

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΔ)

\$2.00

Old Things

I have had occasion recently to reflect on the strange importance of things, beginning with clothes which belonged to my grandmother's sister and which came into my possession after my mother's death. They were far too small for me but I held onto them for some time before Joe sensibly pointed out to me that it was senseless to keep things I could not use when someone in real need might be able to use them. Even so, it was not easy for me to take them to the thrift store. I had to remind myself that they were, after all, only things and that I had preached decluttering often enough to Joe that he had a right to expect me to practice what I had preached to him. I could, of course, have emptied up the tote where I keep my model horse collection and put them in that, but that would have meant getting rid of my model horses. There was no way I was going to do that. I had spent too much time and money replacing the collection I had as a child. There was no way I was going to give up my horses again, certainly not for clothes I could not even dream of wearing. And so the clothes went to the thrift store and hopefully to someone who was small enough to use them.

— Lisa

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On **December 16, 2004** Sir Arthur C. Clarke will be **87**.
 Joe's Birthday is **December 24, 2004**
 Christmas is **December 25, 2004**.
 Printed on July 28, 2009
 Deadline is **February 1, 2005**



For some of you, this will be the **last** issue — unless you subscribe, write, or otherwise indicate your interest.

Reviewer's Notes

by Joseph T Major

The joys of adulthood . . . the week before this deadline, I got paid, and paid the property tax on the home, which tax goes to the Metro government which pays me in the first place. Cue a chorus of baboons with Poopy Panda™ ear hats singing "The Circle of Life".
 Of the two cars, one had 95k miles and the other had 130k miles. We probably should have upgraded. So I traded in the Mustang (the lower-mileage one, but in less good condition) and now we have an '03 Taurus SES. Nice and roomy, and we should be able to go to cons . . . except of course that the money we would have used paying for cons has to be used to pay for the new car. Just as well that for the next two years Worldcon is out of reach.
 Of course, paying for the car was fun. The dealers had all sorts of special deals that didn't apply. I am getting a home-equity loan so as to 1) get a tax break 2) spite their finance department by paying off the car (at least as far as they're concerned).

It's still better than living in Mother's basement.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Congratulations to **Sue Mason** of the Plokta Cabal for winning the Nova Award for Best Fan Artist. Also, Claire Brialey won Best Fan Writer and Pete Young's *Zoo Nation* won Best Fanzine. Congratulations to them all.

Thanks to **Sheryl Birkhead** for the abstract of the article on Crohn's Disease.

Ned Brooks reports: "C L Moore's stepdaughter Carole Ann Rodriguez (18009 San Fernando Mission Blvd, Granada Hills CA 91344) says (in an e-mail forwarded to *fictionmags* by Dave Langford at *Ansible*) that she inherited the literary estate of Moore and Henry Kuttner and is researching their work, as the family copies were lost." (*It Goes On the Shelf*, Issue 26)

GALLAGHER IS FREE! THE BALDIES ARE LOOSED! THE TWONKY IS OUT AND ABOUT!

Let joy be unconfined! Let there be dancing in the streets, drinking in the saloons, and necking in the parlor!

(According to Eric Flint, C. L. Moore's second husband disliked that sci-fi junk and refused to let her work, and Kuttner's, and theirs, be reprinted. It looks like Ms. Rodriguez may release these prisoners.)

I think I have some submitting to do:

<http://www.teemings.com/extras/lotr/>

has a whole batch of revisions of a certain work. Anyone want to see "The Tragedie of Frodo Baggins" by Will: Shaksapur?

Now that sumer is i-cumen in, lhude sing pengwyn . . . er, now that the Antarctic summer season is beginning, I have some sites to look

at:

<http://www.70south.com>

has Antarctic news and history; it's the best site for an overall view.

<http://www.polar.org/antsun/index.html>

has the Rayethon Polar Service Company's newsletter, *Antarctic Sun*. A special midwinter issue describes the storm that struck Ross Island and damaged the American and New Zealand bases severely, while the old Scott and Shackleton huts at Hut Point, Cape Evans, and Cape Royds were barely touched.

And speaking of Shackleton, the British Antarctic survey ship *HMS Endurance* is refitting and will not sail south until January 2005, as you can see at:

<http://www.visitandlearn.co.uk/default.asp>

The Scott Polar Research Institute has a virtual Shackleton exhibit, where among other things you can see an image of his original "I have done it damn the Admiralty" letter:

<http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/>

Forthcoming on DVD is a tale of Nickleodeon's animated kiddy hero with the hair like a chocolate-dipped custard cone; it has a most fascinating title, for those in the know:

The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron — Attack of the Twonkies

He being a continuing character and all that, I expect James Isaac Neutron (not the sort to get charged up about things) will outdo the animated TV set of "Lewis Padgett" [Kuttner & Moore, sigh; *Astounding*, 1942].

Battered and reeling, but still willing to take more punishment, the Columbus in '07 Committee has got up off the canvas (having been flattened by the Nippon Heisei 19 sumo wrestler) and is announcing a bid for the 2008 Worldcon. They are up against Chicago and Denver. Well, so much for that.

Incidentally, when I got the mailed copy of the Nippon 2007 Progress Report 0, it had the listing of the hotel rates without the rates in yen, only dollars. The cheapest hotel, the New Otani Inn, looked rather like the sort of motel one finds off the main drag in, say, Hopkinsville, to take a place I know about. (One such motel there shares a parking lot with a Unitarian Universalist Church. I bet you didn't even

know that there *was* a Unitarian church in Hopkinsville.)

I was reading Bryan Burrough's *Public Enemies: America's Greatest Crime Wave and the Birth of the FBI 1933-34* (Penguin Press; 2004; \$29.95) and noticed how inept the Great Bandits of the thirties were. John Dillinger *always* had to take hostages, for example. Scott Scurlock (see Ann Rule's *The End of the Dream*) was a lot more mission-capable, or say Willie Sutton.

Nevertheless, some of these bandits were seen as revolutionary confiscators of extorted capitalist loot. Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd was a folk hero in Arkansas, for example. Hunting them down with an inexperienced outfit, the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation (founded by Napoleon's grand-nephew Charles Bonaparte), meant there would be a terrible cost in blood. Dillinger was the exception; most of these bandits shot first and didn't bother asking questions, and G-Men often had a very fatal learning experience.

This is an un-romantic look at a significant influence on American self-perception.

The Flight of the Phoenix, Elleston Trevor's book made into a remarkable movie with Jimmy Stewart, directed by Robert Aldrich, screenplay by Lukas Heller, has been remade. The new flick stars Dennis Quaid and is directed by the John Moore who did *Yeager* and *Behind Enemy Lines*. The release date is December 22.

Was this really necessary?

Original (1965):

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0059183/>

Remake (2004):

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0377062/>

The *Looney Tunes Golden Collection Volume Two* is out (\$64.92). It contains sixty more classics of Warner Brothers' art. Those disappointed at the lack of Road Runner & Coyote cartoons in the previous collection can now see Wile E. be disappointed again and again; those missing Tweety (as Sylvester does) now can have that lack filled. If you want to know where the mascot for the WB Network comes from, you can see the frog in action in "One Froggy Evening". And yes, this one has "What's Opera, Doc?" Gonna kill the wabbit, **kill the wabbit, kill the wabbit! DUM-DA-DUM!**

MONARCHIST NEWS

King Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia has abdicated, presumably ending what is one of

the most turbulent, on-and-off reigns in history. Born October 31, 1922, he was named as monarch by the French colonial administration in 1941 in succession to his maternal grandfather, **Monivong**. Sihanouk abdicated for the first time in 1955 in favor of his father, **Norodom Suramarit**, in order to pursue a political career. (His parents were both of the royal line and were second cousins.)

Upon his father's death in 1960, he became king again, only to be forced from the throne in 1970 by the revolution led by Lon Nol. He returned to the throne in 1993, after the Khmer Rouge terror, but preferred to live outside the country, wanting to remain outside the political bickering that marked the war-wasted land.

He delivered a letter to the government on **October 6** stating his intention to abdicate. His successor is his son **Norodom Sihamoni**, the former Cambodian ambassador to UNESCO; his elder son **Prince Norodom Ranariddh** is, like his father, more interested in politics.

His Catholic Majesty **King Juan Carlos I** of Spain [but evidently not the Indies any longer] has made Don Simeón de Sajonia-Coburgo Gotha, the Prime Minister of Bulgaria, a Knight of the Golden Fleece. This Order is for heads of state, but then in his secret identity the Prime Minister is **King Simeon II**. (Never mind that **Dr. Otto von Habsburg** also awards the Order of the Golden Fleece.)

ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME — Part Two

Some notes by Joseph T Major
on Melissa Scott's

A CHOICE OF DESTINIES

(Baen; 1986; ISBN 0-671-65563-9; \$2.95)

Alexander's Feast: or, The Power of Music

I.

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:
Aloft, in awful state,
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne.
His valiant peers were placed around;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound:
(So should desert in arms be crowned.)
The lovely Thaïs, by his side,
Sate like a blooming eastern bride,
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

II.

Timotheus, placed on high
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touched the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the power of mighty love.)
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
When he to fair Olympia pressed,
And while he sought her snowy breast;
Then, round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign
of the world.
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
"A present deity!" they shout around;
"A present deity!" the vaulted roofs rebound.
With ravished ears,
The monarch hears;
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

— John Dryden

In our last thrilling episode, Alexander the Great, in camp in Baktria, was informed that All Hellas Was at War and he needed to return to settle the matter, never mind this India to the east. Having resolved the revolt of the homeland, he now finds himself being drawn into the affairs of the Hellenes of the west, and

of the powers beyond them . . .

Chapter 5: Pella, late winter (Dystros) to Syracuse, late summer (Gorpaïos), 30 imperial (326 B.C., AUC 427)

The victorious and triumphant army returns to Macedonia. The rejoicing there is truly on the scale of "Alexander's Feast". Well, not everyone, for Olympias has been dissatisfied. Alexander confronts his imperial mother and (more point of departure) his orphaned son. He has to resolve the family crisis, which is also a political one.

But amid the rejoicing there is more to be done, for Demosthenes (recall him) has lit out for the territories, and a war in Sirakusa is in the offing. After three months of rejoicing the army sets out after him, only to find itself drawn into a different realm of politics and intrigue.

The already unstable Syrakusan polity has been further upset by the arrival of this Athenian intriguer, and it explodes into stasis ("civil war") right before the Macedonians arrive. Alexander establishes some sort of calm, quite literally over Demosthenes's dead body, but then more trouble comes to hand from both north and west.



Page 107 **Aegae, where Alexander sacrificed at his father's tomb** Forensic reconstruction has determined that the tomb excavated by Professor Andronikos at Vergina (which it can be presumed is the Macedonian capital of Aigai (ΑΙΓΑΙ) in 1977 contained a man who had lost an eye in combat and who closely resembles the statues and coins of Philip II. Q.E.D. (Pardon my Latin.)

Page 109 **Neoptolemus** Neoptolemos (ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ) A chiliarch of the Hypaspists.

Page 113 **Elaphion** Elaphion (ΕΛΑΦΙΟΝ)

Olympias's cook.
Page 113 **Who lost everything you'd won in Greece** This may imply that the Spartans did not rebel earlier, either. Is Agis still alive?

Page 116 **Even Sparta sent envoys to discuss a new treaty.** A remarkable comedown for the proud Lakadaimonians, who heretofore would never have considered taking part in a conflict without being in charge of it, for as Cavafy puts it, "The Spartans were not to be led and ordered about/as precious servants."

Page 117 **Syracuse had good reason to fear tyrants** Though some make out the rule of Dionysos II (Dionusos; ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΣ) to have been a philosopher's paradise (See Mary Renault's *The Mask of Apollo* (1966) for example.). However, Plato thought otherwise, even though Dionysos was more Platonic than Plato — something about legal problems.

Page 117 **Timoleon** Timoleon (ΤΙΜΟΛΕΩΝ), as said restorer of democracy in Syracuse.

Page 117 **Carthage** Kart Hadasht, the great Punic trading city of the Western Mediterranean. Still had ties to Tyre, so they might be amenable to an anti-Alexander alliance.

Page 118 **the fortress of Ortygia** The tyrannos Dionysius I (Dionusos; ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΣ), father of Dionysus II, had fortified the island of Ortygia as a personal refuge. For more on Ortygia and its uses, see L. Sprague de Camp's *The Arrows of Hercules* (1965), about its time as a weapons research station.

Page 118 **Periander** Periandros (ΠΕΡΙΑΝΔΡΟΣ), a Syracusan mob leader. Where is Agathokles (ΑΓΑΘΟΚΛΗΣ), son of a potter? (In our world, Agathokles set up a tyranny in Syracuse in a manner similar to that of Pisistratos, the Athenian tyrant.)

Page 120 **The Carthaginians were driven back, but everyone knew that it was a temporary victory.** Alexander's plans reportedly included building a thousand ships larger than triremes and a road along the African coast. (Diodorus, XVIII, 4, 4-5) Carthage was the next target.

Page 121 **Demonax** Demonax (ΔΗΜΩΝΑΞ) Syracusan leader.

Page 121 **Twice in a hundred years Syracuse had been the death of Athenian pretensions** And both times a Demosthenes was involved, for the Peloponnesian War siege had involved a Demosthenes as an Athenian commander.

Page 122 **A delegation has arrived from Taras and Heraclea. . . The old Italiote league** The Hellenic cities of Magna Graeca, in the southern part of the Italian peninsula, in the Greek manner formed a league to resist their external enemies. Taras (ΤΑΡΑΣ; later Tarentum, later Taranto) dominated it. The city was capable of putting some 20,000 troops into the field but their quality was declining. They hired troops, and already two Greek monarchs had died for them, the first being King Arkhidamos III (ΑΡΧΙΔΑΜΟΣ) of Sparta (Taras was a Spartan colony) who had lost the battle of Mandurion to the Lucani, a Samnite tribe, in 13 imperial (343 B.C., AUC 411).

Page 122 **Alexander of Molossia** Alexandros (ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ) King of Epeiros was also Alexander's brother-in-law, being married to his full sister Kleopatra (ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑ). (Philip was murdered at the wedding.) He was Olympias's brother. He was also the other foreign king who had died on behalf of the Italiote league.

Page 122 **Samnite and Lucanian tribesmen** The Samnites and Lucanians were two Oscan (so called because of their language, a language of the Latin family) tribes in southern Italy. The Samnites were more powerful but were fighting Rome.

Page 122 **driven back the tribesmen, taking control of southern Italy. Taras had revolted** Or apparently withdrawn support, fearing Alexandros's ambitions to emulate his nephew/brother-in-law. They had also feared Arkhidamos. Alexandros was actually killed by the Lucanians.

Page 124 **Hieron** Hieron (ΙΕΡΩΝ) A Royal page.

Page 124 **Taras, Heraclea, Thurii, Consentia, and Metapontium** But Taras would be the dominating city.

Page 124 **Mentor** Mentor (ΜΕΝΤΩΡ) An Epeirote noble, mercenary in Consentian service. Not to be

confused with the Mentor who was a mercenary in Darius's service.

Page 125 **Hippodamus** Hippodamos (ἸΠΠΟΔΑΜΟΣ) The Tarentine emissary.

Page 127 **If I give you enough men to beat the Samnites** Alexander had had to split the army to leave Peukestas with a sufficient force, even though the bulk of Peukestas's force was probably Greeks, Asiatic cavalry, and *epigoni* (Persians trained in Macedonian tactics). The Macedonian garrison needed could be overcompensated in numbers, if not in quality, by Greeks. The Italiote league could provide troops but they would be of poor quality. Alexander just could not fight two wars. At least Hephastion or Krateros would not proclaim himself *basileus* and set up an independent empire as long as Alexander was alive.

Interlude: Egyptian Alexandria, Autumn (Dios), 1440 imperial (A.D. 1084, AUC 1837)

This second brief Interlude gives us quite a different picture. It is set in the heart of the Empire, featuring essentially a college bull session among several students. Some matters are surprising to moderns, such as the lack of racial distinctions. Others would be surprising to ancients, such as the lack of sexual distinctions. That is to say, one of the students is African, another is a woman. Another is more startling: they are Christians. Scott shows us here a diverse but hardly despotic Empire.

Page 129 **A.D.** Why not 'EK (ἔτος Κύριου)? ("Year of our Lord")

Page 129 **Theon son of Hermaiscus** Theon Hermaiskou (ΘΕΟΝ) A student.

Page 129 **Ursulina of Tyre** A student.

Page 129 **A Reform-Christian priest** The interesting point is that this makes clear that Christianity exists in this time-line. One can imagine that it would be more like the Orthodox than the Catholic, but apparently without the imperial attitudes inherited from the Byzantines.

It is interesting to speculate about the origin, growth, and triumph of Christianity under the Alexandrine dynasty. Would the reverence paid Alexander be assimilated into Christian belief, the way that the concept of a Roman empire was?

Also, we never see any Jews. Josephus (Flavius Josephus, Yosef bar-Matthias ha-Cohen) recounts in detail in his *Jewish Antiquities* a visit by Alexander to the Temple, where the king paid homage to the High Priest. Since Arrian does not mention this, the episode is often dismissed, but Arrian was writing during the reign of Hadrian, who had put down a Jewish rebellion and would likely make it policy not to encourage the rebels.

Page 129 **James of Kano. . . son of a Hausa resident alien** The Hausa are a people living in the Oil Rivers (palm oil) of the Gulf of Benin. The term for "resident alien" is *metik* (μετικ).

Page 129 **St. Hypatia's college** A Hypatia (ΥΠΑΤΙΑ) of Alexandria-by-Egypt was killed in the fourth century A.D. for being a pagan and winning arguments with Christians.

Page 131 **the two looked at each other, romantic interest for the moment submerged in the greater passions** A reflection of how modern race prejudice was not a factor in the classical era.

Scott now brings her story, and her characters, into collision with one of the other rising civilizations of the Mediterranean. Here, we shall find, her research seems to have slacked off. For example, the list of consuls of Rome at that era is well-established. Roman society changed over the years. She has nevertheless managed to avoid several of the common errors found in historical works, and the story continues well.

The primary source on Roman history of this era, besides Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch (*Moralia*, "On the Fortune of the Romans"), is

Livy Titus Livius Patavinus, *The History of Rome*

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the time and place of its composition, this work is very contentious and favoring of his topic. His book Nine, Chapters 17-19, contains an essay on the good fortune Alexander had in never fighting the Romans, the first Alternate History ever. Livy extols the multitude of great commanders, trained in warfare from their earliest days, available to the Romans, and the vast multitude of men who would follow them. Whereas Alexander would have had few Macedonians, supported by a rabble. Yes, he was biased.

Chapter 6: Southern Italy, late summer (Gorpiaios), to Campania, late

autumn (Apellaios), 30 imperial (326 B.C., AUC 427)

Alexander has now been called into the affairs of Magna Graikia, the Hellenic cities in the south of the Italian peninsula. Also, the affairs of the barbarians to their north; which, he finds, are better organized than one would expect from "barbarians". The initial campaign involves doing what his uncle Alexandros of Epeiros tried to do and failed, subdue the Samnites. But doing so attracts the interest of the rising power to the north of them. *The Arrows of Hercules* by L. Sprague de Camp and *Over the Wine-Dark Sea* (2001) by "H. N. Turtletaub" give views into this era, and Scott has done as well in portraying the clash of cultures.

The Romans prove resilient and resourceful. The full force of the Macedonian army is exerted on a detachment of mainly allied troops, and not surprisingly, they win. This is by no means the only Roman force, and while Alexander has won now, there is no indication that this will continue — particularly in the opinion of the Romans. Moreover, Alexander has been wounded in the battle . . .

Page 134 **The tribesmen had learned long ago that they could not stand against well-trained troops in a pitched battle.** The Samnites preferred to stage ambushes in valleys. When they fought they were very tough at the first shock but apparently did not have reserves. In our world, five years later, such tactics led to the shocking humiliation of Rome at the Caudine Forks — and in Roman style, the heavier hit the heavier strike again.

Page 134 **Leaving Craterus in command of main body of the Foot Companions, Alexander divided the lightly armed, fast-moving troops — hypaspists, Agranians, Thracians, and the archers — between himself and Ptolemy . . . Hephastion, with a strong cavalry force** That is, just like in Sogdia where he moved with separate columns.

Page 134 **the last of the treaties with the Samnites** The general tenor of this section is as if the Samnites were as unorganized as the Baktrian tribes. But apparently they did have a central government and were as organized as the Greeks, if not the Romans.

Page 135 **return the city of Neapolis to his**

Samnite allies Rome had recently (18 imperial (338 B.C., AUC 416)) fought and won a war against their Latin allies. Neapolis had allied with the Samnites in the previous year and now Rome was at war with the Samnites.

Page 135 **Marcus Fabius Caeso, the junior of the two newly elected consuls** AUC 428 was the consulship of L. Furius Camillus and Junius Brutus Scaeva (Livy VIII.29). Oops! As we shall see later, using the real people involved would have been of advantage to Scott's plot.

Page 135 **Fabius Caeso was granted the command of the army assembling to stop Alexander's advance** When the consular commands were allocated, Camillus was given command of the army facing the Samnites, but fell ill and appointed as dictator L. Papirius Cursor, whom Livy describes as "by far the most distinguished soldier at the time". Papirius Cursor's deputy, the Master of the Horse, was Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus (grandfather of Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator). They were political rivals and when Fabius Maximus won a battle in Papirius Cursor's absence, against his orders not to fight, much bad blood was shed in the Roman camp, so to speak.

A common error, fortunately absent in this narrative, occurs in describing names. The second name, not the final, is the family name (*nomen*). The first name is the personal name (*praenomen*), and at the time of the story was selected from a short list. The third name was the so-called "clan" name, showing what part of the greater family the bearer came from (*cognomen*). Additional names were called *agnomen*. For example in the name "Marcus Fabius Caeso", "Marcus" is the praenomen, the personal name. "Fabius" is the family name; he is a member of the Fabian family. "Caeso" is his clan name.

Page 135 **The men of the phalanx . . . kept an obtrusive, unofficial watch on . . . the Samnites** When you consider that Alexandros of Epeiros was killed by a Lucanian "ally" this vigilance is not at all surprising.

- Page 136 **The army had barely covered fifty stadia, less than half a normal day's march** According to Engels, the sustainable march rate for the entire army was 130 stadia (15 miles) per day.
- Page 139 **Amyntas** Amuntas (AMYNTAS), a hipparch of the Prodromi.
- Page 142 **Tyrimmias** Turimmias (TYPIMMAΣ), a hipparch of the Prodromi.
- Page 142 **"Two armies," Craterus said.** Two consular armies, one would think. A consular army would consist of two legions each containing 4-5000 infantry and 300 cavalry, and two allied legions (called "alae" (s. ala, "wings")) of similar or perhaps greater strength.
- Page 143 **Their total strength is four legions** During the war against the Latin League Rome had raised ten legions from the Roman citizens alone, but this was a total mobilization. Livy's figure of 250,000 Romans available would seem to be the total available manpower and nowhere near this could be effectively called up. However, we can credit his statement of "four or five armies", taking into account their being understrength. The Samnites seem to have undercounted.
- Page 144 **There are about four thousand men in a legion, if it's two of our brigades** The second-century size of a legion was 4200 infantry. The taxis was, as said above, theoretically 2048.
- Page 144 **The whole army couldn't cover that ground in a single day** Engels cites the record march in Sogdiana of 43-57½ miles per day of a detachment consisting of Companion cavalry, light infantry, and select phalanx. This is what Alexander is doing.
- Page 146 **Alexander, riding at the head of the lead squadron** This would be the Agema.
- Page 148 **the cavalry won't be able to touch us if we just hold our line** At this period, the Romans were in a transition from the hoplite model to one more like the armies of Scipio or Marius. The men of the front line, the *hastati*, and those of the second line, the *principes*, would carry the heavy throwing spear, the *pilum*. The men of the third line, the *triarii*, still carried the long hoplite-type spear. Cassius Nasidienis might be better off putting the *triarii* in the front line and presenting the Macedonians with a spear-line.
- Page 148 **Horatius Regulus** An interesting name. "Horatius" implies a connection with Horatius Cocles, hero of the stand on the bridge against the Etruscans. Regulus is the diminutive of *rex*, "king".
- Page 148 **a stocky, balding veteran of a dozen or more campaigns** Is he the *primus pilus*? (Senior centurion of a legion.)
- Page 149 **Hector son of Demetrius** Hektor (ΕΚΤΩΡ) A Neapolitan leader.
- Page 151 **Alexander's infantry had arrived at last** A detachment of a Latin ala is about to face the Hypaspists. Cassius Nasidienis is in even bigger trouble than he thinks he is.
- Page 155 **I am Hector son of Demetrius, I am of importance in the city** Hektor negotiating with Alexander has its own poignancy. "Paris" was the by-name of the Trojan prince; his actual name was "Alexandros". (To further the irony, Paris took the bribe offered by Aphrodite, the most beautiful woman in the world (Helen) and passed up the bribes offered by Athena, the wisdom to win all his battles, and by Hera, the lordship of all Asia. Alexander refused to see Statira, the wife of Darius and reputedly the most beautiful woman in the world. Of course, he won all his battles and was lord of all Asia — and got the second-most beautiful woman in the world, the Baktrian princess Roxane. He knew his Homer, his copy spent every night under his pillow.)
- Chapter 7:** Neapolis, late autumn (Apellaios), 30 imperial, to Latium, winter (Peritos), 31 imperial (326-325 B.C., AUC 427/428)
- Neapolis has now been liberated, or fallen. Alexander must now prepare to fight the Romans. Scott alternates between the two sides, showing them trying to understand each other. The Romans have to comprehend what they're facing, but are quite willing to show this greasy Greek that he hasn't really fought any enemies worth fighting; the domestic political situation is also a problem. What we have here is the run-up to the battle, one that looks to be as decisive for Rome as the Allia (AUC 364; 390 B.C.), when the Gauls defeated the Roman army and occupied most of the city.
- Alexander, meanwhile, is quite aware that these "barbarians" are a serious enemy and is determined not to give way to overconfidence. However, his injuries are weighing on him, and he is having visions. Not to mention omens from Pasithea, the seeress who has followed the army from Baktria to Italia. The two sides negotiate, but without real result, while the Romans prepare their defenses and the Macedonians prepare to attack.
- Page 163 **Philip, Alexander's Acarnanian doctor** Who had once had demonstrated to him how much his patient trusted him (see note on Page 47).
- Page 164 **Achilles** Akhilleus (ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ); ancestor of the Epeirote royal line, including Olympias. One of Alexander's heroes.
- Page 164 **Zeus Ammon** Zeus Ammon (ΖΕΥΣ ΑΜΜΟΝ)
- Page 171 **They've signed a treaty with Carthage, against Alexander** Carthage and Rome had renewed a treaty of alliance in AUC 407 (10 imperial, 347 B.C.), according to Livy (VII.27)
- Page 172 **His father had been killed by raiding Carthaginians** Cassius Nasidienis's father must have been in Hispania or otherwise be in a position to be seen as infringing on Poeni interests.
- Page 172 **I think our legions are as good as his phalanx any day** And man for man a lot better. In cavalry, though, Fabius Caeso is completely outclassed.
- Page 173 **Fabius . . . withdrew slowly towards Rome** *Cuntactor* (Delayer) indeed!
- Page 173 **The senior consul, Marcus Hirtius Fimbria, objected strenuously to the practice, but Fabius contrived to ignore his protests.** Livy describes the feuding between Papirius Cursor, the dictator, and Fabius Rullianus, his Master of Horse and ostensible subordinate, at a prolonged act of insubordination. Using the real people would not only look better, but even fit.
- Page 175 **three brigades of mercenary infantry** Most likely peltasts (*peltastoi* (πελταστοι) from their smaller and lighter shield, the *pelte*), infantry which fought in a more open formation than the phalanx but closer than archers and light infantry. They certainly used javelins and may also have used longer thrusting spears.
- Page 176 **Python** Python (ΠΙΘΩΝ) A strategos.
- Page 178 **Tauron of Larisa** Tauron (ΤΑΥΡΩΝ), a prodromos.
- Page 179 **Get to the point, penpusher** You would think that it would be Neoptolemos or Hephastion, the particular enemies of Eumenes, who would be saying this. But Eumenes is a Greek among Macedonians.
- Page 180 Now we can figure out Alexander's army. He has the Companion Cavalry (7 ilae @ 210 & Agema @ 300 = 1800), the prodromi (300) six taxis of the phalanx (@2000 each = 14,000), 3 taxis of mercenaries (6000), Paeonian light cavalry (300), archers (1000), and an unspecified amount of light infantry and cavalry which may have included Tarentines (they were the first in the classical era to have shielded cavalry) and Samnites and did include Thessalians (Page 191 [including Leon of Atrax?]). Going by the "twenty-five thousand" of Page 173 these may not be more than about a thousand.
- Fabius Caeso has five legions (Page 165) which means he has 15,000 heavy infantrymen with pilum (*hastati* and *principes*), 3000 heavy infantrymen with thrusting spears (*triarii*), 6000 light infantry with javelins (*velites*), and 1500 cavalry. It's going to be a stiff fight.
- Page 181 **Ariston** Ariston (ΑΡΙΣΤΩΝ). Paionian commander.
- Page 185 **Other kings had avoided battle when they were wounded, but not Alexander** Plutarch lists Alexander's wounds in his "On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander" and it is an impressive listing.
- Chapter 8:** Latium, winter (Peritos), 31 imperial (325 B.C., AUC 428)
- This chapter is devoted to the climatic battle of the campaign. This is no Cynoscephalae (the battle in 197 BC where T. Quinctius Flaminius broke the power of Macedon and defeated King Philip V) or Pydna (where in 168 BC L. Aemilius Paulus finally conquered them); Alexander wins but at a heavy cost, the Romans are not destroyed but they have fought a battle

worse than the Allia. Now, they have to bear the unbearable and sue for peace, lest the City perish. Scott is very good at describing the minutiae of battle, in this, the second set-piece combat of the book.

Page 189 **Aristander, the chief augur** Aristandros (ΑΡΙΣΤΑΝΔΡΟΣ) the seer had been with Alexander throughout the campaign. Arrian cites his taking of the omens before each of Alexander's great battles.

Page 190 **The Romans had worked like slaves throughout the night, and had come very close to finishing their defenses.** The massive field fortifications described by Julius Caesar at Alesia are of a more advanced era. However, the Macedonians can look forward to lilies, caltrops, and other pieces of rough work.

Page 190 **two legions were made up of troops from the smaller Latin cities** It seems a failing not to be aware of the war of the Latin League and the possibility of turning the allies against Rome.

Page 196 **Balacrus** Balakros (ΒΑΛΑΚΡΟΣ), a deputy taxiarach.

Page 196 **Menidas** Menidas (ΜΕΝΙΔΑΣ) An ilarch of the Companion Cavalry.

Page 197 **All along the phalanx, the Macedonians struggled grimly to gain a foothold along the bank.** Sounds like Granicus and Issus all over again. In both those battles the Macedonians had to cross a river to fight the enemy. At the Granicus the Persians did not post infantry along the river bank, an error they corrected at Issus. Issus was, not surprisingly, far more a contested struggle for the phalanx.

Page 201 **stabbing awkwardly with the too-long lance** Usually in such circumstances they reversed the xyston and stabbed with the other end, which also had a spike.

Page 201 **Theodatus** Θεοδάτος (ΘΕΟΔΑΤΟΣ) A Royal page.

Page 201 **Machatus** Μαχάτος (ΜΑΧΑΤΟΣ) A Companion Cavalryman.

Page 203 **Menestheus** Μενεσθέος (ΜΕΝΕΣΘΕΥΣ) A Companion Cavalry officer. [Also, ironically, the name of the Athenian noble who undermined Theseus; see Mary Renault's *The Bull from the Sea* (1962) for a modern description.]

Page 203 **Pantordanus** Παντόρδανος

(ΠΑΝΤΟΡΔΑΝΟΣ) A Companion Cavalryman.

Page 206 The course of this conversation implies that it is being conducted in Greek, and that the Romans, even Domitius Mela, understand it.

Page 207 **both consuls and their tribunes** The Consular tribunes, as opposed to the legionary tribunes, the six officers commanding each legion, and the civil tribunes, the representatives of the plebians.

Page 209 **I wish to hold one of the two consulships** The parallel seems to be with being Hegemon of the Thessalian League. But Alexander was never Strategos, much less Archon, of Athens, for example.

Page 209 **I would want to seal such an alliance by marriage with a Roman woman of suitable family.** It looks as if Alexander has seen a future. In the late republic, political alliances by marriage were as common as marriage alliances in the Grecianized kingdoms and Macedonia. By the way, what does Alexander have to offer in return? Besides his mother, Olympias, and his son, Philippos Alexandros, there are:

His full sister, Kleopatra, the widow of Alexandros of Epeiros

His half-brother, Arridaios (ΑΡΡΙΔΑΙΟΣ), mentally retarded (according to Diodorus) or timid (according to Curtius Rufus)

His half-sisters Cynna (Κυννα; ΚΥΝΝΑ), the widow of Philip's nephew Amnytas (Αμνύτας; ΑΜΝΥΤΑΣ), and Thessalonike (Θεσσαλονίκη)

Cynna's young daughter Adea (ΑΔΕΑ)

Rome is now in the same position as Athens, though somewhat better off than ancient Babylon, hundred-gated Thebes, and sanctified Jerusalem. An empire with multiple power blocs (for Persia has only gained a new monarch, as the Persians would be quite glad to point out) seems fit for civil war, and only a foreign threat would serve to keep it together. For now, there is a foreign threat, one that will be faced when this campaign is:

(To be continued)

RAPTOR RED

Commentary by Lisa Major

Raptor Red is a novel whose main character is a female dinosaur named Raptor Red. *Raptor Red* was written by famous paleontologist Robert Bakker. He has a tendency to use too much of his vast knowledge of the world of the dinosaurs and the prehistoric trivia slows the book noticeably. I found the information interesting enough not to really mind but this is not a book for people not interested in loads and loads of dinosaur age trivia. For this commentary, I have chosen to comment only on those parts of the book I think actually advance the plot.

Bakker was a consultant on Spielberg's dinosaur film, *Jurassic Park*, which featured a giant raptor, a predatory dinosaur. There was no fossil evidence to back up the huge raptor Spielberg needed but he was going ahead on Bakker's assurance it was possible. And then Bakker got a call from another paleontologist who told him his team had just found a claw of the giant raptor. The new raptor is named *Utahraptor* and *Raptor Red* is the story of a young female *Utahraptor*.

Raptor Red begins with Raptor Red and her mate stalking a herd of brontosaurus-like dinosaurs. She and her mate are monogamous and preparing for chicks. They select a young bull. He is aware of them but does not realize how big and dangerous they are from their scent. The cows are suspicious and bunch to protect their calves. They make their attack and drive their prey out onto soft mud, where he believes he is safe. They make their kill and eat. Afterwards, the male gets pinned underneath their kill. Raptor Red tries frantically to dig him out but in the end has to retreat or be mired herself. Her mate is dead in just a few minutes. She stays by her mate's body a day and a half. It is then that dactyls, the dinosaur version of buzzards, arrive and challenge her for the dead brontosaurus. She kills one and eats part of it, then leaves the scene. Alone, she cannot kill big prey so she scavenges along a river bank. She encounters males of a related species but with yellow snouts instead of red. They try to court her but their display is wrong and it rouses her anger. She charges them. They run and she retreats too.

Survival drives her to start seeking another mate two weeks later. She is too skinny for true *Utahraptor* beauty. She announces her presence and then has to wait.

A male shows up at a sunset but proves to have potentially deadly ticks so Raptor Red chases him away.

After this she encounters her sister and her three chicks. She joins up with them and they

then make a pack. They hunt together and then on a hunt they encounter two *Utahraptor* males. One courts Raptor Red and impresses her very favorably but her sister has far different feelings. The males leave.

After this, Raptor Red's sister is almost killed by an iguanodon herd when she recklessly stands her ground against thirty of them.

. . . Raptor Red had already retreated.

She is the more cautious of the pair, the one who always evaluates and reevaluates the balance of risk and reward. But her sister can be like a whirling dervish, convinced of her indestructibility, lashing her claws, snapping her teeth, attacking when she should withdraw.

Raptor Red distracts the herd just long enough for her sister to escape.

The incident with the iguanodons is followed by a flood, which the pack survives because Raptor Red's sister can swim. They climb up in a high tree and join many other animals. When the flood recedes Raptor Red sees her suitor in the tree and he resumes courting her. He follows the pack until he catches up. Luck is on his side this time. Raptor Red's sister is asleep with a full belly. By the time she wakes, Raptor Red has accepted the young male as her consort.

A big female tries to chase Raptor Red away from the male so she can have him as consort. Raptor Red's sister refuses to help her but the consort is turned off by the challenger's huge size. He joins forces with Raptor Red and the giant female gives up.

The pack then has a time without a kill until the young male teaches them how to kill fighting Gaston bulls. The older chick helps on the kill for the first time. In spite of this, Raptor Red's sister is still antagonistic toward her consort.

We now meet a white dactyl who is friendly with Raptor Red's pack. He guides them to bodies he cannot open himself in exchange for the gleanings when they have finished eating. A drought follows the flood and food gets scarce. The pack begins to break up. They are on the verge of abandoning the chicks and each other.

There is discussion of the male raptor's tendency to kill chicks that aren't his, followed by an attack on a chick by an acro. The sister goes to the defense of the chick and the male joins in her attack. Together they chase off the acro. Raptor Red was gone looking for food and when she returns she finds harmony

between her sister and her mate.

One of the chicks dies of an infection and Raptor Red and her sister grieve. The consort tries to find something to ease Raptor Red's grief.



The pack wanders along the beach where Raptor Red is attacked by a huge sea predator, a kronosaur. She manages to jump out of its reach to safety.

The pack is again close to breaking up, to the extent that they ignore the white dactyl's warning that they are being stalked by bigger acro dinosaurs. The female acro has chicks and Raptor Red's pack is a threat to these chicks.

The little raptor chick gets on the male's nerves and he puts it in his mouth. The sister attacks the male and he lets go of the chick. All the pack except Raptor Red end up in the surf and a kronosaur comes toward them. The acros come out of hiding and start their attack. The sister ignores them and keeps charging her brother-in-law. Raptor Red runs into the surf, distracting the kronosaur away from the chick and getting the female acro to chase her. Just as the acro is about to finish her off, the kronosaur attacks the astro and carries her off. The male acro loses heart and leaves. Raptor Red has won this battle but her consort is through with Raptor Red's sister. He heads off away from the pack.

The pack later heads north to get away from the acros. They move into snow country and must find shelter. They find a cave and Raptor Red's sister kills the segnosaur in it but suffers a deep slash to her waist.

"Raptor Red is aware that her sister walks with a limp. The wound has scabbed over but Raptor Red can see that it still causes pain. Her sister refuses to stay in the cave to let the wound heal and insists on going on every hunt.

"Raptor Red worries about her sibling. She hasn't seen her injured before, and it changes

her attitude toward her own responsibility in life." Raptor Red helps by doing more of the necessities of caring for the chicks. The older chick is in the raptor version of adolescence.

Raptor Red's consort stays close to her pack but not in actual physical contact with Raptor Red.

The pack encounter a new kind of brontosaur. Raptor Red is uncertain and cautious about attacking this new dinosaur, especially when she sees how little she and her sister bother this new dinosaur. It proves that this dinosaur's tail makes a very dangerous whip. She and her sister began retreating and then realize that the older chick is trapped by the whip-tail. Raptor Red goes to help and is knocked down which dislocates her knee, crippling her. Her sister and the chick draw the whip-tail away. Raptor Red gets the joint back in her place but her sister is struck several times by the deadly tail. It is now Raptor Red's turn to help the chick draw the whip-tail away from her sister. The chick does admirably well in this crisis. Finally the whip-tail gives up and finds something else to do. She finds her sister unable even to raise her head because of her very serious injuries.

"The older chick stands still, in emotional shock. She's always assumed that her mother would be there to protect the chicks. Life without her was-is-unthinkable."

Raptor Red manages to get her sister into shelter but her condition worsens. Raptor Red's injured knee is still too stiff for her to hunt alone but the older chick again rises to the occasion and initiates a hunt. They find a dead segnosaur and more ominously sign of a deinonych pack, a smaller predator they could normally ignore but which now presents a decided danger. The deinonychys spot them and realize Raptor Red is crippled. They close in but the chick scares them back for a bit. One gets in Raptor Red's reach and she knocks him into a tree. The deinonychys retreat and the two Utahaptors go back to their temporary nest. Raptor Red's sister is dead.

"It takes several hours for Raptor Red to accept the reality of her sister's death." The two chicks go to the cave but she stays out in the cold. She leans against her sister's body for a few more minutes of warmth but is too far gone to really care. The deinonychys return but she is experiencing near-death hallucinations. She tries to move but her body fails her. The deinonychys quarrel about the dead segnosaur. One attacks her sister's body. At this Raptor Red manages to pull herself halfway up. The

deinonych backs up at sight of this. The deinonychys retreat to a safe distance. She manages the loudest roar she has ever had. The deinonychys know she is crippled and settle down to wait for her death. She roars again but not as loud this time. Her roar echoes from a cliff and then there is a second echo back the other way.

"Raptor Red's eyelids open very wide and she aims both her ears toward the new sound. She cries again, a strange combination of threat and greeting. Her call is answered immediately by a Utahaptor voice from upslope on the edge of the plateau." It is the Utahaptor cavalry in the form of her consort. He charges into the deinonych pack and together they deal with those deinonychys not smart enough to run. When they are gone, she collapses.

Her mate and the oldest chick tend her and hunt meat for the pack while she is recovering. Her sister's death frees her to give undivided loyalty to her consort.

Before long the older chick is mature enough to have her own consort and the story of Raptor Red ends with a family visit of the two packs and the growing chicks that Raptor Red and her niece have.

IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE

Review by Joseph T Major of Philip Roth's
THE PLOT AGAINST AMERICA: A Novel
(Houghton Mifflin; 2004;
ISBN 0-218-50928-3; \$26.00)

Sinclair Lewis no doubt had to be grateful, in a literary sort of way of course, at the volley of shots, some of which may even have been fired by the alleged assassin, that felled Senator Huey P. Long (D-La). That way he could have his candidate, Berzelius Windrip, operate without having to remove his real-life model, the way he had to remove the talk radio preacher Father Charles Coughlin, after creating a copy, whose part in *It Can't Happen Here* (1935) was, in the mode of the original, to mobilize public support behind the candidate. (Then he was removed — more successfully if less violently than how Dr. Fu Manchu tried to remove the copy of Coughlin in *President Fu Manchu* (1936). If he'd cared at all about Nanking, he should have used those cruise missiles ("aerial torpedoes") on the Japanese.)

But that was then and this is now. They are all dead, so can't sue. And this is alternate history, not fictional speculation.

Philip Roth seems to have it in for Jews, which is interesting given that he is one. Imagine, if you will, a novel posing as serious historical recreation which uniformly presents Englishmen as being as inept as Monty Python

and as whiny as Blackadder. This is what Roth does — and he doesn't spare himself, since the narrator of this work is a whiny inept boy named Philip Roth.

It was never quite clear how in Lewis's timeline the Democratic National Convention of 1936, which in our time-line renominated President Roosevelt by acclamation, was so divided as to have Senator Berzelius Windrip defeat the President and two other candidates, one of whom was his own Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins. And similarly, some commentators have wondered how a deadlocked Republican convention of 1940, which in our timeline had, after a carefully planned public-interest campaign, nominated Wendell Wilkie, could have the candidate appear and be handed the nomination by acclamation. Well, like in Russell Baker's *Our Next President* (1968), the nomination was put through by party insiders.

But in an eerily modern resonance, Candidate Lindbergh sets the tone of the race with one simple brief speech:

"My intention in running for the presidency . . . is to preserve American democracy by preventing America from taking part in another world war. Your choice is simple. It's not between Charles A. Lindbergh and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It's between Lindbergh and war."

— *The Plot Against America*, Page 30

And on the platform of Keeping Us Out of War, Lindbergh sweeps the nation, winning clear and fair with 46 states (all except Maryland and New York) and 56% of the popular vote (Electoral vote totals: Lindbergh (R) 476; Roosevelt (D) 55). He then proceeds to keep America out of war, meeting with Hitler in Iceland and with Prince Konoye in Hawaii to reassure them that America will not meddle in the spheres of interest of other powers. That done, he returns to America.

The Roth family finds itself already dispersed, since one young Roth has spent a summer working on a farm near Danville (Kentucky). Now, they are among the first to be in line for the new Homestead Act, where the whole family will be sent there. It turns out that there is something suspicious about this resettlement of urbanites in the healthy rural land, since all the urbanites in question seem to be of a certain ethnicity . . .

Protests (but not of Lindbergh's rearmament plans) at the crackdown on civil liberties lead to an unusual opposition candidate offering himself: Walter Winchell, famous columnist,

radio commentator (“Hello Mr. and Mrs. America and all the ships at sea!”), and now notorious denouncer of the autocracy of Colonel Lindbergh.

It looks as if he is actually a serious candidate; many opposition figures of various allegiances begin to support him. Then, while speaking here in Louisville, he is killed.

The funeral is marked by the return of FDR to public notice, he having withdrawn to Hyde Park after being shellacked in the election. Indeed, just about the entire Roosevelt Administration shows up, along with such opposition folks as Fiorello LaGuardia, the colorful mayor of New York. A fusion ticket may be in the offing.

In response, President Lindbergh flies out to Louisville, makes a speech at Bowman Field (which, by the way, was within the city limits then, not a “five-mile trek from the city” [Page 306], and for those who like oddities, between Louisville’s Orthodox (Anshei Sfard) and Conservative (Keneseth Israel) synagogues), takes off again . . . and vanishes.

His Vice-President, Barton Wheeler, assumes power and launches a crackdown, only to be stopped dead by a simple declaration by Anne Lindbergh. Congress brings Roosevelt back by the means of a legalistic machination which includes the calling of an interim election. Then the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, the US finds itself at war with its former friends, and the war goes on as scheduled.

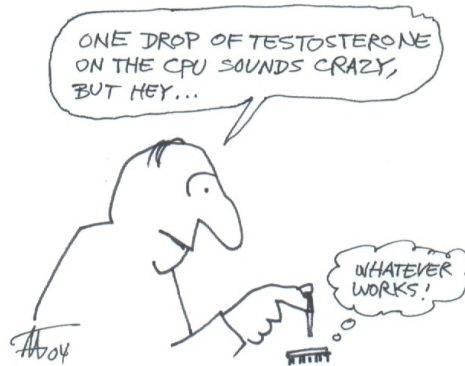
Rumors spread of a far-flung Nazi plan to put Lindbergh in power by, among other things, kidnapping his son, faking the boy’s death, and holding him hostage. Then, after leaving Louisville, Lindbergh flew into the Atlantic, ditched at sea, was picked up by a U-Boat, and met with his boy in the Reich. Or so they say.

Meanwhile, the Roth family has collapsed, with one wounded boy (lost a leg when he enlisted in the Canadian Army and joined the Commandos) and the aunt who married the collaborationist rabbi forming the extremes of a disintegrating relationship.

The presentation of the social milieu of this America is convincing and historical. There was genteel “they aren’t our sort” prejudice there, and Roth has built it up carefully and, as it would be in those terms, slowly. The incident at the hotel in Washington in Chapter Two, when they found out that their reservations had been canceled once it was clear what sort of people the Roths were, for example.

Nevertheless, one finds a certain one-dimensionalness to the debate. Only Walter Winchell, for example, attacking the Administration? One can’t imagine, to take one

example, the Luces looking lightly at Lindbergh’s surrender of China to the Japanese, and they would have plenty of *Time* to make President Lindy’s *Life* very unpleasant. And other commentators would be equally annoyed.



Then, why under these circumstances would Japan attack Pearl Harbor at all? Much less take the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya as Roth has them doing. In our time-line they moved to seize the Southern Resource Area because of the oil embargo, and the events here are about as far opposed to that restriction as they could be. If the renascent President Roosevelt had slapped on such an embargo, moreover, the base would have been better-defended by then. Not to mention the Philippines. Indeed, the Japanese would have been well and truly deterred.

Similarly, Hitler wouldn’t go to Iceland to meet with Lindbergh in 1941. Iceland was occupied by the British. Even getting there would mean dodging British air patrols.

Not to mention that given the changes in the book, it’s highly unlikely that the war would repeat the one in our timeline so well; Roth-character makes comparisons to Guadalcanal and the Battle of the Bulge. Again, why would Japan attack when they were getting the oil they needed? And one would think that any “Battle of the Bulge” would be butterflied away. Roth is just being lazy here.

While the imagery of Candidate Lindbergh repeating his 1927-8 post-Atlantic flight aerial odyssey and flying *The Spirit of St. Louis* from city to city, saying vote for Lindbergh or vote for war, is quite striking and shows the author’s understanding of the sort of image this candidate would project, unfortunately for Roth, by 1940, said airplane was already a museum piece in the Smithsonian. Later on, President Lindbergh flies an airplane called a

Lockheed Interceptor — presumably a version of the P-38 of our time line, which did exist, even if the models available then were not quite as fast as this “Lockheed Interceptor” is. As you know, in our time-line Lindbergh flew a P-38 in the Pacific and even made a kill.

What dragged him out of his shell, anyhow? The flying around the country strategem seemed to be a way to get around Lindbergh’s distrust and dislike of publicity, the press, and the public, which had for some reason become even greater after 1932. But he was too private a man to even go that far, it seems.

And then, how did that too, too Solid South melt? Roth mentions Southern yellow-dog Democrats only in connection with the Maryland vote. The South was heavily pro-Roosevelt and not particularly isolationist. And similarly, what happened to the “Red Decade” bloc? They would support Lindbergh’s isolationism as long as the war was an imperialist war, but when the Nazis attacked the Socialist Motherland?

Presumably little Phil Roth is so sunk in his misery that he doesn’t even notice any restrictions (or worse) on “colored folks”, “mackerel snappers”, or any other historically disfavored groups. Perhaps it’s the Jake Featherston effect; hate one group intensely and there’s no hate left for others.

Moreover, by then, the Ku Klux Klan, which here seems to be a significant support for the government’s policies (along with the “American Nazi Party” — someone’s doing George Lincoln Rockwell just a little too soon), at that time was so disorganized and demoralized that on a national level it was more of a liability than an asset. (As opposed to the local, where it was still capable of the occasional lynching or cross-burning.) The Klan in the South was then not overly fond of them Nazi furriners, either.

And for a final item of Klankraft, would it have been too much of a burden to refer to the Imperial Wizard by his proper title? Roth says “Grand Wizard” [Page 310], which was the title of Nathan Bedford Forrest way back when and of David Duke not so long ago, but not of the then Klan leader Dr. James A. Colescott, whom Roth doesn’t name, either. (Robert Bloch said that there were plenty of stories about mad doctors but not enough about mad dentists, which makes me think he never heard of Dr. Colescott, who was a tooth-drawer when he wasn’t Kluxing.)

It’s all very well to change things when necessary to the plot, or even desirable to the writing. Such things when done erroneously tend to grate. This problem is even more significant for such a work, where there have

been changes from “what everyone knows”. If Lindbergh was persuaded to break out of his shell of personal isolation and run for office, how is this done? And what do others do about this? If, however, the book is about miserable little Phil Roth and his disgusting family, the structure of changed history created here is at best superfluous and at worst obstructive.

Like all too many such works, this is one-dimensional; it doesn’t take into account the bulk of society. The way that law firms on TV only have one case at a time, TV doctors only one patient at a time, and so on, in other words. Literary parsimony is all well and good, but in such cases as this by being so parsimonious it fails to present a plausible background, and weakens the book. Then too, the plots break up towards the end.

The Plot Against America may raise public awareness of Alternate History. Roth has nevertheless used this medium to reiterate his message of disgust with Jewish society; in this family, Alexander Portnoy, he with his obsession with masturbation, would be just one of the folks.. His persuasive, in-depth social history of his sector of society is an exception to a slipshod presentation of history; what follows from a point of departure has to logically follow.

For what it’s worth, Amazon.com is offering *The Plot Against America* in a tandem bargain deal with Max Wallace’s *The American Axis* (reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #6). Misery loves company?

Is it me, or does Roth seem to have it in for Louisville?

THE PROFESSOR’S SECOND KLUSS

Review by Joseph T Major of
**HERE COMES CIVILIZATION:
 The Complete Science Fiction of William
 Tenn, Volume II**
 (NESFA Press; 2004;
 ISBN 1-886778-28-0; \$29.00)
 Sequel to *Immodest Proposals*

Go back and dig out your copy of *Alexiad* V. I #5 (Whole Number Five) and read the review of the first part of this work. Better yet, go get a copy of *Immodest Proposals* and read that.

Philip “William Tenn” Klass was very much in evidence at Boston this Labor Day weekend, and in the fifties he had been very much in evidence in SF in general. Alas, the demands of teaching and age have curbed his output and bridled his wit, and now we will likely never

see much more than this. Enjoy, enjoy while you can, and be prepared for the worst.

Here Comes Civilization “Bernie the Faust”

Once upon a time, Harpo and Chico Marx decided to paradigm-shift an unfortunate security guard at MGM. They started off selling him, daily, a five dollar bill for less than that. Then, one day, they sold him the five for \$5.25 because, you see, money had gone up that day.

Bernie the Faust got started on that scheme, with at first an even bigger profit margin. Then, it turned out there was a dubious subtext to those hot deals, one made worse by Bernie’s very real position. He thought he was the interplanetary con man, but he was wrong. Even then he managed to turn the situation to a psychic gain if not a financial one.

“Betelgeuse Bridge”

The interplanetary con men continue their reign. This time, it’s two incredibly cute snails who offer a good of great value, namely perpetual good health. This requires a buildup, their price being rather high. And it turns out to have a sting, which requires a counter-sting . . . (in George Roy Hill’s use of the word, too).

“Will You Walk a Little Faster”

A moral dilemma, combined with aliens trying to speed up natural selection. Aliens offer common people a destructive weapon for their government. Do we destroy all of humanity or just the good part? (See also *The 27th Day* by John Mantley (1955) and its film adaptation *The 27th Day* (1957) — note that this story was written in 1950, so no Moskowitizisms of derivation are in order here.)

“The House Dutiful”

If your house is not only a home but your watchdog and caretaker, that sounds wonderful. For you, anyhow, but as for others . . . a couple find the house that does everything for them. Why would they want to leave? Well, the house makes sure.

“There Were People on Bikini, There Were People on Attu”

And, in a premonition of *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, aliens evacuate Earth so that they can conduct an experiment. Just like Earthians did on those Pacific islands. (A bit US-centric; nothing like the British nuclear test in Australia where afterwards they let Aborigines enter the area and leave it, counting the difference . . .)

The Somewhat Heavy Fantastic

“She Only Goes Out at Night . . .”

Tenn wanted to do a SF gothic. So he did one about a vampiress who found love (trampling on the vampire legend as writers do)

and wanted to end it all. But since this is an SF gothic, there turns out to be an alternative . . .

“Mistress Sary”

Sarietta was a strange girl. Being an albino for one thing, and having some other abilities that Elric of Melniboné might appreciate. She learned things in the West Indies, you see. As did her classmates, but the teacher now . . .

“The Malted Milk Monster”

This is one of the most terrifying stories I have ever read. Dorothy is a lonely and ignored obese little girl who only wants love and admiration. And she can get them — by stealing other’s souls. It’s all her daydream made real, but what if one of those people conscripted into it tries to make it realer?

“The Human Angle”

Another vampire story, which at first seems to tell of no more than a waste of time and effort. The reporter searching out the human angle on this report of vampires in the hills sure thought so. Was it really a *human* angle, though?

“Everybody Loves Irving Bommer”

Irving Bommer was lonely and ignored; he just wanted to be loved. Oh, by the way, he was the ugliest guy in town. Then, one day, he got what he wished for, and found out that the usual results applied. (I remember reading about what happened to Valentino; is this really that much of a fantasy?)

For the Rent

“A Matter of Frequency”

Wherein we find out that We Are Not Alone — and they don’t like being disturbed. A slight piece with some social satire that deserved more space and effort.

“The Ionian Cycle”

The survivors of a spaceship disaster make an anthropological (xenological?) discovery. What’s surprising is that for a story ground out “For the Rent” (more on this later), Tenn includes some quite interesting social, biological, and environmental speculation and extrapolation.

“Hallock’s Madness”

If I said “Indiana Jones meets Ubbo-Sathla” would you understand? The adventurer Wells W. Hallock finds an obstacle he can’t overcome — within his own mind, an obstacle that others could visit, if they dared. (We can see here precursors of “The Malted Milk Monster”.)

“Ricardo’s Virus”

Which is deadly, and utterly incurable, unless you’ve forgotten basic immunology. (Which we see today, when scrubbed-clean, germicidal-enclosed children are the sickliest.) Another precursor story, to “Venus and the Seven Sexes” but analyzing the human angle (see above) of that planet. Anyone who got the

deadly Ricardo’s Virus would die soon, but Griff Dingle had to catch the poachers before he died. Or sent his friends to join him.

“The Puzzle of Priippiirii”

Priippiiri was a God almost out of worshippers. In fact, he runs out of worshippers during the course of this story; but not before two Terran adventurers make some confusing discoveries about the God of Puzzles, appropriately enough. The universe is full of many practical jokes on those venturesome enough to go out there, some of them with very powerful punch lines.

“Dud”

He thought the war was over and he could go home. However, in the modern legal age, it ain’t over until the fat chief justice sings. For a story written “For the Rent”, there is a profound and varied content of satire on the problems of military life, the horrors of totalitarianism even when powered by a newer and darker science (Tenn refuted the Draka series before its author was even born, evidently), and the problems of blip krieg super military technology that may, but often doesn’t, affect the enemy.

“Confusion Cargo”

In a way, this is a dud, since the narrator’s Big Surprise is a “tomato surprise”, at the time and even more later. But the war-weariness of the crew of the *Reward* was complicated by their discharge plans — not to mention that different sort of discharge, in the ship’s engine room. It reads different now, but it’s about a very real problem.

Afterword: For the Rent

Where the author explains the why and the wherefore. Tenn is ashamed of these stories, and I can see his point. He explains why he is ashamed; having written below what he sees as the best of his ability because he needed the money. He should look around; he has not written porn, romance, processed fantasy product, or works set “in the thrilling universe” of a fellow writer. Compared to those, these stories are brilliant, independent, and wonderful tales, examples of what SF can do. Even without the comparison.

Beating Time

“The Discovery of Morniel Mathaway”

The only thing that Tenn couldn’t predict is how much art would de-art itself. But his time-traveler, wanting to find the ultimate source of information on the great artist, finds a ironic way to ensure his greatness. And the artist, in turn, finds the admiration he wants. Talk about paradoxes!

“Sanctuary”

One can imagine how emotionally distressing the thought of an ambassador from the Future would be. Or relieving, to the man

who is unpopular in the present . . . or, it seems, any other time.

“Me, Myself, and I”

The bit about not being able to get along with yourself, much less anyone else, gets a workout here. Or perhaps a grudge match. Tenn thought it was unpublishable, as he wrote it right before Heinlein’s “By His Bootstraps” came out. What this proves is that there are many things that can be done with the same concept, as one guy keeps on going back to the Cretaceous to resolve this argument he’s having, one would think with “A Sound of Thunder”.

“It Ends With a Flicker”

A time-travel story with alternate time-lines to boot. If the nuclear-test rocket landed one place, people were barren; if it landed the other place, crops were barren. And so each resultant time-line sent its only man who could travel through time, the great-grandson of Giovanni Albeni, to undo the event. The portrait of essentially the same man in two vastly different worlds alone makes the story classic, and the final sequence, now . . . *flick!*

“The Girl With Some Kind of Past. And George.”

The “some kind of past” was George; George Rice the expert lover wonders why this time-traveler in the strange red out fit has hunted him down. Then she tells him why. Lazarus Long was (before he went bonkers) rather concerned about such degrees of relationship. A slight but amusing story.

“Firgleflip”

At first this story seems incoherent, words without referents scattered promiscuously. Think about it. How would a person from EK, er AD 1000 be able to comprehend most of what we do today? And the same for someone from 2949. At which point we come to Tenn’s firgleflipper, who finds himself working through one of the classic paradoxes of time travel . . .

“Errand Boy”

The old joke of sending the new worker out for a biscuit gun, a bucket of prop wash, a left-handed monkey wrench (I’ve heard that someone actually made one of these; it had a left-hand thread on the screw), etc. turns out to have quite a different result here. But this time, the errand boy who was sent out to get a bucket of polka-dotted paint turned out to be rather a different sort of new employee. For one thing, he gets what he’s sent for. For another, and how! (This story comes complete with financial plaint by Klass.)

A Lamp for Medusa

Percy S. Yuss found out that he was the Eternal Champion, so to speak. Whereas he has

to be the Medusa-Slayer in another realm . . . and finds out that he has job security. Here, Tenn takes the Pratt & de Camp theme and develops it in his own fashion.

Essay

“On the Science in Science Fiction”

Tenn argues that while science is nice, it’s not essential, and names several stories that would be unaffected by scientific errors. Some people do read that way; others read quite the opposite.

Of Men and Monsters

Or maybe not. After realizing that he could do something to the same theme as “By His Bootstraps” or “The Complete Enchanter” and not be accused of plagiarism by anyone short of SaM, Tenn realized that if you steal from an old writer, it’s research, and did a version of the *Second Voyage from Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* by L. Gulliver.

Only in this case it’s the whole world; subdued by (impossibly large; see above about “On the Science in Science Fiction”) aliens, where humans have become residents in the walls of their buildings. Eric, member of Mankind (all 128 of them), sets out on his Manhood quest and learns that life is not quite as it seems.

When he finally meets a good girl, Rachel Esthersdaughter, she turns out to have the key to several secrets, some of which even have no relationship to the fact that when the Monster put Eric in the cage with her, she had put her cloak aside and was in, er, her skin.

Eric, it turns out, has the skill the Aaron People need. Which, along with the new sciences developed by Rachel and her associates, not to mention the unwitting assistance of the Monsters in distributing their vermin on their spaceships, utterly fulfills the promise of G-D to Avraham [“Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto them, So shall thy seed be.” Genesis 15:5].

(The problem, one wonders, is that the various clans of humanity here seem just a little too aware of pre-Monster culture. Admittedly the book stands as a counter-argument to the Humanity Triumphant theme promoted by Campbell and presented by Heinlein, and a novel which takes the judgment presented by the King of Brobdingnag (or Brobdingrab) as a literal description is hardly likely to result in a sunny view of people.)

Afterword to the Two Volumes

“William Tenn: The Swiftest Tortoise” by George Zebrowski

A short and glowing overview with a startling revelation: **THERE IS A TENN**

NOVEL OUT THERE! He’s signed a contract, been writing, so we must get him to finish it.

HARRY AND HARRY — Part Two

Review by Joseph T Major of
SCEPTERS

by L. E. Modesitt, Jr.
(Tor; 2004; ISBN 0-765-31042-2; \$26.95)
“The Third Book of the Corean Chronicles”
and

DEATH AND THRAXAS

by Martin Scott
(Baen; 2004; ISBN 0-7434-8850-4; \$7.99)
Contains *Thraxas at the Races* (1999) and
Thraxas and the Elvish Isles (2000)

Alucius the simple (**Right!!!**) herdsman of the Iron Valleys, would no doubt be extremely grateful he did not have to investigate the murders perpetrated within the corrupt city of Turai and within the gentle Elvish Isles. But not as grateful as Thraxas, who would be extremely grateful that he did not have to struggle with the ifrits over the Scepters; the mundane corruption he could handle, though it would be doubtful if those nine thousand gold pieces the corrupt commander had skimmed off would *all* be devoted to public service. (Quoth Thraxas: “Sure it is! I’m a public servant!”)

It’s not paranoia if they really are out to get you, because if you found their *Scepters* it would be really bad for them. At the end of our last thrilling episode, Alucius rode off into the sunset, the heroic war-winner retiring to his ranch (but he’s a sheep man boo hiss), wife, and baby. You knew that wouldn’t last.

Indeed, the amalgamated nation has all sorts of problems, including a new totalizing religion, a foreign invader, and general unrest. All of which turn out to have the covert backing of some very powerful and intrusive types. These colonizers are very forward-thinking, hoping to upset the natives first and then exploit as they arrive. Smallpox-infested blankets are nothing compared to this.

Alucius rises through the command structure of his new country’s army (or armies; for a change the country came to the people instead of vice versa) as he meets these successive challenges. It’s fair to note that he also deals with more mundane corruption (see above about the 9000 gold pieces), envy, and the pangs of fame. Modesitt is aware of the desire to suck up to the hero, and how inconvenient it can be for said target.

In a final conflict, Alucius figures out who is behind all this and takes steps . . . would you really take an infant into such places? Wendra,

his loving (and resourceful) wife is all very well as a frontier wife willing to plug them savages (which, unlike most such portrayals these days, is plausible and historically-based) but taking their little girl into harm’s way? Clarissa MacDougall Kinnison might have a few words on the matter.

Fantasy heroes who just do their job, live through it, and then retire are rare in this business. (Either they don’t live or they don’t retire.) It’s intriguing to imagine Alucius taking a load of nightsilk into Turai, stopping at the Avenging Axe, and having a drink and a meal, while glaring at the portly sot and the almost-naked server, then taking off for home and kin.

Before we can find *Thraxas at the Races*, he has to go through a confrontation with his former commander. He’s a private investigator; the distinguished Senator is suffering from an inventory shrinkage problem with his art. They can come together. Then, the Senator is murdered — and Thraxas is the chief suspect. Add to that a drug ring, a confrontation between the Orcs and the Elves both entering chariots in the races, and the fund-raising problems (and their questionably-ethical solution) of the Association of Gentlewomen and you have a situation that makes the prospect of retiring to his room with a few mugs of beer very appealing to Thraxas, but hardly possible.

Particularly when considering the contrasts of *Thraxas and the Elvish Isles*. Well, it turns out they have beer there after all, so it’s not so much of a contrast. It seems that there is a little religious problem combined with murder among the Elves, not to mention intrigue, drug smuggling, and rehearsing for pageants. Which puts Makri, Thraxas’s grumpy associate, at just a little bit of a problem, for while she is quarter-Elf, she is also quarter-Orc. But being a surviving gladiator makes for interesting times in her teaching the young Elf lady Isuas — assuming it can be differentiated from abuse. It all ties in to the murders and desecrations, of course.

This is the low-keyed sort of fantasy I wish there were more of. Defeating the Evil Overlord gets a little preposterous when public, or publisher’s, demand means that the Hero has to come back for another round, learning that behind the Evil Overlord was an even Evilier Overlord who just hadn’t wanted to get involved last time; Thraxas just deals with mundane problems. As Campbell wished for “the ordinary novel of the SF era”, this is the ordinary story of the fantasy realm. People will still get hooked on drugs, pay off the government, deal with rain and snow, gamble, and all the rest of the ordinary facts of life.

Except with Elves, Orcs, magic cloaks, etc.

EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE ATROCITY ARCHIVES

by Charles Stross
(Golden Gryphon; 2004;
ISBN 1-930846-25-8; \$24.95)

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

— H. P. Lovecraft, “The Call of Cthulhu”

The problem with this book is that it poured concepts and ideas into my mind with all the volume and power of water from a fire hose. From *The Leaky Establishment* to *Colonel Z* to “The Call of Cthulhu” to *Worldwar* to “Magic, Inc.” to *Stargate SG-1* to “Yes Minister” to . . . Stross draws on a staggeringly diverse variety of sources for this work and the result is amazingly good. This is a tale of a government bureau that really and truly does keep secrets from us for our own good. I could only read it a bit at a time, and then I’d put it down and say “wow”. Or “Iä Iä Yog Sothoth!”

I once had the pleasure of meeting Robert Bloch, and he smilingly described his then forthcoming book *Strange Eons* (1979) as being the antidote to the cute and cuddly Cthulhu novels that were being pushed then by Brian Lumley and his sort in such numbers. (I never thought I’d conjoin “cute and cuddly” with Cthulhu, but one despairs at finding a term to encompass Lumley’s far-reaching flight from the piercing cosmic indifference of HPL’s vision.) But now we have Stross.

Bob Howard is an espionage agent in the “Carry On” tradition; his missions involve fumbling, the equipment never quite works properly, his officemates are incompetent, intrusive, or both; James Bond would have retired to Jamaica long ago. His missions, however, involve trying to suppress people’s discoveries of how to invoke Cthulhu monsters. It ain’t just digging up old crumbling copies of

the *Necronomicon* of Abdul Alhazred, either; there are, it seems, rigorous mathematical algorithms for calling up Great Old Ones, so piecing together of dissociated knowledge *does* open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein. (I wonder what his middle initial is?)

Before all our brains deliquesce and run out our ears, such outfits as the Laundry step in. This outfit, founded by Sir Claude "Colonel Z" Dansey, in our world from the Firm, S.I.S., and here sent over to their enemies S.O.E. to fight Cthulhu monsters, in some ways seems to copy that silly and terrifyingly plausible outfit established by Buck Henry and Mel Brooks, though Bob Howard doesn't have to fall out of a telephone booth to get in.

"**The Atrocity Archive**" pits our Civil Servant against insane flatmates, obsessive-compulsive supervisors, and demons who possess bodies and suck all the power from the Sun. Not to mention a very mysterious supervisor with the gnomish and squamous name of "Angleton". Amid all this, Bob has to work on computer networks at the office while being packed off to do black bag jobs, rescue the Woman Who Knows Too Much, and account for having incurred overtime without filling out a request slip. This combines comic tales of bureaucratic harassment with mind-draining scenes of cosmic terror ("Iä Iä Minister"?). And did I mention the Nazis? Not to mention the new flatmate?

Having survived the death of a world, Bob finds himself pitchforked into a crisis at home, where amid "**The Concrete Jungle**" of Buckinghamshire, security cameras turn out to have lethal consequences. And their managers have been taken over but by nothing so ordinarily sinister as George Soros (speaking of Soros and his dirty deeds, where is James Bond when you need him?)

Stross has here combined the mind-shattering terror of Lovecraft's vision with the weary world of human fallibility that Tolkien kept in mind. He can write a lot of things, it seems.

TEMPLE TROUBLE

Review by Joseph T Major of

CURIOUS NOTIONS

by Harry Turtledove

(Tor; 2004; ISBN 0-7853-0694-8; \$23.95)

"Crosstime Traffic, Book 2"

Before the "Temple Trouble" (*Astounding*, April 1951) began, Transtemporal Mining had a pretty good setup. Its pitchblende mines in the place which in yet another time line was called Anatolia were at known sites, thanks to

research on old mines in the First Level Home Time Line. As for cover, there were the holy temples of Yat-Zar, positioned over the mineheads, accessible by Ghaldrion-Hesthor paratemporal field transporter. Perfectly covered. Then things began to go wrong . . .

Paul Gomes, though very young, could probably have a very interesting talk with Ghullam, the High Priest of Yat-Zar, also known as Stranor Sleth. Who would probably envy the Gomeses not having to use phony names, wear damned hot fake beards, and the like. Paul and his father run a little store called Curious Notions that sells . . . well, curious notions like VCRs.

Stranor, or perhaps more likely for our purpose, his boss Verkan Vall, would say, "Ah yes, one of the Fourth Level Europeo-American lines, where their Global Wars resulted in the predominance of the 'Teutonic' society. They should be grateful that their nuclear wars have kept population down." Whereupon Hadron Dalla would sniff something about keeping women down. Lucy Woo, completely assimilated Chinese-American of subjugated America, would no doubt find "Mrs. Vall" far too exotic for her workaday world, and hardly because she was a round-eye. Now this boy Paul at Curious Notions . . .

And so a commonplace tale of life in subordinated America begins, with the drama of being chased by the Reich's occupation authorities: Second Reich, for a change, the Germany of Bismarck and Wilhelm, not Hitler.

Mike Resnick's ruefully respectful critique of Eric Frank Russell was that if he had made *Wasp* a story about a British agent spreading trouble in Germany, he would have become a renowned spy thriller writer. Instead, he made it about a Terran agent spreading trouble in an alien star empire, and was just another of those damned sci-fi hacks. This tale can't be written without the alternate history content; the Imperial German dominance over the US has its own particular context of rule and methodology. The Woos are not "Free Men" (1966; NHOL G.050) striving to liberate the country from the occupier, just ordinary folks trying to get along.

So when Lucy finds out that that cute round-eye boy, on the run after the *Feldgendarmie* closed that shop full of curious notions, has more to him than he looked, it's a very life-changing experience for not just her but the entire family.

This is a book where people actually live in the world. The most interesting scenes are where Lucy, the outsider, sees the Home Time Line with its faults and advantages; a portrayal of an ordinary, everyday world, except that the

"every" includes time-line travel, subflexive fasartas (invented by one Daniel B. Davis, no doubt), and the need to trade to feed the population of a world where nuclear wars have not brought down population the hard way. It's not a happy happy joy joy bright shining Wellsian or Gernsbackian world where all evil has been eradicated by the Wonders of Technology Produced by Ralph 124C41+ or by the Open Conspiracy of John Cabal and Wings Over the World, but a world with commonplace good and evil.

These books can be taken as the "mainstream novel of the culture they describe". One can imagine, in the early days of the Paratime Police, similar stories occurring, and indeed this is an ordinary, workaday novel that just happens to have a lot more content.

There is a lot said here about prosperity, about technology, and about culture. The way it is said, though, is in a human story about accepting differences (or not). One wonders what would have happened if this book and the earlier one, *Gunpowder Empire*, had been shipped in a time machine back to the fifties and laid on Alice Dalgleish's desk. Try putting them on your shelves.

BARKER UP A TREE

Review by Joseph T Major of

LORDS OF TSÁMRA

(Zottola Publishing; 2003;

ISBN 0-9725880-1-9; \$19.95);

PRINCE OF SKULLS

(Zottola Publishing; 2002;

ISBN 0-9725880-0-0; \$19.95); and

A DEATH OF KINGS

(Zottola Publishing; 2003;

ISBN 0-9725880-4-3; \$19.95)

by M. A. R. Barker

<http://www.zotpub.com>

The selection of fantasy at Worldcon wasn't all that great. It seemed as if almost every novel had the theme of "The Evil Overlord is about to carry out his fiendish plan to conquer all the forces of Good. The only ones who can defeat him are a disparate band of adventurers who must be brought together . . ."

Even those I did get were not all that hot. One I got there, for example, was *Kindling* by Mick Farren (Tor, 2004; \$27.95) which had that plot, and while it had some good ideas and scenes, didn't come together.

Established authors who didn't quite stick to that theme were disappointing, too. Jacqueline Carey's *Kushiel's Legacy* books were fascinating, but I am several chapters into her new one, *Banewrecker* (Tor; 2004; \$27.95) and with its seven gods trying to outdo each other

there isn't any focus or anything to get interested in. When Philip José Farmer had gods, more or less, in his World of Tiers series he had the sense to start out with one who thought he was an ordinary human and gradually found out he was more, keeping his humanity as he grew into his new role.

The Outstretched Shadow by James Mallory and Mercedes Lackey [you know how these things work; the junior writer does the hard stuff, the Name writer gives it a lick & a promise and cops most of the check] (Tor; 2003; \$27.95) was pretty good, particularly in the description of the society and the resolution or path thereto of the protagonist's various struggles. Its sequel, *To Light a Candle* (Tor; 2004; \$27.95) [is there a pattern here?], while developing its story not too badly, is getting too mired in subplots and trivia.

Back in the seventies, when role-playing games were fresh and new and one didn't have to consult three books before the first blow in a fight (admittedly nowadays most players get annoyed when bandwidth is clogged), there was a different game brought out by the originators, Gary Gygax's TSR. Unlike the denatured Celtic-Teutonic mythos that undergirded most fantasies and most role-playing campaigns, this game, *Empire of the Petal Throne*, drew on a different set of myths and histories.

Then the guy who devised the game and ran the campaign wrote a couple of books set there, as he'd meant to for some thirty or forty years. Now a few manuscripts from such sources occasionally filter through editorial sensibilities. *Quag Keep* by André Norton (1979) had the imprimatur of a Big Name (one, and this blasphemy may horrify many, who had never been all that good to begin with). Kevin J. Anderson, before he worked new horrors on Dune, and managed to get upstaged by Mark Twain, produced a trilogy set on a blatantly game-based world (*Gameplay* (1989), *Gamearth* (1989), and *Game's End* (1990)). And so on. (Gygax did a few works himself, showing that no matter how overblown his self-image as a game designer was, he was a pretty poor writer.)

In 1984, however, no less a reputable figure than Great Ghu himself, Donald A. Wollheim, published *The Man of Gold* by M. A. R. Barker, a novel of the world of the Empire of the Petal Throne. A year later, *Flamesong*, a novel set in a different part of the world, featuring a different person doing different things against different people (that is, a sequel by the old rules, not the new ones), came out.

They gave views into the complex and varied world of Tékumel, its Five Empires and the many lesser states surrounding it, the many

varieties of humans and the other non-human races that shared it with them. The books seethed with intrigue and sensuality. (The fact that women wear little or nothing comes across as a condescension to adolescent passions, save that in hot lands — such as the ones Barker based his culture on — they do so anyhow.)

The world of Tékumel combined “fantasy” tropes — magic — and “science-fiction” tropes — high technology. This was the sort of compromise that is familiar to readers these days. I’m sure there are people who are disappointed to find out that Tolkien did not put ray guns and nanites in Middle-earth, or, for that matter, hot bitchin’ bi kickboxin’ babes. Barker had a justified reason for his combination.

His background is, as I said, different: The culture of Tékumel combines Central American, Hindu, and Muslim features. After all, Barker is a professor (now retired) of Urdu, and the initials stand for “Muhammad ‘Abd-er Rahman”. He is a *second generation* European-ancestry Muslim. God is indeed great.

Moreover, he constructed a complex network of languages, cultures, and technologies to play his game against. Would that half the people who are only writing books would put half the effort into it.

As to these: *Lords of Tsámra* follows from a scene in *The Man of Gold*, where the magically-oriented, secret-society-run land of Livyánu has decided to cover its flank, so to speak, occupying some bandit islands in the sea to its west. However, this incursion is going deadly wrong, and the observers from Tsolyánu, the setting of the two earlier books (including the priest Hársan, protagonist of *The Man of Gold*), now have to get out. Except they are carrying a deadly plague, and Livyánu has been invaded and conquered. .

Prince of Skulls takes Hársan and Trinesh hiKétkolel, the protagonist of *Flamesong*, to more barbarous lands, involving a spoiled ex-hostage princess who finds it like absolutely grody in her old homeland. The conflict there turns up involving an usurper, or several usurpers, along with some dreadfully annoying divine interveners (they please themselves, not you, you twerp). What happens to the title character shouldn’t happen to a Zrné (the local equivalent of a Presa Canario) but he deserves it anyhow.

A Death of Kings has Hársan and Trinesh going east, to the corrupt kingdom of Salarvya, after a few friendly family murders lift the lid that permits a jacquerie to spill out over the whole land. It doesn’t help that one of the principal murderers, or murderesses, has managed to attach herself to the Tsólyani

diplomatic party, all unbeknownst to them . . .

The Man of Gold and *Flamesong* both had the problem that so much had to be explained to the reader, often whether or not it was necessary. Barker had put a lot of work into his background and didn’t want to waste it. This would rather overwhelm some people.

Some of that background is a bit overwhelming in one way or another. All the action with zombies of various degrees that the villainous Prince/Emperor Dhich’uné has, may just turn a few stomachs. Even the “good guys” have their culture shock moments: Hársán’s wife Eyíl, for example, is a priestess who participates in full-blown orgies — not just men and women but other intelligent species, and animals. (There’s no comma there — Hársán also has a wife Tlayésha, who suffers from a dreadful handicap; blue eyes.) Trinesh objects to sacrificing women and children to his god; sacrificing male prisoners, on the contrary, is proper and admirable. These are not the books to give to your pastor as examples of modern fantasy, unless your pastor is extremely broad-minded or your congregation is odd.

Barker is not a masterful writer, but he has his moments. For example, the opening scene in *A Death of Kings*, where Eyíl is playing with a vibrator (I said they had a lot of ancient artifacts) is actually quite funny, if you’re old enough to enjoy the joke.

For all that Barker loves the background he made, the depth of its development means that there is a completely realized world there for the characters to act against. One can travel for a while and find that things are different.

While these books might not be to everyone’s liking, I found them amusing and interesting, and now if only Zottola Publishing would reprint *The Man of Gold* and *Flamesong*, or encourage Phil to write some more . . .

THE HEART OF THE ANTARCTIC

Review by Joseph T Major of
**SHACKLETON’S FORGOTTEN
EXPEDITION:**

The Voyage of the Nimrod
by Beau Riffenburgh
(Bloomsbury Publishing; 2004;
ISBN 1-58234-488-4; \$25.95)

**We have shot our bolt
and the tale is 88.23 S. 162 E.**

“That’s all trimmings, Cynthia. You have got to surround your expedition with a scientific halo. It gets you money, and official support, and the

countenance of the learned societies. But the man who goes south into the Antarctic goes with just one reason — to reach the Pole. Why? You can’t give a rational answer to that, Cynthia. No one can. Such men are just driven on by a torment of their souls.”
— *The Turnstile*, A. E. W. Mason, Page 348

He tempted me. He used the “S” word.

Why exactly was it that in 1913, the financially inept son of a petty Anglo-Irish doctor could flirt with noblewomen and be subsidized by the rich and powerful? In the next few years, while his countrymen were falling in No Man’s Land in sheaves and windrows in an effort to move the general’s liquor cabinet six inches closer to Berlin, Sir Ernest Shackleton was fighting in a different sort of warfare. But why did ten thousand people beg to go on a journey where “Safe Return Doubtful”?

Science fiction writers love to tell the story of the humble little private expedition that outdoes the big government sponsored one. Shackleton did his best to make that a reality. His British Antarctic Expedition was raised on a shoestring, put together with whatever he could scrape up from a medley of donors across the country.

Riffenburgh draws not only on *The Heart of the Antarctic*, the “official” history of the expedition by Shackleton (and Sanders), but also the diaries of the others, from Frank Wild, Shackleton’s most loyal follower, to the discontented Dr. Eric Marshall. One of the last survivors of the expedition was Sir Philip Brocklehurst, Bt., though that may have been connected with the fact that when he donated 1000£ to join, his mother had to sign for him — he was only twenty! Yet Shackleton considered him for the Polar Party and only the shortage of ponies and his frostbite put him out.

For a scratch crew slapped together, the Shackleton BAE did some remarkable things. Riffenburgh cites their scientific work, which considering Shackleton was not so much on science turned out to be pretty good. Not to mention the actual exploring. One party climbed Mount Erebus (that was where Sir Philip injured himself). Another went to the South Magnetic Pole; this one was led by the elderly but apparently still vigorous Professor T. W. Edgeworth David, and including Douglas Mawson, who would himself be having a little liver trouble in the area soon. And Shackleton himself set out for the south . . .

The ill fate of the ponies should have been a warning. Some died of eating sand. And their final chance to get to the Pole fell down a

crevasse on the Beardmore Glacier — the pony Socks, which would have become their food for the final spurt.

Riffenburgh describes the last few days on the journey south, when it became clearer and clearer that the Pole was just a few days too far. There, Shackleton made the most humiliating decision: he chose to live.

Even then it was a close-run thing. The return was grueling, sicknesses of various sorts assailed the four men (Shackleton, Wild, Dr. Marshall, and Jameson Boyd Adams), not to mention cold and hunger. Finally, when Marshall collapsed within reach of their base on Ross Island, Shackleton and Wild pressed on. But their ship, the *Nimrod*, had already left.

Well, almost left. They sent a few men when Shackleton signaled, he went back and got Marshall and Adams, returning to “Honour and recognition” even though there was no success.

Riffenburgh follows up on the men, some of whom had very unhappy endings. I wish he had discussed in further detail the untimely ending of South Magnetic Pole explorer Mackay; apparently when Mackay left the other survivors of the *Karluk* he informed Bob Bartlett that HE had served under Shackleton and what did Bartlett know about polar travel anyway? (For the record, Bartlett got almost as close to the North Pole as Shackleton did to the South Pole.)

**I thought you would rather have
a live donkey than a dead lion.**

FINDING BIN LADEN

Review by Joseph T Major of

SHADOW WAR:

*The Untold Story of How Bush Is Winning
the War on Terror*
by Richard Minitier

[research by Martin Morse Wooster]

(Regnery Publishing; 2004;
ISBN 0-89526-052-2; \$27.95)

This is not so much a complete work on the history of the Fourth World War, the one against Terrorism, as it is a selection of insights into phases of it. This is an ongoing process, and it is better to completely understand parts of it than it is to try to cover the whole thing. Having read books on the Second World War written by reporters hot off the battlefield, I understand that sometimes it’s better not to rush things.

It should be noted that this is a politically charged issue, and as is customary, opposing views are not so much refuted as distorted; the

views aren't or perhaps even can't be challenged, so their expressors are derided. What Minter has failed to acknowledge is that if he attains any public visibility, he will be drawn as being utterly outwitted by a penguin, who will cleverly shoot down the stupid things he is saying. The problem in discussing the internal conduct of the war on terror is not the commentaries of Chomsky and his ilk, which are organized enough to be refuted. It is the image, created by people such as the cartoonist Tom Tomorrow (drawer of the above-referenced bird), of the administration as a gang of loutish ignoramuses [ignorami?] bent on world domination on behalf of a management company.

Enough of the reaction, on to the action. The first "essay", so to speak, deals with the "Where Is He Now?" issue, and advances the theory that 'Usama bin Laden is in Iran. And why? The Tom Tomorrow cartoon showing 'Usama and Saddam Husayn unconvincingly agreeing to cooperate shows the shallowness of this sort of thought; as Minter says:

Why would Iran, a predominantly Shi'ite Muslim land, work with a predominantly Sunni Muslim terror organization like bin Laden's? The short answer is personal connections, shared goals, and a common enemy . . . Both bin Laden and the mullahs share an Islamist worldview that calls for the armed overthrow of Arab dictatorships and the restoration of a single caliph who will rule according to Shari'a law. While their visions overlap, there are, of course, significant differences about the content of Shari'a and other particulars.

— *Shadow War*, Page 25

Ayn Rand and Whittaker Chambers may not have agreed on much else, but they both said that what people didn't understand about Communism was that it wasn't a vast left-wing conspiracy with Stalin in the Kremlin issuing direct orders to the progressive teachers in the little red schoolhouses in Smalltown, USA; it was an *idea*. People who shared this idea, this vision, worked together even if they had differences on its implementation. That was then, this is now, and even though 'Usama and President Khatami may have their differences about the Rightly Guided Caliph, uniting the House of Islam and subjugating the House of War is something on which they can agree. ("You have terrorists. I have money. We can come together.")

The second chapter deals with the structural failings of the intelligence community. This did

not begin on January 20, 2001, or for that matter on January 20, 1993. Minter discusses the clash of visions between Richard Clarke and Condolezza Rice, and how their different perspectives helped and hindered the conflicts.

In the third chapter, Minter delivers a warning about the perils of intelligence-gathering. The chapter is melodramatically titled "**The 2002 Plot to Kill Bush**" and describes the dramatic and thorough investigation that balked this scheme. Or non-scheme. The problem with soliciting information is that demand creates its own supply, often with poor quality control. The Riga document factories of the nineteen-twenties with their reams of "secret Kremlin documents" describing how Lenine and Trotzky were purging and back-stabbing each other were hardly the beginning or the end of this. There is a price: and Mekki Hamid Mekki, a man who worked hard, didn't bother anyone, and hoped someday to get his immigration status regularized, paid it.

The next two chapters might be characterized as "other new things to worry about." The price of defeating the Taliban/al-Qaeda alliance in Afghanistan is that they have spread out. Minter might have mentioned that they had to be gone after anyhow; imagine someone saying during the War Against Crime of the nineteen-thirties that "Well, if you break up the gangsters in Chicago, they'll just spread out and establish little local gangs all over. What we need to do is to provide aid to the people there so they won't want to join the Mob." One is tempted to quote Al Capp.

Chapter Five is that other worry, the joyous prospect of a jihadi presence at sea, with al-Qaeda ships transporting jihadis and even bombs into ports. This is a complex issue and here Minter may have fallen into the trap he discusses earlier, of conflating speculation, supposition, rumor, and outright fraud. While in such circumstances a more cautionary approach has its merits, Mekki Hamid Mekki just might have some complaints.

This must, moreover, be seen in the context of a more general deterioration of maritime control. See *Dangerous Waters: Modern Piracy and Terror on the High Seas* by John S. Burnett (2002), a discussion of this problem in more detail than is reassuring. The dire predictions of doom here *could* come about. Whether they are only misgivings or actual plans are of a different order of detail.

The final chapter features other misgivings and actual plans. There was no al-Qaeda terrorist assault on the November election, only 'Usama bin Laden's tape of him channeling Howard Dean ("We will attack Ohio, and

Florida, New Mexico, Texas . . . HOOOAH!"). But there was a very real and very deadly attack in Spain before their election.

Minter describes the chaos and confusion in the investigation of the attack. Nevertheless, he says, it was not the crucial element in the change in the Spanish government; rather, it merely highlighted a long campaign of struggle waged by the PSE against the government, using methods that echoed the ones practiced in the United States.

The book ends with several appendices discussing various factors of the situation. One lists a number of contacts between al-Qaeda and Iraq, and explains why. They may have indeed had opinions like in the Tom Tomorrow cartoon (where Saddam denounced 'Usama as a religious loon and 'Usama declared Saddam a vile apostate) but their differences did not hinder cooperation against a common foe.

This is a partial analysis; bound to be incomplete, perhaps erroneous, inadequate. When Minter speaks of meeting with confidential sources there is always the suspicion that said sources are stretching the facts or even spinning them. (Oddly enough, this never works the other way round.)

Actually tracking down sources instead of relying on Internet reports (the modern-day version of the kid in the sixth grade whose classmate told him he knew someone whose brother had really truly seen a kid cut open a golf ball and die) is unpopular among the whitish kawl Netheads. Comforting dreams are really not to be preferred to harsh insights.

THE STRANGER BESIDE ME

Review by Joseph T Major of
**GREEN RIVER, RUNNING RED:
The Real Story of the Green River Killer —
America's Deadliest Serial Murderer**

by Ann Rule

(Free Press; 2004;

ISBN 0-7432-3851-6; \$28.00)

"It's big," Gordon said, as if to brace me. "More than Bundy, more than Henry Lee Lucas, even more than the Green River Killer."

— Doug Moench, *The Forensic Files of Batman*™, Page 303

With the coming of the new century, a blue-ribbon panel composed a list of the Hundred Best Nonfiction Books of the Twentieth Century. There was, understand, a certain amount of trading-off. There was also a degree of representation, of deciding that this category of work or that had to have a book or so on the

list.

Thus, "True Crime" had to be represented. One book chosen was the book that brought the category back to life, after a long period where criminal shockers had lain fallow: Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965). The other one was, or so it seems to me, rather an odd choice: *The Journalist and the Murderer* by Janet Malcolm (1990).

Malcolm's book is a denunciation of Joe McGinniss for telling Dr. Jeffrey MacDonald that his book would bring MacDonald acquitted — and then writing a book that argued MacDonald's guilt, *Fatal Vision* (1980, 1999). Malcolm showed a tendency to write the other way, particularly in *The Crime of Sheila McGough* (2000), about a lawyer who became an accomplice to her con-man client, which Malcolm writes off as an assiduous defense becoming criminalized by an unjust legal system. It is probably just as well that Malcolm did not target Alger Hiss, who noted that he began his relationship with Alger Hiss by boasting that his researches would prove Hiss's innocence, and ended it with Hiss whining "You always thought I was guilty" after Weinstein's researches indicated precisely that (see *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* (1979, 1997)).

The syndrome of being seduced by the cute bad boy is unfortunately all too common, and if it just means that the lawyer, warden's wife, etc. gets killed by her innocent, innocent love object, that's just a personal tragedy. They rarely stop at offing the dumb bitch when she gets in the way, though.

It's all a matter of being In The Club or Out Of The Club. Detective-magazine writer "Andy Stack", better known as Ann Rule, is Out Of The Club. *The Stranger Beside Me* (1980, 2000) is about someone she associated with, but didn't come to like. Detective stories, the ones illustrated with scantily-dressed models being tied up and menaced, don't fulfill. Helping in a suicide-prevention center does. One of Rule's fellow volunteers had real empathy, worked well with others. Then he left.

Somewhat thereafter Ted Bundy became rather well known. And on the basis of this connection, Ann Rule made the jump to books and wrote one about *The Stranger Beside Me*. She went on to write a number of such works, on mostly murderers but some others, including Scott Scurlock, a bank robber very much like Harry Harrison's Stainless Steel Rat except in his ending (*The End of the Dream* (1998)).

Being a full-bore writer, she publicized her books both away and at home, and had a number of quite assiduous fans in the Seattle

area. Wherein lies a tale . . .

While she wrote about all-powerful advisors in Delaware (*And Never Let Her Go* (2000)), mad millionaires in Texas (*With Every Breath You Take* (2002)), deadly doctors in New York (*Last Dance, Last Chance* (2003)), and fantasy-minded femmes in Washington State itself (*Heart Full of Lies* (2003)), Rule stuck to the policy of only writing about cases that had been closed. Therefore, while everyone waited for her to write about Seattle's most notorious criminal, she waited too, waited for him to get caught. Even her old friend Ted had something to say on the matter (*The Riverman: Ted Bundy and I Hunt for the Green River Killer* by Robert Keppel (1995, 2004), where a frustrated cop from the Green River Task Force played Clarice Starling, though Ted never quite came out and said "Can you say I am evil?"), but not Ann.

Meanwhile, the task force, or properly its successors, were closing in on someone. Who, it turned out, used to go to Ann Rule's public speaking engagements, standing to one side, listening attentively . . .

For all that there are those who fall in love with the cute murderer (see Mark Twain's "Edward Mills and George Benton: A Tale", for evidence that this is not just a contemporary habit) there is, in most criminals, a moral hollowness at the core. Some, like Bundy or Scott Scurlock, are interesting because of the means they employed, though these tend to be more wasted effort, good means corrupted by accomplishing bad ends. Gary Ridgway, the attentive Ann Rule fan, is of the other kind; a moral nullity whose only significance is how many people he killed.

There is a certain attraction to playing the villain; the villain can do so much more! And nowadays, he can even get away in the end. I went to see a friend who was watching *The Silence of the Lambs* on television and said, jokingly, "Hannibal Lecter Will Return" in the style of the James Bond movies. He thought I knew something, and though I didn't, sure enough Hannibal Lecter did return.

The fascinating, complex killers of fiction remain that, fictitious. The millionaire who sheds an unwanted ex-wife does not turn to the assassination department of his corporation's security division, which dispatches a Man In Black with an untraceable silenced pistol; Allen Blackthorne of *With Every Breath You Take* hired random thugs who brutally beat his ex-wife to death. The brilliant bank robber is not a cheerful planner with a jolly anarchist streak who never hurts anyone and easily outwits the stupid cops; after being tracked down as the result of a careful, complex investigation, Scott

Scurlock shot to kill, fled amid return gunfire, and ended up killing himself. The doctor who ends lives is not the insightful, warped Hannibal Lecter; Anthony Pignataro of *Last Dance, Last Chance* was a cocky, overbearing fool who ran out of luck. Instead of being a clever crime-scene planner (thanks to her mastery of detective fiction writing) who frames her dead spouse, Liya Northon of *Heart Full of Lies* set up such an improbable story that she was lucky to get off with ten years in prison. Far from being the Man So Important that all the police at all levels are taken off the case and only the lone scorned detective can bring him to justice, Thomas Capano of *And Never Let Her Go* was convicted after a thorough investigation by the police, in spite of all his high level connections, in spite of the lack of a body, in spite of his taking the stand to spin out his detective-novel story ("You see, my one girlfriend shot the other so I had to take the body out to sea and dump it so she wouldn't get in trouble").

And so here. The Green River Killer was not some incredibly cunning master of disguise, or a hot urban player with all the latest brand-named goodies, but a very drab, commonplace fellow (with admittedly, a very expensive mobile home . . .). He wasn't tracked down by one lone scorned detective who overcame all the odds, but by a careful investigation which studied evidence from all sources, scientific to old-fashioned ground-pounding.

In the face of the evidence, Ridgway negotiated a surrender, so to speak; he would enumerate and admit to all his crimes, and in return be immured in a dungeon for the rest of his life. The county would be spared an expensive trial, the relatives of the victims would have cloture, and Gary would not swing. And thus it went, cheating Court TV of a special. But by then, everyone was off chasing Scott Peterson.

If it were only commonplace to forget the victims; contemporary defense strategy is to explain how they deserved killing. In her meticulous recounting of the victims of the Green River Killer, Rule strives to overcome this. Ridgway wasn't down on whores and going to keep on killing them until he was bucked, out of a desire to clean up the streets, or out of some subtle revenge, but because he was too cheap to pay. Some of his victims weren't even whores. Rule puts a name to every face, a face to every body, and reminds the reader that every life is a story.

GOTHAM --- YEAR ZERO

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE FORENSIC FILES OF BATMAN™
by Doug Moench

(iBooks; 2004; ISBN 0-7434-8732-6; \$22.95)

Other superheroes have super powers. Superman is faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, etc. etc. and so can use X-ray vision to see a crime being planned while his super-skin and super-muscles make preventing it easier. But he's an alien. Other super heroes also have non-Earthly origins or even non-planar origins, enhancements by unusual circumstances or superior entities, and the like.

Batman has only his body . . . and his mind. Everyone else can do; he has to think.

So do real-life (whatever that is) investigators. The procedures and methods described in this book are indeed what real-life police and detectives employ to resolve crime.

The spice, as it were, is having these methods used by and for those people who were portrayed *All In Color for a Dime* (1970, 1997; I am not as old as Richard Lupoff and I think I am more alive than Don Thompson, but I too remember when comics went up to 12¢). Watching Commissioner Gordon, his able but constrained staff, and the rest of the old gang use prints, autopsies, and so on at least gives the reader a familiar background upon which to build this new knowledge. (See also Michael Kurland's *How to Solve a Murder: The Forensic Handbook* (1995) and *How to Try a Murder: The Handbook for Armchair Lawyers* (2002) for the more down-to-earth phases of law and order in Gotham.)

Moench has his own views. It might be amusing to round up Mark Hamill and John Douglas (or maybe Jodie Foster) to record the excruciatingly painful scene where the VICAP interviewer tries to make sense of the Joker. Moench finds forensic profiling to be distressingly vague and grossly overpublicized, using the said interview with the Clown Prince of Crime as a case in point. To be fair, all those profilers who led the search for the white guy, loner, some high school, who drove a white van and was the Beltway Sniper were not the police ones, for example.

The Batman of the book is the more recent, darker one, from such works as *Batman: Year One*. In fact, all the cases cited are dated from the first year of Batman's efforts at crime fighting. (Perhaps a little too much coincidence for one year, especially with the rest of the business.) These are a few of the familiar super-villains we know and love along with more mundane murderers and the like.

As I said, "more recent". As when the eternally loyal Alfred recounts his concern that Master Bruce, having cut himself off from the company of law-abiding women, might fall for

an outlaw adventuress. Like, say, this woman in the skin-tight cat suit who steals jewelry. Even when Master Bruce has to clear her of a murder in the course of a theft by studying the scatter of broken glass. (Since this is only Year One, we can't yet know about Huntress, Ms. Helena Kyle, daughter of Selena and er, well Alfred may have been right at that.)

As I said, there are more mundane cases, involving such things as a serial killer who kidnaps and mutilates young women. Batman doesn't need to interview gourmets who eat liver with fava beans and a nice Chianti to solve this crime, but he does have to use the more mundane methods of prints, legwork, and basic fighting. And Ann Rule might appreciate this subtle reference to Ted Bundy:

When a killer selects his prey by physical type — all young white women, for example, all slim and all with long dark hair — the victims can be complete strangers, making their killings simultaneously connected, yet random.

— Doug Moench, *The Forensic Files of Batman™*, Page 36

The super-villain stuff fortunately doesn't get in the way. It does supply an added twist of fun for those of us who remember back when, or want to come from what's going on now, to find out how they actually do it.

Some of Moench's judgments can be differed with. Such as the overblown and emotional comments on guns — of course Batman would like to see an end to guns, he can get shot, and of course his parents actually did. Some of the rest of us aren't as gifted as him. His strictures on forensic profiling, while overblown, are a corrective to the equally overblown wonder-working abilities attributed to it in the current press. As an introductory volume for those wishing to learn about crime detection today, *The Forensic Files of Batman™* is both amusing and informative.

HEALTH ISSUES

by Joe

Monday, November 15, 2004

In the middle of November I went to see Dr. K, my gastroenterological specialist. I was supposed to have seen him back this summer, but I let the appointment slip.

I have been seeing Dr. K for the past few years. He was the one who got me started on Vitamin B12 shots a couple of years ago. I don't want to die like Peary, thank you. When Dr. Cook diagnosed Peary with pernicious

anemia, anemia caused by B12 deficiency, and prescribed eating liver, Peary said, "I would rather die." And he did. He may have been influenced by the Inuit experience that eating dog, bear, etc. livers caused speedy madness and death. However, herbivore livers are not so abundant in Vitamin A, which was what caused the death of, for example, Xavier Mertz.

The Crohn's Disease which I have been diagnosed with and been treated for over the past fourteen years is marked by inflammation of the ileum, the portion of the small intestine where B12 (among other things) is absorbed. Hence if I myself were to take Frederick A. Cook's advice and eat liver, it still wouldn't do any good.

Dr. K made the usual examination; inquiries about any symptoms, auscultation, palpitation, and the usual checks of weight, pulse, blood pressure, and the like. Since I have to see my regular physician, Dr. H, in December, he wanted me to have his lab people make some blood tests.

However, it's time for another bowel X-Ray. Fortunately I have the Friday off, so it won't disrupt my work schedule. They altered our work rules a few years ago. I don't get compensatory time when I work over forty hours a week. I would get overtime, but that's discouraged. Another triumph of modern management principles! So when I used to have comp time available for such medical matters, now I don't.

Friday, November 19

I got to the hospital before eight, signed in, and was led over to the medical imaging lab. There, I waited for an hour; fortunately, I had brought several books to read, and was able to endure my hunger and thirst.

About nine I was called into the radiological room. The technician asked me to lie on the table beneath the X-ray machine. She held up a sheet so I could lower my trousers and keep the zipper, buckle, etc., out of the picture (I still remember the *Sanford and Son* episode where Lamont, the "Son" of the title, prepared to suffer with tuberculosis, only to discover that the good-luck charm he had on him had resembled a spot on his lung when X-rayed . . .), then proceeded to take two preliminary shots.

After which I was ushered out into the hall to drink the barium solution. They have figured out how to make it not taste like chalk.

While waiting for the stuff to work its way down the technicians took two more films. Then, after half an hour, it was time for the doctor and the fluoroscope.

It's rather interesting to see one's innards,

even in black and white. Time before last, the doctor had wondered if I had had surgery; this one didn't, but he did observe that there were a few places that seemed to be rather expanded, and perhaps a CT scan would be in order. (I had a CT scan when I had Bell's Palsy; much to the surprise of some, I'm sure, it revealed that there was something in my head.)

The X-ray technicians were women, the doctor was a man. Just noting.

In December, I have a test to see how fast my stomach empties, along with a visit to Dr. H to see how well the new diabetes medicine is working (I really don't want to start on insulin, I wonder about air embolisms). And then there's the little matter of the prostate . . .

Wednesday, December 1, 2004

Dr. K.'s assistant Ms. M. called to inform me of the results of the bowel examination. The doctor has received and reviewed the films and concluded that there is some stenosis in my colon. (If you use a Greek word you can charge more. Saying "there is a narrowing in your colon" wouldn't sound as KEWL.) This may entail some changes. New medications for one, including some immunosuppressive ones. And steroids. I can look forward to being on a par with Olympic athletes! And of course more diagnostic procedures, including the promised CAT scan and the dreaded colonoscopy. . . [To Be Continued]

THE KENTUCKY FUTURITY

by Lisa

Joe and I went to Lexington this weekend with two things in mind, renewing our family membership in the Saddlebred museum and seeing the Kentucky Futurity, the third leg in harness racing's Triple Crown. Windsong Legacy had won the first two legs and so was bidding to become the first since Speedy Crown in 1972, a longer gap than that in Thoroughbred racing.

We stopped at the Saddlebred museum and made a brief tour of the Hall of Champions. Another local horse lover I know had thought John Henry was dead but we were able to see for ourselves that the reports of his death were indeed greatly exaggerated.

We went on to the Red Mile, the harness track and got there in time to see the third race. We rooted for Cam Fella's daughter Eternal Camnation, who was pacing her last race. Unfortunately she finished second. Another of his descendants, Four Star Shark, was also retired that day.

The Kentucky Futurity was run in two heats,

or stages. If one horse won both heats, that was the end of it. If the heats were won by two different horses, those horses would have a trot-off and that winner would be declared the winner.

There were too many horses to fit behind the moving gate and so Windsong Legacy was in the second tier, which was a very difficult spot. The very good colt Cantab Hall had no such problem. Nevertheless, Windsong Legacy managed to hit the finish line half a length in the clear, in a very impressive performance.

Post position in the second heat was determined by order of finish in the first heat, so on the next round Windsong Legacy had the advantage. Cantab Hall and two other colts, one named Sky Watch, were scratched from the second heat, no reason given. I hope it was not because of serious injury.

The time for the second heat, the eighth race, came. Windsong Legacy hung back a bit and then began gaining ground. By the time they hit the stretch he was in the clear and won going away, in a beautiful performance.

I was surprised at how easy it was to find a good seat and the smallness of the crowd, given how much fun this proved to be and the very low admission.

Next morning I was even more surprised at how little attention the Louisville newspaper paid to his brilliant win. The Lexington paper gave Windsong Legacy more of the attention he deserved.

SORRAIA

by Lisa

When I searched the Net for information about Sorraia horses I found a website, <http://www.sorraia.org>, devoted to this ancient horse.

According to this website the Sorraia are native South Iberian wild horses. They remained almost pure because they lived in inaccessible areas around the Sorraia River of Portugal. In 1920, Dr. Ruy D'Andrade, Iberian scientist and horse expert, found these horses and preserved them.

There are only about 200 Sorraias still left. Most are privately owned and so the breed has an uncertain future. They do not live wild today but most are not given much help in surviving.

All Sorraias descend from only 11 or 12 animals that d'Andrade secured in the 1930s, and inbreeding is therefore extremely high. Unfortunately, inbreeding is often unnecessarily intensified even further.

In DNA comparisons the Sorraia seems to be closely related to the Tarpan, the prehistoric wild horse tamed by the Scythians in 3000 B.C..

Sorraias can be tamed and turned into good mounts and work horses – sometimes they even make outstanding riding horses, but they can maintain their primitiveness, instincts, specific traits and qualities only if a nucleus herd is allowed to live wild in some sort of a preserve. So far, no such preserve has been established.

DNA also seems to indicate that the Sorraia is not a domestic horse, but a wild subspecies. They have a very old genetic type.

Many Lusitano horses show the influence of Sorraia blood, probably from wild Sorraia stallions stealing Lusitano mares, which seems to be a common pattern wherever wild stallions encounter captive mares. Since mtDNA only records maternal descent, such encounters would leave no mark to be found on mtDNA comparisons. Rutherford Montgomery wrote several good books based on just such occurrences.

The Sorraia is no longer purely Sorraia. Some turn up with white markings that usually mean domestic blood but could also be caused by extreme inbreeding.

Sorraias make good cross-country horses. Portuguese vaqueiros have ridden them. Some have performed "at the highest level of dressage".

Recently, two mature Sorraia stallions were broke to ride which had been nothing but herd sires before. Within a matter of weeks they were tamed and broke to ride, and within a few months they became reliable youth horses, even though they were not gelded!

Unfortunately, the total Sorraia population is estimated at most around 200 horses. Many more would be needed to keep the Sorraia alive. Inbreeding is a severe problem. A hopeful sign is that some mares sent to Germany have had foals. In the Sorraia's Portugal home, the d'Andrade family are the only private breeders. One of them is doing fairly well but another lost his stallion and has had no foals in two years. Another has lost interest in breeding the Sorraia. A hopeful sign is that two Sorraia stallions have been shipped to breeders in the United States. Lusitano and Andalusian breeders have shown interest in the old Iberian

blood the Sorraias can bring back to their breeds. Some mustangs, known as Sorraia mustangs, appear identical to the Sorraia. Sorraia mustang breeders are also interested in these two stallions.

If anyone out there should be interested in these horses, the address of Sorraia breeder Hardy Oelke can be found at www.sorraia.org.

The Joy of High Tech

by Rodford Edmiston

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

Getting a Date

The first objective methods of measuring the age of objects older than recent history (say, within the past thousand years) often gave results which surprised many archeologists, paleontologists and geologists. So much so that the dates were often rejected, or explained away, often in derisive tones. In the late Nineteenth Century the consensus was that the Earth was young and humanity not much younger. So early estimates made by physicists about the age of the Earth and other bodies in the Solar system were greeted with great skepticism. ("The Sun is nine thousand years old?! Nonsense!") Then the various disciplines started getting actual, hard data, and some human artifacts turned out to be older than the previously accepted age of the Earth, and some rocks were given ages vastly older than even *that!*

Science is an interdisciplinary institution, with many checks and balances. And more and more disciplines were providing strong evidence that time was much deeper than most educated people had previously thought.

One of the criticisms of evolution in the period leading up to the first, objectively obtained data on the actual age of the Earth was that not enough time had passed for it to produce the variety of life seen in the world. Supporters of evolution who stated that the diversity shown in both the currently living animals and plants and that shown in fossils was proof that the Earth was much older than thought were accused — justifiably — of arguing in circles. Hard data that there actually had been enough time vindicated them. But such is the conservatism of the human mind that many scientists insisted the ages being determined were proof that the science behind the dating methods *must* be wrong.

Stratigraphy — identifying layers of soil and/or rock by their characteristics, such as included fossils — can provide relative dates,

using the reasonable assumption that new is deposited on top of old, as long as the layers remain undisturbed. The problem is that many natural processes can overturn soil or strip away some layers so that new layers are deposited directly onto very old ones. Even rocks will flow like thick putty when deep underground. (Something else the conservatives rejected, since that required pressure and time outside their world view.) If layers are tilted, folded or otherwise distorted the stratigraphic sequence will become difficult — or even impossible — to read. Even when the stratigraphic record is clear it only gives relative ages, not absolute ones. Still, once accepted this was the first reliable, reproducible, scientific method for dating fossil beds or layers of human-produced debris with respect to each other.

The Latin names given to various geological periods probably seem quaint and archaic to modern students. Those periods were given names instead of dates because before reliable dating methods their ages could only be assigned relatively, through stratigraphy. That is, distinct bands with typical fossils or types of rocks could be found in many rock formations, and their relative positions — and therefore relative ages — could be determined through diligent study. Cenozoic rocks are on top of Mesozoic rocks which are on top of Paleozoic rocks, but how old are any of them?

The temporal boundaries of these eras — and the multiple sub-eras in each — were marked by such things as significant changes in rock composition, or the types of fossils found. Several different distinct layers were found widely around the world. Some were claimed to represent the Noachian flood, because they contained fossils of sea creatures. (It is now known that most of these are seabed sediments turned to stone and raised by vast, slow, powerful geological processes of which scientists at the time were unaware.) Slowly, scientists began to realize just how much material there actually was in these rocks. In some places fine-grained rocks held thousands of layers of sedimentary material, each layer presumably marking a season, or perhaps an entire year. These layers alone represented long stretches in human terms — many of them recording spans of time longer than what had previously been thought of as the total age of the Earth — and they were in the *middle* of multiple thick layers. People were starting to stretch their minds, at least in respect to the concept of how old things actually were. But this was still only supposition, a matter of relative positioning in the timeline.

Then came radioactivity.

The old alchemists' dream, of changing one

substance into another, turned out not only to be true, but to be happening all the time in nature. Moreover, these changes proceeded in a specific order at a very steady rate. If you could measure that rate, find a piece of, say, undisturbed radium ore, and accurately measure the ratio of decay products radium atoms produce to the remaining amount of radium, you could get the age of the actual piece of ore. Theoretically.

Of course, ore is ore because it isn't the pure substance. So, after getting the decay rate (which was not easy, since some materials have half-lives longer than the current age of the universe; even a tiny error in measuring these rates would cause huge errors in calculated ages) they next had to develop methods for getting the ratios.

In 1905, the British physicist Lord Rutherford made the first specific suggestion to use radioactivity as a tool for measuring geologic time directly. It turns out that there are only a few radioactive materials which are actually useful for dating purposes. And while there is some overlap in the date ranges for which they work, there are also some large gaps. Still, there were a few early successes. In 1907, Professor B. B. Boltwood, a radiochemist at Yale University, published a list of geologic ages based on radioactivity. Although Boltwood's ages have since been revised, they did show correctly that the duration of geologic time would be measured in terms of hundreds of millions to billions of years. The ages were astounding, and could only be obtained for certain, specific layers in the geologic record. However, the dates he obtained put the layers in the same order determined by stratigraphy. Now they were getting somewhere!

More methods of dating through the detection of radioactive isotopes or their decay products were developed. Some turned out to be useful for things besides rocks.

The Potassium/Argon method is good for a range of about 10,000 years BCE (Before Common Era) to over 4,000,000 years BCE. The Rubidium/Strontium method is useful for 25 to 90 million years. The Uranium/lead methodologies are more flexible, due to uranium having both several useable radioactive isotopes with widely differing half-lives, and the fact that there are several decay paths whose byproducts can provide ages for a wide range of periods. U/L can even be used for some limited dating of (once) living things. Calcium-rich items (such as bones or shells) buried in wet ground which contains enough uranium will preferentially absorb uranium from their surroundings while not absorbing the thorium and protactinium daughter products of

uranium, which are not water soluble. Therefore, any daughter products found in the materials are the result of uranium decay, and the amount and type can be used to date the object.

All these methods are for dating the formation of rocks. For living things the most common method of radiological dating uses the decay of Carbon 14. Cosmic rays striking the atmosphere produce a radioactive isotope of carbon, C-14, as a result of the bombardment of nitrogen by neutrons from the cosmic rays. This unstable isotope is incorporated into living things through respiration and consumption of other living things. Once this stops — that is, the organism dies - there is no longer any carbon intake. So by measuring the ratio of C-14 to other carbon isotopes in a dead bit of tissue you can know when it died. For example, if carbon from a sample of wood is found to contain only half as much carbon-14 as that from a living tree, the estimated age of the old wood would be 5,730 years, one half-life of C-14. For many years Carbon-14 analysis was the standard for dating once-living materials. Then astronomers discovered that the cosmic ray flux wasn't constant. Today, the C-14 calendar has been calibrated by other methods and is considered quite reliable, when used within its limitations.

C-14 can be used to acquire dates from a few years in the past to nearly 100,000 years back, but the method is usually restricted to a range of 200 to 40,000 years. Note that the global burning of fossil fuels tends to skew the carbon isotope balance of living things over much of the Earth if they lived in the late Twentieth and early Twenty-First centuries. The carbon in these materials is so old that nearly all the C-14 they originally had is long decayed.

Besides these isotopic methods, there are many other reliable dating methods which do not depend on radioactive decay, some of which depend on knowledge of a culture's artifacts and which can be used for historical and recent prehistoric dating. Specific styles in pottery, jewelry, tomb decoration and so forth can often give a date to within a century or two, and occasionally much closer. One recent example of a situation where dating by style has been used is the tomb cask or ossuary box which is suspected of belonging to James, brother of Jesus. The exact time when the style of decoration used on the box came into use is known to within a few years, and this decoration was only used for a pretty limited time (a century or two). The date when the box was created therefore contains the time when James died.

One very useful dating method is dendrochronology, dating by tree rings. This has actually been used to calibrate Carbon-14 dates. Pretty impressive, when you consider that it was first dismissed as fringe science. However, it depends on calibration for each region where it is used, and that can be *very* time-consuming and effortful. Also, weather patterns repeat through time, so for long-dead wood some other method may be needed to pick which set of reference tree rings it actually matches. Combined with carbon dating to give a general period, tree-ring dating may date the death of the tree a piece of wood came from to a specific year.

In still bodies of water and some other situations the layers of silt formed can be dated, as mentioned above, both by distinguishing between annual layers (much as with tree rings) and by looking for specific materials in the inclusions. (Some types of pollen means Spring, certain types of insects mean Summer, etc.) This method can be used to obtain dates from both lake-bottom mud and fossilized sediments.

Related to this is a group of disciplines which use bits of vegetable matter found with items. Presumably, a dried berry found on a plate with an abandoned meal was put there during the time of year when such berries were on the vine or on the ground. Pollen grains are very distinct, and an expert can distinguish between pollen from different varieties of the same plant. Finding a tomb with a fine dusting of pollen on the floor from plants which only bloom during late Spring probably means the tomb was last open in late Spring.

Another non-isotopic method of dating is paleomagnetism. Some materials pick up the direction of the Earth's magnetic field when they cool after being heated; since this direction changed globally in a known pattern this can sometimes be used to date when something cooled.

Then there is thermoluminescence. Many materials, when heated, will release energy captured when high-energy photons — such as gamma rays — passed through them since they were last heated; heating and measuring the amount of specific types of photons released can give a somewhat reliable date, depending on circumstances. Thermoluminescence can be used on materials such as fired pottery, stones caught in fires and volcanic tephra.

Which of these methods are the most accurate? That depends on the situation. For instance, if we know that a certain log was cut just before use, and can tie it into the local dendrochronology calendar, we might be able to get the exact year a structure was built or a piece of furniture was made. If an undisturbed

site has a bunch of coins with dates which cut off at a certain point, we can be pretty sure they weren't buried (or whatever) much after that, and could not have been buried before the latest year on any of them. However, careful judgement, based on extensive knowledge, must be used with such dating methods. In ancient Egypt (most of which had no forests) wood was important and valuable enough to be reused over and over. A toothpick found in a tomb may have started as a huge log centuries earlier. And many coins remain remained in use for centuries, because until modern times making coins was difficult and there weren't many of them.

Chemical dating methods are generally not accurate except in certain circumstances. The fluoride dating method depends on the fact that buried bones absorb the compound from the soil. The technique can be very useful in certain circumstances. Dating by patina (corrosion or other surface effects) is pretty much a guess. There are too many factors involved in the rate of effect, including not knowing whether as-found conditions are typical of previous conditions. However, differences in patina on the same surface can provide relative dating. The ossuary box mentioned above did turn out to be legitimate; however, the inscription giving the name of the occupant was probably forged, and recently. The patina on the part of the inscription containing the name James had been disturbed. The dealer claimed he did this when cleaning the box, but the difference in patina led to a closer examination, and strong evidence emerged that the original name had been altered.

If Carbon-14 and dendrochronology are applicable, most other dating methods are pretty much just used to confirm the dates they give.

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THE UNCYCLOPEDIA

by Gideon Haigh

(Hyperion Books, 159 pages, 2004,

ISBN 1401301533, \$14.95)

Review by Johnny Carruthers

The cover of *The Uncyclopedia* describes the book as "everything you never knew you wanted to know." It collects lists of various bits of information. I'm still rather uncertain as to the criteria Haigh used for including something in this book. My best guess is that if it was something that he found interesting, it made its way into the book.

Some of the information could be considered useful — a list of the Vice-Presidents of the US. (By the way, who is currently the oldest living former Vice-President? Well, he also happens to be the oldest living former President, Gerald Ford.) Some could be said to be of historical interest, such as a list of Andrew Carnegie's philanthropic enterprises. Others . . . well, let's just call them esoteric, and leave it at that. The names of The Three Investigators, or a list of defunct NFL teams. (According to that last list, Louisville has had two NFL teams; the Brecks and the Colonels.)

There is no organization to the book. A list of the value of pi to 600 decimal places is followed by a list of elephant facts. That is in turn followed by the formulae for converting degrees Celsius to degrees Fahrenheit (and vice versa), a description of the Mercalli Scale, and a list of appellations for Margaret Thatcher. You never know what list lies just around the corner. And that is part of what makes this book such an interesting and fun read. (There is an index at the back of the book, if you feel that you really have to have a shortcut to discover what may or may not be listed in the book.)

At 159 pages, it could be described as a somewhat slender volume. I have this suspicion, however, that this is but the first volume of *The Uncyclopedia*. If this sells well, I have a feeling that we will be seeing subsequent volumes.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SUPERHEROES ON FILM AND TELEVISION

By John Kenneth Muir

(McFarland, 621 pages, \$59.95)

Book Review by Johnny Carruthers

The text on the back cover proclaims, "It's a bird! It's a plane! It's a complete guide to over fifty years of superheroes on screen!" I wouldn't call it *complete*, but it does come pretty close.

Muir's *Encyclopedia* covers both small and large screen superhero productions from 1951 through 2003. Why choose 1951 as the beginning of "the modern age of superheroes?" Well, that was the year that *Superman And The Mole People* was released; the low-budget feature that led to the 1950s TV series *The Adventures Of Superman*.

The first section of the *Encyclopedia* is a brief overview of superheroes, beginning with Superman's first appearance in 1938. Some early superhero productions are mentioned here; mostly serials of the 1940s. This history also traces similar threads that have been shared

by superhero productions, from the campiness personified by the 1960s *Batman* TV series, to the dark and gritty heroes ushered in by the 1989 *Batman* movie, to the rise of woman power begun with *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*.

The heart of the book, though, is the entries for individual productions. These are grouped together by character; for instance, all of the various Superman productions, from *The Adventures Of Superman* to *Lois & Clark*, are grouped together under the heading for "Superman." Movies are given a synopsis, TV series receive an episode guide. The episode guides vary. Some episode guides give a brief plot description and a guest cast list, while others are merely a listing of the episode title and original airdate. Cast and crew lists are given for both movies and TV series.

With a book of this size, it shouldn't be too surprising that some errors escaped the editor's eye. In the cast list for the 1970s series *Shazam!*, John Davey was listed as the first actor to play Captain Marvel, Jackson Bostwick the second. (I remember the series quite well, and it was the other way around.) The *Angel* episode "The House Always Wins" is mistitled "Bloodlust." Those were the only errors that immediately caught my eye, though.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the *Encyclopedia* is not as complete as Muir would have us believe. There are several glaring omissions. There is no mention of *Power Rangers* in any of its incarnations. There is no mention of any of the series that followed in the wake of the phenomenon caused by the success of *Power Rangers*. Nor is there any mention of *Captain Power And The Soldiers Of The Future*, which deserves mention if for no other reason than for the contributions by one J. Michael Straczynski. And the 1975 *Doc Savage* movie is also strangely omitted from the book, even though the 1990s versions of *The Shadow* and *The Phantom* are given entries.

In deciding what characters would and would not be included in the *Encyclopedia*, Muir defines a superhero as "a character of extraordinary capabilities or powers who has a propensity to fight evil in all its forms, whether criminal, terrorist, or demonic." I suppose that is as good a definition as any, but Muir still requires further clarification of his criteria for inclusion. He focused strictly on the human superhero — no anthropomorphic heroes such as Mighty Mouse. Secret agents such as James Bond don't make the cut, nor do sword-and-sorcery heroes such as Kevin Sorbo's Hercules or Xena. (He is never specifically mentioned, but it seems likely that Indiana Jones failed to make the cut for the same line of reasoning.)

There is one more slight fault with the book

that I know had to be caused by the book's deadline. The episode guides for all TV series that were in production during the 2003-2004 season were cut off in the middle of those seasons. The best the reader can hope for is that an updated edition (or even a volume 2) will contain the proper revisions.

With its rather hefty price tag of \$59.95, this edition of *The Encyclopedia Of Superheroes On Film And Television* seems to be aimed at the library market more than the general public. This edition is hardcover; perhaps a trade paperback edition would be more suited for the fan who would like to add this to their reference library.

AMAZING STORIES

Magazine Review by Johnny Carruthers

Amazing Stories is back.

After an absence of some four years, the world's first science fiction magazine is back, rising like a phoenix from the ashes once again. According to the editorial, the first issue of the 21st Century (#603, if you want the specifics) has been over a year in the planning.

WARNING: This new incarnation of *Amazing Stories* will probably irritate some long-time fans. Instead of an amazing painting by Michael Whelan, Don Maitz, or Bob Eggleton, the cover of the relaunch issue features . . . Spider-Man. To be more precise, a still from *Spider-Man 2*. In the relaunch editorial, editor-in-chief Dave Gross* mentioned that good storytelling hasn't changed since the first issue of *Amazing Stories* first hit the newsstands on April 5, 1926. Today's SF fans, however, are more likely to get their SF/Fantasy fix from the screen than from the printed page. The new *Amazing* plans to give its readers both. To use a line from a subscription ad in the issue, the magazine plans on presenting "Amazing Storytellers of page and screen."

Gross admits that there will be some purists who will insist that *Amazing* should be devoted solely to print fiction, and that Paizo Publishing (the publisher of the new *Amazing*) runs the risk of alienating both print and media fans by attempting to combine both in one magazine. But Gross also believes that a majority of *Amazing's* readers enjoy their stories in a variety of media. This new incarnation of the world's first SF magazine is directed toward them. It will be interesting to see if this combined packaging is successful.

The cover feature of *Amazing* #603 is on superhero movies; what can and can't go wrong when a superhero makes the translation from the comics to the movie or TV screen. The

writer's assertion is that superhero movies get it right when the producers focus not on the costume, but on the character wearing the costume. (I tend to agree with this assertion.) A sidebar lists a number of superhero movies in various stages of production (some of which have already been released).

Other features in #603 include an interview with Robert Silverberg, and an article on *The Twilight Zone* radio dramas. The latter takes scripts from the classic TV series, and adapts them as dramatic audio presentations. (The series is syndicated, and is also available on CD.)

Regular departments include a news column; reviews of books, movies, DVDs, and comics; "Time Machine," which this issue looks back at some of the biggest influences in SF during the first half of the 20th Century (including a reproduction of the cover or the first issue of *Amazing*), and a Q&A session, this time with Larry Niven.

There are both long and short reviews in the review column. One nice thing about most of the reviews is that at the end, there is a list of titles (usually three) that use similar themes or characters, or just say, "If you liked the book we just reviewed, try these as well."

Of course, for some people, the most important part of *Amazing Stories* will always be the fiction. In issue #603, the good stuff is short stories by Timothy Zahn, Bruce Sterling, Gene Wolfe, Ray Vukcevich, and Harlan Ellison & Neil Gaiman. Oops, make that Harlan Ellison® & Neil Gaiman. Somewhere along the line, Harlan seems to have become a registered trademark. It doesn't seem to have done anything to change his writing; it's as acerbic and witty as ever.

The letter column in the relaunch issue features well wishes from Robert Silverberg, Jack Williamson, and former *Amazing* editors George Scithers and Joe Ross. All express the hope that this will be the last time that a relaunch is needed for *Amazing Stories*. Silverberg stated that *Amazing* "has outdone any cat I know by going way beyond its ninth life." And Scithers comments that only *Weird Tales* (which he currently edits) has been reinvented as many times.

In one interesting little sidebar, the editors mention that when reviewers began requesting the same books or DVDs for review, they made the reviewers compete by writing haiku praising Gross. Readers of *Amazing's* weblog morphed this into a celebration of the magazine's return by writing haiku using the five-syllable title as one of the lines. I thought I would offer my own take here:

World's first SF mag
Once more, like a phoenix rise:
Amazing Stories.

The new *Amazing Stories* is published monthly. Individual issues are \$5.95, and a subscription (12 issues) is \$34.95. The address is:

Amazing Stories
Subscriptions
Paizo Publishing
3245 146th Place., Suite 110
Bellvue, WA 98007-6481

Subscriptions can also be made online at *Amazing's* website:

<http://www.paizo.com/amazing>.

I probably won't be a regular reader of the new incarnation of *Amazing Stories*. I already have more than enough to read. But I will keep an eye on it, and if there is a story that catches my eye, I will definitely pick up the odd issue every now and then.

* Gross has since left *Amazing*, and Paizo Publishing. Jeff Berkwitz is now *Amazing's* editor-in-chief.

DREAMWATCH

Magazine Review by Johnny Carruthers

I was a little surprised when I saw the first issue of *Dreamwatch* on the newsstands. Why surprised? Because I have seen the magazine on the newsstands for a number of years.

Dreamwatch is a British magazine covering SF and Fantasy movies and TV. Or as editor David Bassom describes it in his editorial, it's a "guide to the world of fantastic entertainment." It's not too dissimilar from *Starlog* – or if you want to go back a little further, *Famous Monsters Of Filmland*. It has been around for quite some time – the last issue I saw was either #122 or #123.

The point is, I have seen it quite regularly, in several establishments here in the Louisville area. I think I first saw it at Louisville's two major comic stores, Comic Book World and The Great Escape. During its all-too-brief stay in Louisville, Hastings carried *Dreamwatch*. So did the very fondly remembered Hawley-Cooke Booksellers; after its acquisition by Borders, it has continued to carry the magazine. I have also seen *Dreamwatch* at Waldenbooks and Barnes & Noble. In other words, anyone who wanted to acquire *Dreamwatch* could easily do so here in Louisville.

For some unknown reason, *Dreamwatch's* publisher, Titan Magazines, has decided to release a US edition, in addition to the UK edition. This is not completely without precedent; Titan publishes licensed magazines for, among other series, *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*, and publishes separate US and UK editions for both. It's just a little surprising that Titan decided to create a separate US edition after selling the original edition here for some 10 years.

I was not a regular reader of the original *Dreamwatch*. I did look through the occasional issue, though, and I am familiar enough that the US edition retains the same basic format as its older sibling – it's just packaged a little differently. The US edition comes in the standard US magazine size – roughly 8-1/2 x 11 inches, as opposed to the slightly larger size that seems to be the standard for British magazines. (I'm not certain of the precise dimensions, but I think that 9 x 12 inches is a pretty close estimate.)

The first issue's cover features Sarah Michelle Gellar, and the cover story is about her new movie *The Grudge*. The main problem with the cover photo is that it doesn't have anything to do with *The Grudge*. For lack of a better term, it's a rather generic photo of Gellar; one that could just as easily appear on a number of any other magazines – from *Rolling Stone* to *Entertainment Weekly* to *Glamour*. Personally, I would rather see a scene from the movie or TV series being featured as the main cover image.

Right before the first issue appeared, ads for the new *Dreamwatch* appeared in some of Titan's other magazines. Those ads showed a cover mockup that featured *Smallville's* Tom Welling, *Tru Calling's* Eliza Dushku, and *Star Trek: Enterprise's* Scott Bakula, all of which were taken from the actors' respective series. To me, the mockup from the ads was a much better cover than what was actually used.

They are getting better, though. *Dreamwatch* #2 hit the stands while I was writing this review. The cover for the second issue features Welling, and it does look like something taken from *Smallville*.

The only other quibble I have with *Dreamwatch* is the size of the type used. The fonts used for the text are quite readable, but most of the text seems to be set in 4- or 6-point type. It would be most preferable to not need an electron microscope to read the magazine. At least some of the major articles seem to be printed in slightly larger type – somewhere around 8-point.

Other features in the first issue include articles on *Tru Calling*, *Lost*, and *Andromeda*;

an interview with *Star Wars* producer Gary Kurtz; and a profile of *X-Files* creator Chris Carter. There are the usual news and review sections that are a staple of most genre media magazines, and a guest column, this time by *Farscape* producer Richard Manning. (I have the feeling that it will be interesting to follow the guest column, as much to see who other guest columnists will be as the topic of his or her column.)

Another *Dreamwatch* department is "Hot Topic" – and no, it has nothing to do with the chain of clothing stores. The topic of discussion in the first issue is test screening of movies. Or, to use the title of this particular essay, "Is the test screening process good for moviemaking?" This essay covers both the pros and cons of the process, and the conclusion reached here is that test screening is best done when a film's director, and *not* the studio executives, have the last word on what goes into the final cut.

Even though this edition of *Dreamwatch* is being published for a US audience, the magazine still has a certain undefinable feel to it that is definitely British. It isn't something that immediately stands out, like whether a word is spelled "color" or "colour." (I should point out that while I haven't noticed any particularly British spellings yet, I also haven't scoured the entire magazine looking for them, either.) I suppose the closest I can come to describing it is to say that it has an attitude or perspective that is undeniably British, but even then, I don't think it might be the right term. Whatever this intangible is, it makes for an interesting contrast to the media magazines published here in the US.

Dreamwatch is published monthly. Individual issues are \$6.95, and a 12-issue subscription is \$39.99. More information can be found on the web at:

<http://www.titanmagazines.com/us/dreamwatch/dream.html>

I never was a regular reader of the original *Dreamwatch*. I think that I will give this new US edition a chance – even if the type is a little on the small side.

CANDY BAR REVIEW

Hershey's Double Chocolate
Review by Johnny Carruthers

I'm not completely certain why Hershey decided to release this as a limited edition. Unlike most of their recent limited editions, the Double Chocolate bar is not a variation on one of their existing products. I'm hoping that consumer response is positive, because I really

like this bar.

The Double Chocolate bar comes in four connected sections. Each section is a milk chocolate shell, which encases a dark chocolate filling. The filling is soft, almost fluid. It's more viscous than Hershey's Syrup, but not as firm as, say, the marshmallow in the S'mores bar. The viscosity is similar to that of the caramel filling in a Caramello bar.

I think I would have preferred a center with a firmer texture. A center that has a fudgier, chewier texture, that would make it more discernable from the milk chocolate outer shell. I would also like the filling to have a more distinctive taste. As it stands, the milk chocolate shell dominates the taste buds. It almost overpowers the flavor of the filling. I think the bar would have a more interesting flavor if the milk chocolate and dark chocolate tastes were on an equal footing.

As is the case with all limited edition bars, I have no idea how long this will be on the shelves. I do hope it has life beyond this one limited release. Hershey hasn't got this one quite right – yet. I would like to see Hershey give the Double Chocolate more of a chance, and give it a few improvements in the process.

CANDY BAR REVIEW

Dark Chocolate Almond Joy
Review by Johnny Carruthers

Not too long ago, I wrote about the limited edition White Chocolate Almond Joy. This was not Hershey's only variation on the Almond Joy theme. Hershey went to the other end of the chocolate spectrum, and released a Dark Chocolate Almond Joy close on the heels of the White Chocolate edition.

When I first saw the Dark Chocolate Almond Joy, my initial reaction was, "Oh. Mounds with nuts." But upon closer inspection of the wrapper, I discovered that there was more to this limited edition than a mere change in the chocolate in the outer covering.

As the name readily suggests, the milk chocolate covering of the original Almond Joy has been switched with a dark chocolate covering. But that is not the only difference. The coconut is chocolate flavored. As best as I can tell, it's a dark chocolate. There is a slight difference from the dark chocolate in which it is covered; slightly sweeter. I attribute this to the coconut itself.

The almonds are probably the one thing that has stayed the same. They are in their customary position, resting on top of the coconut. Of course, there is not much that you can do to change whole almonds.

As is the case with all of these limited

editions, I have no idea how long this candy bar will be on the shelves. Nor do I have any idea as to when it might return once it does leave the shelves. If, indeed, it does return. If I knew that, I would probably be working for Hershey's marketing department, and I probably couldn't tell you if I wanted to.

CANDY BAR REVIEW

Reese's Inside Out
Review by Johnny Carruthers

Hershey has released yet another limited edition variation on the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup. This isn't the first time for the Inside Out cup; I've seen it on two or three other occasions. Unlike some of the other Reese's variations, this is more of a novelty. It seems unlikely that it would sell well on an ongoing basis.

As the name implies, the Inside Out cup switches the two great tastes that taste great together. The milk chocolate is still there, as is the peanut butter. But instead of the peanut butter being encased in a milk chocolate shell, a milk chocolate center is encased in peanut butter.

In terms of taste, this is exactly the same as the original Reese's Cup. The peanut butter in the original Reese's is fairly stiff, so there doesn't seem to be any noticeable difference in terms of texture. The difference here is visual, the sight of the reversal of the components.

This is one limited edition that should probably stay a limited edition. If it were a regular part of Hershey's product line, the visual impact would soon decrease. Having it appear on the shelves on an annual basis would make the difference more striking. But late August/early September is the wrong time of year for the Inside Out cup to be on the shelves. It would be more appropriate if it were to appear on the shelves around April Fools Day.

SCIENCE FICTION HAMS!

As predicted, the number of Ham Radio Operators in SF is growing. At the 2004 Worldcon, Hamfen started. Anyone interested in getting involved in this endeavor, especially at Cons and related events can contact: Bill McIninch at: ka1m0m@arrl.net. Since Hamfen is also interested in gathering and preserving historical material linking ham radio and SF authors, editors and publishers this is particularly important. If you know of any who have been operators, or have literature links to the two areas, please contact Mr. McIninch.

— Bill Breuer

SPACE NEWS

by Bill Breuer

With the passing of Gordon Cooper, I am reminded of two brief stories about him. The first one I call "20/20 Superman Eyesight." During his 1963 orbital flight he reported seeing the wake of a ship on a river in India, smoke coming from houses in the Himalayas, an oil refinery in Australia from over one hundred miles up. He remained adamant about it and later flights confirmed that indeed one could see these things from there.

The second one I call "This Side Up", He was doing a PR visit to an industrial plant where they rolled out an Atlas Rocket that would have his Mercury Capsule set atop it for launch. He took out a pen and drew an arrow on its exterior and wrote "Launch This Way."

You will remember that Bush recommitted the initiative for further Lunar exploration just as the Chinese had proved that they were somewhat spaceworthy. NASA has received the OK from Congress to carry out voyages to Moon (and eventually to Mars).

To that end, and others, NASA has successfully requested \$16.2 billion in funds from Congress. But United States is seeking foreign partners to collaborate with them to save money and avoid wasteful duplication as well as keep tabs on the technology of these other countries.

NASA is concentrating on Moon rather than planning a manned voyage to Mars. NASA has put forward proposals for a series of unmanned missions to moon between 2008 and 2011 to collect data and pick a landing site. Then they are later planning to send robots between 2011 and 2015 that will further help to prepare the selected site for a permanent manned base between 2015 and 2020.

On the foreign efforts: Recently a British spaceship entered lunar orbit for a two-year scientific reconnaissance mission. Remember too, that countries like Japan, China and India have plans to launch lunar orbiters in coming years.

FANZINES

Banana Wings #20 November 2004
Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer, 59
Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7ES
UK
banana@fishlifter.demon.co.uk

Beyond Bree October 2004, November 2004
Nancy Martsch, Post Office Box 55372,

Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5372 USA
beyondbree@yahoo.com

Not available for The Usual; \$12/year, \$15
 in envelope or overseas.

Catchpenny Gazette #5 October 2004
 David Burton, 5227 Emma Drive,
 Indianapolis, IN 46236-2742 USA
catchpenny@mw.net
<http://www.efanzines.com>

eI #16, October 2004
 Earl Kemp, Post Office Box 6642,
 Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 USA
earlkemp@citlink.net
<http://www.efanzines.com>

It Goes On the Shelf #26 November 2004
 Ned Brooks, 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA
 30047-4720 USA
nedbrooks@sprynet.com
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Jomp, Jr. #23 October 2004
 Richard A. Dengrove, 2651 Arlington Drive
 #302, Alexandria, VA 22306-3626 USA
RichD22426@aol.com

The Knarley Knaws #108 October 2004
 Henry & Letha Welch, 1525 16th Avenue,
 Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA
welch@msoe.edu
<http://www.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html>

Lofgeornost #77 November 2004
 Fred Lerner, 81 Worcester Avenue, White
 River Junction, VT 05001-8011 USA
fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu

MT Void V.23 #15 October 8, 2004 — V. 23
 #22 November 26, 2004
 Mark and Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge
 Drive, Matawan, NJ 07747-3839 USA
eleeper@optonline.net
mleeper@optonline.net
<http://www.geocities.com/evelynleeper>

Nth Degree #11
 77 Algrace Boulevard, Stafford, VA 22556-
 8608 USA
<http://www.nthzine.com>

Opuntia # 55.3 October 2004, #55.5 December
 2004
 Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta
 T2P 2E7 CANADA

Pablo Lennis #203 October 2004
 John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, IN
 47904-2950 USA

thiel@dwci.com

Peregrine Nations V. 4 #3 October 2004
 Jan G. Stinson, Post Office Box 248,
 Eastlake, MI 49626-0248 USA
tropicsf@earthlink.net
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Surprising Stories #6 September 2004
 John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, IN
 47904-2950 USA
thiel@dwci.com
<http://www.surprisingstories.dewi.com>

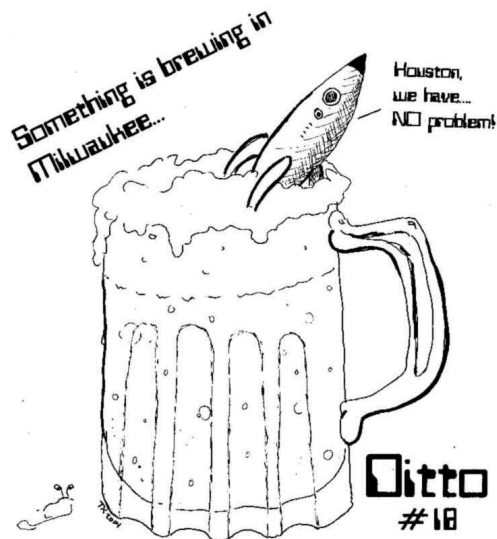
Sansevieria #63 December 2004
 Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta
 T2P 2E7 CANADA

Taboo Opinions # 22, #23, #24
 Richard E. Geis
rerwingeis@cs.com
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Vanamonde # 558-562
 John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado Street, No.
 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

The Year of Living Frantically
 Bruce Gillespie, 5 Howard Street,
 Greensborough, Victoria 3088
 AUSTRALIA
 A one-shot about the pains of moving.

DITTO NEWS



October 2005

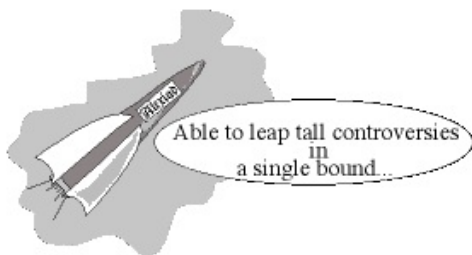
Ditto 18 in Milwaukee, WI

Brew Meisters: Henry and Letha Welch
Brew Crew: Trinlay Khadro, Henry Osier, Greg Rhin, Georgie Schnobrich, Dick Smith, Leah Zeldes-Smith
Bottle Cap Inspectors: Laverne DeFazio and Shirley Feeny
Hardware Consultant: Howard Cunningham
Location: Best Western Airport Milwaukee
Tenative Dates: October 14-16, 2005
Memberships: \$35
Make Checks to: Milwaukee Science Fiction Conventions, Inc. (MSFCI)

For more information contact:
 Henry Welch
 1525 16th Avenue
 Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA
welch@msoe.edu

Nothing's going to turn us back
 now!
 Straight ahead and on the
 track now!
 We're going to make our dream
 come true!
 Doin' it our way . . .

Letters, we get letters



From: **Cuyler "Ned" Brooks** Oct. 9, 2004
4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA 30047-4720 USA
nedbrooks@sprynet.com

Much thanks for the *Alexiad*. Lisa should know that ALL spiders are poisonous. Of course the common garden spider that built a web on the mailbox is not likely to be in the category of the Black Widow or the Brown Recluse — but there is a great variation among people in sensitivity to the venom. Something here builds webs over 4 feet in diameter between the shrubberies, I have to clear them away with a stick to mow the lawn. My nephew found a Brown Recluse in the basement at my mother's house. I will admit to a strong prejudice against the critters, unlikely to be altered by literature — they're all Shelob to me.

The spider in question seems to have died in the cold. Since it ran in terror whenever I approached, I wasn't really worried about being bitten. I knew where it hid and I could keep my hands away. That in itself made it a far less danger than wasps (which except for dirt daubers I find intolerable creatures.)

And if they're all Shelob to you, then your attitude toward them seems to me to have some literary influence.

— LTM

I have yet to see any explanation of what Space Ship One is good for. It cannot reach orbit, and if it could, would have to stay there, as it has no thermal protection for re-entry.

I heard about the beatification of Karl I on the radio, but there was no explanation of the reason for it. Perhaps only the bad emperors make it into the history books. I never heard of the guy, but find it hard to imagine a saintly

emperor!

The Noreascon program book has been franked through the current SFPA mailing — the coated paper probably doubles the weight!

I didn't know Glycer was a Herbangelist, or that the Church was still in business. Haven't heard from or of Elst in years. I was supposed to be something in the Lowerarchy for Virginia. Or am I confusing this with my august position in the True Faith of the Sacred Cat? I know I was in both.

Frank Wu is apparently a very nice fellow, but just how he qualifies as a fan artist at all seems to be a mystery.

He exhibits in art shows at cons, and he did the cover for Challenger #20. Oh, and he has a loc in Catchpenny Gazette #5.

— JTM

A skimpy letter I fear — the faster I go the behinder I get. I walked across a local strip-mall parking lot too fast and tripped on a speed-bump and can hardly walk at all now, pulled a muscle in my left leg. I would never have imagined that a 140-lb man could do such damage just walking!

From: **Trinlay Khadro** October 7, 2004
Post Office Box 240934, Brown Deer, WI 53224-0934 USA
trin63@dias.net

Hopefully, this letter will not be too rambling or disjointed: I'm pooped!

Today I went to see the government doctor as part of the investigatory process of my disability claim. To start with, I'd gone to try the Department of Vocational Rehab a few weeks ago and was quite depressed to hear: "Sorry, can't help you." Apparently planning to work around the sick time needed for the fibromyalgia is too much to request from a potential employer.

I think the interview and exam went pretty well: I did forget to tell the doctor about the DVR finding but I can call him back tomorrow.

We've also had a mailbox spider, I gently relocated her to the flowerbed. I'm not the only person going into the mailbox.

Yeah, #6 flirting with Dr. Deane would be a hoot. We found *The Cell* to be fairly "freaky" but with some really gorgeous and bizarre effects and costumes. "If I looked like J.Lo, I'd dress like that too!"

Yep. The Anasari Competition is very much the feeling of NASCAR: fortunately without the vehicles covered with logos for shaving cream and cigarettes.

It struck me as odd to see the Kaiser nominated for sainthood . . . not something I've seen in this context previously.

Alexander: I'm 5' 3" and I think I'd find a 15-foot spear unmanageable.

Re: Page 75: is that the same Indian King Ashoka who after a lifetime full of warfare became a Buddhist, put up a pillar with historical notes at Bodhgaya in Nepal, and raised the status of Buddhism in India?

Page 84: so in this case "Hetaira" is much like "Geisha"?

Yes to both.

Imperial Earth: Interesting that the cousin Karl is the "fair haired boy" and that some of Duncan's elevated status on Earth is from his very dark skin. Sounds like an interesting family.

Your review has me reminded how much of my life is stored in my palm: I've got alarms to go off to get me to appointments and meetings on time; store info on friends and contacts. ("If I'm ever very ill or worse go through my palm and contact everyone to let them know.")

Vulnerat Omnes, Ultima Necat: lovely obit for a fantastic cat. Made me cry almost as hard as the "dang Rainbow Bridge Poem does". I still feel the presence sometimes of a cat I had, that passed away nearly two decades ago. Cellach was a big grey tom. KT says she sometimes sees him. He'd watch over her when she was a tiny baby, I'm not surprised he'd watch over her now.



Glomming: When I worked at the courier place the jobs got classified as "good", "bad", and "ugly" — relating to complication level, special handling, etc. and how they got charged.

Have you ever heard of "the Great Lukeski"? He does some hilarious fannish music.

My granny's ghost is scandalized/shocked that you READ over dinner. I used to get scolded for bringing a book to the table or snacking while reading.

KT seems to be doing OK in school this

year. (Knock on wood, cross fingers.) Looks like A's and B's across the board. She's even sort of catching up in GYM despite the Rheumatologist telling the school that she doesn't have to. It looks like she may also have fibromyalgia.

As I'm rather tiny, even the Nihongyo "capsule motels" would be doable for me . . . unless, I wanted to host a party. :-)

I still hate buying gas; it's around \$2.15 a gallon here.

Just saw *Evangelion* (T.V. series and the movies). What a crazy mind*@\$K. The majority is "Giant Robots vs. beings from Space" and the end is a bizarre hallucination, and then it gets freaky . . .

Arthur: I DO feel better when I think the president or the boss is smarter than myself. I *do* also think a great many people would be surprised by how well someone with a marginal-low IQ can actually function.

EB & Joe: On the other hand a couple years ago I made it to Oddcon and a 'zine panel (including Steve Silver) and I recall about a dozen people in the audience (including me! and my sister) — it's not the 20-30+ people in the audience for **Women Warriors** at a Wiscon, but a healthy group for the size of the con.

But this was a worldcon with ca. 5000 people. What bothered me most wasn't the size or lack thereof; it was that nobody came up afterwards and asked for an issue.

Colleen: Megumi also has food readily available. I think she wakes me as she's seen me wake in a panic having overslept. She understands "It's Saturday — let me sleep". Megumi-hime is a **good kitty!**

Joe: Are there **real** Inuit in that "Eskimo Pie"? Kems makes a really nice selection of ice cream novelties. I don't know if Kems is just a local brand or national.

As José Jimenez used to say, "Ohh, I hope not." I've never seen Kems around here, for what it's worth.

Robert K.: I'd *love* to go to Worldcon in Nihon, but I could never afford to. *sigh* "Gomen nasai, Watashiwawa baka-gaijin des!"

(I'm sorry I am a crazy/stupid/clueless foreigner.)

I've found the *Stargate* tv show to be a lot of fun over the years: **much** better than the

movie, with excellent character development. I've also enjoyed their early use of "McGuyver" as a verb. "It'll be fine, sir, we've McGuyvered it . . ." (as in: repaired with bubblegum, non-dairy creamer, scotch tape, and a match . . .).

The books about von Lückner sound like fun; I'll have to see if the library has them.

Lowell Thomas, *Count Lückner The Sea Devil* (1927)

Lowell Thomas, *The Sea Devil's Fo'c'sle* (1929)

John Walter, *The Kaiser's Pirates: German Surface Raiders in World War One* (1994)

Much to my surprise, *The Sea Devil's Fo'c'sle* is in print! (Kessinger Publishing; 2004; ISBN 1417915579; \$30.95)

Trinlay also sent the book of her cartoons, *Civil Serpents*. Copies are available from her for \$5.

— JTM

November 2, 2004

It's been a nasty campaign season; I'll be glad it's over.

We had a great Halloween weekend full of fannish life. I'll email more with photos eventually. KT was gorgeous.

Still waiting on my disability claim — these things take forever.

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** October 12, 2004
4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA
22204-1552 USA

Thank you for *Alexiad* 3.5, which didn't inspire much of a letter.

In '68 Dolly and I looked in on the Baycon masquerade, but not for long. The band was **LOUD** and there was smoke halfway down from the ceiling. A pity Jack Chalker didn't get to finish his story — it's worth listening to. (When the last band wouldn't stop playing, Joni Stopa broke the glass and grabbed a fire ax, and promised to apply it to the band's amplifier if they didn't stop. They stopped.)

From: **E. B. Frohvet** October 10, 2004
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott City, MD 21042-5988 USA

So, who gets the place on the ballot opened up by the demise of *Mimosa*? My guess would be *Argentus*. Guy Lillian thinks so too, he said as much in *Zine Dump* #7. I would be glad to

see *Alexiad*, or other worthwhile but not-fannishly-political fanzines, make the ballot; it just doesn't seem likely.

The highest-ranked fanzine not to get on the ballot was SF Revu. It's a webzine.

To anyone who wants it, I offer the following panel topic:

"**Harry Potter: Short-Lived Fad, or Enduring Classic?**"

I know how I'd vote . . .

My cousin and her husband now have three cats. The elderly cat they had seemed to be dying; he couldn't or wouldn't eat, despite special-order, \$24-a-bag, food for elderly cats. He was losing weight and seemed increasingly frail. Lynn wanted to get a kitten. Their elder daughter found a place that had kittens and brought them two. They bought ordinary kitten food from the market. The elderly cat of course immediately started scarfing down the kitten food and has made a remarkable recovery. The vet is reported baffled.

In correspondence with Garth Spencer in Vancouver, we've been discussing that old question, how to get more people into fandom. Websites, obviously; but if one literally does not know that fandom exists, what are the odds of finding it? Specialty SF bookstores are a dying breed — there isn't one in Central Maryland that I know of. Should we perhaps be pitching fandom through the "sci-fi discussion group" at Barnes & Noble, or Borders?

We brought issues of *Alexiad* to the group. Nobody seemed very interested, I'm afraid.

Happy birthday, Lisa.

Thank you.

I also received a "Golden Beanie". I'm not quite sure what I did to deserve it, but as it's the only award I am likely to receive from fandom, I am duly grateful. As for the Hugos, I don't see *Emerald City*; have seen one piece of Frank Wu's art (a recent *Challenger* cover); and in common with everyone but the voters, I disapprove of the King of Shameless. Any further comment seems superfluous.

One supposes the famous Makenzies of the Clarke novel are descended from, or otherwise related to, the character of similar name in *A Fall of Moondust*?

"Building a Better Fanzine": So *Idea* is technically considered an "active" title? . . . "They Gave It a Hugo?": And no one mentioned Langford? Sidewise Awards: Far be it from me to point out that in *The Crossroads of Time*, André Norton stipulated a whole series of alternate words, in one of which World War II was still going on. . . Should I ask why you were so concerned with/impressed over the "sturdy towel racks"?

As opposed to those in the Days Inn Airport in Nashville, which were not so sturdy.

I have no strong feeling about what weekend in October is preferred for 2005 Ditto, except (1) weather/climate should be considered, and (2) someone should check how late that ferry service from Janine Stinson's Michigan side of the lake runs — I would guess, not year round.

Trinlay Khadro says, "Either eat or read, not both together . . ." Actually, I almost always read during dinner, in fact I select favored books for the purpose. Of course I don't have a spouse sitting opposite me . . . I forget the name of the sci-fi version of Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, but there was one.

I suppose I could object to Joe's reading during dinner but then I would have to stop myself.

— LTM

IMDB lists four remakes of *Shichinin no samurai* (The Seven Samurai) including *Dune Warriors* (1980), which seems to be what you are thinking of.

Shichinin no samurai
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0047478/>
Dune Warriors

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099474/>
— JTM

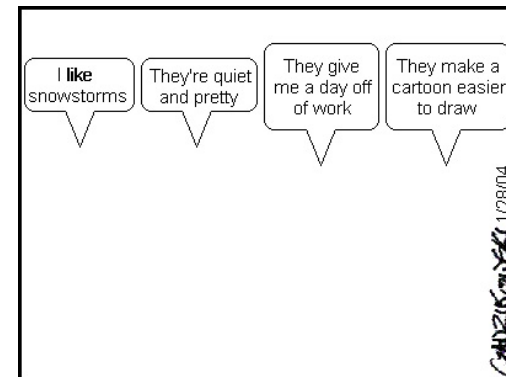
Jan Stinson: "Hey Joe" was an old blues written by Billy Roberts and pre-dated Jimi Hendrix, though he did an interesting cover of it. I think Arthur Lee & Love also did a version of it.

Alex Slate: Thanks for the compliment, even if misguided. Joe Major deserves a Langford Award nomination, I don't. Of course, as long as the King of Shameless is alive, it doesn't really matter.

Colleen Cahill: Good to hear you're expanding your fannish tastes. Now contact Jan Stinson for *Peregrine Nations*.

Robert Kennedy: In my time we used

"roger" as both a noun ("That's a roger") and a verb ("Do you roger that?"). We never used "wilco" that I remember.



AL du Pisani: The Lockheed C-5 "Galaxy" was the largest production aircraft in the world at the time it was introduced. Within a year or two, the Soviets, who couldn't stand to be second at anything, even if it made no difference, built one that was three or four feet longer and had a slightly wider wingspan. The C-5 will be gradually phased out over the next decade in favor of the McDonnell-Douglas C-17. The older, slower, prop-driven Lockheed C-130, which can do all the things jets are not good at, remains in production.

From: **Joy V. Smith** October 16, 2004
8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL 33810-0341 USA
Pagadan@aol.com
<http://journals.aol.com/pagadan/JoysJournal/>

Speaking of intervening in dreams (Reviewer's Notes), *Dreamscape* with Dennis Quaid is a good movie.

Great round-up of Roman history books: All Roads Lead to Rome.

I enjoyed your fascinating review of *Stalin's Secret War: Soviet Counterintelligence Against the Nazis, 1941-1945*. So, there really was a SMERSH, and the Germans were not good at spying.

Agent ARABEL (Juan Pujol Garcia) [in another place I'd said "IVAN" but that was wrong; IVAN was Dusko Popov (TRICYCLE)] reported to the Germans that dockworkers in Glasgow were ordinarily closemouthed but opened up once he'd got a liter or two of red wine into them.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

Thanks for bringing to my attention all those Antarctic exploration stories; and I enjoyed the review of *Mars on Earth: The Adventures of Space Pioneers in the High Arctic* also. Breaking simulation is tempting, of course, . . .

I enjoyed your ConGlomeration 4 report. What was the Best in Show costume from one of Pratchett's works? Interesting that Lisa started a knife collection there. (I have a little media animal collection, btw — Zero from Nightmare before Christmas, the Taco Bell dog, a horse from Mulan (I think) . . .) And that was a long and fun trip to Boston for Noreascon. (I never wanted to visit a horse racing museum before now, though I've always loved harness racing, and I think it's a lot more fun to watch than a regular horse race.) Sorry there weren't more people at the fan panels; there's always lots of competition from other happenings. . . (I still can't understand why there aren't more posts in the AOL Fanzine folder. It's on the Fantasy board, folks!)

Nice trip home too. Thanks for all the background info on Standardbreds and Quarter Horses (I didn't know there was a triple crown of trotting), also Kabardians, which I'd never heard of. It would be a real shame if they became extinct. I wonder if any have been imported into the States. A number of dog breeds have been saved that way, I believe. (I live next door to a Tennessee Walking Horse, btw.)

I had also never heard of Kabardians. There doesn't seem to be a breeder in the United States yet. I tried to find one on the Net but had no success. Getting one to the Horse Park might help but a breeder would have to send the Park a horse all the way from Europe.

The Tennessee Walking Horse is an interesting breed. I intend to do a piece on them eventually but Appaloosas are next on the agenda.

— LTM

I'd like to read Patricia Wrede's *The Grand Tour* (review by Colleen R. Cahill). It sounds like a fun read. I always enjoy Johnny Carruthers' candy bar reviews. The Chocolate Truffle Mint Patty sounds like a real contender.

The LOCs are always fun and enlightening. Hmm, grilled peanut butter and cheese sandwiches: I'd try that. I like the idea of the retro Hugos, btw. It encourages people to look

back at the early classics, reread them, and discuss them. Hopefully, some younger readers will discover them. Interesting info on the Priory of Sion, which I'd never heard of.

Thanks to Robert Kennedy for his background on S.M. Stirling's *Conquistador*. Mistakes like that irritate me too. It breaks your suspension of belief. And thanks to Taras Wolansky for the background on Georgette Heyer's Regency novels. I noticed the difference between her and her imitators a long time ago, but I didn't realize how thoroughly she'd done her research. Still, it's how she integrates it into the books that makes a difference too.

I really enjoyed *The Goldfather*, but I'd like to know two things. Who were Tom and Neri referring to, when Tom asked — "Are they safe?" And what happened next? (I really want to know what the offer was.) Ask the Doctor was good too — fun twist.

Michael and his wife Kay. And the offer involved that one American billion American dollars, after which Goldfinger had some issues of a financial nature with General Grubzaboyshchikov and all the gang at SMERSH . . .

— JTM

November 10, 2004

My house book, *Building a Cool House for Hot Times without Scorching the Pocketbook*, is on Barnes & Noble's house book top ten best seller list.

From: **Rodney Leighton** October 5, 2004
#11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,
Tatamagouche, NS B0K 1V0 CANADA

The August issue of *Alexiad* arrived August 18. I read Lisa's short bit about reading Stephen King novels (none of the 14 or so I have read have been that violent, Lisa), turned to the letter section and read about 98% of that, then went back and started scanning, stopping to read anything of interest.

I haven't read much else he's written, though I thought *Buick 8* was pretty good and will recommend it, maybe even do commentary on it some day.

Joe actually reviewed some books which sound interesting, for a change, even one by Jules Verne. Then there was a review of a Mike Resnick thing which was probably

readable and one about an old pirate of years ago. And *The Turnstile*, which sounds like a great book.

And then he writes of a book which purports to expose the errors in *The Da Vinci Code*, which should soon be on the way to me; perhaps the most interesting, to me review in *Alexiad*, ever. It includes references to a bunch of books which I am going to put on my list, although the probability of them popping up in a 10 by 10 used bookstore in small town Nova Scotia is probably remote at best.

Joe writes a bit about hybrid cars. He and Lisa write about a power outage. Lisa produces one of her horse tale things complete with excerpts; I read this one for a change. And she does a long article on Publish America which was really interesting. Read about 80% of this issue.

Glad you found my work interesting enough to read.

— LTM

We hope Rodney keeps on going; I admire particularly his ability to see through things.

— JTM

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** October 12, 2004
921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia,
PA 19143-3310 USA

Sheryl Birkhead's generator is "portable" in the sense of "not designed to be a fixed installation", not to mention "joining in itself all necessary components". But does it actually have such aids to portability as handles, bars, and lugs by which it could be either manhandled or lifted by a crane without any external contrivances? A single point of suspension above the center of gravity would, for example, be a neat feature. When I lived in Minneapolis 25 years ago, another fan and I built a glass-fronted display case for small objects at the Minicon art show. I made a point of providing a carrying bar at each end. Not only that: a block of wood projecting at one end made it easier to store the thing on end without any external prop. Does it, I wonder, still exist? Those who appreciated the carrying bars should be grateful to me, ME. "I carry the hose."

"Eight legs good, six legs bad."

So Sleipner is better than a thot?

To say nothing at this juncture of my serious feelings, more of the legacy of my late wife the pack rat has come to light. I recently found the

last disposable diapers our son ever didn't need; he is now in 12th grade. Relics from all the years of Betsy's life were found in profusion; the more ambitious projects undertaken in grade school have a certain poignancy and will be kept, but from her college days I have chosen to keep only one thing, as a dire example and a warning. It is an outline map of Britain on which have been charted, in color, WOOL PRICES — 1343 (Marks per sack).

I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

I notice in this some criticism of worldcons, but the one just past took my mind off my troubles. Mirrors were not handy, but I could feel my face from the inside and I was smiling. When Harry Turtledove greeted me with a hearty, "How are you, Dainis?" I answered in all sincerity, "Just fine!" before remembering to tell of Betsy's death. In general, I could strike up a conversation with anyone and find common ground. I talked up Jasper Fforde's books to anyone who would listen and found that nearly half of those I spoke to knew and liked them already. George Scithers was not in that number, but when I showed him a brief sample passage in *Something Rotten*, he promptly bought the book.

To the extent that I went to panel discussions, I chose the ones I would have liked to be on . . . but then I'm a nobody and wasn't asked. I usually had one or two things to say from the floor. As a subscriber to *Locus* from the first, I noted how in the early days back issues could be returned for credit, as the limited print run didn't leave enough for new subscribers who wanted them. And once I personally paid in Georgette Heyer books, hardcover reprints that I'd bought cheaply in England. (But my prize find turned up in a thrift shop in the U.S., Heyer's first — and very bad, never reprinted — novel, *The Great Roxhythe*. That went to Tony Lewis. Is another copy of it known *anywhere*?)

Abebooks lists seventeen copies, from \$85 to \$301, with reprints in 1929, 1951, and 1983 (original edition 1923). Heyer seems to have agreed with you about the quality.

I found by pure chance *The Regency Companion* by Sharon H. Laudermilk & Teresa L. Hamlin (Garland, 1989: "Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, Vol. 841"). It is divided thematically and has several vocabulary lists, also a chronology of salient events and some potted biographies. But it necessarily fails to present the talk and behavior of people

of the time; for that, we'd have to go to memoirs, drama, fiction, and other documents; cartoons, I think, are most vivid of all. James Gillray or Thomas Rowlandson — I'd be happy to have a big fat collection of the work of either. But will I go out of my way to find and purchase any such thing? No; the lottery of what I find going cheap (or free!) supplies nearly everything.

I have by now seen enough praise of the historical novels of the late Dorothy Dunnett that I determined to give them a try. I have so far some odd volumes of the two series, the *Lymond Chronicles* and the *House of Niccolo*, plus the stand-alone *King Hereafter*, about Macbeth, in which are no fewer than three genealogical tables.

("Stand-alone" — that such a term should be necessary.)

Hardly a page of *King Hereafter* is without some demonstration of one-upmanship. Without power, in that society, or without some attachment to power, you were nothing and nobody.

Didn't Dunnett have it that Lady Macbeth, whose name was Gruoch (a detail Master Shaksper thought unnecessary to recount), was really a Norsewoman named Grœa?

She did. There's a copy somewhere in the stacks.

I've sampled the other works, but I want to get together the complete series, first one and then the other. Every page has the air of a virtuoso performance. How plain and straightforward the narrative styles of Mary Renault or of Gillian Bradshaw (which I admire) appear by comparison. Dunnett's words dance on top of the story line; more than most novelists writing about large events, she shows not only the acts but the behavior of the characters. Behavior: a offshoot of personality, not intended to have consequences — which come anyway, and often impede the character's progress. Indirection is a feature of the dialogue; one must be alert to the direction and intent that are hidden in it. Not what we are accustomed to in science fiction; I would point to Harry Turtledove as typifying the opposite extreme. No hidden meanings!

The second chapter of Joyce's *Ulysses* begins with a sentence which stands in contrast to what SF writers give us. "Mr. Leopold Bloom at relish with the inner organs of beasts and fowls." It, and so much else, is an example of pure characterization. In science fiction, anyone with such dietary preferences would be

placed in contrast to another so accustomed to vat-grown protein as to be filled with revulsion against food that formerly walked, flew, or swam. A little episode from *The Warrior's Apprentice* comes to mind: the refugee Barrayaran grilling goldfish out of a fountain on Beta Colony.

Which somehow brings to mind a book that was one of those lovely chance finds, *Much Entertainment* by Virginia Maclean (1973): "A visual and culinary record of Johnson and Boswell's tour of Scotland in 1773." Drawings by Rowlandson are richly represented. Like a number of the best books I have, it is a library discard. In oblong format, it is on a shelf not far from *The Eating-in-Bed Cookbook* by Barbara Ninde Byfield, which is bound in a printed imitation of mattress ticking.

Damn, but I don't want to live the rest of my life without a Significant Other who would appreciate all this printed happiness . . .

I have one who appreciates my four different copies of Alfred Lansing's *Endurance* (along with the shortened juvenile edition, Shackleton's *Valiant Voyage*).

— JTM

Before I objected to this, I would have to get rid of duplicate copies of the Black Stallion books with different covers.

— LTM

From: **Lloyd Penney** October 19, 2004
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Many thanks for the 17th *Alexiad*. There's still a little time tonight for locking the zines that aren't coming in as fast as they used to, and yet still pile up. That says more about me than those fanzines. Here are some comments . . .

Yvonne was in Vancouver when Burt Rutan won his \$10 million from the X Prize Foundation with SpaceShipOne. She was attending the annual Space Generation Congress, followed by the annual International Astronautical Congress, and then VCon 29, where she was the technical GoH. Given her fairly high level involvement with the X Prize in Canada, we may be heading to St. Louis for the actual presentation ceremony of the big cheque. The big fete should be taking place sometime in November.

Well, we didn't go to Noreascon 4, but we've heard a lot about what happened there, and we've seen a lot of pictures on line. Looks like it was a lot of fun, and I heard that even

with a few screw-ups here and there, it was a masterpiece of logistics compared to Torcon. The panel on Buidling a Better Fanzine reminds me that on this year's Aurora ballot, in the category of Fan Achievement (Fanzine), there are only two nominees, Don Bassie's *Made in Canada SF* website, and a French-language magazine from Quebec on les bandes dessinees. Such is the current state of fannish publications in Canada. E.B. Frohvet's letter mentions other fanzines, but Andrew Murdoch hasn't published anything in some time, and most Canadian fans never see copies of *Opuntia*. Clubs in Montreal, Ottawa and Vancouver publish their fanzines, but clubzines are no longer eligible to be nominated for Fan Achievement (Fanzine) because of perceived ballot stuffing from a local Trek club.

I got my copy of the First Night One-Shot in the mail, thanks to Bob Devney, and I wrote on a topic I'd written on before, my first exposure to fanzines. I share your distress at the lack of interest in fanhistorical panels. Fanhistory is making a comeback in local conventions . . . I spent a couple of hours digging through my programme book collection to create a spreadsheet history of Ad Astras past. Ad Astra will hit 25 in 2006, and Toronto Trek will hit 20 that same year. Both conventions want to do something special . . . we will find out if they are still interested, especially in the nasty political parts, in a short time. Yvonne attended the first Ad Astra in 1980, and she is also the founder of Toronto Trek.

(Bless you for your words about the Best Fan Writer runners-up. This is the third time I've finished sixth in that category. Jeff Berkwitz has just been hired to be the editor of *Amazing Stories*, so perhaps I may yet make it onto the ballot.)

You're welcome. Now we have to get John Flynn off, not to mention You Know Who . . .

Does anyone know if Henry Welch got the Ditto he was going after? I have also heard through the grapevine that some Toronto fanzine fans are going after a Corflu. I have not been asked to participate, so I will have to find these things out through the usually unreliable fannish grapevine.

As you know, the Welches won. Perhaps you can come, and then maybe we might break into our jug of change to go.

The next three Worldcons shall be in Glasgow, Los Angeles and Yokohama

respectively. That will definitely make sure I won't be going. 2008 will probably be Chicago, and who knows what I'll be doing by then? Who knows where I'll be? We've sworn off Worldcons, but if there ever is the chance to return to them, we won't do it for some years to come. I doubt I'll be supporting Montreal in 2009, not because I don't think they can do it, but I expect we'll hold true to our swearing off. (I am glad that the rest of the world is bidding for Worldcon and winning it. I just wish there wasn't so much geography between them and me.)

My loc . . . well, the job at Stronco lasted three weeks. After working as hard as I could on a list of things my boss provided for me, I was ushered into her office 15 minutes before the weekend, told that she didn't think things were working out, I wasn't the perfect fit she was hoping for, and I should go and clean out my desk. I never got a fair chance, IMHO, and the job hunt continues ever on.

Time to go, it's getting late. Take care, and see you with the next issue. I hope there'll be more N4 reports.

Sorry about the job trouble. Some bosses, I think, only hire to be able to say "You're fired!"™

— JTM

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** Oct. 19, 2004
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Many thanks for *Alexiad* 17.

Robert Kennedy asks how many books I have written. The answer is the two he mentioned, although my book on donor intent had a second revised edition in 1998 that was 12,000 words longer than the first edition. I have a third book that is at a publisher; I'd prefer to keep information about it vague until the book is actually published. I have also written four monographs: *Should Foundations Live Forever?* (Capital Research Center, 1998), the sequel to my donor intent book, *Return to Charity?* (Capital Research Center, 2000), which was supposed to be the first part of my third book, *The Foundation Builders* (Philanthropy Roundtable, 2000), and *By Their Bootstraps* (Manhattan Institute, 2002). I am currently writing my fifth monograph.

I was the researcher for *Shadow War*, by Richard Minter (2004), *Losing Bin Laden* by Richard Minter (2003), and Bruce Duffy's two novels *Last Comes the Egg* (1997) and *The World as I Found It* (1987). I did some research for John Fund's *Stealing Elections*

(2004), although less than Minter (who bought all of my time). I was also the Washington researcher for Sarah Bradford's *America's Queen*, but she also had researchers in other cities.

Robert Lichtman asks about my fanzine production. Well, I was in an apa for fifteen years: DAPA-EM (1979-83), Frefanzine (1983-87), and Golden Apa (1987-94). I've been in a newsgroup (fictionmags) from 2001 onwards. I also had one contribution to FAPA in 1981. And I've also had 77 letters in *FOSEAX*. I think Renegade Press, my imprint, got up to 130 or so, counting all the issues of my college sf club newsletter. I've never claimed to be an active fanzine fan, merely someone who likes fanhistory and fanzines and wants to contribute to them in a small way. I've never wanted to be a SMOF or think myself part of an elite that is somehow superior to other fans.

As for Corflu, people can go to it for whatever reasons they like. I enjoyed the three Corflus I have been to (in 1986, 1995, and 2002). It is not a convention I would go out of my way for (the farthest I've gone to a Corflu is 25 miles), but I would go to it if it was in the Washington area again. But the con can't simultaneously be a salon where the rarefied faanish elite produce exquisitely faanish conversation, and be a place where people who used to be involved in fanzines like to hang out. As for Moshe Feder's fanzine career, it was announced at the 2002 Corflu banquet that his last zine was in 1978. Feder's apazines weren't mentioned, at the banquet.

The fanzines they do manage to publish are exquisite; magnificent layout, scintillating prose, gorgeous illustration. Nothing in them that I would be interested in, but . . .

— JTM

From: **Milt Stevens** October 24, 2004
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In *Alexiad* V3#5, Joseph mentions the movie *The Cell*. As it happened, the movie was on television the evening after I finished reading this issue. It was quite well done, even though I would hardly call it pleasant. I thought they made Stargher a very believable psycho which made him far more disturbing than half a dozen big ugly dudes with chainsaws. Even though Stargher is a monster, Dr. Deane never has any motivation other than to help him.

The technology involved seemed

benevolent, because the person using it was benevolent. That's really an important point. Technology has no morality. A chainsaw isn't an evil piece of technology just because some psycho can use it to disassemble an entire dormitory full of screaming teenage girls. I also thought the final "combat" was handled in an interesting way. Dr. Deane can only defeat a psychological phenomenon by psychological means.

Joseph notes there were fewer covers from *Astounding* in *Worlds of Tomorrow* than of other magazines, even though *Astounding* was the leading magazine. I can think of reasons for that. *Astounding* in the forties was The adult science fiction magazine. The other magazines were mostly directed at teenage males. As a publication that was trying for the adult market, the covers on *Astounding* were more restrained and usually in muted colors. I think this tendency went too far in 1945 when *Astounding* published some of the dullest covers ever to appear on any science fiction magazine. By contrast, the covers on *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Adventures* were flamboyant in the extreme and almost always used bright, vivid colors. The covers on *Amazing* may have been silly, but they are more interesting to look at. In the mid range, we have *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* which reprinted serious science fiction novels from an earlier era. The covers on *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* were fairly flamboyant but in much darker colors than those on *Amazing* and *Fantastic*. When *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* appeared and was also trying for the adult market, it initially took a different approach with covers. Most of the covers from the first year of *F & SF* are just plain odd looking. They might just as well have been covers on *Quaint Quality Quarterly* or any other little literary magazine. Of course, that was pretty much the idea the publishers wanted to convey to the casual newsstand browser.

At Noreascon, the attendance at fannish and fanzine programming was certainly underwhelming. At the FAPA panel I was on, there were four people on the panel and four people in the audience. If I was still involved in running worldcons, I might think this sort of programming wasn't getting me the cluck for my buck. However, there are other considerations. It has become a virtual imperative that worldcons offer a totally inconceivable amount of programming. We fanzine fans are called upon to pick up our spears and add to the crowd scene. For all I know, there aren't any more attendees at costuming or gaming panels, but they get to add to the crowd scene too.

Remember back in 1998 when The Big Panel was J. Michael Straczynski? Two thousand people it was. Then Crusade tanked and he was out the door . . . (well, IMDB reveals three items since then, a Babylon Five TV movie, a Murder, She Wrote TV movie, and the series Jeremiah).

Like Jack Chalker, I certainly remember the masquerade at BayCon. Did Jack mention the purpose of the incense was to cover the smell of the dope everybody was expected to smoke to really enjoy the masquerade. I think that was the expectation of the guy who bought the incense, even though it wasn't the expectation or hope of most of the people who attended the con. The three rock combos were memorable even if not particularly good. I recall Don Fitch's comment that they sounded OK when he stood at the back of the hall and turned off his hearing aid.

The hall which was used for the masquerade was also used for the Hugo banquet. The hall proved to be of a quite remarkable design. People who hadn't noticed something funny about the acoustics during the masquerade did notice during the banquet. I sat through Philip Jose Farmer's guest of honor speech without understanding a single word of it. I later read his speech in *Science Fiction Review* and thought it was quite good. The pillars undoubtedly contributed to the poor acoustics. There were so many pillars in that hall that every last person at the banquet could be seated behind one of them. Before the banquet, I thought I was in tight with the Berkeley Boys (Donaho, Rogers, and Stark). When I found myself behind a pillar I began to wonder about that. Then I checked behind the pillar behind me and found John Campbell.

As I recall what put paid to the Hugo banquets was the famous (or infamous) ConStellation Crab Fest. In another banquet tale, MidAmeriCon had tables for ten. FOSFA had eleven people going to the banquet. Guess who didn't get to sit at the FOSFA table.

— JTM

From: **John Hertz** October 29, 2004
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Thanks for *Alexiad* 3/5.
You too (like me, alas) missed Fredric Brown's *The Lights in the Sky are Stars* as a

Retro-Hugo candidate.

I am among those who consider Heinlein's juveniles among his very best.

Look for me in the October *Chronicle*.

And look for me from Advent:Publishers soon, with Heinlein's Children, my book about Heinlein's juveniles. George Price and I are doing the final few corrections.

— JTM

From: **Evelyn C. Leeper** November 14 2004
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In your comments on *The Know-it-all: One Man's Quest to Become the Smartest Person in the World*, you refer to "The Red-Headed League", but not to Frank Gruber's pulp hero Oliver Quade, a.k.a. "The Human Encyclopedia", who got that way by reading a set of encyclopedias straight through — four times. Some of his cases are collected in *Brass Knuckles*, a collection from Sherbourne Press so old it has no ISBN.

In your review of *Settling Accounts: Return Engagement*, you mention "Donald Sobel's *For Want of a Nail*"; his name is actually Robert Sobel. Donald Sobel wrote the "Encyclopedia Brown Boy Detective" stories. Could it be that your comments on *The Know-it-all* and "The Red-Headed League" put the name in your head? :-)

On the "If Rome Never Fell..." panel, *Procurator* was not mentioned by name, but Turtledove was undoubtedly referring to it when he talked about a story with an industrialized Rome but the same social structure as that of two thousand years ago. (At previous conventions he named it by name in this complaint, but at some point he probably decided that it was so old and unknown that just describing it was enough.)

And a final nitpick: You say in the letters "Alan White got one nomination less than you did." Shouldn't that be "Alan White got one fewer nomination than you"?

And you know what, I will even use a preposition to end a sentence with.

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** November 14, 2004
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Another choice collection of comment hooks in the October *Alexiad*.

Noreascon 4 trip report: Shouldn't the "Cheesecake Factory" have scantily-clad waitresses? Just a thought.

"These are the top ten novels that did not make the finals list for the Retro Hugos . . . The comparison is almost embarrassing." I think you meant to compare them with the Hugo nominees for 2003, rather than the 1953 finalists. Conceivably there might be just as much great work in 2003 as in 1953, but it's lost in the shuffle.

I was also pleasantly surprised that the "Kennedy Survives Dallas" panel had no JFK-worshippers on it. You could make a good case that Kennedy, one of the most unqualified people ever to win the Presidency, was the worst President of the 20th Century. I base this primarily on his inept handling of the Cold War, alternating passivity with aggressiveness, perhaps in time with his drug-induced mood swings. For a President to be unequivocally worse than JFK, he would have had to actually start World War III, rather than merely come to the brink.

Review of Stalin's Secret War by Robert W. Stephan: **"It is virtually impossible that an American agent could have seen him doing so, since far from being overrun with American agents, Moscow was overrun with Soviet informers."** I had an interesting exchange with leftist commentator Eric Alterman on this very subject, a few years ago. At the time, Alterman was one of the last people in the world still defending Alger Hiss against the charge of spying for the Soviets. His argument was in part based on the preposterous notion that Moscow was too full of Western spies for Hiss to take the risk of meeting with Soviet officials, as one of the Venona decrypts indicated. I endeavored to apprise Alterman of the real situation, but I doubt I succeeded.

Why do you think I said it?

For me, it illuminated the way seemingly irreducible political differences may actually be matters of misinformation.

Arthur D. Hlavaty: **"Actually he said he didn't have to take the test because he was a legacy."** Maybe Bush "didn't have to", but he did: his SAT scores were leaked years ago. Kerry's never were, interestingly enough; but a psychometrician converted the two men's armed forces tests into IQ scores — and Bush came out a little ahead. (Off-camera, Kerry joked he must have been drinking that day, according to Tom Brokaw.)

Jan G. Stinson: **"DragonCon is also probably the most congested event in SF cons as a result of its attendance numbers."** The one time I was there, several years back when it was the NASFiC as well, the cause was the thriftiness of the con-runners. At the end of the con, visiting the extremely close-packed art show, I saw Michael Whelan taking pictures: for proof, he said.

Martin Morse Wooster: The Edwardian novel-reading public was largely female, I think; thus the Imperial adventures told from the point of view of the home front.

Then who was reading Ayesha: The Return of She? Or The Time Machine, then the toast of the literati.

— JTM

From: **Robert Kennedy** November 17, 2004
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The book reviewer for the *Scottish Rite Journal* has struck again. In the September – October 2004 issue, he recommended *Masters of the Maze* by Avram Davidson. He said: *"Masters of the Maze* is the only work of fiction I know of in which the Scottish Rite specifically plays a part, really more than a part. The entire novel can be read as an allegory for the degrees of the Rite, including the hero's ultimate meeting with the Masters of the Maze, which is, I suggest, based on the 31°." Since I cannot remember ever reading an Avram Davidson novel, I obtained a copy. Actually, Davidson is off on early Freemasonry and missed the tie to the Knights Templar. An intriguing, but strange, novel.

My Navy ship reunion in Mobile, Alabama was interesting. One of our lowest turnouts for reasons unknown. Nevertheless it was an enjoyable reunion even though several of my Fox Division shipmates were not able to make it because of medical and other reasons that were known. The main tours were of the battleship *Alabama* and to Bellingrath Gardens & Home. Returning home is always nice. The bad part about returning home is the accumulated mail. Prior to leaving for the reunion, I went to Borders and purchased three paperbacks. I get nervous if I don't have anything to read. While at the reunion I was able to read *Heroics for Beginners* by John Moore. An enjoyable read. Also, part of *Thief of Time* by Terry Pratchett. I had purchased it along with his *Monstrous Regiment*. I do not remember previously reading any novels by

Pratchett (my loss). Anyway, I finished *Thief* after returning home and have now read *Monstrous Regiment*. I just finished *Night Watch* and am reading *Going Postal*. I will definitely be reading even more Pratchett.

I would like to read more of Pratchett's Discworld Series. But, there are so many that I have no intention of reading them all. So, recommendations anyone?

Before leaving, I had finished reading *Secrets of the Code: The Unauthorized Guide to the Mysteries Behind the Da Vinci Code*, edited by Dan Burnstein (2004). It is even better than I expected. A minor problem, David A. Shugarts (p. 255) refers to "novelist Robert Anton Wilson, including a novel in his Illuminati trilogy called *Widow's Son*." He is a bit off here, of course. The Illuminatus trilogy was by Robert Shea (may he rest in peace) and Robert Anton Wilson. *The Widow's Son* is part of The Historical Illuminatus Chronicles by Robert Anton Wilson. As far as I know, Wilson never finished the series which would have been more than a trilogy. Excellent section, "The Plot Holes and Intriguing Details of The Da Vinci Code", also by Shugarts (pp. 254-283). This is an outstanding book for anyone interested in the subject and, if I were to recommend just one book on the subject, this would be it. I'm beginning to think that Dan Brown is a mountebank.

I read *The Rule of Four* by Ian Caldwell & Dustin Thomason (2004). I don't understand what all the excitement is about.



When the announcement was made about a *Farscape* miniseries, the promise was made that it would wrap things up and bring closure. The four hour *Farscape: The Peacekeepers War* (October 17 & 18, 2004) kept that promise. Maybe this time it will receive a HUGO nomination and, if there is any justice, win the HUGO. I am, however, unclear as to where I should nominate it. Should the two parts be

nominated separately? If so, where, Long Form or Short Form? If you take out the commercials, each two hour part is probably actually less than 90 minutes which would make it Short Form. But, actual running time with the commercials is two hours. Should the two parts be considered as a whole which would make it Long Form. I need some help here.

You may have noticed that I considered the BDP-SF Hugo the "Buffy Award"; the Buffy fans had to compete with movies. It's a controversial award; there was, for example, a hypothetical BDP-LF ballot for the 1953 Retro Hugos published on Trufen.net.

Apparently, there is a possibility of a regular *Farscape* movie. I can always hope.

I watched *Frankenstein on USA* (October 10, 2004). It was billed as a movie. It was obviously a pilot. It wasn't very good.

Joe mentions the Bluejacket Books program at the Naval Institute Press. He makes an offhand reference to "the cruise of the *Lanikai*" by Kemp Tolley. I reviewed the *Cruise of the Lanikai* by Kemp Tolley (1973 & 1994) elsewhere a few years ago. It is an incredible book. It is about more than reconnoitering the Japanese fleet. It is also about FDR's attempt to draw a Japanese attack so as to get the United States into WWII. But, it is mainly about how, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and attack on the Philippines, Tolley and the crew of the *Lanikai* escape and make an incredible sail (and I do mean sail) from the Philippines to Australia. Another book I recommend highly.

Ronald Spector mentions Rear Admiral Tolley and the *Lanikai* in his *Eagle Against the Sun* (1985). He also makes a point with regard to the Panay; if that attack hadn't drawn the U.S. into a war, why would this one have done so?

My thanks to Joe and Lisa for their NorEasCon 4 report since I wasn't there. And yes, whatever did happen to Chuck Lipsig? Joe mentions Captain L. Edward Beach. He not only wrote about submarines, he was also the author of the magnificent book, *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short at Pearl Harbor* (1995, Naval Institute Press). Sadly, Capt. Beach died on December 1, 2002.

Mine was one of the nine nominations *ALEXIAD* received for the HUGO. Now, if only another sixteen or more people can be

found to nominate it in 2005.

Joe and Lisa both read at dinner? Well, if both of them do it, then apparently no problem. Sometime after I got married in 1969, I went to the dinner table with a book and started reading. (A clear sign of having become comfortable.) My wife had a fit and I didn't do it again. (She was in the right.) Ever since my divorce I always read while eating alone at home.

Lisa: I received an offer to join The Stephen King Library and be able to obtain the first six books of "The Dark Tower" series for \$19.99 and reserve a copy of the seventh (and final) book. I didn't sign up.

I have some of the rest of the series but will probably not acquire any more until after I've put money aside for my current shopping list at Abebooks. I want to finish up my collection of Rutherford Montgomery's Golden Stallion books first. Then after that will come the reissued Black Stallion books with their fabulous new covers, then maybe books on mountaineering.

— LTM

Arthur D. Hlavaty: The "my parents, Ayn Rand and God" comment was by Joe and credited to you. Apparently, you are denying it. The "Nelson Mandela, a dildo collector and a thousand-year-old demigod" is hilarious. In *The New Well-Tempered Sentence* (1993), Karen Elizabeth Gordon definitely uses the serial comma and devotes a section to it. (See my comments to Colleen R. Cahill.) By the way, my comment that perhaps you should contact Dan Brown should have been followed by a Smiley. :-)

Colleen R. Cahill: I ordered *The New Well-Tempered Sentence: A Punctuation Handbook for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed* (1993) and *The Deluxe Transitive Vampire: A Handbook of Grammar for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed* (1993) (both by Karen Elizabeth Gordon) from Interlibrary Loan to see if I might wish to purchase either or both. *The New Well-Tempered Sentence* is excellent. I like it as well as, or maybe even better than, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*. I will definitely be ordering a copy for myself. The *Deluxe Transitive Vampire* covers much more than I want to know. As a matter of fact, it gives me nightmares about diagramming sentences while in high school. Gordon's sense of humor appears to be similar to that of Lynne Truss in *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*. I am very suspicious that Truss has read Gordon's books. I also obtained Gordon's *The Disheveled Dictionary: A Curious Caper Through Our Sumptuous*

Lexicon (1997) on Interlibrary Loan and am awaiting her *Torn Wings and Faux Pas: A Flashbook of Style, A Beastly Guide Through the Writers Labyrinth* (1997). Thank you for recommending Gordon's books.

Richard A. Dengrove: You appear to accept the falsehood that Nazi's were right wing. NAZI stood for the National Socialist German Workers Party. Obviously, Nazi's were Left Wing.

Joseph T Major: I have watched *Run Lola Run* twice and enjoyed it greatly.

This loc is being sent on Wednesday. On Saturday, I will be going to the Burbank Airport Hilton and Towers for the second day of the three day *Farscape Convention*. Then, barring any problem, over the Thanksgiving weekend I will be going to the LAX Marriott for *LOSCON 31*. I'm having some problem with my legs. We'll see what happens this weekend.

It looks like netzines and net fan writers will dominate from now on. Perhaps now that Jeff Berkwitz is sitting in Uncle Hugo's chair (does he even know who Gernsback was?) he will no longer be nominated for Best Fan Writer.

— JTM

From: **Alex R. Slate** November 18, 2004
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Actually I learned to shift for myself a long time ago. I learned to drive on two cars, one automatic and one standard. The standard, or manual shift, to be more accurate was a Saab. I say manual rather than standard because it was different than most manual shifts. First off, it was column mounted rather than floor mounted. And it was also veerrrry picky. If you can drive stick on an old fashioned Saab, you can drive stick on just about anything. 2½ ton Army trucks were a piece of cake after the Saab. It also had a lever you could throw to change the transmission from free-wheel to 'normal'. In free-wheel when you took your foot off the accelerator the car kept going, in 'normal' mode it would slow down if your foot was off the accelerator.

So, I was shifting for my self as a high schooler. In fact, the cars I have owned have run about 50/50 automatic/manual.

The Da Vinci Code: I enjoyed it, it was a pretty good thriller. It's hard to believe that some people took it seriously. No, I take that back. Some people will believe almost anything!

I haven't been keeping up on all the hooahh and cross-talk about this book. Frankly, if the author really meant the idea seriously I will be somewhat disappointed.

Trinlay: The fairy godfather has old roots in the SF/F world. There was Bruce the Fairy Godfather in the Asprin "Myth" series, but way before that in the 40's I believe there was a comic strip, I believe it was called "Barnaby" which featured the idea of a fairy godfather. It was also the genesis of the Little Men, Gnomes and Elves Marching and Chowder Society (betcha I got that name mixed up).

The strip "Barnaby" was by David Johnson Leisk, better known as "Crockett Johnson". The fairy godfather was named Jackeen J. O'Malley, and his wand was a cigar. As for the organization, right words, wrong order; it was the "Elves, Gnomes, and Little Men's Chowder & Marching Society". The strip was very popular with Fans, not at all surprisingly. Cushlamocree!

— JTM

Someone mentioned the upcoming Earthsea mini-series (Sci-Fi channel in December). I'm looking forward to it as well. I haven't seen anything about the *Farscape* series though (*Farscape: The Peacekeeper War*). Thought it was a good wrap up to the series and was very glad to see it. I hated being left hanging the way we were when the series was canceled. Actually, I was late coming to the *Farscape* series (like I usually am with most things like that). I didn't start watching until about halfway through the second season and had to catch up with reruns.

Anyway. That's going to be it for this issue. Till next time.

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** November 11, 2004
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Thanks for thish.

The Boston Hugo is very attractive. Belatedly, congrats to all.

I hope the Japanese put together a guess at costs for their Worldcon. Not that I think I'll get there, but I'm curious about the budgets that need to be made.

A retired nurse helps me with the shelter on Wednesdays. She won first level dressage over 120 others — and was quite justifiably proud of herself and her horse.

Nice that you made a pilgrimage to 423 Summit Avenue.

Gee — didn't realize Ocean City (MD) was bidding for NASFiC in 2007. If I remember correctly I've been close by, but never actually to "OC". Hmm — do the same groups vote for con running the NASFiCs as the Worldcons? Just wondered.

Voting for the 2007 NASFiC will be done by the members of the 2005 NASFiC, CascadiaCon in Seattle. The Ocean City bid is being run by the people who put on Balticon. More important to Lisa is that Ocean City is near Assateague, which is next to Chincoteague.

I've been hunting for guaranteed nut-free chocolate for a family with six kids — one is allergic to "true nuts" and peanuts — so that rules out ALL the commercial chocolate one finds at the store. Most are now carrying the allergy "disclaimer" that the contents may contain peanuts, etc. . . I have found two spots on the Internet, but the guaranteed "nut" free candy is pricey (but compared to the cost of the alternative . . .).

Am I really in the
Alexiad lettercol...?



Gee — I'd never seen the Chocolate Truffle Mint Pattie — need to look closer, in case it is still available.

Trinlay: I noticed (yes, I know it was only artistic license) Fibromyalgia mentioned in a relatively recent *Cold Case* — where the husband talked about all the pain meds his wife was on, then, when angered, said it was all in her head. Sigh. Hope you are feeling better.

Hmm — your mention of \$78/hour for a mechanic . . . plumber \$65/hour, electrician was \$680 for six hours (a few cables tossed in, but I had already bought all the hardware). I had my firewood stacked — it took 1½ hours and cost \$90. Then again, if I leave the county, all these prices drop, a lot.

We had heated "discussion" about the fanzine and fan artist nominees this year, but I'll bet nothing gets changed, and as long as all nominees meet the criteria, then any win is a

ghood one. But according to the description of *both* fan writer and fan artist, the winner *could* have made a living from semi-prozines. It's possible.

For fan artist at least, my thought is that if one is looking solely for the best artist — we already have the pro category — to me, by putting FAN in front, you change things greatly.

Taras: once upon a time one Worldcon (I forget which one) made a Hugo nominee booklet which had a page for each nominee. I suggested for future cons that it be made a routine publication — obviously NOT. If worldcon members are going to vote for categories for which they are ill-prepared, perhaps one alternative (after the nominations are out, before voting) would be either a publication (same as the PR you suggest) or a site with representative works from all nominees.

Nowadays they're more likely to provide links to the nominees' websites. Which rather puts out those who disdain web access or don't even have it.

— JTM

From: **George W. Price** November 20, 2004
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Jan Stinson and **E. B. Frohvet** both answer David Wilson's complaint about you giving his book a bad review even though you hadn't read it all the way through. Actually, his reaction was quite mild compared to the open-handed abuse that reviewers and editors sometimes have to take when they say a book is not up to par. It happened to me once.

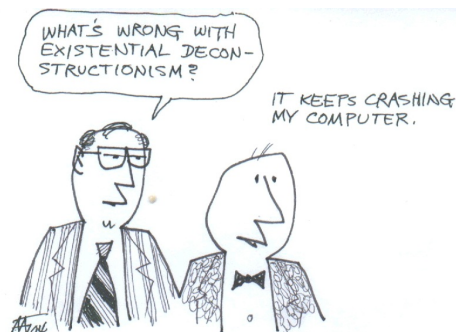
You may remember the 1955 Signet paperback collection *The Space Frontiers*, by Roger Lee Vernon. Now that was a *bad* book. Not only was the writing clunky, I got the impression that Vernon was unaware of any science fiction published since the mid-1930s. Damon Knight's *In Search of Wonder* gives it a proper roasting. (Curiously, it had the same cover illustration as Signet's 1950 *Beyond the Moon*, by Edmond Hamilton. Did someone at Signet think it wasn't good enough to justify paying for original art?)

About two years later, Vernon submitted a novel to Advent:Publishers and it was my duty to read it. Well, *Robot Hunt* was considerably better written than *The Space Frontiers*, but still quite a ways from acceptable. But I thought it had possibilities. So in my rejection letter I told

him that Advent wasn't interested in publishing fiction — which was true — and he should try other markets. And then, naively trying to be helpful, I mentioned some of the plot illogicalities and other flaws that I had noticed, and suggested ways to overcome them. The thanks I got was a fire-breathing letter from Vernon that, boiled down, said how dare you criticize my masterpiece? Another two years later, Avalon published *Robot Hunt*. I don't know if Vernon took any of my suggestions — I've never been curious enough to buy the book and read it.

* * * * *

My thanks to **Alexis Gilliland** for enlarging on his reasons for supposing that Pontius Pilate was a tough SOB who would never have let Caiaphas pressure him into executing Jesus (as Mel Gibson's *Passion* shows), and that instead Pilate did it for his own good imperialistic reasons. This may well be true — it seems reasonable and I am quite prepared to believe it — but we still seem to lack any objective evidence supporting this interpretation over the more traditional one that Gibson used. I suppose that until we get time travel, we'll just have to accept that it is impossible to know.



* * * * *

A very minor point in **Milt Stevens'** letter: He says that in Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock*, Pinkie "[to] cover the murder he has committed, [has] to marry a woman to keep her from possibly testifying against him." That's a book I've never read, so I can't say if this is accurate. If so, Greene was mistaken. Marriage does *not* keep a woman from testifying against her husband. It only saves her from being *compelled* to testify; that is, fined or imprisoned if she refuses. But if she wants to testify, she is perfectly free to do so. When you think about it, this is obvious — otherwise there could never be a contested divorce.

I haven't read **Brighton Rock** but — is that what **Greene** the author thinks or what he has **Pinkie** the character think? To quote **In Search of Wonder**: "there are several technical errors in [David Karp's *One*], most of them common ones, so it's hard to tell whether they're introduced deliberately, or whether the author himself doesn't know" [Page 79]. *In Search of Wonder* is still available from Advent:Publishers.

— JTM

From: **Bill Breuer** November 29, 2004
Louisville, KY
sciwriter1@juno.com

Hello Canadian Fen!

Please feel free to email me about any SF&F Cons in Eastern Canada . . . especially if you know of any in New Brunswick.

From: **AL du Pisani** November 30, 2004
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It has been a nice and quiet last couple of months. My work situation has changed slightly, but my intention to find a new job has remained. I am hopeful that something will turn up soon.

In the mean time, new and old friends, here and afar, tie me to society, and I can live with hope and not too much misery. As for the latter, I have recently read that it appears that all people have a natural state of happiness, and that all most perturbations does is to swing you around that point of happiness. And it do appear that my point of happiness is pretty low.

I think that if I hadn't met **Lisa** and married I would be in really low spirits by now.

In South Africa, the interesting things that have happened and is happening right now, is legal recognition of gay marriage, the **Shabir Shaik** trail, and Archbishop **Desmond Tutu's** recent speech.

It was perhaps inevitable that legal recognition of gay marriages would come to South Africa: It is after all a liberal idea, and South Africa is in some ways an extremely liberal society, especially under the ANC. The process is also extremely interesting: It started with a court case by a lesbian couple, in the High Court. Which referred them to the

Constitutional Court, to rule on the constitutionality of gay marriage. Which said that the constitution does forbid discrimination based on sexual orientation, and referred it to the Court of Appeals. Which then agreed that the current laws on marriage discriminated unfairly against gays, and referred it to parliament to modify the laws, and to accommodate all South African forms of marriage: Western, gay, traditional African, Hindu, Muslim and other. And that all related laws: On divorce, inheritance, etc, be adjusted at the same time. With a deadline that parliament has to do something within two years.

I expect this process will drag on for years. Hopefully, by the end of it, a consensus of some kind will have been reached.

The **Shabir Shaik** trail is interesting, for the person not on trial. **Shabir Shaik** is on trial for bribing Vice-President **Jacob Zuma**, who then ensured that certain parts of South Africa's arms deal go to businesses related to him (**Shaik**). **Zuma** is not on trial, but everybody knows that if **Shaik** is convicted, **Zuma** can forget about becoming President of South Africa. Since current President **Mbeki** has already announced that he will keep to the ANC imposed 2 term limit for the State President, and not be eligible at the next election, this is starting to open up a real fight for the ANC leadership positions. You see, usually the ANC has had a clear line of succession, sometimes after a bitter fight. But there was always an anointed successor for ANC leader. And now there is not.

This has lead **COSATU**, the trade unions organisation, "battered wife" partner of the ANC for the last decade, to openly oppose certain ANC positions. For instance, **COSATU** is moving against the ANC consensus that **Robert Mugabe** is the Man in Zimbabwe.

Which is where Archbishop (Emeritus) **Desmond Tutu** comes in. Now, I have never liked **Tutu**. He is too much of an opportunist, who lays guilt on you to get what he wants. And he has been more politically active that I am comfortable with. (Mostly, in opposition to what I find comfortable.)

But the man has been involved in the **Struggle**, and he was invited to give a lecture in memory of **Nelson Mandela**. (Last year was the inaugural memorial lecture, given by **Bill Clinton**.) And this was a very good lecture / speech. (It was broadcast on television in toto, once they realised that he had said some interesting things.)

It started by looking back over the past decade and concentrated on what went right in South Africa. Too often these days we take the

good things that have happened for granted, and only look at the bad things. So it was good to look back at our successes as a country. For the first time that I am aware, somebody high up and involved with the Truth and Reconciliation commission said that it was flawed in many ways. (Of course, immediately mentioning that there have been nothing better before or since.)

And then he got to the meat of the speech: Where he was unhappy with Black Economic Empowerment (Too many deals going to too little, too politically connected people). With the party list system of Proportional Representation (Too little responsibility back to the voters. Ironically enough, the Slabbert commission recommended in 2000 that South Africa's system be changed to one of 75% constituency based voting, 25% PR. This was rejected by just about every party in parliament, since just about every single party gains from the current system.)

And then he mentioned the big one: That there is too little discussion of policy in public forums, where the input of the people are received. That too much policy is never discussed outside of the ANC internal structures, and the the party list nature of representation encourages a bunch of yes-men in the party.

Now, this speech was given at about midday. That evening, the portion of the speech that was on the news was his condemnation of BEE. But once the speech was broadcast, it soon became clear that the last item was the big one.

President Mbeki denounced Tutu in his weekly column in the party newsletter, saying that he (Tutu) was not a part of the ANC, and can therefore not understand how discussion works in the ANC.

This was the exact wrong thing to say, and Tutu lost his temper and denounced the current government, before going off on a trip outside of the country. And the ANC's spokes-people have since been trying to pour some oil on troubled waters.

As to what will happen next: Anything. But my gut feel is that the people involved will patch over things and carry on as normal. I do not think that the government will fall, or that the ANC will split, as a result of this spat. But I think that it may be the beginning of the end of the ANC as it is currently. As to when that end will be: I would not be surprised if that is another ten years away.

Now to other matters:

Trinlay Khadro asks what my relative who died of muscular dystrophy's mother thought was going on? If it was a case of denial or something else? I do not know. I think it was

partly denial, for some reasons of murky family history I do not really want to get into. But partly it was due to the optimism of Andre. Who believed passionately that if he could hang on for another three to five years, a cure for muscular dystrophy will be found. And since he had survived for more than double the time doctors originally gave him, that should not be too difficult. Sadly, he ran out of time before a cure was found.

E.B Frohvet: It was some time after reading *A Civil Campaign* that I started to wonder about Bujold. Since, upon reflection, things did not go the way I became accustomed to happen. That there were too many instances where people and institutions were not behaving in a sensible way, or a way that I have become used to seeing them behave. The "dinner party from Hell" scene is indeed a hoot, but it do appear that shortly afterwards, all people involved lost their heads.

Perhaps Taras Wolansky is correct in stating that Miles lost his integrity and the arms-men their dignity. When I read this comment, I had an "a-ha" moment, where I understood something I had known, for the first time.

Now I considered the switching back and forth between the tense scene in the Council of Counts (debating Miles's potential complicity in the death of Ekaterin's husband) and the less tense one at Vorkosigan House (those of us who remember the Three Stooges and their pie fights appreciated the butter-bug "butter" fight) rather a clever and skilled example of writing.

Thanks to all nice thoughts and prayers for my work situation. Not much has changed, but I am much more hopeful that change is on the way, and is going to be for the better.

A good Christmas and a happy New Year to all of you.

Merry Christmas to you and to all yours a good night.

— JTM

From: **Marty Helgesen** December 1, 2004
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I assume the misspelling of the name of T. O'Connor Sloane, Ph.D. was a typo. Incidentally, in addition to editing *Amazing Stories* Sloane translated the book *Saint Francis*

of Assisi: a biography by Johannes Jorgensen from Danish into English. I've known that for years, but just discovered on the web that his son married a daughter of Thomas A. Edison.

Presumably not the one who left her fortune to Holocaust deniers.

I never saw a Herbie comic book but I learned something about Herbangelism in MINNEAPA, where some people were familiar with him. I didn't know his followers were called Herbevangelists.

Lisa mentions the sign on a door at Noreason saying it was not a door and the graffiti it collected. The sign was on one of the doors of a con office so fans would know to seek entrance elsewhere. Some of the graffiti was clever, but some, such as "Sure looks like one to me," seemed dedicated to proving that not all fans are Slans. I don't remember the Tolkien one she mentions. What was it? The reference to Magritte, which was one of the first to appear, was obvious but appropriate. I am reminded that some years ago New York Magazine had a Competition to write two sides of a famous person's business card. My entry was "Rene Magritte" / "Je ne suis pas Rene Magritte".

Alexis Gilliland's comments on the Gospels read like conjecture built on conjecture. It would seem, from what he says, that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John made up an imaginary Jesus and taught people about Him so they could be arrested and executed (except for St. John, who was only imprisoned) for teaching people about their imaginary Jesus. They also managed to invent an imaginary Jesus whose teachings and personality have inspired and changed the lives of millions of people over the centuries. That seems like an extremely strange way of using extraordinary literary ability.

E. B. Frohvet says he did not invent the term "Biblical inerrancy". Of course not, and I didn't say he did. I said that the term is not the best term to use when asking about matters such as the laws of Leviticus. There is no error in those laws but, as I said, they were part of the Old Covenant and Jesus instituted the New Covenant.

The Catholic Church teaches that the Bible is inerrant in what it teaches, but that does not mean that, for example, poetry, parables, and similar figurative expressions should be taken literally. When the Bible uses expressions like that to express a truth about God, the truth about God is inerrant, but the figurative expressions are not inerrant in a literal sense.

St. Augustine wrote, "With Scripture it is a

matter of treating about the faith. For that reason, as I have noted repeatedly, if anyone, not understanding the mode of divine eloquence, should find something about these matters [about the physical universe] in our books, or hear of the same from those books, of such a kind that it seems to be at variance with the perceptions of his own rational faculties, let him believe that these other things are in no way necessary to the admonitions or accounts or predictions of Scripture." (The Literal Interpretation of Genesis, 2:9, written A.D. 408).

Joy V. Smith mentions the books by Jasper Fforde: *The Eyre Affair*, *Lost in a Good Book*, *The Well of Lost Plots*, and *Something Rotten*. They are indeed wonderful, but they should be read in the order of publication, which is indicated above. There is one developing story line and reading them out of sequence could result in being puzzled unnecessarily or in encountering spoilers. One should visit the web site at <http://www.thursdaynext.com> which offers such things as book upgrades, but NOT before reading all four books. There is a MAJOR spoiler on the site without any warning. I had been to the site before reading the last book, but fortunately that spoiler hadn't been there yet.

Taras Wolansky asks why *The Passion of the Christ* shows Jesus carrying a cross instead of just the crossbar. The best explanation I've seen is that Gibson was making an artistic movie, not a documentary or a mere re-enactment. The picture of Jesus carrying a complete cross is so standard in art that showing Him carrying a cross-bar, while probably historically accurate, would be a distraction that could cause confusion.

Taras says that although he is an atheist he recognizes that "nothing can't beat something" saying, "If Christianity dies out, it will most likely be replaced by Islam. This is happening already in Western Europe." Yes, and churches that teach traditional, orthodox Christianity are flourishing while theologically liberal churches are losing members. In 1931, several years before he became a Catholic, Arnold Lunn, alluding to John 3:15, wrote, "Before very long all churches will discover that there is no market for sermons on the text 'God so loved the world that he inspired a certain Jew to inform his contemporaries that there is a great deal to be said for loving one's neighbor.'"

Churchill's comment about "a riddle, wrapped in an enigma, shrouded in mystery" also seems to apply to the multicultural attitude towards intolerant

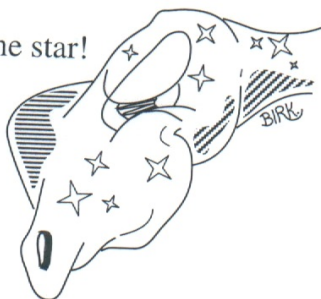
Islamicism. But his comment about the key being self-interest may be the answer.

— JTM

WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

I'm a fanzine star!



CONTESTS

The hidden cookie in the Clockwork Orange commentary was that it contained the title of every episode of The Prisoner.

War Admiral was the horse in the second picture. The horse in the first picture was his descendant, Check the Charts.

Nobody guessed *sigh*.

STANDARDS

by Grant C. McCormick

The Military of the United States has some of the most exacting, rigorous requirements of any organization on this planet. The term 'MilSpec' ("Military Specifications") is often used to express that an item is of the highest quality.

Of the branches of the Armed Services, the United States Navy has some of the tightest, most exacting specifications and requirements. After all, when you are in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, six months out of port and six *more* months from port, a broken widget can spell disaster.

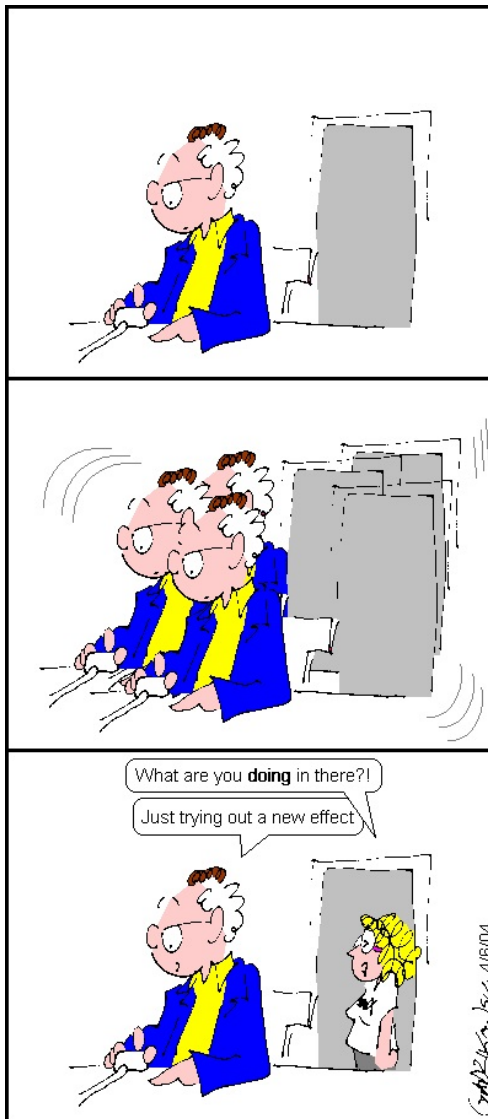
And in the United States Navy, the submarine division has some of the most stringent standards. Anything that applies to a surface vessel is squared for a craft that may not see the surface of the sea for months on end. The underwater fleet needs, and gets, the best of the best.

And so should you. You deserve what the submariners get.

So, if you want quality and performance that you will not believe, insist on only **SubStandard™** quality products and services

ART WORK

by Paul Gadzikowski



THE TRAGEDIE OF FRODO BAGGINS

by Will: Shakspar
Act IV, scene ix:

Before the Gates of Morannon

Enter GANDALF, ARAGORN, and ÉOMER
with their Army;

GIMLI, PEREGRIN, BEREGOND & others
Enter to them LEGOLAS

Leg. Prepare you, generals.
The enemy comes on in gallant show;
Their bloody sign of battle is hung out,
And something to be done immediately.

Ara. Éomer, lead your battle softly on,
Upon the left hand of the even field.

Éom. Upon the right hand I, keep thou the
left.

Ara. Why do you cross me in this exigent?

Éom. I do not cross you, but I will do so.

*March. Drum. Enter the MOUTH of
SAURON, KHAMUL, GOTHMOG, the KING
of the EASTERLINGS, and their Army*

Mou. They stand, and would have parley.

Kha. Stand fast, O King; we must out and
talk.

Éom. Gandalf, shall we give sign of battle?

Gan. No, Éomer, we will answer on their
charge.
Make forth, the generals would have
some words.

Ara. Stir not until the signal.

Mou. Words before blows. Is it so,
Gondormen?

Gan. Not that we love words better, as you
do.

Mou. Good words are better than bad strokes,
Gray Fool.

Gan. In your bad strokes, you give good
words.

Kha. The posture of your blows are yet
unknown;

But for your words, they rob the Hybla
bees,
And leave them honeyless.

Éom. Not stingless too.

Mou. O, yes, and soundless too,
For you have stol'n their buzzing,
Éomer,
And very wisely threat before you sting.

Ara. Villains! You did not so when your vile
daggers
Hack'd one another in the sides of
Isildur.

Come, come, the cause. If arguing make
us sweat,
The proof of it will turn to redder drops.
Look,

I draw a sword against the Shadow;
When think you that the sword goes up
again?

Never, till Isildur's three and thirty
wounds
Be well avenged, or till another Isildur
Have added slaughter to the sword of
traitors.

Kha. Master of woodmen, thou canst not die
by traitors' hands,
Unless thou bring'st them with thee.

Ara. So I hope,
I was not born to die on Nazgûl sword.

Kha. O, if thou wert the noblest of thy strain,
Young man, thou couldst not die more
honorable.

Mou. A peevish school boy, worthless of such
honor,
Join'd with a masker and a reveler!
But come, behold these tokens.

Proffers arms and armour
Know thou these?

Per. Frodo!

Mou. So, thou hast another of these vermin,
Though what service thou get from
them none can descry.
Behold, the spoils of thy spy,
Ta'en from him as trophy of his capture.
Yet gracious is my lord, Sauron the
Great,
And will ransom his body, for proper
due.

Gan. What are the terms of your treaty?

Mou. The rabble of Gondor shall withdraw,
Leaving surety of their submission.
All the lands of Ithilien shall they render
up
Acknowledging Sauron the Great their
lord.
Submission shall they make to his
majesty,
Ne'er to bear arms against him for ever.
Isengard beyond the river shall be
rebuilt,
To be the stronghold of one more
worthy.

Ara. Old Sauron still!

Gan. Come, Aragorn, away!
He takes the trophies from the Mouth
Defiance, traitors, hurl we in your teeth.
If you dare fight today, come to the
field;
If not, when you have stomachs.

Exuent GANDALF and his Army

Kha. What a wretched and peevish fellow is
this chief of Rangers, to mope with his
fat-brain'd followers so far out of his
knowledge!

Mou. If the Gondormen had any
apprehension, they would run away.

Kha. That they lack; for if their heads had any
intellectual armour, they could never
wear such heavy head-pieces.

K. Est. That land of Gondor breeds very valiant
creatures;
their mastiffs are of unmatched
courage.

Kha. Foolish curs, that run winking into the
mouth of a Wilderland bear, and have
their heads crush'd like rotten apples!
You may as well say that's a valiant flea
that dare eat his breakfast on the lip of a
lion.

Mou. Just, just!
And the men do sympathise with the
mastiffs in robustious and rough coming
on, leaving their wits with their wives;
and then give them great meals of beef
and iron and steel; they will eat like
wolves and fight like devils.

Kha. Ay, but these Gondormen are shrewdly
out of beef.

Mou. Then shall we find to-morrow they have
only stomachs to eat, and none to fight.
Now is it time to arm. Come, shall we
about it?

Kha. It is now two o'clock; but let me see —
by ten
We shall have each a hundred
Gondormen.

Exeunt

Co-Editors: Lisa & Joseph Major
Co-Publishers: Joseph & Lisa Major
Writers, Staff: Major, Joseph & Major,
Lisa

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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