn't even gone to bed yet. (Better look out, they have Drusus Lupus on their side, and he doesn't have all that weight to calm him down! Pfu.)

Then the fun really begins . . .

Every Inch a King is a comic romp, and yet it ends with a philosophical comment about growing up. Or, you can expand your knowledge of history while trying to guess the origins of all the country names. Or other matters: Zibeon was right, the followers of Eliaphet took the wrong turning (read the book!).

[At ConGlomeration, Dr. Turtledove gave a boring lecture about some usurper in Albania. You can't take the historian out of the writer, can you?]

FAITHFUL DOG

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE THIRTEENTH HOUSE

by Sharon Shinn

(Berkley; 2006; ISBN 0-441-01368-6;
\$24.95)

"A Novel of the Twelve Houses"

Gillengaria has problems; the King is old and his daughters are young. A regency is so much in order that a prospective Regent has already been named. Somehow this bothers people, and the prospective Regent has also been detained by less than friendly types.

This looks like a job for Superman. Well, he isn't in this world, but as the plot progresses, one wonders. You see, looking for him is a very talented and determined woman named Kirra Danalustrous. Not just the talents you're thinking of; she can change her shape.

This turns out to be a useful talent, as she and her retinue (including yet another shapeshifter, who sometimes masquerades as her maid and sometimes as her faithful dog) manages to extricate the prospective Regent, Romar Brendyn. Who turns out to be extremely grateful. And vice versa. Indeed, what bothers Kirra is that she falls in love with him, even though he's married. As if that has ever bothered nobles anywhere before.

Then, Kirra goes out on a more determined mission, to investigate the potential of further unrest. Only, since she's known to be a shapeshifter (why, then, did the kidnappers let her into the house where they had Romar; you'd think they'd have had more sense than to let in someone with infinite disguises), she would have to go as her own sister. However, Romar learns different soon enough, and then they take their mutual attraction a step further.

Along the way, Kirra tries something even more world-shaking when she is begged to heal a child dying of fever, an utterly incurable fever. Dogs can get it too, but they can be cured of it. Well, it seems she can shift more than just her own shape . . .

And then, she gets invited to heal Romar's wife, who is barren. This leads her to the discovery of the ultimate plot, one close to her, and then a solution to her other problem . . .

While Shinn tells an interesting story, she may not have thought through all the consequences of Kirra's powers. At the beginning, the plotters know she is a shapeshifter but let her in anyhow. One would think that there would be a lack of trust; or that there would be other ways of identifying people.

Not to mention the potential unease implicit in Kirra's "healing" someone of love. Do you really think there would be much trust in a society where there are people who can look like anyone or anything and mess with other peoples' minds? It's a pity, and it makes the good parts of this book, an amusing story with a mature grasp of how to deal with a relationship, look bad.

PEAK PERFORMANCE

Review by Joseph T Major of

THE WIZARD LORD

by Lawrence Watt-Evans

(Tor; 2006; ISBN 0-765-31026-0' \$26.95)

"Volume One of The Annals of the
Chosen"

In Philip K. Dick's *Solar Lottery* (1955), one of the peculiar checks-and-balances imposed on the Quizmaster, the randomly-chosen ruler of the solar system, was that as soon as he was chosen as Quizmaster when the bottle twitched and his P-card came up, a convention was called to choose an assassin.

This seems a bit much.

In this world, the magical spirits, the *ler*, that control and empower the world are very much different from place to place, and are monitored and placated by a network of local priests and priestesses, under the supervision of a Wizard Lord. But whence the checks-and-balances? Well, if the Wizard Lord goes wrong, there is a team of experts, empowered by the *ler* to be the best in their particular fields, who are supposed to kill the Wizard Lord.

This sounds like an Advanced Dungeons & Dragons™ Adventure for Levels 9-12. Or worse, since (for example) one of the Chosen, this team of the best of the best, is the Beauty, supposed to stun the Wizard Lord's henchmen by her incomparable good looks. (And what if a Wizard Lord hires gay and female guards?) It sounds almost Smithian (as in E. E.).

Well, not precisely. Evans has given some thought to this. The Chosen have to make their own livings somehow. And other problems; the Beauty, for example, lives in a community where women are secluded and veiled — think about it, otherwise every man she saw would be single-mindedly devoted to seducing her.

Breaker of Mad Oak, our protagonist, has to learn many of these things. You see, he's been chosen to be the new Swordsman, and the Wizard Lord is acting up.

Not that he knows the second half, for after becoming trained with the sword by the old Swordsman and charmed with the Swordsman's talisman, he sets off to see the world outside Mad Oak. Including the Wizard Lord's home village, which was completely and thoroughly devastated. By the Wizard Lord, as he so kindly informs them (he can talk through animals). They had been very cruel to him when he was young, you see. (Did they call him "Fimfle"?)

So it is that this adventure turns into a sanctioned whacking, now the Chosen have to do the job they have been chosen for. Some human features make for problems. The Thief, for example, has married, settled down, and doesn't want to leave her children. (She keeps up her responsibility to have to steal something every day — all the Chosen have to practice their particular art daily — by filching the kids' toys.) And then there is the debate of whether eliminating the Wizard Lord is such a good idea after all. Or even

possible, given how he can use his powers in self-defense . . .

This is not just an entertaining story (though it is); Evans has shown some of the underpinnings and ways of such a society. (One point hit me after a bit of reading; there are no riding animals. The Chosen walk everywhere they go.) It looks as if there'll be more when this is . . . **[To Be Continued]**

FAROE SUMMERSISLE

Review by Joseph T Major of

WARRENER'S BEASTIE:

A Novel of the Deep

by William K. Trotter

(Carroll & Graf; 2006;

ISBN 976-0-78671-328-8; \$17.95)

Never ask for what you want; you may get it, in some strange and unanticipated way.

The basic theme of the Cthulhu Mythos, back when it belonged to H. P. Lovecraft, was that there are strange things out there so far beyond normal human comprehension that merely seeing them will make the observer's brains deliquesce and run out of his ears. Nowadays, it's all rock-em-sock-em Ancient Ones vs. Elder Gods Plush Cthulhu as told by the *Necronomicon* automatic printing machine.

None of which concerns our protagonist, Allen Warrener, who has a family tradition to live up to. But something seems to be saving him, though having first caught some hideous fungal infection right before passing out of Special Forces training, then getting bizarrely wounded in 'Nam, hardly seems to be what he had in mind.

But then, he develops an interest in Cryptozoology — the study of creatures not yet known to science. Particularly, that of a strange entity seen in the Faroes. A place which has good memories for him, due to an intense brief encounter with a young lady.

Bulwarked by a diverse team of associates (the retired porn director and his wife, who was also his star, make an interesting pair of second bananas), Allen sets out to the Faroes to find his beastie. Provided he survives the encounter between his current girlfriend and his first one.

Or, for that matter, if any of them survive the investigation, which is set on an island that was notorious for the unexplained disappearance of its entire population, and neighbors another one where the people are

extremely reclusive. One would think they were communing with the Deep Ones (see "The Shadow Over Innsmouth") for wealth and ease. Not to mention the mysterious artist who has a different sort of shadowy background.

Then, the islands start having real trouble, of which a volcanic eruption is one of the lesser factors . . .

Trotter handles a diverse cast well, making his supporting players well-rounded people, if sometimes oddly so. The story builds gradually, yet confidently, to its stunning climax. One can quibble over details (I know that the Special Forces expanded big time during Vietnam, but would they take guys fresh out of OCS?) and still enjoy the whole.

FORGOTTEN ARGONAUTS

Review by Joseph T Major of

THE LOST MEN:

The Harrowing Saga of Shackleton's Ross Sea Party

by Kelly Tyler-Lewis

(Viking; 2006; ISBN 0-670-03412-8; \$25.95)

I once got sucked into an internet discussion where one of the other people started talking about fame. "What," he asked, "was the name of the leader of the third group to reach the South Pole?" That was not the right question to ask. You know I know him, but you don't know that you know him too. (For the record, we will not count the aerial missions that surveyed and built the Amundsen-Scott Base.)

Thanks to the dogged research of Alfred Lansing and the devoted showpersonship of Caroline Alexander, we are very much aware of the incredible voyage of the *Endurance* (Lansing, 1959; Alexander, 1998). But as Vivian Fuchs had done, so Shackleton had planned on the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition; while the continent-crossing party would leave from the Weddell Sea, another party would land at the familiar setting of Ross Island, and travel south laying depots for the coming people. Fuchs had his more successful support team avoid the tricky surface of the Ross Ice Shelf and spare the main party the hazardous descent from the Polar Plateau of the Beardmore Glacier; Shackleton didn't have that flexibility.

But this depot laying expedition was very

much second in line. Shackleton couldn't be everywhere, and the *Endurance* had priority. Thus it was that the Ross Sea Depot-Laying Party had to make do with whatever they could scrape up in Australia, use the ship *Aurora* (which was not in good condition), and, in general, improvise and dare.

Then the shore party had to do it all over again. The *Aurora* got to Ross Island, site of the previous Scott and Shackleton expedition huts. Rather than work the ship out of the ice, then back again next year, Shackleton had ordered that she winter over at Ross Island, as the *Discovery* had done for Scott's first expedition. Between the choice of a poor mooring site and bad weather, the *Aurora* did not stay there, drifting north along the Wilkes coast of Antarctica. Which left the Depot Party stranded, cut off from equipment and supplies.

Fortunately, Scott's second expedition had left behind a substantial, if occasionally inadequate, stock of equipment, and the men improvised. Not only that, they carried out prodigies of effort, laying a string of depots all the way to the foot of the Beardmore Glacier.

However, the supply problem had a nasty way of hitting back. Three of the seven men in the depot laying party came down with severe cases of scurvy; one of them, the Reverend Arnold Spencer-Smith (he had another job on the side), the expedition photographer, died of it. Then, the two recovering cases, including the commander of the party, Aeneas Mackintosh, got in a hurry and went out over the ice from the *Discovery* Hut on the southern peninsula of Ross Island northwards to the Cape Evans hut, built by Captain Scott's second, fatal expedition. They never got there.

Sir Ernest Shackleton did not return to England, to receive honors and tribute, after his incredible voyage of escape and rescue. He had to finish the job, and went to Australia to recover the Ross Sea party. You would think they would have been disgusted; he won them over. Now that's charisma!

Tyler-Lewis has one of the same advantages that Alfred Lansing had; the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition was well documented by its participants. Journals were made available and every man was encouraged to write up his experiences. This was very helpful to Lennard Bickel when he came to write *Shackleton's*

Forgotten Men (2000), the story of the Ross Sea Party, and here too.

Later on, of course, when Vivian Fuchs led the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition along the route Shackleton had planned to go, he found that his subordinate who was supposed to build the depots on the last half of the trip had decided to go for it, and became the leader of the third group to reach the South Pole, ahead of Fuchs. As if he hadn't already had enough fame. Year after next, he plans to go back there for the fiftieth anniversary celebration, and there he will be welcomed as the conqueror of the Pole and Mount Everest too, **Sir Edmund Hillary**, K.G., O.N.Z., K.B.E.

J. HABAKUK JEPHSON'S STATEMENT

Review by Joseph T Major of

GHOST SHIP:

The Mysterious True Story of the Mary Celeste and Her Missing Crew

by Brian Hicks

(Ballantine; 2004; ISBN 0-345-46391-9; \$25.95)

Captain Morehouse turned his back on the strange, kanaky-style boat. "Never again," he said. "I'm never again salvaging another ship as long as I live. Not after what happened the last time."

Some otherwhere, otherwhen, the Alien Space Bats sighed. They had gone to such trouble to have the abandoned *Teignmouth Electron* drift through the time portal, to give the nineteenth century a scientific boost, and now they would have to send her back to the future . . .

When I was in grade school, I read a book called *Invisible Horizons* by Vincent Gaddis (1965). It might be called an early woo book; Gaddis discussed all sorts of mysteries of the sea, like the case of the two ghosts that followed a ship, or the mysterious disappearance of the lighthouse keepers. Some of his research was not too hot; his description of the career of the battleship *Scharnhorst* was completely wrong, for example.

And yet, and yet when he wrote about the *Mary Celeste*, not only did he get the ship's name right, he put forward an entirely mundane explanation for the disappearance

of her crew, debunked the more exotic factoids about the ship, and pointed out where so much of the mystery came from.

Hicks has done this at greater detail. He gives a description of the entire career of the *Mary Celeste*, from launch in Nova Scotia to wrecking off Haiti, and a biography of her captain. Benjamin Spooner Briggs was a seafaring man of a seafaring family of Massachusetts. He was an entirely reliable and trustworthy man, with a crew so reliable that he felt no compunction about taking his wife and daughter on a cruise across the Atlantic, delivering alcohol to Italy.

He was also friends with David Reed Morehouse, who was also taking a cargo from New York to Italy. They had dinner before Briggs sailed, and planned to meet afterwards. At least their ships did.

Morehouse and his crew were astounded to find the ship and not the crew, instead of vice versa, and hard put to get her into port, but then they really got into trouble. The Attorney General of Gibraltar, Frederick Solly Flood, thought he was on to something. The wild theories and outrageous speculations he threw out during the course of the hearing set a new low in jurisprudence, one worthy of the O. J. trial.

Then the speculation began. If nothing else, that doctor with a lot of spare time on his hands can be shown to have influenced more than just crime investigations. "J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement" tells a lurid story of mutiny and massacre on the ship *Marie Celeste*. As a result, even Benjamin Briggs's family started calling the ship that — much less the reporters who, some ninety or so years later, reported on the discovery of the abandoned trimaran racing yacht *Teignmouth Electron*. A. Conan Doyle has something to answer for there.

After listing some other wild stories told by people who weren't trying to pass it off as fiction, Hicks gets to his explanation of what he thinks really happened. Which turns out to be pretty much what Gaddis had said: they left the ship because the alcohol was giving off fumes, tying the lifeboat to the halyard as a towrope. Then the halyard broke . . .

Hicks has given a description not only of a different way of life, but a investigation of a different kind of story.

HIMMLER'S CRUSADE
Review by Joseph T Major of
THE MASTER PLAN:

Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust

by Heather Pringle
(Hyperion; 2006;

ISBN 0-7868-6886-4; \$24.95)

"Wenn Abenteuer einen Namen hat, muß es Indiana Jones sein! . . ."

SS-Standartenführer Remler drew his dagger. "This weapon was given me by the *Reichsführer* himself in an Aryan weaponsbestowing ceremony at Wewelsburg," he said, his blue eyes glittering with racial fanaticism.

"Our racial researches have uncovered the description of the sacred knives used by the ancient Aryan warriors in defending their racial will. The steel of this blade was forged using ancient Aryan rituals and ceremony. . ."

BANG

He slumped to the ground. Marion said, "Indy, why the hell did you take so long?"

Indiana Jones shrugged. "Hon, I knew I had enough time to get the revolver out of my backpack when he began that little spiel."

You will recall *Himmler's Crusade* (2003, 2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #4), by Christopher Hale, the story of the SS *Ahnenerbe* mission to Tibet, to uncover the homeland of the Aryan race. That little expedition was only a part of a greater program, a world study of the origins and nature of the true humans.

That's right. Norman Spinrad got it dead to rights in *The Iron Dream* (1977), down to Bors Remler's confident prediction of the nature of true humanity:

" . . . We've drawn up a complete set of genetic criteria for the SS supermen of the future. These marvelous specimens will be a full seven feet tall, with fair skin, golden hair, and the physiques of gods, and an average intelligence surpassing that of present-day geniuses. By regulating the breeding of the present generation of SS with the utmost rigor, such a master race may be produced in as few as three generations."

— *The Iron Dream*

This fervent description could be a paraphrase of the description of the Nordic Race penned by the philologist Hans F. K. Günther in the nineteen-twenties, in his *Racial Elements of European History* (as quoted on Page 34). (Unfortunately for Remler's plans, the Dominator Empire carried out that terrible atrocity with the Fire of the Ancients, but then the SS pulled a faster one . . .)

The *Ahnenerbe* ("Ancestral Heritage" — in full, *Deutsches Ahnenerbe* — *Studiengesellschaft für Geistesurgeschichte* [German Ancestral Heritage — Society for the Study of Primeval Ideas]) was one of the organs of state security, Nazi style. It was founded by Himmler in 1935 to study the history of the Aryan race.

Pringle describes the people who powered Himmler's historical and scientific fantasies. Most of them didn't even have the passing acquaintance with scientific fact that Bruno Beger did; as you know, Beger, of the Tibetan expedition, measured skulls to prove various Nazi racial theories — that he picked subjects and ordered them killed just went to show.

For example, there was Hermann Wirth, a man who exhibited many modern beliefs; telepathy, recreationism, neopaganism, Atlantis, vegetarianism, and so on. However, for all his vast knowledge of philology, social history, archaeology, and music, Wirth was a little cock-eyed. He believed, you see, that the reason that the birth of civilization only appeared to have taken place in the Middle East was that it actually took place in lost Atlantis, a continent occupied by a matriarchal Nordic race. (I wonder if he ever dealt with Marija Gimbutas?)

If he'd ever found the works of Olaf Rudbeck (see *Finding Atlantis* by David King (2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #5)) he would have headed to the other side of Sweden, to Uppsala, Rudbeck's Atlantis; as it was, he went to the west coast, just south of Norway, to make plaster casts of ancient petroglyphs. He believed that folk images contained the original Nordic writing method, and that the Swedish engravings were more examples of this. For all that his expedition had substantial expenditures on equipment and personnel, having someone who actually knew about archaeological methods doesn't seem to have been included, and indeed the Swedes eventually banned Wirth from entering the country. Not long

thereafter, Hitler denounced him, and he ended up being kicked upstairs.

At that, Wirth couldn't hold a candle to Himmler's real estate advisor, Karl-Maria Wiligut. Wiligut, a combat veteran of the Austro-Hungarian army, had become somewhat odd after the war and had been institutionalized, which seems to have made him worse. He insisted that the Ku Klux Klan was going to rescue him but I can't imagine Imperial Wizard Evans having any concern about a Catholic. During and after his release Wiligut, who was calling himself "Weisthor" by then, became obsessed with ancient German legends; he helped Himmler find a place near where the climatic battle of East and West would occur, and having found Wewelsburg, participated in the redesign of the place.

Other expeditions attempted to find Aryan origins in Finland, in Iraq, in the Dordogne, and even in Peru. The story of Schäfer's and Beger's trip to Tibet to look for the origin of the Aryan race there has been covered in *Himmler's Crusade*. (Except for the scene described here (Pages 150-151) where Wiligut met Schäfer to brief him how the lamas, with whom he had some familiarity, apparently, were expecting him. Hale only mentions a brief meeting between Wiligut and Beger.) In a far too short chapter, Pringle discusses how Assien Bohmers, a Frisian working for the *Ahnenerbe*, tried to prove that the Cro-Magnons were the original Aryans, a warrior race who destroyed their racial enemies, though even the *Ahnenerbe* wouldn't have countenanced the answer in H. Beam Piper's story "Genesis" (1951):

They hunted down the hairy Neanderthalers, and exterminated them ruthlessly, the origin of their implacable hatred lost in legend. All that they remembered, in the misty, confused, way that one remembers a dream, was that there had once been a time of happiness and plenty, and that there was a goal to which they would some day attain. They left the mountains — were they the Caucasus? The Alps? The Pamirs? — and spread outward, conquering as they went.

We find their bones, and their stone weapons, and their crude paintings, in the caves of Cro-

Magnon and Grimaldi and Altimira and Mas-d’Azil; the deep layers of horse and reindeer and mammoth bones at their feasting-place at Solutre. We wonder how and whence a race so like our own came into a world of brutish sub-humans.

Just as we wonder, too, at the network of canals which radiate from the polar caps of our sister planet, and speculate on the possibility that they were the work of hands like our own. And we concoct elaborate jokes about the “Men From Mars” — *ourselves*.

Or would they have? (Oh boy: “Aryans Are From Mars; Jews Are From Yuggoth”.)

Ahnenerbe staffers were involved in looting Authentic Aryan Ancestral Artifacts from foreign museums, including a famous altarpiece in Poland done by a German sculptor. This doesn’t seem to accord all that well with their neopagan beliefs but consistency was not one of their particular virtues.

What was the True Heinrich going to do once he had his Aryan race? Going with his existing beliefs in the simple rural life, he had plans drawn up for Aryan communities; farming villages established on ancestral Aryan principles of homebuilding (they had

designed a combined house and barn for the Ideal Aryan Farming Family to occupy) and communal organization (there would be a pistol range and a Party Rally center). But there wasn’t enough free land in the Reich. However, it seemed that there would be plenty available in the ancient Gothic lands.

Himmler actually even made a visit to the future *Götengau*, the ancestral territories of the Goths restored to their proper rulers. This would include the Crimea and a large part of Ukraine up to and past Dnepropetrovsk. (I presume that city would have been renamed.) However, the Soviet Partisans spoiled his visit.

When the Aryans tried to get into some actual science their results were more atrocious than useful; the experiments with freezing (a man can warm up with two women quicker than with one) are well known, and *Himmler’s Crusade* covers Bruno Beger’s work in Aryan physiognomy. But, in the final days of the war, Himmler was wildly optimistic; they had developed a weapon that would utterly destroy their enemies by changing the Earth’s magnetic field and making the operation of electrical equipment impossible. He was disappointed when they told him it wouldn’t work.

However, the biggest theory among the Nazi elite was Hermann Hörbiger’s World

Ice Theory (*Welteislehre*), a thrilling tale of moons building up ice and crashing onto the Earth, creating cycles of civilization and destruction. (Velikovsky, anyone?) And here you thought it was something that Brad Linaweaver (*Moon of Ice* (1982, 1988)) or even Cyril Kornbluth (“Two Dooms” (1957)) had invented. The *Welteislehre* is discussed in Martin Gardner’s *Fads and Fallacies In the Name of Science* (1952, 1957).

Gardner, however, understates the appeal of the theory in the Nazi hierarchy. “I’m quite well inclined to accept the cosmic theories of Hörbiger,” Hitler said (*Hitler’s Table Talk 1941-1944*, Page 129; quoted Page 180) and Pringle describes how Himmler sent an *Ahnenerbe* researcher to Libya to search for proof of this.

Because of a number of technological advances, the rocket program being a prominent one, we have the image of Nazi Germany as a Teutonically efficient super-science society. This and other such works, *Himmler’s Crusade* for example, are reminders of the contrary. Pseudo-science became a far more powerful weapon in the task of genocide than many of its adherents would accept.

After reading this book, the book *Runespear* by Victor Milán and Melinda Snodgrass (1987), the story of an expedition

to Greenland to uncover the lost spear of Odin, Gungnir, has a certain contextual point. I wish someone would reissue that book.

DYNAMITE DAY

by Lisa

This issue’s horse is an Appaloosa named Dynamite Day. He won no fewer than seven world championships. He also was named World’s Best Appaloosa four times. Dynamite Day excelled at calf roping and barrel racing, which both require incredible agility. He is a descendant of Three Bars, the Thoroughbred who was a legendary Quarter Horse sire. He last won World’s Best Appaloosa in 1996, when he was twelve. Very few Thoroughbreds are still racing at twelve.

RACING NEWS

by Lisa

In Saddlebred news, He’s The Man won the Five Gaited World’s Grand Championship. Callaway’s Copyright scored as World Grand Champion in Harness for a record sixth year. Manila Thrilla came away with the Three Gaited Championship.

In Standardbred news, Glidemaster came



out of nowhere and exploded down the stretch to win this year's Hambletonian, first leg of the trotting Triple Crown. Fans should appreciate the fact his driver is John Campbell and cheer him on accordingly. Glidemaster was sold as a yearling for the bargain basement price of 10,000 dollars.

The Futurity was run by dividing up the horses into two elimination heats. The first five finishers of each heat went into a second heat. If a nonwinner of one of the elimination heats won that second heat the horses would be required to trot a third race in the same day. No Thoroughbred would be asked to run two races in the same day, but that is exactly what is required for Standardbreds to win their Triple Crown..

Glidemaster won his elimination heat and came back to win his second, though E.L. Mikko put up a gallant performance to finish second. I managed to get a picture of him a few strides past the finish line. When I looked at my picture I was surprised to see that both Glidemaster and Mikko appear to have all four feet off the ground. I had known, of course, that running horses do this but I hadn't known trotters also do this. He now has just the Yonkers Trot to win to get the Triple Crown.

In Thoroughbred news, Champion sprinter Lost in the Fog was euthanized after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. I wish I had seen him race. Saint Liam, Horse of the Year in 2005, fell and sustained a fatal leg break. He survived all the dangers of the track only to fall victim to a freak accident.

Bernardini easily won the Travers and the Jockey Club Gold Cup, leaving no doubt that he could have easily won the Belmont. Unfortunately he didn't get to test himself against four-year-old champion Invasor, who was sidelined with a temperature.

The first Palio was won by the Tortoise contrada, the second went to the Snail Contrada.

THE JOY OF HIGH TECH by Rodford Edmiston

Being the occasionally interesting ramblings of a major-league technophile.

Hot Time on the Old Globe Tonight

First and foremost, remember the difference between climate and weather.

While it is natural for both to change with time, weather is short-term and climate is long term. What is being discussed here is climate. Weather — even seasonal or yearly weather — can have trends which are directly opposite those of climate. So a freak cold snap does not disprove global warming, any more than a single heat wave proves it.

That the Earth is warming should surprise no-one. We're in the rising part of the 750/1500-year cycle, after all. During the peak two cycles ago, a time known as the Medieval Warm Period, Greenland (which was actually green then) was discovered, named and settled. However, within a few centuries the planet was well into the Little Ice Age and anyone who didn't leave Greenland before the ice came back starved. Two cycles earlier saw the rise of Rome, during what is known as the Roman Warm Period.

But! Did the Roman Empire rise because the climate warmed . . . or did the climate warm because the Romans were clearing huge tracts of forest to build cities and farm the land? Or both? Professional opinion about the impact of human activity on climate ranges from that of people like W. S. Broecker, who said "Climate is an angry beast, and we are poking it with sticks." to folks who feel that climactic variation has so much inertia behind it from natural causes that believing humans can affect it is sheerest hubris.

We know for a fact that warm periods were accompanied by increased levels of carbon dioxide in the air long before there were enough humans to cause the change. Periods of warmer climate also tend to be associated with higher atmospheric levels of methane, not easily produced by non-technical societies, but definitely produced in large quantities by natural means when the climate is warm enough. So which is cause and which effect? Or is the situation far more complicated? Given the way the universe usually works, I'm putting my money on the latter.

We have some pretty good measurements of temperature over wide swaths of the Earth year-by-year going back over ten thousand years, with somewhat less detail known about the eras before this, and for other areas during the same ten millennia. There are multiple, overlapping climatic cycles ranging in length from about seven hundred fifty years to tens of millions of years. Picking

what's "normal" or even "typical" requires specifying a time span, and perhaps even a region. Because complications in natural air and water currents can result in some regions experiencing the opposite of what the planet overall is going through.

There are also non-cyclic influences on climate, such as volcanic eruptions. Several major short-term cold spells in history have been connected to known major eruptive events. Krakatau alone been responsible for several. Besides the recent one, eruptions in 535 CE caused notable diminution of sunlight in much of the world, and associated low temperatures, unusual rains and crop failures. "The Year Without a Summer," 1816, was most likely caused by the eruption of Tambora.

Note that while individual eruptions are apparently random, that global volcanic activity may be cyclic, and some volcanoes do have very loose cycles of activity which may be real or due to accidents of record keeping. If such cycles are real they further complicate forecasting — or even tracking — climate changes.

Another complication in understanding global temperature change is the effect of certain major ocean currents, such as the Gulf Stream. These move staggering amounts of heat around. Parts of Europe and North America are far warmer now than they would be without the Gulf Stream carrying tropical heat north and east, then west. Bermuda has the same latitude as southern New England, but a near-tropical climate because it is in the Gulf Stream. Similarly, river valleys tend to have more moderate climates than the areas around them (compare downtown Frankfurt, which is in a river valley, and Lexington, which isn't).

All these factors and more need to be taken into account before we can start talking about trends. However, with some work such factors can be taken into account, and actually have been. So, what are the trends?

I worked with trendline analysis of traffic data for about a decade. Though I have no formal training in the mathematics behind the procedure, I have a good feel for what is involved in it. As an example, for the majority of purposes traffic count data from before about 1960 is best ignored for modern forecasts, because the construction of the Interstate system significantly changed the trend and data from before then often cannot be directly applied to current trends in most

of the United States.

In discussing climate trends you likewise have to know to ignore spikes in either direction, such as cold spells caused by volcanic eruptions. You also have to take much of the historical data with a generous grain of salt, because in most places through most of time symbolism and politics were considered more important than literal accuracy.

The shortest climate temperature cycle we know of comes from the 11/22 year Solar sunspot cycle. However, while the effect of sunspots on the weather can be significant, this cycle is so short that its effect on the climate can be largely ignored. There's simply too much inertia in the system for such short impulses to do much more than cause an occasional fluke storm or drought. (Though if the effect of this cycle reinforces one or more other cycles . . .) There is considerable evidence that the sunspot cycle is part of a longer cycle, lasting centuries, which influences the intensity of particular 11-year cycles in a longer trend. Combine that with such things as the slow precession of the Earth's axis, and the amount of sunlight falling on our globe can be seen to change dramatically in a long, slow cycle.

Note the "11/22" above, as well as the previous 750/1500. Many cycles are whole number multiples of shorter ones or fractions of longer ones. Others appear independent of shorter cycles. That is, the short cycle can have a double or triple beat, just as the four chambers of the heart have a characteristic "lub-dub." What I'm going to focus on here is the 750/1500 year cycle. That's because this gives us about three complete fifteen hundred year cycles and a good part of another during recorded human history. Though for the earlier part of that period the historical data is limited to just three or four regions. (Mostly Egypt, India and China.)

For non-historical data we have such sources as ice cores from glaciers and ice caps, tree rings and lakebed and seafloor sediments, plus a few other indicators. The sediment layers provide a pretty straightforward example of how non-historical temperature data can be determined. Plant debris such as bits of leaf and pollen can be used to identify the types of plants in the watershed of a lake which were washed into the deep water and incorporated into the sediments. These are often formed in annual or seasonal layers. By

identifying which plants grew in the region and how that mix changed with time, we can get a pretty good idea of the climate trend. The thickness of the sediment layers can also directly tell us how much rainfall fed the watershed in a particular year or season. The proportion of mineral to organic matter in a layer can also give an idea of the severity of rains.

There are even specific indicators which can give some pretty precise and accurate breakpoints. For example, there's a type of snail which curls its shell in one direction above a certain temperature, and the other below that. Why it does this is known only to God (maybe to give us climate clues :-)), but it happens consistently to this day. So if we find the shells of this snail curled one direction, we know for a fact that it grew at a time the temperature was above a certain value.

If the examination of lakebed sediments all around a continent show the hot curl moving north during a certain period, we can be pretty sure that meant the climate was warming. When the northernmost snails began curling the other way, and the change subsequently moved south, the climate was cooling.

Through these and other methods — checking one against the other — we can plot the change in temperature over much of the globe, focusing on relatively small areas or averaging for whole regions.

Because the thermometer is a relatively recent invention, most historical climate data involves such things as the number of days of rain, total amount of rain, river levels, crop successes or failures, what day of the year the first frost was seen, when the Spring thaw came, subjective accounts of cloud cover, and so forth. The Ancient Egyptians kept records of the height of the Nile day by day at multiple locations using the same Nileometers (usually markings cut in rock the Nile flowed past) for thousands of years. We can also make inferences from styles of architecture. For example, during the Medieval Warm Period many rural homes through much of Europe had no solid walls, just tarpaulins which were rolled down if the night became too cool. In the warm climate of the time more insulation was simply not needed, and the open structures let cooling breezes blow through when the heat rose.

Art can also be a source of climate information. For example, there are certain

alpine mountains which appear in paintings and drawings going back over a thousand years. By determining what season a particular piece was done, and what year, and noting where the foot of a particular glacier was then, and comparing with other pieces showing the same glacier through the ages for that same season, and compensating for precipitation changes and other factors, we can get a pretty good idea of temperature changes through time for that area. (See below for more on this.)

Now, here are some numbers. Keep in mind that natural cycles can not only be irregular in length and magnitude, but unsymmetrical. That is, the legs may not be even in length and magnitude. Moreover, the peak high and low temperatures of cycle legs can vary in difference from each other and the average temperature. That is, during some cycles the extremes may be more extreme, while in others they are less so, even with the same averages. Also, one leg of a cycle may be more extreme than the other.

While turnaround points for temperature trends are pretty easy to agree on, and even peaks can usually be determined pretty well, there is still room for argument on when these occurred for a particular cycle. Short-term changes may be flukes or due to another trend momentarily running counter to the 750 one. (See above for examples.) Different indicators may show a peak or turnaround at a different time, perhaps due to different lags in how they function, so a best-guess average must be taken. Finally, we are talking about cycles lasting multiple centuries. Even rounding to the nearest half-century may not be general enough. I'm also skipping some benchmark events just to save space. Finally, note that warmer climates tend to have smoother trends (that is, fewer and slower changes in climate) while colder ones can have numbers all over the chart while remaining cold on average.

150,000 BCE The world's climate is cold and dry, and much of sea and land are covered by ice.

140,000 BCE Ice age peaks, temperatures start back up.

130,000 BCE A rapid warming begins the Eemian interglacial

During the interglacial period Earth's climate on average is much like it is today but a bit warmer and moister in many regions. There may have been at least one major cold and dry event during this period, at around 120,000 BCE. Even then, temperatures were little or no lower than today.

110,000 BCE End of the Eemian interglacial period. The climate cools and mostly stays cold for 82,000 years. The cooling at the start was a rather sudden event, the initial drop to full ice age conditions perhaps taking less than four centuries. Some recent Atlantic floor sediment analysis suggests the change could have been even more rapid.

Following this initial cooling, temperatures changed both ways in often dramatic leaps, but there were also periods of thousands of years of stable climate. Some of those periods were quite warm compared to the average for this long span, and may even count as interglacial periods. However, for tens of thousands of years the trend was towards cooler temperatures. Northern forests were replaced by dryer grasslands. The coldest, driest period was the Pleniglacial, about seventy thousand years ago.

Between sixty and fifty-five thousand years ago the climate warmed slightly. This was followed by a long phase of climate oscillation. Temperature changes in this period often occurred in sudden and dramatic jumps.

About thirty thousand years ago the climate began cooling again, in what is known as the Late Glacial Cold Stage, or Upper Pleniglacial. This reached its coldest between twenty-one thousand and seventeen thousand years ago. The first part of this period is known as the Last Glacial Maximum. (The reduced precipitation which accompanies cold spells means the glaciers grow very slowly, perhaps not even keeping up with the slow creep of ice to the sea.)

Note that even the worst ice ages we know of have had periods of relief, known as interstadials. During these the climate will warm for a few centuries or even as much as two millennia, sometimes approaching modern temperatures. Again, peak temperatures were sometimes reached in only a few decades, with the subsequent coolings being as rapid. Interstadials tend to occur during the warm part of the Atlantic

temperature cycle, which is about 1500 years.

Similarly, Heinrich events are cold snaps which also tend to occur in 1500 year cycles. (Note that the period is uncertain, since the term tends to be reserved for only the most extreme of the rapid cold snaps, and there is disagreement over which of the temperature dips we know of qualify. Several firmly established Heinrich events are listed below.)

Most of the information for this period tends to be for the northern hemisphere, and focus on regions bordering the Atlantic, due to extensive work done obtaining and analyzing sediment cores there. However, the less extensive work done in other areas of the Earth tends to show similar trends for the rest of the world.

103,000 BCE The climate warms slightly but is still colder and dryer than at present for the next ten thousand years

93,000 BCE Cooling phase begins

91,000 BCE Climate warms slightly

73,000 BCE Ice returns, the world becomes cold and dry in the Lower Pleniglacial period

60,000 BCE A thirty-five thousand year period begins of intermediate glacial climate, on average cooler and dryer than today but with much variation

50,000 BCE Peak of warming period

39,000 BCE Heinrich event

33,000 BCE Heinrich event

23,000 BCE For ten thousand years the world is cold and dry, during a period which includes the Last Glacial Maximum

21,000 BCE Heinrich event (extreme)

19,000 BCE End of extreme Heinrich event

15,000 BCE	Heinrich event (extreme)	thousand BCE) is known as the Holocene Optimum.	2700 BCE Old Kingdom begins early in a cold period	Europe note Arctic pack ice is growing
13,500 BCE	Nearly all areas of the world had climates at least as warm and moist as today	9100 BCE Cold phase	The first stone pyramids are built.	1300 CE Little Ice Age begins
12,500 BCE	End of extreme Heinrich event	8500 BCE Cold phase	2400 BCE Egypt continues to grow and consolidate in a warm period	1315 CE Europe suffers three years of torrential rain prefacing decades of unpredictable weather
12,000 BCE	Rapid global warming (most likely an interstadial) which lasted a few thousand years and was followed by a return of cold known as the Younger Dryas	During this time the Sahara region had greatly increased rainfall, including monsoon-like conditions.	2500 BCE End of warm period	
	Temperatures dropped rapidly at the beginning of this period, reaching ice-age extremes in less than a century. After about 1300 years there was an equally or even more rapid rise. As much as half the warming may have occurred in as little as fifteen years. The Younger Dryas was apparently not global, but it did affect large portions of the world.	8000 BCE Severe cold and dry phase lasting one or two centuries	2200 BCE Cold phase	This three year period marks what was known as the Great Famine.
	10,800 BCE Onset of the Younger Dryas	7400 BCE Cold phase	Many early Bronze Age societies collapse as their climate cools; the Old Kingdom in Egypt begins to fall apart.	1500 CE Little Ice Age becomes milder, but global temperatures still low
	10,500 BCE Warm, wet period	7000 BCE Climates were warmer and often moister than today	2000 BCE Rise of Middle Kingdom during cold period	1550 CE Evidence of glaciers expanding worldwide
	Broad areas of land now occupied by Egypt, Chad, Libya and Sudan experienced increased temperatures and precipitation, resulting in the desert blooming. Most of the people in the eastern Sahara region followed the rains and migrating animals.	6200 BCE 200-year cooling period	1650 BCE Hyksos kings seize power in northern Egypt as warming period starts	Before this time in post-Medieval Europe depictions of Winter in art were rare, and the effects portrayed mild. They now became more and more common and the scenes more harsh, for about a century.
	9500 BCE End of the Younger Dryas; beginning of the Holocene phase	This reduced precipitation levels in the Fertile Crescent by thirty percent, according to marine and geological records, and may have sparked a mass migration away from dry-land farming to the creation of irrigated fields along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.	1300 BCE Long period of political turmoil and upset	The pattern repeats from roughly Seventeen-Eighty to Eighteen-Ten, another cold period. The famous Emanuel Leutze painting of Washington crossing the Delaware was made during this time. Today the Delaware River rarely freezes at all, but the painting shows what looks very much like an Arctic ice pack, and is apparently true to actual conditions the General and his troops encountered.
	The cold ends abruptly, but continued warming is a gradual, long-term temperature increase. During much of the next several thousand years large parts of the Earth were warmer and moister than now, but there were also periods of cold and dry. The Saharan and Arabian Deserts almost completely disappeared under vegetation. Large forests covered much of the land and even swamps were present	This is one of the two most extreme cold periods in the last ten thousand years, the other beginning in 600 BCE.	Perhaps as many as 300 conquests and collapses occur in Egypt and the immediate surrounding areas during a persistent warm period with relatively stable climate.	
	The period between nine thousand and five thousand years ago (seven and three	6000 BCE Climates somewhat warmer and moister than today	800 BCE Cold phase	
		5300 BCE Rains in eastern Sahara begin to decline, beginning a return to desert conditions	600 BCE Cold phase (unusual low temperatures)	
		3900 BCE Cold phase begins, forcing more migrations	150 BCE Roman Warming begins	1650 CE Climatic minimum
		The Sahara region becomes very dry. Early settlers enter Nile Valley, which previously had few human occupants.	Rome grows greatly in power, expanding and consolidating.	Glaciers in the Swiss Alps advance, gradually engulfing farms and crushing entire villages. Some today theorize that part of the secret to the violins, cellos and so forth created by Antonio Stradivari and other master instrument makers of this time was the colder climate resulting in denser wood.
		3100 BCE Pre-Dynastic Egypt rises as a power at the start of a warm spell	200 CE Roman Warming peaks	
		During this period in what would become Egypt the hieroglyphic script was developed and pottery invented (apparently independently of its invention at about the same time in the Middle East). Towards the end Narmer unifies Upper and Lower Egypt.	550 CE Roman Warming ends	
			642 CE Egypt conquered by Arabs	1770 CE Climatic minimum
			800 CE Medieval Warming begins	
			1100 CE Medieval Warming peaks	In the winter of 1780 New York Harbor froze, allowing people to walk from Manhattan to Staten Island. The winter of 1794/95 was particularly harsh when the French invasion army under Pichegru marched on the frozen rivers of the Netherlands; meanwhile the Dutch fleet was stuck in the ice in Den Helder harbor.
			1150 CE Medieval Warming peaks again	By the early 19th Century the extent of
			1200 CE Medieval Warming ends	
			1250 CE Observers in northern	

mountain glaciers and snow lines had been mapped around the world. Comparing those with positions in the same areas today shows them to have risen on their respective mountainsides by over a hundred meters. (A 1 degree Centigrade increase in temperature applied over the entire surface of a glacier will reduce it's depth by about one to three meters per year, depending on compaction.)

1850 CE Climatic minimum; end of Little Ice Age

The climate begins to warm worldwide (note that both events are usually dated as "mid-19th Century," which probably means something like ten to thirty years between the cold peak and temperatures becoming distinctly warmer).

1900 CE Modern Warming begins

1940 CE Temperature peak

Average annual temperatures exceed 1961 — 1990 average by half a degree for a roughly three year period, not to be topped until 1980. This is the peak of a long, steady climb beginning in 1910. Temperatures drop slightly after this, but begin climbing again in the late Seventies.

Naturally, many of the apparent correlations shown above could easily be coincidence... but in a number of cases records from the time blame changes in the social and political situation on changes in the climate. Of course these things are pretty complicated. A warming period can stimulate growth in a region... but it can also stimulate more growth in a neighboring region, which then becomes ambitious. Mild cold periods can cause already established kingdoms to consolidate their power, and annex other kingdoms which don't handle the downturn as well. Extreme cold periods can cause even long-established hierarchies to collapse. Or be overthrown by the desperate.

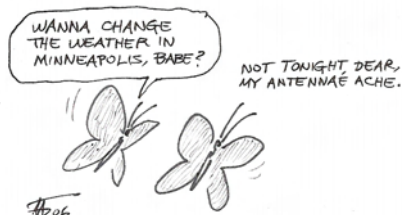
Whatever you do, don't underestimate the effect of changing climate on human history. The Black Death came during a cold time, when people were living closer together for warmth and washing less. It killed so many people that some believe the climate was actually made worse afterwards because forests were reclaiming cleared land and there was less combustible material being burned, both because of the smaller

population. These and other factors consequently reduced the atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, which could in turn have made the climate colder than it would have been without the Black Death. The world is a complicated place and cause and effect are rarely clear.

I focused on classical history, here, but there were similar correspondences with Chinese, Indian and New World events. When Columbus made his journeys the population of North America had been reduced greatly by climate effects during the Little Ice Age. Prolonged drought brought by the cold weather caused many Pueblos to be abandoned over a period of several centuries during this event, as typified by the Anasazi.

So what causes the 750/1500 year cycle? One prime candidate is sunspots. The worst part of the Little Ice Age occurred during what is known as the Maunder Minimum, when observed sunspots were exceedingly rare. There was also a lot of volcanic activity worldwide. Periodic variations in the flow of the Gulf Stream and other major ocean currents may have contributed. Some of these factors have also been connected with other cold periods.

Conversely, the earlier Medieval Warm Period was during the Medieval Maximum sunspot cycle. The thermohaline circulation of the Gulf Stream was likewise in a part of its cycle when it would bring warmth to much of the northern hemisphere. And there appear to have been fewer major volcanic eruptions in this time. The 750/1500 cycle may, itself, merely be an average of the effects of several shorter-term natural cycles, moderated or exacerbated by random events.



Keep in mind that through much of the Holocene (roughly the last ten thousand

years) a change in average annual temperature over decades of two degrees Centigrade would be extreme. Also, changes in average temperature tend to be much milder than changes in peak high and low temperatures in the same period.

So, is the Earth getting warmer? Almost certainly, at least for the short (that is, the next few decades to couple of centuries) term. Are humans causing this? Probably not, but we may be accelerating the process.

Nuclear power, anyone?

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY
 Commentary by Johnny Carruthers
 [originally at
<http://purpleranger.livejournal.com>]

I think fandom missed a great opportunity a couple of years ago. It's an idea that could still be done, if there is someone who knows how to set things in motion.

The idea occurred to me when committees from Japan and Columbus, Ohio were bidding to host the 2007 World Science Fiction Convention. For some reason, I was thinking about SF fandom's big fan funds, the Trans Atlantic Fan Fund (TAFF) and the Down Under Fan Fund (DUFF). Both are forms of cultural exchanges. TAFF alternates sending a fan from North America to Europe, and from Europe to North America. Usually, this is for the selected fan to attend a major convention such as Worldcon, NASFIC, or Eurocon. DUFF does the same, alternating between North America and Australia/New Zealand.

As I was thinking about the funds, I realized that there wasn't a similar fund for Japan and North America. I also thought that this would have been a perfect opportunity to start one. For the moment, let's call it JAFF — the Japan-Americas Fan Fund.

The initial administration for JAFF would have been handled by a representative from the two Worldcon bid committees. Whichever bid won the Worldcon, the other committee would select the first JAFF delegate to visit the winning committee. If Columbus won, the first JAFF delegate would come from Japan to visit the Columbus Worldcon. If, as it turned out, Japan won, the Columbus committee would select the first delegate to visit the Yokohama Worldcon. And of course, the following year the delegate would come from the other side

of the Pacific — alternating just like the TAFF and DUFF winners do. And just as the TAFF and DUFF delegates do, the delegates would run the election to choose their successor.

Unfortunately, I didn't know anyone on either of the committees to make this suggestion, and so this particular opportunity was missed. I still like the idea, and there just might still be enough time to set things in motion. That is, if there were enough fans who also thought this would be a good idea to raise the money, etc.

As you know, in Europe, there's the Japanese Expeditionary Travel Scholarship (JETS), a one-time fan fund to send a European fan to the Nippon Heisei 19 Worldcon.

Here in the US, there's already HANA [Hertz Across to Nippon Alliance; hana is Japanese for "flower"], a fan fund to send John Hertz:

<http://sjhtn2007.livejournal.com>

It says to mail a check payable to Janice Murray to:

Janice Murray
 Post Office Box 75684
 Seattle WA 98175-0684 USA

Now if they will only carry this on as they did with the Willis Fund.

— JTM

**AFTER DOLLY:
 The Uses and Misuses of
 Human Cloning**

by Ian Wilmut and Roger Highfield
 (W.W. Norton & Company; 2006;
 335 pages/indexed; \$24.95;
 ISBN-13: 9780393060669 and
 ISBN-10: 0393060667)
 Reviewed by Jim Sullivan

Wilmut tells, with the writing assistance of Roger Highfield, a published author, of his actual laboratory experiences. As a biologist, he was quite involved with the cloning of the sheep Dolly. It was done in a biology lab in Scotland. The animal's name is a reference to

the country and western singer Dolly Parton. The cell from a sheep's mammary gland was used for implantation with another sheep's egg for Dolly's embryo.

But the story of Dolly is really a minor part of this book. Most of its pages deal with and describe, sometimes in exquisite (and technically complicated) detail, the various biological methods being used in creating man-made combinations of cells with embryos. Readers can conveniently skip the more difficult portions described.

In vitro fertilization, IVF, is fully covered. Since the first, so-called, test tube baby, Louise Brown, was born in 1978, over 2 million more IVF babies have come into the world.

Also recounted in this volume is the subject of pharming. That's the genetic engineering of animals in order for them to produce health giving substances, like blood-clotting factors, that can then be ingested or injected into humans suffering from an array of ailments, such as hemophilia. A sheep named Polly (not to be confused with the cloned Dolly), plays a prominent role in this segment of the book. Polly gave a clotting factor in her milk that could be given to humans. Of course, other animals besides sheep are involved in pharming.

Wilmut praises the uses of IVF. He also believes strongly in the use of stem cells, including embryonic stem cells, to help find cures for many serious human ailments. But he is extremely sympathetic to those people from the religious right, who consider the use of embryonic stem cells as tantamount to abortion, the killing of a human being. He offers many alternatives to using embryonic stem cells, for instance, working on adult stem cells to get them to forget what they are now dedicated to being, perhaps skin cells, and having them accept any role they are assigned. The biologist also sees other possibilities for avoiding the use of embryonic stem cells by the further development of IVF techniques and still more unique methods.

Wilmut is strongly opposed to the cloning of human beings. Throughout the book, Wilmut talks about the extreme difficulties and dangers of performing IVF and cloning techniques. In short, the risks are sky high and the payoff percentage of successful operations are minuscule, though there are cases and times when it might be worthwhile to proceed despite those odds.

He concludes his book by explaining the dangers for parents wanting to create so-called designer babies. If limited to a desire for a healthy child, such as the elimination of a horrible inherited disease, e.g., Huntington's Disease, the author would see that as an acceptable request. But Wilmut is dead set against any attempts or experimentation on ordering a particular gender, height and physique, certain intelligence, talents in art, math, or music, and a whole host of characteristics that parents may wish for their offspring.

He tells the story, originally stated by a geneticist, about a rich family who "hoped to produce a baby genetically enhanced to be artistic and musical but ended up with 'a sullen adolescent who smokes marijuana and doesn't talk to them'."

Wilmut writes, "Assisted reproduction technology is very much in its stone age, and the revulsion that my proposal will stir in some people says less about the technology itself and more about the shock of the new, as it once did in the early days of heart transplants, vaccines, and other innovations. The future-that-was that came in the wake of these early developments shows how utility can breed acceptance."

Ian Wilmut currently teaches at Scotland's University of Edinburgh. Roger Highfield remains an editor with the *Daily Telegraph* in Britain. His previously written books include *The Private Lives of Albert Einstein* and *The Arrow of Time*.

After Dolly is highly recommended!

THE TRUE CONFECTIONARY JEDI MASTER

CANDYFREAK by Steve Almond
(Harcourt/Harvest, \$13.00)

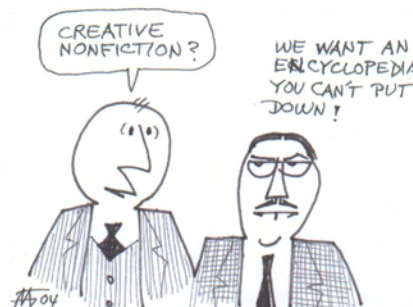
Book Review by Johnny Carruthers
[originally on

<http://chocolatescifi.livejournal.com/>]

If you've read any of my candy reviews, you would probably come to the conclusion that I have something of a sweet tooth. And you know what? You would be right. But I am but a rank amateur, a mere padawan compared to Steve Almond. He is the true confectionary Jedi master, and *Candyfreak* is the proof of his greater mastery.

It's a little hard to describe *Candyfreak*, because it's several different things. Part of it is memoir, as Almond describes how his candyfreakness developed from childhood

through adolescence into adulthood. Another part is travel journal, as he describes his journeys to some of the last independent candy manufacturers in the country. And throughout the book, it's Almond's love letter to the sweet things in life. (And one blurb on the cover describes it as "part candy porn.")



As I said, Almond has a bigger sweet tooth than I do, but he also has quite firm dislikes for some candies. Twizzlers, for instance. He mentions that the most popular flavor of Twizzlers is strawberry, then says, "In fact, Twizzlers bears roughly the same chemical relationship to strawberry as the Vienna Sausage does to filet mignon. Which is to say: none." He also states that he isn't all that fond of almonds, and absolutely abhors coconut (more for the texture than the flavor). Which means the candy bar that you would think would be a natural for him — the Almond Joy — is probably one of his least favorites. He has also heard the "Sometimes you feel like a nut" jingle more times than he cares to think about, and it's probably not a good idea to sing it in his presence.

I find myself envying Almond, particularly when he writes about touring the candy plants. I picture him as being as wide-eyed as Charlie Bucket was in his trip through Willy Wonka's factory. From Almond's descriptions of most of the people he met during his tours, they seem to be at least as candyfreakish as he is. Given that it's unlikely that I will be able to tour these factories myself, Almond's travelogues are probably the next best thing to going there.

Almond also introduced me to a few (make that more than a few) confections of which I had never heard before. Some I have found in my local area; others will be the

target of searches during future travels.

Almond has continued his journey through the chocolate underbelly on his website:

<http://www.candyfreak.com>

Among other things, he gives his readers a chance to "testify to their candy freak," and write about their own particular likes and dislikes.

THE GREAT MIGRATION DUOLOGY

a Liaden Universe™ story
by Steve Miller & Sharon Lee

CRYSTAL SOLDIER

(Meisha Merlin; 2005; \$25.95 hc)

CRYSTAL DRAGON

(Meisha Merlin; 2006; \$25.95 hc)

reviewed by E. B. Frohvet

Long ago, before humanity diverged into Liaden and Yxtrang (ironically, the latter is a pun in English, long before Terrans came on the galactic scene) — there was a war, fought between higher powers to whom humans were pawns. In fact the *dramliz*, the Liaden wizards, were manufactured as tools of the Iloheen. Some served, as soldiers or in other capacities; some tried just to keep out from under and live their own lives; a few looked for a lasting way out. Among this final group were five. Well, six if you count the tree. Pilot Cantra yos'Phelium, last survivor of her lineage, was a grey-market trader. M. Jela Granthor's Guard was a bred soldier, a generalist, accustomed to operating on his own. Wherever he went, there went with him in a pot his Tree, itself the sole survivor of an ancient race. Rool Tiazan and the nameless witch he companions, chose not to be someone else's puppets. Tor An yos'Galan, pilot, found his entire planet gone, and no one other than himself appeared to care about that at all. These are the key figures of the Great Migration: if they can find certain data in a mathematics school where theses are defended by duels.

The driving force behind the previous books of this series has been the clash of Liaden and Terran customs. This new departure backfills a huge chunk of Liaden history. You could say it stands to the earlier Liaden Universe™ books, somewhat as *The Silmarillion* stands to *LotR*. The comparison should not be pressed too far; Lee & Miller

are telling a more unified story here: the founding of Clan Korval. There is also some interesting wordplay (German *kobold*, Hebrew *Edonai*, long before Liadens had any contact with Terrans). Not to mention the uniquely Maryland SF joke, the metal “timonium”, a joke which even trapped the acute Dr. Asimov once upon a time. You had to be there

Where was I? Oh yeah, and Hubble’s Constant is an artificial event. For all this is intriguing as background, and a readable story, it generates almost more questions than it answers. Who are the Iloheen and why are they destroying solar systems wholesale? If the Liaden came to our galaxy, or even our universe, from elsewhere, is it not beyond coincidence that they are DNA-equivalent to Terran humans? It’s almost suggestive of a hidden theology behind the picture, which the authors either choose not to explain, or have not yet worked out to their own satisfaction.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA: Her Life and Times

by Phinneas A. Crutch

New York, G.P. Putnam and Son (1922)

Reviewed by Richard Dengrove

I would not have read this book except that there was a story behind it. No fewer than four people have asked whom the real author was. As far as anyone could tell Phinneas A. Crutch wrote nothing else and everyone has assumed it is a pseudonym. That, it turns out, it is.

I got on the problem years ago. A friend, Ned, had a copy and was wondering who the author was; and my team leader, Chris, had a copy and was wondering who the author was. In addition, a Dr. Daniel Martin Varisco, a scholar in Oriental studies, was too.

He was asking on his website <http://www.aiys.org/webdate/sheba.html>. There he had loved the novel so much he published a facsimile, including art from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and cartoons by the fav cartoonist of the day, John Held, Jr.

Dr. Varisco suspected the author would be an orientalist like he himself because he hit the target for orientalist studies of the ‘20s. It is obvious Dr. Varisco loved the author’s burlesques of sources and research.

Also, on his website, he has published emails where I take a stab at who wrote *The*

Queen of Sheba: Her Life and Times. When I first took on the project, I belonged to a librarian’s list and I asked my fellow librarians. One suggested, as the author, Stark Young (1881-1963), a literary and cosmopolitan Mississippian, because he had written a play entitled “Queen of Sheba..” I wrote Dr. Varisco that that was my best guess.

Then I got the play by interlibrary loan. It was not about the Queen of Sheba at all, but one of the characters is a mad woman who believes she is the Queen of Sheba. So much for Stark Young.

Next, my friend Ned suggested it was a George Shepard Chappell (1877-1946). Chappell at least had the advantage of having written burlesques on different topics in the 1920s. His most famous book was *The Cruise of the Kawa* (1921), a rather popular parody of the South Pacific paradise craze. Also, he wrote through the *Alimentary Canal with Gun and Camera* (1930). I hear his *Evil through the Ages* is not bad.

I emailed Dr. Varisco suggesting Chappell.

Here I was content for things to remain until a couple of months ago I received an email from a Cedric Barfoot. Apparently a British academic teaching at Leiden University in Holland. He suggested that whoever wrote Queen of Sheba must be British. The author, whoever he was, used English phrases, as opposed to American. Also, the author quoted Browning. He must not only be British but have been educated in England.

Chappell was not British at all. If anything, he was French. He had been educated in the École des Beaux Arts.

I decided to end this once and for all. But how? My technique for heavy duty reference questions is simple: find the right person and ask him. I asked my friend Ned whether he knew someone. He asked his e-list on book collecting and no one was interested in the question. However, Ned told me he knew a “crackerjack” librarian, a Dennis Lien at the University of Minnesota.

From Dennis, I got the answer: it was a Meade Minnigerode (1887-1967). He was not an orientalist but an author of popular histories. He wrote quite a few in the ‘20s and ‘30s. While he is not a household name these days, Amazon was selling two of them, last I looked.

By the way, Cedric was almost right about

Meade. He wasn’t quite British, but he grew up in England and went to the famed public school Harrow. Then he traveled across the Ocean and attended Yale.

His Yale education was the giveaway. Doing a Worldcat search, Dennis found the catalog of the Yale library gives Meade as the real author. Also, it provides additional proof. The Queen of Sheba is dedicated to CRH. The Yale catalog says that it is Charles Robert Housum, an author of humorous plays, and another Yale graduate. That he is CRH is inscribed in Yale’s copy of the book.

Well, you can imagine I emailed Dr. Varisco fast.

Then I decided since I discovered the author, I may as well find out what the hubbub was about. I resolved to read *The Queen of Sheba: Her Life and Times*.

I didn’t start out well. It seemed like all of Meade’s humor was falling flat. Then I noticed it wasn’t supposed to be ha-ha funny but clever/erudite funny. Eventually, I got into the Rabelaisian characters and events. All outsized, all caricatures. I am sure Meade was writing a caricature of history too.

I can’t say it was the best book I ever read. However, I had no trouble reading it; and, in fact, I was entertained.

It is not for the history I would have read this book, though. Several people have asked me whether there was any truth in what Meade wrote. Very little. What little we know about the Queen of Sheba comes from a few short passages in the Bible. Also, the name of the Queen of Sheba in the novel, Balkis, comes from Moslem legend.

There is more history when the book lampoons two of the fads of the ‘20s. It lampoons one when the Queen of Sheba is swept off her feet by the Sheik, Achmet ben Tarzan. Shades of the movie *The Sheik* with Rudolph Valentino (1921) and the novel *The Sheik* by Edith Maude Hull (1921).

The second fad lampooned in the novel, Tut-a-mania, Meade is not responsible for; the person responsible is John Held, Jr., his illustrator. One reason may be Tutankhamen’s tomb wasn’t opened until 1922. Too late maybe for Meade but not Held. Held has Ancient Egyptian-like pictures of Balkis doing the Charleston and a pharaonic type figure with fingers in his ears after hearing an Ancient Egyptian jazz band.

Actually, The Queen of Sheba is better at falsifying history than giving real history. While this was written before Meade started

writing his historicals, he seems to have gotten his historical patter just right and cranked it up a few notches.

He takes the side of impossible people, just like historians of the time did. Of course, his people are even more impossible. As I said, his ‘historical’ people have caricatures for personalities. The Queen of Sheba is a rather self-centered teenage girl. She talks incessantly. She can’t see how she has any faults, but she knows she does.

While I am sure Meade is being sexist, many of the men are worse. Her predecessor was a depressed and murderous man. His fellow nobles had to travel around the palace accompanied by bands. Otherwise, they risk coming upon her predecessor by surprise. Then he would have them killed. At about 250 years old, he decided to set the capital city on fire for his own amusement, and that was the end of his reign.

This is not to say other monarchs don’t kill people right and left for little reason or no reason. The Queen of Sheba kills her brothers in order to become queen. In ridiculous ways too.

Even the Solomon of the Bible has his monumental peccadilloes. For instance, his seven hundred wives. Among them is Psha of Persia, Panorama of Punt, Ichneumon of Egypt, Tchalk of Magnesia, Pilaff of Tripoli and Ps’alt of Ammonia.

Of course, these caricatures interact with one another. At one point, Balkis the Queen of Sheba is giving Solomon riddles, which he isn’t doing too well with. Because Balkis has managed to insult all his wives, they are making catcalls.

Balkis: Ready?
Solomon: Shoot.
Balkis: “Why does B come before C in the alphabet?”

A pause.
Ichneumon: Oh that’s easy!

A pause.
Balkis: Can’t you guess? Shall I tell you?

Solomon: Go ahead.

P’Salt: Quitter

Balkis: Because a man must be before he can see. I think that’s awfully good, don’t you?

Solomon: Slick!

Ichneumon: Not so good.

As in other histories, the historian has to find something deeper in their story. Meade finds in the story of the Queen of Sheba the origin of many sayings. For example, a Nubian queen, Stitch, proved herself obnoxious so a king had her killed. The saying that came out of this is: "A Stitch in time saves nine."

I confess, baddddd.

Also, in the search for deeper significance, Meade has different authors exaggerating the consequences of the meeting between Solomon and Sheba: e.g., the enmity between Rome and Carthage, the invasion of Britain by William the Conqueror, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, the Reign of Terror and the downfall of at least nine French ministries. In a footnote, Meade says the French authorities have denied the last.

Now Meade starts to appeal to historians rather than average readers. He talks about "authorities" on the subject. He has some illustrious authorities advocating one theory about why Sheba met with Solomon: e.g., Pontius Pilate, Ivan the Terrible and George Washington. As well, he has other illustrious authorities advocating another theory: e.g., Julius Caesar, Lucrecia Borgia, Frederick the Great and Florence Nightingale. These lists amused Cedric Barfoot.

Monte Python, in one of the books, gave the same type of authorities to support the practice of masturbation. He admitted that he had mentioned Julius Caesar twice.

What so amused Dr. Varisco he mentioned them was not the significance of the story or the authorities cited, but the supposed sources of this history.

There, he found several thousand fragments of torn paper in a trunk in the attic. After ten years of translating and compiling, the fragments proved to be from a grade school reader. In Monkish Latin, they say things like:

"I have a lamb. His name is Genseric Attila Nebuchadnezzar Hannibal. He has needs to be clipped."

Meade/Phinneas is disappointed until he finds that the pages are palimpsests. Then he uncovers the covered up writing to reveal the tale of how the Queen of Sheba had been kidnapped on her way from Solomon and been ravished by the sheik of the desert,

Achmet ben Tarzan. It is written, Meade says, in the little known Arabian dialect of Neurotic. The person who did it was Ptunk, a scribe in the employ of the Sheik.

In short, Meade combines bad provenance with an even less likely story.

This brings me to the ending of the book. I love it even if it is sexist and racist. Balkis the Queen of Sheba has had problems keeping boy friends because she talks too much. However, that is no problem for the sheik since, despite all that came before, Ptunk insists he is stone deaf.

CANDY THAT'S GOOD FOR YOU!

Candy Review by Johnny Carruthers

DARK RAISINETS

[originally on

<http://chocolatescifi.livejournal.com/>]

I like raisins, and as you probably already know, I love chocolate. I'm usually indifferent to the combination of the two, so Nestle's Raisinettes aren't something that I would usually purchase. But when I first saw Dark Raisinets appear on the shelves a few weeks ago, I decided to try something a little different (different for me, at least).

When I saw the bag, and that it trumpeted the fact that Raisinets are made with California raisins, I had a brief flashback to the California Raisins ad campaign of many, many years ago. I even had a brief music clip playing in my head:

"Oooh, oooh, I heard it through the grapevine,
Chocolate-covered California sunshine . . ."

Since I can't remember having ever eaten the original Raisinets, I picked up a bag of them as well as the Dark Raisinets. I needed something for comparison purposes, and I needed it fresh on my tongue, and in my mind.

I found one thing similar in both Raisinets varieties. As you bite into one, there is the initial flavor of the chocolate, quickly followed by the sweeter taste and chewier texture of the raisin. With the original Raisinets, the milder taste of the milk chocolate quickly fades into the background as the sweeter taste of the raisin dominates your taste buds. With the Dark Raisinets, however, it is the bolder taste of the dark chocolate which dominates.

There was one other thing I noticed on

the bag for the Dark Raisinets. As a number of other chocolate companies have been doing recently, Nestle is making certain that the consumer knows that dark chocolate is a good source of antioxidants. As a matter of fact, they point out that both the dark chocolate AND the fruit are sources of antioxidants. Hey, people, this is candy that's good for you!

I have seen both varieties for sale not only in individual size bags, but also in party size bags (eight ounces or larger). If you're having a party, one idea for snacks would be to take one bag of each version of Raisinets, and mix them together in a bowl. Maybe add some nuts, or play around to suit your own tastes.

As far as I can tell, it seems to be Nestle's intent that the Dark Raisinets are a permanent part of their product line. I made a thorough inspection of the bag, and I failed to find the words "limited edition" anywhere. This is just a guess on my part, but I'm thinking that Nestle thinks that this will be a big seller.

OREO CHOCOLATE CANDY BAR

Candy Review by Johnny Carruthers

[originally on

<http://chocolatescifi.livejournal.com/>]

When I say the name "Nabisco," what immediately comes to mind? Cookies? Yes. Crackers? Certainly. Candy bars . . .

CANDY BARS?

Believe it or not, a year or two ago, Nabisco brought forth the Oreo Chocolate Candy Bar. The bar is roughly the same dimensions as a Heath bar (perhaps slightly smaller). The base is a chocolate cookie. I assume that it's the same as the cookie components of an Oreo, just baked in a different form. On top of the cookie is a layer of the Oreo's creme filling, and the resulting bar is covered in milk chocolate.

This is one candy bar using a cookie base where I have been able to taste the presence of the cookie as well as feel it. Not too surprisingly, the cookie base tastes just like an Oreo cookie. Unfortunately, there is too little of the creme filling, and it is completely overpowered by both the flavors of the cookie and the milk chocolate.

The milk chocolate is different from the chocolate used by either Hershey, Nestle, or Mars. It tastes a little richer. If I were to

hazard a guess, I would say that it has a higher percentage of cocoa solids than the chocolate found in the products of the Big Three. At times, it does have the potential to overwhelm the taste of the cookie as it does the creme filling.

This was not marketed as a limited edition; unfortunately, I haven't seen the Oreo Chocolate Candy Bar on the shelves for several months. There is a possibility that Nabisco has withdrawn this product in favor of the recently-released ChocoStix. I haven't been able to verify that one way or the other yet, so for the moment, this is just speculation on my part.

Studentská Peèe

Candy Bar Review by Sue Burke

<http://www.nestle.cz/sk/vyrobyk/cokolada.htm>

A Slovak friend gave me this Nestlé candy bar, popular in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which she bought during a trip back home. The name means "Student Gold Seal," thus the gold seal on the blue wrapper, which also lists the ingredients in Czech, Slovak, and English: milk chocolate mixed with raisins, roasted peanuts, and orange jelly bits.

After repeated testing (she brought me the 200 gram size), I can report that the chocolate is rich and very milky, the raisins add chewyness, the peanuts crunch, but the overpowering flavor comes from the orange jelly bits and chocolate. For my taste, it's a bit sweet, and while some people adore the combination of orange and chocolate, I'm more agnostic. I found the bar's overall affect unbalanced, though not unpleasant.

But, being American, I may not be the ideal consumer. My friend told me that in the Czech Republic and Slovakia the expression "to wait in line for oranges" means to wait futilely. It dates back to the bad old days before the Velvet Revolution when consumer goods, including oranges, were scarce. From time to time a rumor would go around that a store might be about to get a shipment of oranges, and although everyone knew it was unlikely, they'd line up anyway just in case.

If, for me, oranges held a cultural niche alongside lingering resentment of Soviet repression and incompetence, I might give this candy bar a gold seal, but Uncle Sam kept me well supplied with oranges. And much has changed in Eastern Europe. My

friend says proudly, "You can buy oranges always in my country now, too."

FANZINES

and Furthermore . . . #14 August 25, 2006, #15 September 5, 2006, #16 September 13, 2006, #17 September 23, 2006
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Beyond Bree August 2006
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Not available for The Usual; \$12/year, \$15 in envelope or overseas.

Challenger #24 Summer 2006
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In a Prior Lifetime #14 August 2006, #15 September 2006
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The Knarley Knaws #119 August 2006
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The New Port News # 229 September 2006
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Nice Distinctions #15 September 2006
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Opuntia # 62 August 2006, #62.1A Late August 2006, #62.1B September 2006
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Pixel #5 September 2006, #6 October 2006
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Steam Engine Time #5 September 2006
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This was mailed in a flyer for the "Send John Hertz to Japan" Fund.

WORLDCON NEWS

Prometheus Award
Learning the World by Ken MacLeod

Prometheus Award Hall of Fame
V for Vendetta by Alan Moore and David Lloyd

Prometheus Award Special Award
Serenity

Sidewise Award Long Form
The Summer Isles by Ian R. McLeod
Sidewise Award Short Form
"Pericles the Tyrant" by Lois Tilton

Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award
William Hope Hodgson

HUGO AWARDS

Best Novel:
Spin by Robert Charles Wilson
Best Novella:
"Inside Job" by Connie Willis
Best Novelette:
"Two Hearts" by Peter S. Beagle
Best Short Story:
"Tk'Tk'Tk" by David D. Levine
Best Related Book:
Storyteller: Writing Lessons and More from 27 Years of the Clarion Writers' Workshop by Kate Wilhelm
Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form:
Serenity
Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form:
"Doctor Who" — "The Empty Child" and "The Doctor Dances"

Best Professional Editor:
David G. Hartwell
Best Professional Artist:
Donato Giancola
Best Semiprozine (The Locus Award):
Locus (So what else is new?)
Best Fanzine:
Plokta
Best Fan Writer (The Langford Award):
David Langford (So what else is new?)
Best Fan Artist:
Frank Wu
John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer:
John Scalzi
Special Awards

Betty Ballantine, for lifetime achievement
Harlan Ellison®, for 50 years of publishing fiction

Big Heart Award:
Forrest J. Ackerman
[The name "E. Everett Evans" has been retired and the award will now be known as the "Forrest J. Ackerman

Big Heart Award".]
First Fandom Hall of Fame:
Joe L. Hensley

2008 Worldcon:
Denver — DenVenton 3
August 6-10, 2008
GoH: Lois McMaster Bujold
FanGoH: Tom Whitmore
Toastmaster: Wil McCarthy

NOTES & COMMENTS

Neil Gaiman's *Anansi Boys* received sufficient nominations to get on the ballot, but was withdrawn.

Howl's Moving Castle came in seventh in total nominations, while *Star Wars, Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* was ninth.

Alexiad finished tenth in total nominations, ten short of the number needed to get on the ballot. I finished tenth in total nominations, seventeen short of the number to get on the ballot, while Guy Lillian finished sixth, twelve short. *Challenger* finished third in the voting.

The ill-fated Best Interactive Video Game Hugo received a scattering of nominations; the leading game, *World of Warcraft*, received only thirteen nominations, fewer than any lowest nominee in any other category got (though Best Short Story was very close). Gamers just don't do this sort of thing, looks like.

The report is that "Two Hearts" is actually the opening chapter of a sequel to *The Last Unicorn*. Thirty years ago this would have been wonderful news. But I was disappointed in Beagle's last few works, never mind the problem of such a long gap.

The division of the Best Editor Hugo into Best Short Fiction Editor and Best Long Fiction Editor was confirmed. And then David Hartwell won anyway (in his acceptance speech, he suggested that they vote for Jim Baen next year, but I remember what Lester del Rey said when his wife got a posthumous Hugo, which was that it was too late).

Congratulations to 4E on getting the new 4SJ Ackerman Award. I wonder how many people at the WorldCon even had any idea who E. Everett Evans was?

I thought Harlan Ellison® was getting a little too much dominated by his image as a scrappy, take-no-prisoners, wisass. Virginia Heinlein isn't around to reply but I wonder

what the guy who dies a painful, embarrassing death in Connie Willis's next novel will look like? (For those who didn't hear the news, Ellison groped Willis when receiving his special award, and in a conversation afterwards referred to the late Mrs. Heinlein as a "bitch".) I think that more and more Worldcons will move away from Labor Day. John Purcell wondered if he would ever go again, he having school duties around Labor Day; now he might.

NOTES ON CONGLOMERATION by Joe

It was quite pleasant to see **Harry Turtledove** again — he was the Pro GoH. His panels on such matters as the origins of *Every Inch a King* were a notable highlight of the con. (And that panel got me to buy the book.)

Among the other out-of-towners there were **Steven H Silver**, **Leigh Kimmel & Larry Ullery**, and **Rod Smith**. Leigh & Larry had to move their table in the Dealers' Room after their initial site had a leak. Depressingly, there was room and to spare. Also dealing was **Bob Roehm**, with the usual ignored (except by Lisa) selection of old books. Larry Smith the arch-bookdealer was also present (where do you think I got *Every Inch a King*?) but I worry.

Surprisingly, they had a decent "literary" track, including not only presentations by the aforementioned Turtledove and Silver (who later on mentioned sharing some misgivings about James P. Hogan), but even a panel on Philip K. Dick managed by Tony Ubelhor from Evansville, whose fanzines are still missed. Once you break the habit, it's harder to get started up again.

I helped another guy get his name badge on and then it took a while for me to realize what it was about **Percy Bramlett** (author of *I Am In Fact a Hobbit* (reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #3)) and he's a local, too! Good to see you.

The Masquerade was decent, but what ruined it was the half-time entertainment, which would have been more appropriate for a midnight showing, and I think I'll leave it at that.

We had the usual dinner with **Tim Lane & Elizabeth Garrott**, **Jack & Susan Young**, **David Herrington**, and **Johnny Carruthers**, at the same place, which is now Royal Palace Buffet. A splendid time was

had by all.

As opposed to parties. Khen Moore had his usual tailgater, so to speak, but there were few other parties, and those, such as Xerps and Hobbit Hole, seemed to be concentrating on getting drunk.

There were fewer gamers than usual, because of the coincidence of Origins. The conglom had moved the con a week in order to get away from the show car convention (where parking is always at a premium, as they park their trailers across three spaces, then park the car next to it; as a result of the change, this time I could always park next to the convention center) but this is making them ponder a move to April (the first weekend in May is *definitely* out of the question).

ConGlomeration 2007 will be **August 10-12, 2007** and will feature **Ben Bova** as Pro GoH, along with **Daniel Dos Santos** as Artist GoH. It's the weekend after NASFiC, so some people might want to consider dropping over. Looking at the date of DenVenton 3, perhaps they had better move to April.

ELFLING

c. 1994 — September 4, 2006

We figured, afterwards, that he'd been used to getting into the house through the pet flap in the back door. The broker nailed a board over that hole, mostly because the kids from the school in the next block were using the house as their lunchtime hangout, getting in by unlocking the back door, reaching through the pet flap.

So we moved in, Lisa and me and my cat Sulla. Lisa heard another cat under the deck; it went "mir" and after much coaxing, came out. He was a pretty thing, too pretty really to be a street cat, with long dark-gray fur, and Lisa took to him. He took to Lisa.

Then, the spring after our wedding, the rains came. Louisville was flooded and lots of nasties would be coming out of their holes. Lisa said to bring him in, out of the cold and wet.

This took a bit of doing. Not so much as getting him in the house; he was used to it, you know. Not keeping him on his four paws; he was in good shape for a street cat. It was keeping him in the house that was the problem.

If a door was opened he would streak for

it and be out. He'd hide under the deck, going "mir", frustrating us. He'd run down the block and start eating the grass in the neighbor's yard. And one time, he ran into the neighbor's shed at dusk, the man closed the door and went about his business, not opening it for two days. Even when he couldn't get out he would look, hanging by his forepaws on the sill of the back window and staring out into the world.



Elfling thrived. He was a friendly cat; when the cat-sitter's came by, he would come running to her little boy.

He liked to sleep on Lisa, which led to a couple of interesting incidents. A dark-gray cat in a dark room with big green eyes

can be disconcerting at night. Sometimes he lead to dreams too.

As this summer passed away Elfling began to ail. He scratched himself a lot, he had fleas. Then, on Labor Day weekend, on Sunday, he just lay there and mewed, strongly, painfully. His fur was scratched off in places. We got up and took him to the vet that night, at ten.

In the morning he was gone.

We took him home and buried him in the back yard, next to Sulla.

He is out in the cold and wet again, and there is no one to take him in.

— JTM

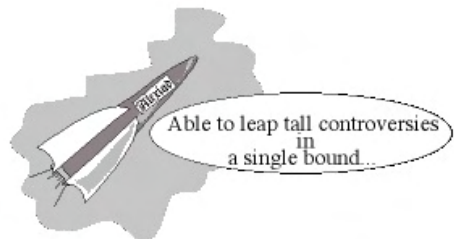
Elfling was the first animal I gave my heart to since the neighbors took Digger away. Now nine years of companionship are over. I had hoped against hope there had been some mistake because the note said we had been called when we hadn't but I knew the instant I held the blue plastic-wrapped bundle this was indeed Elfling, even though I couldn't see him. Wullie was the next to get sick but we got him to the vet in time to save his life. C'Mell was next but hers I

caught before it was truly serious. I have started a small emergency fund at the vet's and hopefully will have it built up enough next time there is an emergency with one of the cats that I can get them to the vet before it is truly serious.

How do you sum up nine years of companionship? Elfling was the first animal I formed a bond with since Digger. Nine years of having my fingers gently nibbled, all ended in one tragic night. I can't write any more about this because it feels like part of me has been ripped out.

— LTM

 Letters, we get letters



From: **Richard Dengrove** August 8, 2006
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Enjoyed *Alexiad* June 2006, because there is so much to comment on in it, as in any *Alexiad*.

Joe, in your "Reviewer's Notes," you comment on how the older generation is always predicting that the younger generation will go to hell in a handbasket. And take the country with them.

They have always found the younger generation wanting somehow. They simply KNOW it will cause the fall of Western civilization. Since the belief is such an automatic response, and it is applied to the greatest generations as well as least generations, we should be skeptical of it.

Come to think of it, doesn't the older generation's criticism usually boil down to your observation regarding the current younger generation, that infancy has been extended?

Of course, the younger generation often believes the older generation will cause the Fall. It did in the '70s. It's no wonder that George R.R. Martin found his world hopeless then in *Dying of the Light*. I remember hearing about the film *Zardoz* where a world of the future was found hopeless.

In actuality, the younger generation had lost its belief that it would reform the world. A belief that was widespread in the '60s. You remember that belief? Altogether, sing after me, "The Age of Aquarius."

However, both the older generation and the younger generation agree on one thing: there are substitutes for common sense. Of course, there can be none. Does the widespread criticism of lawsuits expose these

substitutes to the light of day, or is it part of the problem?

Usually when I see lawsuits criticized, there is no legal citation and specifics are omitted. That makes it harder to check up on what these critics say. What was their source, for instance? Was it the court's decision? In that case, at least you know the outcome of the trial. Or was the source the defendant or his lawyer? And do we have any special reason for believing either of the latter?

On the other hand, a thinking person knows they can't take all of Oriana Fallaci whole hog. Certainly not about the Holocaust. Should we accept more easily that Mussolini and his Fascists were men of the left? That is fashionable for many people on the Right.

There is no question that Mussolini started out as an extreme leftist. However, the way I heard it, his Fascist Party borrowed a lot of his program from the Nationalist Party. That, there is no doubt, was a very Right Wing Party. On the other hand, his original syndicalism got short shrift in the Fascist Republic.

Isn't it better to say that people, like Mussolini, often oscillate from political left to political right rather than have all objectional politicians closer to the politics we oppose? At each extreme, these people are all the more fanatical because they are trying to deny the other extreme, which remains a part of them.

Sadly, I also disagree with Alexis Gilliland. I have already written how the criterion for the Bible's truth should not be historical truth but faith. Faith is people's purpose in reading it. Similarly, the criterion for miracles should be how much faith they bring you rather than how much science. Faith is why people are desperate to believe in miracles.

The Bible's purpose is not to be scholarly history, and the purpose of miracles is not that they will find their way to the pages of the American Physical Society or some modern invention that changes the world.

With Trinlay, I am not going to rant on and on about faith, but about mathematics. Trinlay, the way to deal with arithmetic at least is to round off everything. Maybe doing that, and knowing the ballpark answer, will get rid first of some of your math anxiety.

Of course, I don't know whether you would ever be in my situation, where it really proved useful. I aced the math part of the

Federal government's civil service test by rounding off, and that was one reason I got my Federal job.

Unfortunately, the test, called PACE, hasn't been around for years.

Going from math to literature, this comment is about a work of Nina Hoffman. E.B. Frohvet says that it isn't that she can't plot, just that she doesn't care to. My answer is: Did I say she cared?

Another literary comment is about Gustavus Pope and his *Journey to Mars*. Rod E. Smith wonders whether it influenced the Skylark series. I have never read anything about that. What similarities do you find, Rod?

Now about your comments, Joe, on my LOC. Surely you gest, at least twice.

As for anybody being afraid of supporting global warming, I guess there are few way to the Right who might be. However, the usual academics are only too enthusiastic to advocate it, and anything proves it. Recently, I read a number of people who used a version of Pascal's Wager (Pascal's Fallacy?) to prove Global Warming.

Besides Global Warming, Hamas is another cause of dubious strength. Who knows? Maybe it wants to get back all those places for Islam. However, it looks like it can't even keep Palestine if Israel says Forget it. In the rest of the Middle East, its father organization, the Muslim Brothers, is verboten.

Unlike you, Joe, John Purcell doesn't sound like he's gesting. I want to thank him for complimenting my review of *Journey to Mars*. Where can he get it? I believe I got mine on Amazon as one of their used books. I don't think it's been republished since 1978 when Sam Moskowitz wrote the introduction it.

That's it for now

September 15, 2006

Of course, I enjoyed *Alexiad*, August 2006. Why would I be writing you this long letter if I hadn't?

A propos Richard Lupoff's *Master of Adventure*, which you call Elmo of the Apes, I hear Edgar Rice Burroughs didn't think that Elmo Lincoln (née Linkenhelt) was right for the role of Tarzan. His muscles were too big. Unlike our male ideal, Burrough's was closer to the Greek gods than the Amazing Hulk.

Edgar was just being honest. I don't think Roosevelt was being honest in his correspondence with Joe Stalin in *My Dear Mr. Stalin*. Also, in his pronouncements on Soviet Russia during World War II. I don't think Roosevelt's men were either. We're talking diplomacy here. I am sure they agreed with Churchill that even the Devil was better than Hitler, and Stalin was the Devil.

Anyway, honesty in Washington is hard to come, even during relatively normal times like these.

Who knows? Being liars, Roosevelt and his men may have had special perspicacity. It often takes a liar to know a liar. It certainly did in *The Otherworldly Life of Rocket Scientist John Whiteside Parsons*. I read elsewhere Aleister Crowley, whom Parsons' was a disciple of, knew that L. Ron Hubbard was taking Parsons for a ride. He told everyone but him.

Of course, Crowley was probably right that John Parsons would not have been very amenable to the truth. He was only convinced when Hubbard ran away with his wife in his yacht.

Is it in our genes that we lie? Was it God's will Judas betrayed Christ? Darrell Schweitzer finds it a contradiction that Judas chose evil freely, yet it was God's will he betray Christ.

There is an even greater irony here. It is that free will in any case means our behavior is determined. At least in practice. In practice, as opposed to theory, the idea behind free will is that our behavior is caused by the most desirable or least undesirable choice. Whatever that choice is, we will choose it.

One person made a great choice, Rodney Leighton. He chose to write a great letter. The problem is that I can't pick out any one thing to comment on in *Alexiad*.

Choice is one thing in our mind. Another thing is faith. Alexis Gilliland takes me to task for believing a religious 'high' can be important. I am sure the idea is that it is all in our mind. I have come into views like that before. Someone I know likened religious faith to valium.

In fact, the mind can be more important to us than the material world. There is nothing more difficult to get rid of than a worry or a hatred. Also, religious faith is important to people. To them, it is more than valium; it embraces their life, their hope and

their ethics

For those who consider religion just in our mind, I am sure one faith is as good as another. *The DaVinci Code* is as good as the Sermon on the Mount.

However, believers are very particular about their faith. For instance, *The DaVinci Code* couldn't be my faith. I doubt it could be many people's actual faith. The friends of mine who loved the novel did so not because they had faith in it but because they said it was a hoot.

On the other hand, a particular faith, rather than be too specific, can carry too much baggage. E.B. Frohvet describes how a teacher at a Baptist College was fired because he said the Bible didn't contain all knowledge.

That is why there is so much doubt. That is probably also why so many people are fanatical. Because the Bible has to be the fount of science, art and politics as well as ethics, meaning and purpose, they are weighed down. It will take a lot of self-deception to reconcile the completely differing truths of these completely different worlds into a single truth.

Another thing on our mind are sexual fantasies. Joe, you and Alexis seem to believe that because a woman is turned on by the Gor books, she must be a doormat or a harridan.

However, a sexual fantasy may have nothing to do with reality. Certainly, most women with fantasies of Gor would not be happy with the reality. It may be that a woman with such fantasies is an otherwise normal woman with an offbeat libido.

What makes the woman in question abnormal is that she has advertised those fantasies. It's like the S&M Freak I met at a bus stop. How did I know? He had a button that read: "I haven't had sex in so long I don't know who ties up who."

No, they aren't necessarily harridans (though I understand Mrs. Lange was) or doormats, they're "bottoms". Often the bottom is more in control than the "top".

— JTM

Another thing that's on our minds, besides sex, is the Arab/Israeli dispute. Jeffrey Boman has heard that the Arabs fled for no reason during the 1948 Arab/Israeli

War and their leaders lied that the Israelis had forced them out. I heard that version during my childhood.

I heard a different version in college in the '60s. I read a book written by an Israeli officer. He admitted that the Arabs had been evacuated, as well as many Israelis, because a war was taking place on their land. When the war ended and Israel won, the Israelis refused to allow the Arabs to return to their homes.

I hate to say it, but that version makes more sense.

I guess that's it for my comments.

From: **Janine G. Stinson** August 8, 2006
PO Box 248, Eastlake, MI
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topicsf@earthlink.com

This is becoming a bad habit. Perhaps I should start writing *Alexiad's* deadlines on my calendar — or tattoo them on my forehead.

Lisa, I'm also glad that Barbaro was saved, though I understand he's still not completely healthy yet. Would it be utter heresy to suggest that thoroughbred owners consider allowing sturdier-legged crosses into the Triple Crown and other races? I wonder what mustang blood would do, for example.

I would myself prefer Akhal-Teke blood.

— LTM

Reviewer's Notes: A wikicon sounds like an anarchist's dream. Or are you referring to "Year of the Teledu"? <g>

I'm sure it would be great fun up to the point where the sprinkler head tore out of the wall and the hotel flooded.

The Internet "community" has no moral high ground. Being a cynic, I trust no one unless they prove trustable with someone I already trust, and even then there's still room for doubt. <g>

LoCs:

Re: yct Martin Morse Wooster on TAFF, of course it's still necessary. UK to US airfare any sometimes be cheap, but what about food, lodging, in-country transport, once at the destination? 200 quid is nearly

US\$400, and was that one-way or round-trip?

Brad Foster: Send me a photo of Duffy with her wings (if you took one) and I'll put it on the cover of *Peregrine Nations* — that's a journey if I ever heard one! If a photo doesn't exist, perhaps an artistic rendering by your skilled hands?

Taras Wolansky: Re: Wikipedia, one should remember that its entries can be, and often are, changed as often as most people change their underwear. History, of course, is written by the winners, and in a wiki entry, that history can change every five minutes. Yes, most wikis have a sort of moderator (or several) tasked with keeping factual errors and outright lies out of the entries, but as a wiki grows, so grows the margin for error (and lies). I have no specific examples in mind, but make this note with the knowledge that some people love to cause trouble by messing up other people's sandboxes, given the chance. Using a wiki for information should be a starting point for further research, not the endpoint.

Reviews read and appreciated.

September 11, 2006

I found the first season of HBO's "Rome" at the local video store and, based on your reviews in *Alexiad*, decided to check it out. I've watched the first 10 eps.

Near the end of your review of Episode 2, you mention Niobe breastfeeding that squalling brat. <g> Niobe must've been a low-yield nurser, else Vorenius would surely notice leakage on her dress or on their bedsheets? That was what stopped me dead in my tracks, watching later episodes. Someone wasn't paying attention in the writers' room.

He wasn't the sort to notice, I guess, given his lack of response to Titus Pullo's instruction about female anatomy and relations.

— JTM

In your Ep 5 review, you mention Servilia sneaking out to plant her metallic curses. That wasn't Servilia, that was her personal maid, and she hid the curse scrolls in the mausoleums of powerful deceased Romans, not in the houses of Caesar and Atia. I had the "historical facts" option

turned on while watching the DVD, and that's where I learned this.

You mention more than once the phrase, "At my signal, unleash hell..." — the "Gladiator" quote. Actually, that line should be written, "At my signal, unleash Hel," as I found out after watching the DVD a few times. Maximus' war dog, a German Shepherd ancestor, is named...Hel. So clever, that Russell. Did you know they started shooting that movie with a 32-page script?

I'm having as much fun watching "Rome" as I did watching "I, Claudius," so I plan to rent the other DVDs for the first season and watch them as well. I don't subscribe to HBO, so I'll have to wait for the second season on DVD. Thanks for the reviews, I re-read them between eps and found them most edifying.

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** Aug. 21, 2006
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darrells@comcast.net

In response to Taral's letter on page 18, I shamelessly bring to your attention the article I have in the July 2006 *New York Review of Science Fiction*, which is all about *Tomorrow Revealed* by John Atkins (Neville Spearman, 1955).

This is an entire book written around Taral's premise. In the remote future, only the science-fiction section of a library has survived, and the book is a scholarly attempt to reconstruct "history" from it, reconciling Wells, C.S. Lewis, Orwell, Bradbury, John Wyndham, van Vogt, Robert Graves (his *Seven Days in New Crete* a.k.a. *Watch the North Wind Rise* was in those days a core-classic of SF), etc. There is even a "timeline of the future," stretching from the Martian invasion of 1960 (the scholar assumes Wells deliberately set the story in the past, not when it really happened), up through the triumph of the New Cretan system circa 3700. One curiosity for the modern reader is that Heinlein is only briefly mentioned, as if a British writer of the mid-'50s did not regard him as important. The funniest bit is the speculation that, because of his almost incomprehensible writing style and a total lack of identifiable emotions, **van Vogt was a Slan**, which would explain why his work doesn't quite seem to be aimed at human beings.

This is still a book worth seeking out. It

should be reprinted.

It would do well among the oldpharts, like you and me, who still know who all those people were. For a more modern version, imagine such a recreation based on some fan's collection of 6000+ mangas. Eek! Eek! Eek! On second thought, don't.

— JTM

From: **Cuyler "Ned" Brooks** Aug. 21, 2006
4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA 30047-4720 USA

Thanks for the June *Alexiad*. I've been to cons that seemed very much like your description of a "wikicon", and enjoyed them too. I was always more interested in talking to friends than in program items. Filking, the way it was done when I got into fandom in the 60s, would be unaffected — it was completely free-form, anyway. Hard to see how there would be a Dealer's Room though.

I had forgotten what the Tibetans call Mt. Everest, but I see that I have a 1931 book by Sybille Noel called *The Magic Bird of Chomo-Lung-Ma*, and the subtitle is *Tales of Mount Everest, the Turquoise Peak*. I found it long ago, and bought it because of the art by Avinoff, particularly the startling p. 130 image of the "Swastika Egg Devil".



So that's what Ernst Schäfer of the Ahnenerbe was doing in Tibet! (See Himmler's Crusade)

— JTM

From: **Robert Lichtman** August 23, 2006
Post Office Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442-0030 USA
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My apologies to Rodney Leighton for overlooking his questions and comments about TAFF in his letter in your April issue, which started with his saying, "I believe that DUFF and TAFF contestants are required to promise to write and publish a report of their trip." Actually, that's not a requirement of TAFF or DUFF. One is required to put up a bond promising to travel if elected and to administer the fund on one's side of the Atlantic until one's successor from that side is elected.

From the TAFF ballot: "The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic." DUFF ballots say essentially the same thing, except involving a different ocean.

Rodney is incorrect when he writes, concerning reports, "I think that Robert Lichtman did." Actually, I published a tentative report in outline form, beginning from when I learned I'd won and concluding with some of the follow-up work I did after assuming the administration duties on the North American side of the Atlantic. That partial report can be found at:

<http://taff.org.uk/reports/rl0.html>

for those who have internet access. Of other TAFF winners Rodney writes, "I know Maureen Speller wrote a serialized report, published in segments and printed and mailed by Mark Plummer. I read somewhere that Peter Weston published one. From the U.S. contingent, I know that Ulrika O'Brien wrote at least two parts of a serialized account because I saw them in some fanzine; can't recall which one." Maureen wrote some tentative bits of a TAFF report that was published and distributed by Mark Plummer and Claire Brialey, but I don't believe ever finished the job. I remember one chapter of Ulrika's report appearing in Geri Sullivan's

Idea, and another piece of it appeared in her own fanzine, *Widening Gyre*. It's also unfinished. Peter Weston wrote a very condensed report, "Stranger in a Very Strange Land," which was published in *SF Monthly* in 1975. He wrote further on his TAFF adventures in his book, *With Stars in His Eyes*, available from NESFA Press.

Since 1953 there have been 45 TAFF winners who actually took the trip (early in the game several people won and then didn't go). Of these, 34 have published at least a partial report. I consider that pretty good return for the investment of numerous fans over the years in TAFF fund raising and for the thousands who have voted in one or more TAFF elections. So I'm less than sympathetic to Rodney when he further writes, "Based on my admittedly limited knowledge, no one else has made any effort to publish a trip report. If that is accurate, why should anyone support these people? Is it just the fannish attitude of letting people do what they wish and not caring that fans tend to not do what they say they will? Or the general populace attitude towards politicians of: 'well, they are politicians; they make all sorts of promises during an election and break most of them once elected.'" I believe I've demonstrated just how limited Rodney's knowledge is, and I hope he'll reconsider his stand based on my presentation.

As for his parting shot on the subject, "Did you hear the report that one TAFF delegate spent his entire TAFF trip in a hotel room doing drugs and screwing a certain female fan?" — no, I didn't ever hear that. Wonder who that was, if it's true at all.

Elsewhere in the lettercol, E. B. Frohvet addresses me: "Given the number of things on which you and I disagree, it's good to see you're still speaking to me." And why not? I imagine that if we really probed into the matter we'd find that there are scads of things we do agree on — and many of them would have in common not being about the ins and outs of fandom.

From: **Jim Sullivan** August 21, 2006
803 Woodcliff Drive, South Bend, IN 46615-3247 USA

I did note that one of your letter writers was going to the library for a copy of *The Three-Pound Enigma* that I reviewed and you published.

From: **John Purcell** August 24, 2006
3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845-3926 USA
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Thank you once again for the issue. I really have to start mailing off hard copies of my zines so that I can start receiving more of the paper zines currently being pubbed. At one point around 1980, I used to get a couple locs and a zine or two every day in the mailbox, which thrilled me to no end. What with the Internet shoveling a batch of that kind of contact to the e-mail bin, such physical mailbox activity may never again occur. Oh, well. The way I look at it nowadays, any fannish contact is fine by me. I enjoy it all.

So "why don't teens do zines?" Because, as you so quickly noted, we have raised two entire generations around television and mass media (the baby boomers) and the computer (the baby boomer's children). The good news is that there are a few teen-aged fans doing fanzines; the first name that comes to mind is John Coxon, who is a 19-year old Britfan, and a couple months ago posted *Procrastinations* to efanzines. That's a start. Hopefully, when I run the fanzine room at Aggiecon 38 in March next year I will be able to get some of those college youngsters interested in pubbing zines. Perhaps we older fen need to be more proactive and demonstrate to the young'uns that pubbing zines is a fun way to be creative. Electronic publishing simply makes it even more interesting than before, and this fact can make fanzine production more appealing to young fans. I shall do my part.

Good luck. I used to send copies of *Alexiad* to Ry'kandar Korra'ti when she was running the fanzine room at Norwescon. (I'd known him when he lived in Lexington.) I got her thanks but no other response.

Man, you have got a mess of great reviews in here. It wouldn't be fair to single any one of them out, but what made an impression me was the sheer variety of subject matter. Very interesting books. There is one, though, that I found more than interesting, and that is the review of the updated Lupoff book, *Master of Adventure: the Worlds of Edgar Rice Burroughs*. Many,

many years ago I owned a copy of the original edition; now I can track down this latest edition to re-add the book to my collection, which is significantly smaller than it was 20 years ago. Oh, well.

I think that History Channel did a special on the *Lost in Tibet* airmen a few years ago. That sounds really familiar. A fascinating account, and this book appeals to the military historian in me (my B.A. minor was military history). Half-Price Bookstore, here I come!

Hugo Picks: I haven't read a single one of the fiction nominees, and haven't really seem most of the media nominees, either. *Serenity* I watched on DVD, and it was pretty good. But I feel totally unknowledgeable about most of the Hugo nominees. Now, the fan categories, yes, not a problem. Since I'm writing this loc on the Thursday of the Worldcon, here are my fan Hugo picks:

Best Fanzine: *Banana Wings*

Best Fan Writer: tough one, this. I'm going with *Claire Brialey*

Best Fan Artist: Teddy Harvia is a fine choice, but I think this time it should go to *Steve Stiles*. He's produced so much good stuff for so many years that Steve deserves the nod.

Now let's see who the real winners are come this weekend.

In your loccol, I've noted off a couple things. First, in Jan Stinson's loc, I had no idea that Mercedes Lackey had such a bad experience at Rivercon. That's too bad. The fans that I know and love wouldn't treat her like that. But she's going to have to understand that a lot of sf & f readers aren't Fans As We Know Them, but they are Fans Without A Clue. Sounds like she had a run-in with a FWAC. *sigh* Also too bad to hear that Rivercon is now defunct. At least there is still a con in that region, so that's good news. The bad news is the multi-media influence that's all over cons right now. Hopefully the emphasis will come back to the written word some year. As far as that is concerned, I will not hold my breath.

I don't think she had a bad time at the con when she was GoH. Steve Francis had the problem. Her problem was not connected to the con, but to someone who got a little too involved with her fiction. He had a clue, just not the right one.

Brad Foster: I well remember the work that Steve Fox did for my zines back in the 1980s. His work was simply incredible, and I wish we could track him down again. Anybody know where he's hiding lately?

Lisa, thank you for the feedback on Polytrack. That twenty-year run of success in Great Britain sounds good. I truly hate it when one of these beautiful animals is injured in any kind of a race, so if there's a way to cut down on the track injuries, so much the better.

A fine, fine issue, Jim. Thank you for continuing to read, review and pub. People like me appreciate your efforts.

I stand amazed, astonished, astounded, fantasized, galactic, planetary, thrillingly wondrous, and even analogued and asimoved at the breadth and scope of your fanpubbing efforts. So many fanzines, so little time . . .

— JTM

From: **Joy V. Smith** August 24, 2006
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Thanks for the Saddlebred info, Lisa; that is interesting, and thanks for the Pacing and Trotting Triple Crown lists; I wasn't aware of them. Are you aware of the Racking Horse? The World Champion Racking Horse Competition will be held September 22-30 at the Celebration Arena in Decatur, AL. (The racking horse was officially named the state horse of Alabama in 1975.)

Among all your reviews, Joe, (I was going to use plethora, but I looked it up and discovered it actually means excess, overabundance — I think not; possibly the connotation is better than that), I enjoyed *Master of Adventure: The Worlds of Edgar Rice Burroughs*; I'm glad it's been updated. I teathed on Tarzan stories. I thought I might have the first edition, but all I could find was *J. Allen St. John: An Illustrated Bibliography*, which has lots of Tarzan and other illustrations. I think I'll put that in my reading pile.

I also enjoyed the *Preemptive Strike* and *Lost in Tibet* reviews. Good historical background. Have you ever read *Underground Retreat*? It's a YA book that

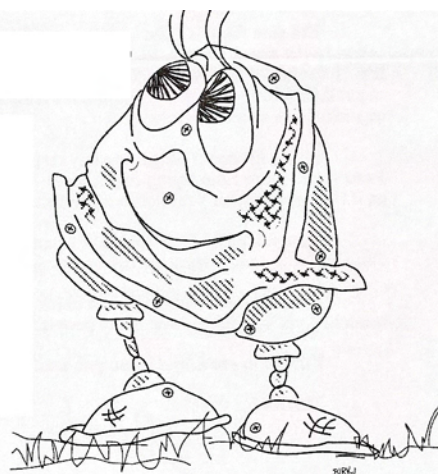
gave me my first insight into the China/Japan relationship and early Communism. And thanks for *The Four Musketeers: The True Story of d'Artagnan, Porthos, Aramis, and Athos* review. I didn't know they were actual persons. And *Strange Angel: The Otherworldly Life of Rocket Scientist John Whiteside Parsons*.

Besides learning about history and all these people I didn't know existed, I found out there was a horse named Greyhound. I love it! And thanks to Lee Gilliland and Richard Dengrove for the background on The Priory of Sion (not a secret order!) and *The Martian* by Du Maurier. Speaking of Mars, there are real Martians in "The Mars Girl" by Joe Haldeman in the new anthology, *Escape from Earth: New Adventures in Space*. (I believe it's a Science Fiction Book Club exclusive.)

And thanks to everyone for the other book and candy reviews, Hugo picks, awards and fanzine listings, and LOCs! A Movie Trailer (back page) was excellent!!

Weeellll, thanks oh so very much. (According to Wikipedia, Capote taught himself to read before he started school. Where have I heard that before?)

— TGC, er JTM



Egoboo is the currency of fandom ...
be a Bbig Spender!

From: **Brad W. Foster** August 29, 2006
P.O. Box 165246, Irving, TX 75016-5246 USA
bwfoster@juno.com

Another great issue! Your family reunion story of hundreds of relatives had me thinking of my own situation. When Cindy and I got together, I learned she had a huge extended family, due to lots of uncles and aunts on both sides. My first exposure to "the family" was a huge Thanksgiving get-together. So many people there, I was just sucked right in to the crowd without any overt pressure of having to make any sort of impression. My own family is much smaller . . . or so I thought, until Cindy met my Mom and sisters, and now she actually knows more of my relatives outside of that tiny group than I do. I never have been one for keeping track of blood-relatives. If we had nothing in common beyond that, they tend to be forgotten.

(Which is also why I love that bit on the next page of this ish about the author of the latest riff off the "D Code" book actually upping the ante by claiming to be a long lost heir. Geez, who cares!)

All the people who believed that Pierre Plantard or Michel Lafosse was The Long Lost Heir.

— JTM

Hey, a review of a book I've read! I'm both fan and friend of John Moore, and have been enjoying all his books. As far as I'm concerned, there is always room for more humorous books out there, and glad John is doing it so well.

And then another name I'm familiar with, Real Musgrave from Sheryl's loc. Have known Real for years, and we actually live in their old house, bought after he got so amazingly successful with the line of collectible Pocket Dragon figures. He's one of several artists I know that I hold up as an example of the "Do what you love the most, and if you are lucky, you can get rich at it. If not, you'll still be doing exactly what you want to do." Often it is a matter of just being in the right place at the right time . . .

Oh, and speaking of getting your stuff out there so the "right" person might stumble over it, I think I've got enough of my website up to start officially giving out the URL.

Everyone can now go to:

<http://www.jabberwockygraphix.com>

to get a look at what I do for a living. Hoping to put more fannish stuff up, now that the "biz" side of the site is mostly done.

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** August 26, 2006
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If you look at the tremendous hyper-extension that takes place in the Thoroughbred's leg — so much that often the fetlock hits the ground — and couple that with such young bones, it becomes more of a wonder that more of the young athletes aren't injured.

Looks as if *Pluto* has been demoted — we'll see. If this sticks, I wonder how long it will take for textbooks (especially for the public schools) to catch up?

Probably by now the Worldcon is (or at least close to) history — hope all and sundry had a ghreat time and that the conreports roll in (for those of us relegated to the sidelines!). While I sit and wait — if I don't *hear* that anything that means nothing went dramatically wrong — something to be devoutly wished for.

Mr. C (agh — just realized that — shades of *Happy Days*), I agree that both the artist categories are tough picks. If (and I may very well be wrong) I don't think *Teddy* did any new fanart this past year — now that I have said that, nothing in the rules requires that the artwork be printed (or viewed) is new — so he has plenty of pieces out there for the year.

I receive a little less than half the zines listed — so pubbing is continuing apace!

It took a bit and some years and then I just stumbled over a *Canfield* portfolio and asked the fanned to ask . . . and that is how the article finally got written in the series on fanartists that I am trying to organize.

Rodney — guess I ought to be clearer — I believe I was referring to the mention of you in the dedication of Lyn's book, *The Duke's Ballad*. I believe that is what I was talking about. Here it is:

*To the Canadian contingent of my friends:
To Garth Spenser, Bill Dodd, and Rodney
Leighton.*

*And to Jo McCarthy, in New Zealand who loves
the Witch World.
Live Long and Prosper*

I'm doing okay on the no chocolate plan (had to scrap the try dark chocolate — too close to the "real" thing for me — and shelved right hfside there milk chocolate . . . sigh). I have made one concession to pre-packaged (100 calories to the pack) chocolate cookies from Trader Joe's which I figure are fair game since they are tiny and don't really taste like chocolate. I crush them up and use them as a crunchy topping for a (soy) milk and frozen fruit smoothie I try to make each day for my sweet tooth fix. Fingers crossed and so far so good. Uh, for complete disclosure, I ought to admit that I am not doing as well with the same pre-packaged tiny cookies of the oatmeal chocolate chip variety. So, no more of that flavor for me.

Prayers and ghood thoughts for *Lisa Mason* — thank you, *Trinlay*, for the information on her cancer fight. As a general rule (and all rules are meant to be broken), at least 80% of cancer victims do not have a familial history of that specific malignancy. The flip side, of course, being that if there is a familial tendency then one is ever more vigilant. I hope the updated results for you are clean.

If you look at the listing for the AAFP (feline practitioners) — it is overwhelmingly female — for the reason you mention. You canNOT out-stubborn a cat and a lot of male vets think they can — as just one example.

Yeah — *Lloyd* was the editor of the clubzine — and "back then" I was urging him to put out his own zine. Still no success in the push for his editing his own creation. He should have more arms twisted . . . into sending something that can be printed!

I do believe that the astronaut *Story Musgrave* is *Real's* brother. Yeah, would make for an interesting panel.

I spent some time online looking at the *Akhal-Teke* and got sidetracked looking at other dressage breeds. I have a friend who has just turned her Thoroughbred pretty much out to pasture (for life) due to recurring ligament tears — and she is looking for a dressage mount to replace him — I believe she is at level 2 — so I was looking at all the related breeds — quite interesting. I really had a good time looking at one breed that prides itself on its feathers! Some of them

had HUGE amounts of long and flowing feathers!! (I presume the readership knows I am not talking about avian feathers!)

Were they Friesians or Clydesdales?

— LTM

There is a growing interest in soccer — the catch is to have kids growing up involved in the game so that it carries over into adulthood. That is happening now. It may take a few generations, but the US may just eventually catch up with the rest of the world. As an aside — the principal where I went to High School refused to allow football (American style) since he said kids could get hurt.

As a result, I never developed any interest in the game. When I went off to college, our team was always so bad that there was no interest. When I went to grad school at *PennState* I actually tried to learn the game — but after one bout of sunburn and one of frostbite (and no one wanted to explain what was going on) — I gave up. My final assessment was that if there was a pileup of guys on the field, the football was, most likely, under there somewhere and spending at least four hours just to watch about fifteen minutes of actually interesting activity just (to me at least) was not worth it. When I went to veterinary school at *VA Tech* — football games were just terribly inconvenient since the fans tended to park everywhere and the traffic made getting to and from the labs to work complicated. So, I really have little (if any) interest in the game.

I did not begin to despise football until I got to college, where the football team was given license to beat me up (not metaphorically, either) because it was so important that the school have a winning football team. Have you ever seen *Horse Feathers*?

— JTM

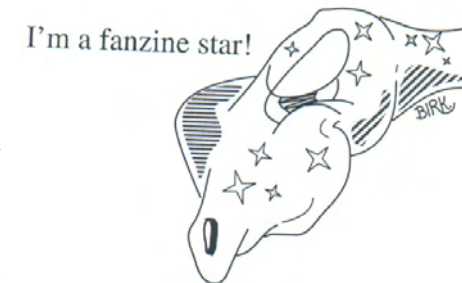
I am expecting to see at least several points of view about whatever happens at the Worldcon this year. I wish the supporting membership were cheaper — every time something like that is mentioned, the same argument is raised about being able to cheaply stuff the ballot box. Uh, since I

honestly wish there were a cheaper way to follow the plans and vote (legitimately) I cannot refute the argument, just limp along with the (usually) about \$40 for the PR reports, nominating/voting rights, and whatever the concom chooses to send (lately pretty much confined to the program book — although in the past some concoms have sent nice goodie bags as well).

From: **E. B. Frohvetgremflod** August, 2006
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506,
Ellicott City MD 21042-5988 USA

I just re-read the chapter of *Heinlein's Children* having to do with *Between Planets*. Without disagreeing with any of the comparisons made therein, I wonder if *Between Planets* did not come out of much the same place as *The Day After Tomorrow*. In both instances the resolution is the same: a whole new branch of physics is pulled out of thin air, and its "magical" properties allow the enemy to be defeated with ease. Also, Heinlein seems to have enjoyed a passing fancy for the nonsensical doubletalk slang of the 1940's. Compare Jeff Thomas's "It is not meet that the farjon should ripsnipe the cuskapads" with Rob Conrad's "The fasarta modulates the garbab in such a phase relationship that the thrimaleen is forced to bast". (Similarly, McCaffrey once said she started writing "dragon" stories because no one had ever made the dragons the good guys. Hello: *Between Planets*!)

These have a connection: John W. Campbell. He wrote the story "All" which Heinlein rewrote as *The Day After Tomorrow* (and published that), and then helped McCaffrey develop the *Dragons of Pern* (and published that).



I also ran the (billiard) table the other day in twelve shots. Sank four balls on the break, and made the remaining eleven without a miss. By professional standards this hardly counts as much of an achievement, but for a weekend hacker such as myself, not a bad effort.

Some horses — presumably saddlebreds would be included — can keep covering ground for hours. Thoroughbreds have been carefully selected for sprinting at near 100 percent effort. Among humans, the typical injury of sprinters is pulled hamstring, or torn achilles tendon; among marathon runners, shin splints (repetitive impact inflammation of the lower leg). The analogy is obvious.

I “have” lots of family. I just don’t know most of them.

Sports Illustrated often does a small feature on some athlete who was on the cover years ago.

There’s a book, *Star Prince Charlie*, Poul Anderson & Gordon Dickson; I have it somewhere but can’t lay hands on it at the moment. Late 1970’s? [According to the ISFDB, 1975.] Cognate to their “Hoka” stories, and distinguished by the riddle: “What’s purple and dangerous?”

I believe there was another Burroughs biography recently; I reviewed it for someone. Was it *Alexiad*? For that matter, there was a previous Parsons biography. (*Sex and Rockets*, by “John Carter” — no, don’t know the real name — 1999; reviewed by Robert Lichtman in *Twink* #18. I looked it up in case you cared.)

Are we to suppose that American jurisprudence *ought* to apply in Costa Rica, Jamaica, etc? That would raise some excitement when a Costa Rican court asserted jurisdiction over events in the United States.

No, but there is such a thing as “flight to avoid prosecution” and in an era where “relegation” is quite the scandal, certainly it should apply to “therapists” too.

I stand corrected on the Faan Award. But I still think the 1992 debacle, thrown in George Laskowski’s face in public, was handled by him with uncommon grace. And yes, I was there, and saw it all.

Jeffrey Allan Boman: Claims that Spider

Robinson is the successor to the title of “the next Heinlein”. Actually, there are a number of claimants to that crown. I would be tempted to say that Robinson has not exactly lived up to his early promise. How many stories can you write about one bar? The use of Hitler, who appears as a character in Kurtz’s *Lammas Night*, works not only because they present him as a monster (true), but as a black adept, a member of a satanic death cult (debatable).

It would more likely be Himmler (Hitler thought his occultism was absurd). For the answer to that read (if you can find it) *Runespear* by Victor Milán and Melinda M. Snodgrass (1987), which besides having a letter from Tolkien gives Reichsheini a right proper poison pill! So to speak.

— JTM

Assorted people: My review of *Old Man’s War* was sent off to the revived *Reluctant Famulus*, so I don’t know when it will appear; but it seems as if most of you liked the book a WHOLE lot more than I did.

Sue Burke: Why Americans don’t like soccer — (1) There is a lot of competition for the sports fan’s dollar in the U.S.; (2) Soccer is a popular sport for children, but there is almost no tradition of it as a participant sport for adults here; (3) It’s boring. They run up the field; they run down the field; once an hour, someone scores; then they run up and down some more. The level of reward is just too slow for American tastes.

Taras Wolansky: The Manhattan Project pre-dated Hiroshima by several years. The intent was, explicitly, to build a weapon. The enemy was: Germany and Japan. Unlikely the British would have approved our dropping a nuke in Europe (and the Atlantic Charter had agreed that the U.S. and U.K. were the deciding factors on the Allied side). It does not strike me as implausible that someone in the high command passed down the word: leave Hiroshima alone for now, no reason supplied. I stand by my account of events.

Al du Pisani: I had not known about the discovery of a new coelacanth population. The one originally caught off South Africa in 1938 was supposed to be a stray from the Cameroon Islands vicinity, further north, off

the east African coast.

Confusion to the enemy.

From: **Rodney Leighton** August 27, 2006
11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,
Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia B0K 1V0
CANADA

Thanks for the latest *Alexiad* which arrived earlier this week. Might have been on the day I encountered one of my brother’s co-workers in the woods. Said: “I suppose you know my brother.” “Oh, yes. Um, how can I put this” the guy said. (Brother) “um, has a way about him; uh, if you don’t know him, he could easily piss you off.” I said, well I haven’t seen him for almost 3 years . . .

On t’other hand, I am going to visit one sister and one aunt, day after tomorrow, barring serious problems.

A bitch of a summer is almost over. Fall looks to be worse. You may recall this time last year I was out of work and in trouble; neighbours came up with some work which kept me going. They have some work. but since they have not yet been paid for what I did last year, I doubt they will have anything for me this year. Employer informed me a couple of days ago that he had lost all his funding. I didn’t tell him that I was planning on looking around next week anyway. Stopped and talked to one guy I was thinking of, yesterday. He’s going out of business. Forestry in this part of N.S. is the worst it has been in at least 30 years. Long past time I did something else. God knows what; it would be nice if the so and so would let me know.

I did, on a whim, make an effort to win some. Rarely buy lottery tickets but I happened to have some spare money and bought what is called a superpack; 3 lottery game cards for \$5. Scratch off cards. First one yielded \$5. Second one yielded \$5. Third one yielded \$2. Sensible thing would have been to take the \$7 profit and run; instead I kept the \$2 and bought 2 superpacks. Of course, those 6 tickets yielded only \$2. Haven’t turned that in yet but I suspect I will buy a \$2 ticket with it which will yield nothing and that will be the extent of my latest attempt at getting lottery money to retire with.

Got a slew of contest opportunities along with a bill from *Reader’s Digest*. Going to throw all them away. And cancel the Select Edition membership.

I had a problem with *Reader’s Digest*; they renewed the subscription without telling me. When they officially forgot they had had John Barron writing for them, that lost me.

— JTM

Sheryl, darlin’, I don’t have a computer and it costs money to go to the village to look for ezines. I was in a couple of apas some years ago. Not an option which interests me.

How come so many people name Janine as Janice and how come you didn’t correct it?

Hey, Taras: you read what interests you, bypass what does not interest you, or do what I do and scan a section until you feel you can skip to the next one and you loc as you wish or else you tell Joe you are not interested in the zine. No need to bitch about the contents of the zine. Yeah, yeah, I know, look who’s talking!

Well, I don’t know what is going to happen with me. Probably only going to respond to fanzines I have to, for awhile. With any luck one of these baby strokes will turn into a killer. . .

From: **Henry L. Welch** Sept. 10, 2006
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welch@msoe.edu
<http://people.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html>

Thanks for the two most recent *Alexiads*. I have been horrible the past year or so in getting timely responses written. Here are some comments:

No. 3

The extreme duration of the time capsules described makes them of dubious value.

In response to Trinlay: Estate law is all about intent which can be very difficult to determine when the person whose intent is needed is deceased. Consequently the requirement has always been for the intent to be writing. If your uncle wanted to leave the house to you and K.T. he needed to put it in a will. Yet one more reason why estate planning should not be delayed.

No. 4

Joy Smith, many of the on-line games and quite a few of the console games require significant long-term planning and strategy. Other require tactical planning to do well. It

isn't bang-bang shoot-em-up as the stock and trade of the gaming industry any more.

George Price, there are sanctions (including loss of the license to practice) for attorneys who bring frivolous actions. The problem is that they have to be quite egregious. In addition, not all laws provide attorney fees to the winner. Judges have often been known to find ways to rule so that the outcome is what is right as opposed to what the law technically requires.

There are indeed legal sanctions. There are also a lot of laws that are not enforced.

— JTM

From: **George W. Price** Sept. 11, 2006
P.O. Box A3228, Chicago, IL
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grgpric@aol.com

Jeffrey Allan Boman says, concerning my story about cat mothers, "I thought we were supposed to stay away from kittens that young or the mothers would kill them — or is this just an old wife's tale?" Now that's something I never heard of before. In my family the received wisdom was that *tomcats* had to be kept away because they would hunt out and kill the male kittens (presumably as a way of cutting down future competition for females to mate with).

When I was about six, a tomcat sneaked into our basement apartment one summer night through an open window with a broken screen and approached our female cat and her litter. She intercepted him and worked on him so ferociously that he fled through a different open window, where the screen was intact. He hit that screen in full leap and punched right through it. The caterwauling woke us up but by the time we got the lights on it was all over. We never saw that tomcat, but we could tell he was yellow because he left a thick ring of fur on the raw edges of the hole he made in the screenwire. The sayings about the ferocity of a cat defending her kittens are very accurate.

Our mother cats never tried to keep us away from their kittens, or showed any unwillingness to let us handle them. However, for the birth they would usually find a dark and solitary spot. But even that had its exceptions. When I was twelve our pregnant cat lived in a box in the back of my closet. But when her time came, she had a

different idea. I was awakened that morning by the weight of her lying on my chest, with the first of four kittens halfway out. You better believe I yelled for my mother! I already knew about birth, but I wasn't prepared to deal with it quite so intimately. Mom carefully moved the cat — and kitten — and did what else was necessary. She had been raised on a farm and knew all about such matters.

I AM A CAT, NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS. IF YOU WANT A FURRY HOT WATER BOTTLE, CHECK OUT THE NIEMAN-MARCUS CATALOG!



* * * * *

Taras Wolansky asks if *Null-ABC* by H. Beam Piper and John J. McGuire was an unpublished story, and Joe notes that it appeared in *Astounding* in 1953. It was reprinted as *Crisis in 2140* in 1957 as half of an Ace Double (the other half was *Gunner Cade* by Cyril Judd [joint pseudonym of Judith Merrill and C. M. Kornbluth]). It's a story about a future in which education has become so degraded that literacy is restricted to a guild of "Literates" who are necessary for the functioning of society but feared and despised by the masses and demagogic politicians. It's Piper's take on progressive education, which he regarded with profound distaste and contempt. It's not a bad story, though it breaks down at the end into a

shoot-'em-up. In that respect it resembles Piper's "Last Enemy." The important part is the portrayal of the society, not the resolution by gunfire.

It's one of those Piper stories available on Gutenberg. Oddly enough, the February 1953 issue somehow turned up in my grandfather's house. He had the Ace Burroughs reissue paperbacks, too. I wonder where he got them?

— JTM

From: **John Thiel** September 9, 2006
30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, IN
49704-2950 USA

I was surprised to see your book reviewed in the November *Analog*; that doesn't happen every month. *Heinlein's Children*, is it? An unruly crowd of youngsters.

Only if you try to take away their pets, lives, or freedom.

— JTM

From the back page of your latest issue, I remember when there wasn't anything on the best seller lists but *In Cold Blood*, certainly no science fiction. Now in the days of the sf best sellers, there's sf like *The Silence of the Lambs*, which when I see you allude to . . . do you think it's a science-fictional *In Cold Blood* themed movie? It certainly was appalling; watching it all the way through might be regarded as a criminal activity. As it had a lot of wolves in it, "The Bleating of the Lambs" might be a better title. Your reference to it has given me an opportunity to express my objections to it and to all movies like it.

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** Sept. 13, 2006
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93010-2451 USA
robertk@cipcug.org

Thank you for Vol. 5, No. 4.

It happened again. For the 7th time I was the only person in a movie theater—*Superman Returns*.

I would like to thank any of you who voted for the World Con in Denver for 2008 as your first choice. Also, any of you who

voted for Columbus as your first choice and Denver as your second choice. It was a very close site selection vote with Denver only winning by 12 votes.

L.A.con IV was interesting. However, for some reason there were not as many panels as usual that really interested me. In the voting, only two of my first place votes actually won. *Serenity* won a Hugo for Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form and John Scalzi won the John W. Campbell Award. Given that Scalzi won the Campbell, I thought he had a good chance for Best Novel with *Old Man's War*. No such luck and, if I'm reading the figures correctly, his novel came in third.

I did go to a number of the panels: Opening Ceremonies, Blogs & E-Fanzines, Why Doesn't SF Seem to Last on TV?, Starship Smackdown (that I left early), Weaponizing Space, Making DVD's Special, What's Next From The Sci-Fi Channel, What's Coming From TOR, and Military Tactics In Science Fiction. Also, I went to Fan Funds to see Guy H. Lillian III and Rose-Marie to try and remind Guy that we met at Chicon 2000. But, he still didn't remember. Rose-Marie had just agreed to marry him and his mind was not fully functioning.

There was supposed to be a two hour panel "Galaxy Quest Revealed" with Robert Gordon, the writer of the movie. However, he called in sick and they just showed the movie. I have the DVD and watch the movie periodically. So, I left and didn't stay for the show. I did go to the Masquerade and the Hugo Awards Ceremony.

At 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, The Prancing Pony Players put on a wonderful show near the Food Court—their take on *The Lord of the Rings*. They are excellent and will show up at other Cons. (See <http://P3.bucklandblues.com>.) At 1:00 p.m., I went to Jerry Pournelle Invents The Future. Jerry was in full form and at his best. Then I went home. Home is 79 miles from the hotel. The drive down on Tuesday was horrible and took almost three hours. The drive home on Sunday wasn't too bad and took about one and a half hours.

I purchased several books, T-shirts, and had my picture taken on the bridge mockup of the Starship Enterprise with Capt. Kirk, etc. Spent more money than previously planned.

It appears that the result of their lost case

against Don Brown is that Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh may be bankrupt. If so, it's a good thing that Henry Lincoln didn't join them. For those not familiar with the three men, they are the authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (1982, etc.). Obviously, Dan Brown did use part of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* for *The Da Vinci Code*. But, it was not enough for Baigent and Leigh to win their case. Information surfaced about another book that may have strongly influenced (perhaps had its plot stolen) Brown. It's *Daughter of God* by Lewis Perdue (2000). I obtained it on Interlibrary Loan and don't see any connection.

Who would have thought? Oliver Stone has made a movie that doesn't involve his paranoid fantasies. *World Trade Center* is magnificent. On my rating scale of 1-5, I gave it a 5. The only reason I didn't give it a 5+ is that he did not have any scenes of Muslims throughout the world (and here in the United States) dancing, cheering, and expressing their support for the attack. Apparently *World Trade Center* has not done all that well as neither did *United 93*. I find that rather baffling because, as far as I'm concerned, they were/are must see movies.

On August 6 I taped *Airport* (1970) on Turner Classic Movies and watched it on August 11. With all that has happened starting with 9/11, it was a very different experience than back in 1970. One scene that I really enjoyed is when a very obnoxious passenger was panicking. A priest across the aisle crossed himself, and then whacked the man.

I've mentioned previously how a number of years ago I submitted a DNA sample (just scraping the inside of one cheek.) to Oxford Ancestors. Also, several years ago I had some blood taken at an LDS Church in Ventura for a migration study they were doing. (I do not know what subsequently happened with that DNA study.) Now, I've submitted a DNA sample (two cheek scrapings taken eight hours apart) to National Geographic for The Genographic Project. This is "... a globe-spanning effort to collect over 100,000 DNA samples representing a worldwide range of human diversity ... for it is a genetic journey we all share. Together we may learn more about who we are, where we came from, and how we relate as members of one extended family." Yes, it sounds similar in concept to the LDS study. But, this time I'll see the results and they will

provide a personal report. They will only allow one test at a time, either the Y chromosome (that only men have) or the mitochondrial DNA (that men and women have). I chose the Y chromosome. I am now submitting a request for the mitochondrial.

How does one get into this?
What are the costs?

Joe – The only family I have is my two nephews, a niece, and their children (7). There are also cousins, but we do not have a lot of contact. So, "Prince Michael of Albany" has been stripped of his British citizenship. As you say, "couldn't happen to a nicer chap." In your review of *Bad Prince Charlie* (p. 3) you make reference to *The Devil's Advocate* by Taylor Caldwell (1952). I greatly enjoyed that novel and have a copy around here somewhere.

That book was responsible for my first literary confusion. One of my odder friends was going on about how *The Devil's Advocate* proved the bankruptcy of American policy. I wondered how a book about a dying monsignor investigating the suitability for sainthood of a martyred partisan, in Italy could say anything about the U.S. Then I discovered that there's no law against two people using the same title for different books. (The one I had been thinking of was by Morris L. West (1959).)

— JTM

I would like to add my strong recommendation to *Help at Any Cost: How the Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids* reviewed by Joe (p. 10). It is outstanding, if a bit depressing.

Thanks for the HUGO recommendations by Johnny Carruthers, Milt Stevens, and Tom Veal. Too bad that they did not arrive prior to the voting deadline. They might have influenced my voting.

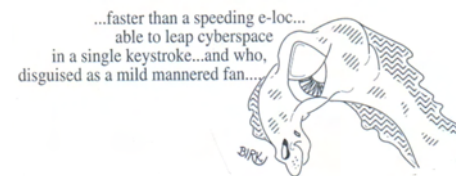
Lee Gilliland: Good commentary on *Pierre Plantard and The Priory of Sion* (p. 11).

Jeffrey Allan Boman: See my comment to Trinlay Khadro.

Trinlay Khadro: You indicate that it's

still too "fresh and painful" to see *United 93* (and I assume *World Trade Center*). It's been five years since 9/11. If not now, when? We need to keep being reminded about what we face. This is a war for the survival of Western culture/civilization.

I was scheduled to leave today for Deerfield Beach, Florida and my Navy ship reunion. However, I have hurt my back, am on medication, and have cancelled my trip. It is a great disappointment as I have been to ten straight reunions and did not want to miss this one.



From: **Martin Morse Wooster** 9/12/ 2006
Post Office Box 8093, Silver Spring,
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Many thanks for *Alexiad* 28. I'm sorry you weren't at LaCon. The dinner was very pleasant. David Herrington, Taras Wolansky, Robert Kennedy, "Filthy Pierre", myself, and my friend Carl Aschmann had a very pleasant time.

And Stross is the only one not getting this fine publication. Someone should have asked him.

At LaCon, I bought a copy of Guy Lillian's DUFF report for his 2003 trip. Guy deserves great credit for producing a report and publishing it. I also thought it was pretty well written and entertaining. I've mentioned in the past that I think TAFF is no longer necessary, but DUFF in my view seems a worthy cause. After all, it's hard to get to Australia. You can order *The Antipodal Review* for a \$10 donation to DUFF from Guy H. Lillian III, 8700 Millicent Way #1501, Shreveport, LA 71118-2264 USA.

I should note in response to **Alexis Gilliland's** letter that Jerry Uba has never made any effort to join PRSFS and has never been to a PRSFS meeting. My guess is that

Lee Gilliland made that comment because she neither knows nor understands why there are a bunch of fans in the Washington area who are a) organized and b) don't really care about WSFA. I mean, we go to Capclave and have a good time, and WSFA feuds are mildly more interesting than, say, Swedish fan feuds, but PRSFS is a much more mellow group than WSFA, and I'm proud to be an active member of PRSFS.

Sue Burke brings up the whole issue of which team sport is the most interesting. Soccer does have some interesting things going for it; if you love obnoxious players and owners with dubious morals, soccer is a sport for you. But baseball has more scoring, but not too much scoring like basketball. Plus, with baseball you don't get just the sport; you get the whole package — the traditions of the sport, being in the stadium, pretty good food, being with your friends. You can relax and chat in the slow parts, or just enjoy being outdoors. You don't have to stare at the field all the time in case you miss something. These are reasons why baseball is more fun than soccer. (I'm a weaker fan of American football, though I do watch it fitfully and am happy whenever the Washington Redskins beat the Dallas Cowboys or the Baltimore Ravens.)

I read *Strange Angel* by George Pendle and enjoyed it. But though the parts about rocketry seemed accurate to me, Pendle is absolutely tone-deaf when it comes to his understanding of fandom. In fact, I found an item for the Thog column from *Ansible* quoting Pendle's condescending view of sf fans. I am told that sf writers hired to read the ms. removed some of Pendle's more egregious errors about sf, but plenty of goofs remain in the book.

Shouldn't that have been in the other column, "As Others See Us?"

— JTM

From: **Milt Stevens** September 19, 2006
6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley,
CA 93063-3834 USA
miltstevens@earthlink.net

In *Alexiad* V5#4, you ask how L.A. con was for us. Well, nothing seems to be broken. I don't even have any particularly unusual lumps on my head. L.A. con appeared out of nowhere. It hit me and ran

over me several times. Then it disappeared into thin air.

Even at that, I may have missed the brunt of the con, since I never made it to the convention center after Tuesday, August 22. I stayed at the Anaheim Hilton from Monday, August 21 to Monday, August 28. I walked in on the 21st and hobbled out on the 28th.

Most of my time was devoted to the fanzine lounge which was on the fourth floor of the Hilton. Aside from that, I was also on nine program items which were also on the fourth floor of the Hilton. I had intended for the fanzine lounge to be a hangout for fanzine fans, and it seemed to work well for that purpose. Quite a few people had good things to say about it. Presuming I had to be somewhere during the convention, the fanzine lounge was a good place to be.

Nine program items is quite a few from the participant viewpoint. I initially thought there were a total of 800 program items at the entire convention which is quite a few from almost any viewpoint. But I was wrong. There were really 1000 program items. That is sort of overwhelming. At least, the convention didn't have to worry about criticism for not having enough programming.

Of course, fan/fanzine programming doesn't attract huge crowds under any circumstances. It's just our job to pick up our spears and take part in the crowd scenes. The best attended of the program items I was on attracted something like 15-20 people. The smallest attendance was at 10 am Sunday, where one guy showed up for a panel with Guy Lillian, Jerry Kaufman, and I. I didn't feel offended, since I certainly wouldn't attend a 10 am Sunday panel unless I was on it.

Increasingly, fanzines are becoming marginalized. Or it may have been because you were up against a Buffy panel (Item #927, "What Is It About Buffy?") that drew all the Trufans, to whom Buffy is the ultimate in skiffy.

— JTM

Since worldcon, it seems to have taken me awhile to get back to writing letters and doing apazines. Part of it was just pure sloth. There were also all of those things which had

been put off until AW (after worldcon). Some committee members probably have it worse than I have, since they had been putting off things until AW for a couple of years. (I remember when I was worldcon chairman I put off getting a divorce until AW for about a year. That only sounds like it's a joke.)

Another worldcon has come and gone, and that which doesn't kill us outright leaves us time to attend a few more conventions.

From: **Sue Burke** September 25, 2006
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It's a busy time for bones in Spain. On Aug. 1 the world learned that the 200 grams of bones that rest in the elaborate tomb for Christopher Columbus in the cathedral of Seville are indeed his. That was the result of DNA testing at the University of Granada, and confirmed by labs in Barcelona, Rome, and Leipzig.

The Admiral died in Valladolid, Spain, in 1506, but continued to travel the world. In 1509, the remains were moved to a monastery in Seville; 35 years later, to what is now the Dominican Republic; in 1789, to Cuba; and in 1898, to Seville again — presumably. Some people said the body was of a relative, but when labs compared the remains to those known to be of his older brother, they were of a son of the same mother. In any case, the bones in Seville amount to only 15 percent of Chris's remains; the rest is unaccounted for. Researchers also found gold threads, a bullet, and some rodent bones in the urn. The remains of Admiral Columbus were treated with military honors when his identity was confirmed.

Some people died with no honors whatsoever in Spain, but their bones are now being dug up with tender respect. These are the people killed and buried in unmarked mass graves during Spain's Civil War, which began 70 years ago, and during the decade of reprisals after it ended. Official records indicate that at least 94,699 people are in those graves, but those figures are incomplete; one respectable historian thinks the real figure might be double. So far, more than 900 skeletons have been dug up. Spain is slowly starting to come to terms with the

war, a process not permitted under the Franco dictatorship. He died in 1975, but old habits die hard — or rather, the last survivors are beginning to die, and they think it's finally time to tell their stories. As part of this, obituaries for the war dead on the losing side are now being published. I have some on my web site, www.sue.burke.name, and here is a sample:

"On July 24 seventy years ago, at 5 in the morning, a volley and three coups de grâce. Three men fell. With them and with all those who fell defending liberty and the Republic, the dreams and hopes of an entire people fell.

"In memory of José Álvarez Moreno, Captain of the Assault Guard; Manuel Rubio Duráñ, Mayor of Dos Hermanas; Francisco Grillo González, Police Chief of Dos Hermanas.

"Assassinated in Seville on July 24, 1936.

"Seventy years later, the tomb of their assassin, the seditious Gen. Gonzalo Queipo de Llano, continues to occupy a place of honor in La Macarena Church in Seville . . ."

As it happens, I will be in Dos Hermanas, a suburb of Seville, on November 3, 4, and 5. The Spanish national science fiction convention, Hispacon, was to be held in Cordoba, but the people organizing it pooped out on Sept. 11 (a good day for disasters). The officers of the Spanish Association for Fantasy, Science Fiction and Horror, which sponsors the convention, had reorganized the event by Sept. 15 with the help of some leading fans and authors, a Dos Hermanas alderman, and the head of the city's library, which will provide meeting space. This Hispacon now goes by the name DH2006.

What happened? I've heard of conventions dying (the most notorious case being SF Expo, the megacon that ended up giving Midwestcon a very good weekend in 1976) but this sounds like the city had problems.

— JTM

Trinlay: I know Lisa Mason. All my best

to her and to you. And thanks for the advice. I get my checkups; now if I could convince my husband.

From: **Jeffrey Allan Boman** Sept. 30, 2006
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Thank you for *Alexiad* Vol. 5, No. 4. This is Jeff from Jacksonville . . .

(Florida. I'm still using North America.)

My computer is still having issues... the motherboard was replaced in March, then a hard drive in August — only for the other hard drive to crash a month later. Now the Internet doesn't work well under Windows (the Microsoft Virus as Henry calls it), the sound card isn't working. I'm still using a Linux live CD to get things done . . .

I won't bring this back to the shop for repairs now. Every time it costs my parents more, and I'm starting to feel that the shop is only fixing some stuff each time and leaving other stuff not working to get more from us. Instead I'll use tech-minded friends to get things fixed for good.

On to the LOCs:

John Hertz: Thanks for the invite for the WorldCon thing. Hopefully you'll have one if we get it in Montreal in 2009.

Janine G. Stinson: I haven't seen that Doc Samson book. I outgrew my younger "Marvel Zombie" days, and stopped getting every title they put out. Not that my reserve list shows it . . . / I'm also not familiar with Misty's Diana Tregarde books. I'll look for them in my local library.

Darrell Schweitzer: I haven't read *The DaVinci Code* (I tend to avoid trendy things), but your overall point about the ludicrous idea of bloodlines in it rings true. I'm not knowledgeable in genetics, but with about 2000 years since Jesus and Mary Magdalene . . . it doesn't take a genius to figure there's a lot of alteration in the line since then.

Taral Wayne: My only time capsule stuff is old tape recordings from my childhood and old photos. It's still strange to me how I had light brown hair as a child, especially with it looking black to me in most shots!

Joy V. Smith: Another down view on time capsules! My only plan is to convert analog tapes to digital before they erode.

Alexis A. Gilliland: As to the dearth of new conrunners, I suspect that the group

politics that sometimes took their toll on us made it look far less appealing to join. The greying of fandom likely also plays a part. As you say about the move to video forms over literary, that also plays into it . . .

Brad W. Foster: I can so far only dream of winning an award some day! That's extra motivation in my writing.

John Purcell: Speaking of *Amazing Stories*, I have the history-making issue (300? 600? I'm blipping out on the number) somewhere in my stuff.

Dainis Bisneiks: H. Beam Piper as well as being someone who planned out things well was also in the view of many quite a good writer. I've yet to read the Paratime series, but you've now made me more curious to.

Almost all of them are on Gutenberg.

Me: On Joe's comments about author copyright, I never knew Moore's husband despised SF. That must have been a bone of contention in that household! / On *Spin* – it occurred to me while re-reading this LOC that Robert Charles Wilson is our GoH at Con*Cept in mid-October! If I get time to breathe (I'll be speaking on up to 5 panels, maybe up to 9), I may meet him.

Lloyd Penney: I've actually seen an online roleplaying con. I guess it makes sense, what with so many campaigns run via e-mail . . . but I still prefer playing in person. / The LA Worldcon sounded like a lot of fun (I read a great report online on a Montreal-based Web BBS called The BBS At The End of the Universe, <http://theendoftheuniverse.ca>). The US ones seem to be bigger than the out-of the US ones.

Trinlay Khadro: I'm sure no one in the world of zines would be heartless enough to consider regular LOCs more important than the tough times you've been dealing with. / People often gain fame after they've died. That seems to be a sad fact of existence. / Best hopes for Lisa Mason from me. / Considering your comment to Rodney about anthropomorphizing pets: we have the habit in my family of even giving ours the Boman family name. :)

Robert S. Kennedy: *X-Men: the Last Stand* has had a lot of negative reviews. Maybe a lot of people took those reviews to heart. In any case, your empty theater

demonstrates how poor the film was. / That there are some good programs like you mention on the History Channel almost tempts me to get it – except I know the programming is different on the Canadian version. / Re: Joe's comment about George Washington . . . you're a descendant Joe?

No. I am related to Mary Fitzhugh Lee (Mrs. Robert E.) who was descended on the other side from Martha Washington and her first husband. George Washington was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen, but married a widow!

— JTM

I can't claim any interesting ancestors like that (definite, anyway. A Great Aunt always swore we were related to Vlad Tepes. I don't have any concrete proof), but I can play the "6 degrees" game twice: my dad worked with Leonard Cohen, and went to camp with William Shatner (most of Montreal has a link to him). . .

Sheryl Birkhead: My cats haven't had shots in many years. The rules in Canada are different, and my cats never go outdoors (I'd never be cruel enough to pitch them off the balcony and expect them to develop wings). / I wonder if I could get a decent price on a Macbook on Ebay. / Re: your comment to Rodney on electronic fanzines – I actually quit an APA when it went electronic. With all my recent PC headaches, if I didn't have all the issues backed up, I'd lose them! / Re: Joe's comment on his niece – I've been living with the MonSter for over a decade now. Before I was diagnosed, doctors theorized that I might also have had a stroke. Not many (then) 28-year olds would have, so that was ruled out.

Sue Burke: A few of my friends are also World Cup fans. I never got the taste myself.

Taras Wolansky: Anime/SF influences could also be indirectly linked to Miyazaki's film *Howl's Moving Castle*, since the original story was written by Diana Wynne Jones.

Up-to-date, and for once not 2 LOCs together! Plus I'll have some more fannish stuff about a con next time!

From: **AL du Pisani** October 1, 2006
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bids arise between now and then.

This will be a short letter. The past two months have been dreadful. So bad that I have not managed to do more than briefly look at *Alexiad*, once I have received it.

I have had a lot of issues to deal with. For one, I still am at the same job, with very little prospects of change. One possible option for change is six months away. Another options is one month away, but I did not do a terribly good job selling myself to these people. And to add insult to injury, both my colleagues have just resigned and have gone to new jobs or are in the process of moving to new jobs.

At least I had a week in which my mother came to visit my sister in Pretoria, and I was able to take some leave and visit with her. A wonderful experience, to be able to visit your sisters and your mother, and to have good relationships with both. (Unfortunately, I have relatives where the three sisters will not meet with their mother at the same time. I am so lucky not have this problem.)

I am still planning to attend next year's Worldcon in Yokohama. Have been saving up for a while, and have the best part of the year to continue, and to prepare in other ways. I had hoped that things will allow a visit to the USA for a Worldcon soon, but at this moment this seems not to be.

Good luck, and may God go with you all.

We had been hoping to see you at Denver, or KC/Montreal. Oh well. I do hope to hear your perspective on Nippon Heisei 19.

— JTM

WAHF:

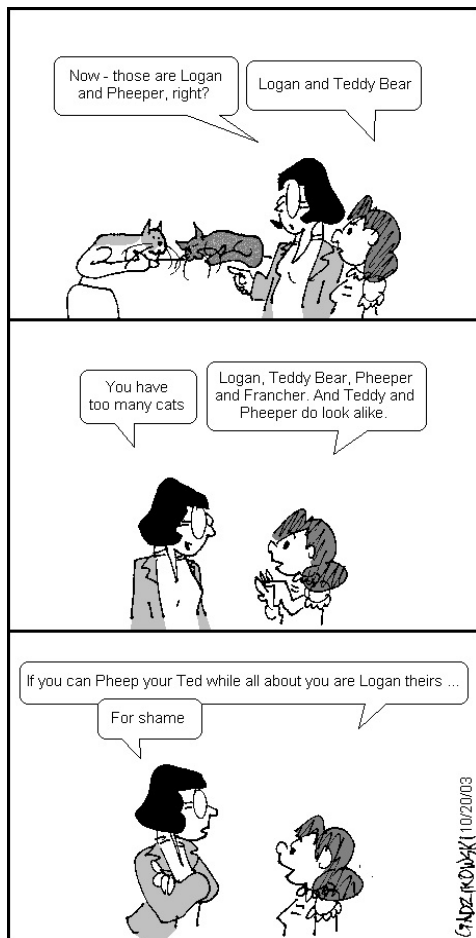
Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

Earl Kemp, who also mentioned *Sex and Rockets*.

No new WorldCon bids were announced. Nippon Heisei 19 will see voting for a choice between Kansas City and Montréal. DenVention 3 will have voting for Australia, and in 2009 we will have the choice of Seattle (The DC in 2011 bid appears to have folded) plus whatever NASFiC 2010

ON THE NAMING OF NAMES

by Paul Gadzikowski



EXECUTIVE GRAPPLE

Jack Ryan took a deep breath and looked into the lens of the Television camera. He remained amazed at how technology had advanced over the past few years; now he could be seen from Maine to California as he addressed the American people. It was rather inconvenient that certain others could be doing that as well, but Television had other uses.

"Three, two, one, roll," the producer said, and Jack began to speak.

"Some of us in America have had difficulties with others. In the past eighty years, we have had three wars to determine whether we will be a single nation or not.

"Since the end of the Great War, the exhausted world has been at peace. Not everyone wishes that to be that way. Instead, they carry out war by different means.

"I became your president after the dreadful national trauma when a Boeing 247 flew into the assembly of our Congress that had just named me Vice-President, killing the President and most of our elected representatives. This was only the first of a series of attacks of that nature.

"There is one man who is behind this. He sits not two hundred fifty miles from Philadelphia, thinking himself safe in his fortress in Richmond. This is Jake Featherston, the man who sent a plane to crash into our capital, the man who tried to kill my family, the man who tried to kill me. He is a man who has defied the laws of men and nations, and now, Mr. Featherston, here is the response of the United States of America."

The picture cut to an even grainier scene showing the streets of Richmond. The Francis-X SD1400 glider bomb, developed by a German-American technical team, remote controlled by a controller in a compartment stuffed full of radio and Television gear in a dirigible flying over West Virginia, its framework itself the vast antennas of the system, aimed itself directly at the Gray House. Then the picture cut out.

Two hours later, the Confederate response was aired. An all too familiar visage filled the Television screen; he said in his rasping voice, "I'm Jake Featherston, and I'm here to tell you the truth."

The camera pulled back, showing the C.S. President sitting by another Television unit. "Roll that there thing," he said, and as the flickering, grainy image of Jack Ryan appeared on the screen Jake spoke over the words of the U.S. President, "The truth is, Jack-boy thinks his fancy toys work all the time, and just exactly as his long-hair white-coat fellers tell him they're supposed to . . ."

— Not by Tom Clancy or Harry Turtledove

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Art: What we are mainly looking for is small fillos. Your fillo will probably be scanned in and may be reused, unless you object to its reuse.

Contributions: This is not a fictionzine. It is intended to be our fanzine, so be interesting.

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